

Researching Land Reform in Zimbabwe

Edited by Ian Scoones

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This book is dedicated to Blasio Mavedzenge (BZ), research team leader, farmer and passionate advocate of land reform and sustainable farming in Zimbabwe.

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

All the chapters in this book bar one have appeared as peer-reviewed journal articles, with the material covering the period from early land invasions in 2000 to more recent developments. A full list of the original sources is below. The selection of pieces for the chapters in this book was difficult, and additional articles and Working Papers published since 2000 are listed below too, in case readers want to check them out too.

As you will see, most of the chapters are co-authored outputs, based on the work of an incredibly dedicated team. The core team started working together in the late 1980s, under the aegis of the then Farming Systems Research Unit of the Department of Research and Specialist Services of the Ministry of Agriculture. Under the leadership of the late BZ Mavedzenge, we kept working together on various topics and, following 2000, focused on land reform experiences, starting in Masvingo. Sadly, BZ passed away prematurely in 2017¹ and Felix Murimbarimba has since led the team, supported by long-standing team member, Jacob Mahenehene. Jacob Chaumba, Easter Chigumira, Nelson Marongwe, Toendepi Shonhe, Chrispen Sukume and William Wolmer have also been part of the research team at different points. Over the years, we have also worked with many field assistants, very often agricultural extension workers based in the field sites, including V. Sarai, M. Manaka, B. Mulotshwa, S. Semede, M. Mutoko, among others. They have helped with logistics, field surveys and provided important local insights into changes underway in their areas, and their inputs have been immensely important for the overall research effort.

While this book focuses on the research by our team, the work is complemented by that of many others. For it is this wider corpus of work, conducted in the context of a vibrant research culture in Zimbabwe that continues despite the challenges, which adds to the wider picture. From the beginning, our work complemented that of the African Institute of Agrarian Studies, led then by the late, great Sam Moyo.² Since his passing in 2015, others have carried the work forward, including Walter Chambati on labour issues and Freedom Mazwi on contract farming questions, among many others. The work of the research-based NGO, the Ruzivo Trust, led by Prosper Matondi has been hugely influential too, as has the work by Grasian Mkodzongi, especially his pioneering work on the connections between land reform and mining. Others have led work on environmental questions emerging around land reform, notably Easter Chigumira, while others

such as Sandra Bhatasara and Manase Chiweshe have emphasised important gender dimensions. There are many others besides, adding to an impressive and important set of insights, largely from Zimbabwe-based researchers, with our contributions now only a small part of a voluminous body of work.

The work on which this book is based has been supported by many grants and much free labour. We have not had the luck to be funded continuously throughout this period, and support for the research has had to be cobbled together. Despite the challenges of getting funding to support work in Zimbabwe, we have been lucky. When the land reform happened during 2000, we were working on the DFID (UK Department for International Development) supported 'Sustainable Livelihoods in Southern Africa' programme, alongside another DFID-funded project on 'crop-livestock integration', both with study sites in Masvingo province. Researching livelihoods and rural change meant we could not ignore the land reform and we switched our focus. The long-term survey work in Masvingo province was first established under a DFID-ESRC (UK Economic and Social Research Programme) poverty programme research grant on 'livelihoods after land reform', with work also in South Africa and Namibia, and coordinated by PLAAS at UWC. Elements of this were carried on, and our sites were expanded including to Mvurwi through work under the SMEAD (Space, Markets and Employment in Agricultural Development) project, again led by PLAAS, funded through the Development and Economic Growth Research Programme, also supported by DFID and ESRC. On-going support for work in Zimbabwe continued under the umbrella of the DFID-funded APRA (Agricultural Policy Research in Africa) programme of the Future Agricultures Consortium, with some co-funding through the ESRC funded STEPS Centre. By hook and by crook and with lots of extra, unfunded work of course, the team has kept going, and our intention is to continue.

This book has emerged due to a number of request for easy access to our published material and the wish to see this lodged in libraries and resource centres across Zimbabwe. I would like to thank Ben Sladden for his careful editing work and his diligent attention to all the complex rights issues that have allowed republication.

ORIGINAL SOURCES

The following lists the original sources of each of the chapters in the six sections of the book after this introduction. When referring to any chapter, please make use of the original source reference, as below.

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NOTES

¹ <https://zimbabweland.wordpress.com/2017/09/04/bz-mavedzenge-the-loss-of-a-true-public-servant/>

² <https://zimbabweland.wordpress.com/2015/11/23/a-tribute-to-sam-moyo-a-giant-of-agrarian-studies/>

1

RESEARCHING ZIMBABWE'S LAND REFORM

Ian Scoones

Zimbabwe's controversial land reform that unfolded from 2000 was one of the most significant land reforms of the past century, and the experience raises many questions of wider relevance. In the long process of decolonisation, how can the injustices of the past and the massive inequalities of land ownership be addressed? How can land redistribution link with broad-based economic and social development? What are the politics of land reform processes? How can the capture of accumulation possibilities by elites be avoided? What forms of state support are required following redistribution to facilitate wider agrarian reform and local economic development?

With land reform and broad-based economic redistribution being recognised as central to the long-term success of many economies, particularly in East Asia¹, the Zimbabwe experience raises questions for the African setting, where many countries, especially in southern Africa, still live with the inheritances of colonialism and so massively skewed ownership and use patterns. With inequality widely recognised as a constraint on economic growth as well as wider well-being, redistributive policies – including land reform – are back on the development agenda for the first time in decades.

This book is a compilation of published pieces emerging from over twenty years of researching Zimbabwe's post-2000 land reform. The book is not just for those interested in Zimbabwe, but will hopefully offer insights

for others too. With South Africa tentatively moving towards a more radical stance on land reform, there are lessons – positive and negative – from the Zimbabwe experience.² For those more focused on Zimbabwe, the book brings together scattered sources in one place. Most of these are available in open access format already, but reading them together and getting a sense of how debates have evolved offers important insights.

WHY ARE WE STILL DEBATING ZIMBABWE'S LAND REFORM?

So why this book form compilation now? Surely the debate on Zimbabwe's land reform is over? At one level (thankfully) the debate has matured since the febrile atmosphere of the mid-2000s, but the many 'myths' that we challenged in our 2010 book, *Zimbabwe's Land Reform: Myths and Realities*,³ extraordinarily still persist. Systematic, long-term empirical work is necessary to challenge these and to update and nuance the arguments, as media commentators, policy-makers, politicians, donors, diplomats and even sadly some academics still trot out some of the now long-debunked myths.

Take just one example of many. In 2010, the so-called ZimOnline Investigations Team published an expose on land holdings acquired through the land reform.⁴ They suggested that half the land had been taken by top-level, party-linked 'cronies'. Of course, as our research has long shown, capture by political-military elites is an issue in the A2 medium-scale farms, especially in some parts of the country, but this is not the whole story (see chapter 5). Yet the narrative fits a particular political position, and feeds into fears in other countries about the dangers of land reform. A well-respected South African academic, Roger Southall, picked up data in the news article and used it in a largely favourable review of our book in 2012,⁵ but implied that our data were not representative and was therefore somehow suspect. Many others have subsequently both cited Southall and referred to the ZimOnline investigation as if it was 'fact'.⁶ In the classic approach of the BBC offering 'balance',⁷ such limited analyses and opinions are offered as a counterpoint to our and others' much more substantial and grounded research. While there are kernels of truth of course in the ZimOnline article, the overall story was highly misleading. We tried to get hold of the report to check it out and attempted to reach the 'investigators', but failed on both counts. We suspect that the investigation did not exist and that this was simply (quite sophisticated and effective)

propaganda, not research.

As we have found out that, in a highly-charged setting with established political interests vying for control of the narrative, evidence is never enough to challenge embedded positions. Arguments made in debates about Zimbabwe's land reform are frequently based on wilful misinterpretation and are often immune to solid research, so entrenched are particular interests. A nuanced, data-rich alternative with many shades of grey evident that does not take sides is inevitably difficult to handle. But this situation does not mean that researchers should abandon the task of collecting solid data, frustrating though the process may be at times when wider engagements seem to have limited, immediate impact. In our experience, it is only over time that hegemonic views are challenged and a new 'common sense' emerges.

Twenty years on, I am glad to say that at least in Zimbabwe, if perhaps not internationally, this is happening, especially as research outputs from many excellent studies continue to accumulate. This suggests a more sophisticated view of the post-2000 land reform, combined with a political pragmatism that future policies must accept that the land reform has happened, envisaging a way forward for Zimbabwe with a new agrarian structure. There are many constraints to this more positive, constructive scenario of course, not least the political impasse, where the ruling party and its military allies refuse to budge on political reform at the same time as the Western diplomatic community belligerently continues its sanctions regime, constraining economic development through the on-going effects on international flows of finance.

Two decades on, land remains central to the intransigence of all sides, given its symbolic role in narratives around national liberation and the overthrowing of the shackles of colonialism, as well as around the sanctity of property rights and the racial politics of land expropriation and dispossession. This book, and the wider research effort of which it is part, I hope offers a contribution to the emergence of a new 'common sense' and an alternative perspective not bound by particular strident interests and fixed political positions.

RESEARCH THEMES AND PROCESS

There are 20 chapters in this book organised across six themes. The first theme is 'experiences of land reform', which includes pieces that present our overarching data on what happened to people's livelihoods in different

sites in Masvingo over time. The second theme focuses on 'political contestations' and highlights the changing political dynamics emerging in our sites, resulting from different trajectories of accumulation and so social differentiation. The third theme is titled, 'people and places' and looks at particular groups of people – such as young people and farm labour – and locates their experience in the wider land reform story and certain places, including small towns in farming areas. The fourth theme focuses on 'production and markets' and examines particular commodities – notably livestock, tobacco and sugar – and investigates changes in production systems, including through farmer-led irrigation. The fifth theme looks at 'environmental dynamics' and touches on the contests over land in wildlife areas and the impacts of foot-and-mouth disease in a new agrarian setting. And finally, the last theme examines the 'land reform in the wider context', touching on broader questions of long-term rural development and the meaning of 'viability' in the Zimbabwean farming context.

What are some of the overarching conclusions that emerge from this body of work? They are difficult to summarise as there are differences across sites, between people and over time, but the listing below offers some headlines.

- Farmers on the new resettlement areas are producing and accumulating from investments in agriculture. Patterns vary widely between farms and across years, but a distinct pattern of 'accumulation from below', particularly in the A1 smallholder land reform sites, is seen. However, political and economic conditions over the past 20 years have seriously limited opportunities for most.
- Farmers who gained access to land during the land reform came from many different backgrounds. In the A1 smallholder areas, the majority were previously poor, small-scale farmers from the communal areas or were un(der)employed in nearby towns. In the A2 areas, there was a mix of those who applied through the formal route (mostly civil servants, including teachers and agricultural ministry staff) and those who gained access to land through patronage arrangements, drawing on close connections with the party and security services. Outside this latter group, which is a small minority, the beneficiaries were not 'cronies', nor even necessarily ruling party supporters.
- Many of the new farmers are investing in their farms. First this was focused on land clearance and building new homes, but since this has extended to investing in new technology (notably irrigation pumps), as well as tractors and diverse forms of transport for marketing.

Some are able to invest off-farm and there has been a growth in investment in real estate in nearby towns, especially in the tobacco-growing areas.

- Over time, there has been a distinct process of social differentiation, within both smallholder (A1) and medium-scale (A2) farms, with some accumulating, while others struggle. This results in new social relations between farms and between sites, as those who are not surviving from farm-based income must seek employment on other farms or develop off-farm income-earning options.
- There are major contrasts between A1 and A2 farms in all of our sites. A1 smallholder farms have performed relatively well, often producing surpluses, with investment flowing back to the farms or supporting relatives in other areas, including the communal areas and towns.
- A2 farms have by contrast struggled. As larger medium-scale operations, they require finance and capital investment, and this has been difficult to secure due to lack of bank finance or government support. Beyond a few years when the economy stabilised, the economic conditions over the past 20 years have not been conducive to successful farm business investment. That said, some have managed, and again there is substantial differentiation among A2 farms.
- The spatial restructuring of rural economies through land reform has resulted in new patterns of economic activity, with the sharing of labour, equipment and other resources across A1, A2 and communal areas. The concentration of locally-based economic growth driven by agriculture has had important effects on small towns, and many of these have grown significantly.
- During the land reform, resident farm labour on farms, especially in the high-potential areas, largely lost out on the allocation of new land. Farm labour has had to reincorporate in a new agricultural economy and has faced many challenges. Gaining access to even small pieces of land is crucial for survival, as the demand for labour varies and the working conditions are poor.
- Twenty years on from land reform, there is a next generation of young people who are seeking out agriculture-based opportunities. They may benefit from subdivision of their parents' land, but many must survive on small patches. Investment in small-scale irrigation through the purchase of small pumps and linked to horticulture

production is a favoured activity.

- Finance for agriculture is extremely limited, constraining opportunities for small- and medium-scale resettlement farmers alike. Banks have so far rejected either permits to occupy in the A1 areas and leases in the A2 areas as a basis for lending. State investments have been limited, and are often misdirected and subject to corruption. Western donors have not supported land reform areas as these are deemed 'contested areas' and so are effectively subject to sanctions.
- The dynamics of agriculture is highly dependent on the type of crop. Some crops, such as tobacco and sugar, are linked to contract finance arrangements, supported by private companies. This allows farmers to invest in their production and some have been highly successful, although the terms of the contracts are not always favourable. Other crops, including grain crops and most horticulture, require self-financing or reliance on very selective government schemes, and so are more challenging business propositions; although again there are important successes, notably around small-scale irrigated horticulture.
- The contrasts between A1 and A2 areas and the differentiation of farmers within each mean that there is a highly heterogeneous farming population. There are different classes of farmer emerging, ranging from emergent rural capitalists to petty commodity producers to diverse classes of labour, only partly reliant on agriculture. This results in a new politics of the countryside, with quite volatile political affiliations.
- The new agrarian structure, centred on a smallholder-based agriculture and complemented by medium-scale farms, requires a very different policy approach to agriculture, with new forms of support, including a revamped and revived agricultural administration system to encourage investment. Economic and political instability, combined with wider sanctions, has massively restricted the potential of land reform farmers to drive rural economic growth, but the potentials are clearly apparent, along with many on-going challenges.

As headline findings, these points summarise a lot of research. However, you will have to read all the chapters to get the details, qualifications and nuances.

RESPONDING TO CRITIQUES

Over the years, there have been a number of critiques of our work: some very much on-target, others widely missing the mark.⁸ This book hopefully offers a challenge to some of our detractors who dismiss our research, too often without having read it. With such a selection of outputs in one place, now there is really no excuse!

When our 2010 book came out, based on our work in Masvingo province, some argued that our research was too geographically limited, and so not representative of the wider land reform experience. Since then we have expanded our sites to include Mvurwi in Mazowe district in the high potential tobacco-growing area to the north of Harare and Matobo in Mashonaland South, where livestock production is central to post-land reform trajectories. While the coverage of our studies is far from comprehensive, it does cover a wide range of settings and perhaps unsurprisingly the story is similar. The same myths are challenged perhaps even more forcefully, but with interesting nuances and inflections to the general story that we first documented across Masvingo province. With many other researchers adding to the evidence base from numerous PhDs, MA theses and other studies emanating from many research organisations and universities, the core findings have been sustained - that the land reform offered benefits to many, particularly smallholders, and that this has supported local economic development in these areas.

Another critique levelled against us was that we ignored the politics of land reform. This was an odd critique, given that we looked in detail from the beginning at how changing economic configurations supported different interests, resulting in a shifting politics of the countryside. In this collection there is a dedicated section on 'political contestations', including some of these articles. However, it is also true that our focus was quite micro, focused on our study sites and did not relate outwards to the wider, very fast-changing party-political context of national politics. In some ways this was deliberate. Our aim was not to take sides in a very dynamic national political setting, but simply to present the data on what had happened to people's livelihoods and the political consequences for class formation and social differentiation in particular places, and so showing all sides of the land reform story, good and bad. However, this is not to say that we have not engaged in national political debates. In the articles, as well as the ZimbabweLand blog series, we have taken fire at all parties and positions, highlighting corruption by party and military linked elites, challenging the state to provide post-settlement support and critiquing the

opposition for failing to engage with land and rural policy issues.⁹ On this front, there is clearly more to be done, and the links between changing economic configurations in resettlement areas and larger political dynamics at national level certainly deserve more attention, linking the micro to the more macro.

A further complaint centred on the composition of our research team, suggesting somehow that, because some of team members gained land through the land reform, that we were irredeemably biased. We have disputed this claim many times, pointing to the fact that the team had multiple political allegiances in Zimbabwe and none.¹⁰ That we had an A1 and A2 farmer in our midst was related to the opportunities that former extension workers with diplomas in agriculture had in the application process as they were deemed to have the requisite expertise for farming – and so it has proved. As farmers conducting research the practical insights on everything from negotiating sugar prices, to irrigating dryland areas, to marketing challenges have been important in guiding our research foci over time. Indeed, team members who were farmers were often the most critical in the team when it came to the state's abject failure to support land reform following the redistribution. All researchers inevitably come from somewhere and have positions, but being reflexive about this is always part of research, and we are proud to have a very diverse team, with many social, political and indeed ethnic backgrounds, although admittedly there is quite a strong gender and age bias that we try and counter when pursuing particular lines of inquiry.

Another critique we have heard is that our research was too focused on just documenting what happened, rather than looking forward to longer-term development. I always found this a slightly odd complaint too, as our longitudinal work on 'livelihoods after land reform' was very explicitly about understanding how different groups of people benefited from land redistribution (or not) and so what options there were for further support. In particular, we have highlighted the importance of a territorial approach to encourage local economic development,¹¹ and the blog has been tediously repetitive on the need for a new land administration system, including addressing issues of tenure, rural finance and compensation.¹² As our research continued, we have repeated some of our surveys across the sites,¹³ and the results have been published both in blog updates and in a series of synthesis pieces (see chapters 2 and 3).¹⁴ But, in addition to the tracking of our sample, we have also identified additional themes that cut across and were highlighted by discussions in the field. These have included explorations of the implications of contract farming in tobacco production

(chapter 13), questions of labour in land reform areas (chapter 9), challenges of young people growing up in resettlement areas (chapter 10) and the revolution in farmer-led irrigation (chapter 15), among others. All of these have very direct development implications, which we draw out in our writing.¹⁵

THE VALUE OF LONGITUDINAL RESEARCH: EMERGING LESSONS

Casting aside your own biases and assumptions, I hope that reading our work in this book, and checking out the now 420 articles on the ZimbabweLand blog too (more than 400,000 words!), you will learn something new and agree that some of these critiques have been responded to. There is more to do of course, and one thing you can be sure about with longitudinal work, perhaps especially in rural Zimbabwe, is that things change continuously.

Having a sense of how things have changed and why can be really important for assessing policy directions and defining development pathways.¹⁶ Too often policy-makers and development practitioners rely on snapshot assessments, produced rapidly by consultants, and policy advice and development planning as a result suffers. Longitudinal studies are rare in rural Africa and few span 20 years; although of course in Zimbabwe we are lucky to have the amazing work of Bill Kinsey and colleagues going back even longer, tracing the story of resettlement since Independence.¹⁷

Longitudinal work is tricky to do, given turnover of both survey participants and researchers. It is sometimes seen as expensive and with limited direct, tangible outputs and so not 'value for money'; and in any case it never fits within the short-term funding timeframes of most agencies. Big panel surveys, seen as the gold-standard for rural research, find it difficult to adapt to changing contexts as conditions shift and questions become redundant, while others are added making the research ever more cumbersome. In my view, the sort of low-cost, more flexible research, combining light-touch and occasional quantitative surveys and censuses on well-chosen but limited samples with extensive qualitative exploration, is the ideal. Focusing on particular places that the team, including locally-resident field assistants, really get to know is invaluable in exploring shifts over time. The insights generated are complex, nuanced and sophisticated, and never fit a simplistic, politically-driven narrative. They challenge us to think and rethink, and this is why we carry on.

After over 20 years of land reform there is much to report, and many lessons to learn. While the political and economic context in Zimbabwe remains depressingly intransigent, with continuous political failure and economic mismanagement combined with Western sanctions, there are still some signs of hope and optimism, witnessed even during the COVID-19 pandemic.¹⁸ However, the quality of advice to government, donors and international diplomatic missions by-and-large remains limited, and there remains a real need for solid, longitudinal field-based evidence.

This body of work is therefore as relevant to the immediate development challenges of Zimbabwe as it is to the wider debates about land, redistribution and economic transformation more widely across Africa. For Zimbabwe, when opportunities for change do open up, which inevitably they must, there will be a cumulative body of work to help define the new pathways of development that the post-land reform agrarian setting in Zimbabwe urgently needs.

NOTES

¹ <https://zimbabweland.wordpress.com/2017/11/27/the-path-to-prosperity-starts-with-land-reform-says-the-economist/>

² <https://zimbabweland.wordpress.com/2018/03/05/panic-privilege-and-politics-contours-of-south-africas-land-expropriation-debate/>

³ <http://zimbabweland.net/Books.html>

⁴ <https://zimbabweland.wordpress.com/2012/06/18/who-took-the-land-more-on-the-crony-debate/>

⁵ <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/000203971104600306>

⁶ See for example, the introduction to the otherwise useful book, *Zimbabwe's Trajectory: Stepping Forward or Sliding Back* (2020, Weaver Press), edited by Eldred Masunungure.

⁷ <https://zimbabweland.wordpress.com/2011/12/03/bbc-crossing-continent-production-declines/>

⁸ <https://zimbabweland.wordpress.com/2012/11/26/more-inconvenient-truths/>

⁹ See for example, <https://zimbabweland.wordpress.com/2021/03/29/frontier-politics-in-zimbabwe-the-chilonga-case/>; <https://zimbabweland.wordpress.com/2020/03/02/zimbabwes-economy-goes-from-bad-to-worse/>; <https://zimbabweland.wordpress.com/2013/06/17/the-mdc-ts-agenda-for-real-transformation-art-why-the-land-and-agriculture-sections-need-more-thought/>, and many others on the blog.

¹⁰ <https://zimbabweland.wordpress.com/2013/04/08/when-is-research-really-authoritative-challenges-of-evidence-authorship-and-positionality-in-research-on-zimbabwes-land-reform/>

¹¹ <https://zimbabweland.wordpress.com/2015/11/09/land-and-commercial-agriculture-in-zimbabwe-new-findings/>

¹² <https://zimbabweland.wordpress.com/2017/07/17/a-new-land-administration-system-for-zimbabwe/>; <https://zimbabweland.wordpress.com/2017/07/10/getting-agriculture-moving-finance-and-credit/>; <https://zimbabweland.wordpress.com/2020/11/23/land-and-compensation-in-zimbabwe-frequently-asked-questions/>, among others.

- ¹³ Samples involve 340 A1/51 A2 households/farms in Masvingo; 220 A1/39 A2 plus 100 compound-based former farm workers in Mvurwi and 208 A1/50 A2/'self-contained' in Matobo (the latter linked to work by Tapiwa Chatikobo).
- ¹⁴ <https://zimbabweland.wordpress.com/2020/05/11/zimbabwes-land-reform-areas-twenty-years-on-1-introducing-a-short-blog-series/> and <https://zimbabweland.wordpress.com/2014/03/31/how-have-the-new-farmers-fared-an-update-on-the-masvingo-study-i/>
- ¹⁵ <https://zimbabweland.wordpress.com/2019/11/25/what-does-pro-poor-rural-development-mean-for-zimbabwe/>
- ¹⁶ <https://zimbabweland.wordpress.com/2016/02/08/sharing-results-generating-impact-experience-from-zimbabwe/> and <https://zimbabweland.wordpress.com/2020/01/06/research-to-impact-stories-from-zimbabwe/>
- ¹⁷ For example, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/03066150.2011.632089>
- ¹⁸ For example, <https://zimbabweland.wordpress.com/2021/02/08/the-rich-peoples-virus-latest-reflections-from-zimbabwe/> (one of many articles in an on-going series).

Experiences of Land Reform

2

ZIMBABWE'S LAND REFORM: CHALLENGING THE MYTHS

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Felix Murimbarimba, Jacob Mahenehene and
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<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/03066150.2011.622042>.

INTRODUCTION

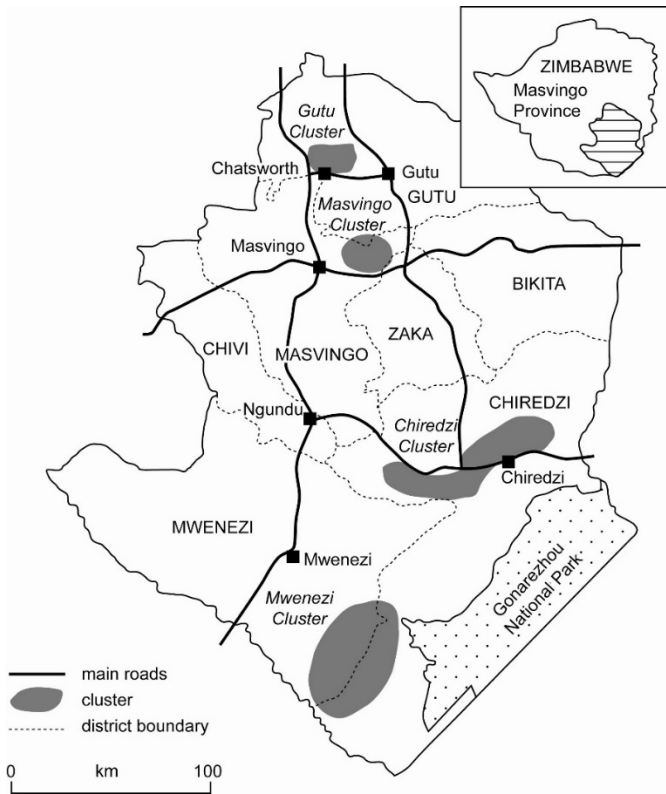
Zimbabwe's land reform has had a bad press. Images of chaos, destruction and violence have dominated the coverage. While these have been part of the reality, there is also another side of the story. There have been important successes that must be taken into account if a more complete picture is to be offered. This paper argues that the story is not simply one of collapse and catastrophe; it is much more nuanced and complex, with successes as well as failures.

As Zimbabwe moves forward with a new agrarian structure, a more balanced appraisal is needed. This requires solid, on-the-ground research aimed at finding out what happened to whom and where and with what consequences. This was the aim of work carried out in Masvingo province since 2000 and reported in the book, *Zimbabwe's Land Reform: Myths and Realities* (Scoones et al., 2010). This paper offers an overview of the main findings¹. The question posed for the research was simple: what happened to people's livelihoods once they got land through land reform from 2000?

Yet, despite the simplicity of the question, the answers are extremely complex.

The research involved in-depth field research in 16 land reform sites; in some sites over a decade from 2000. The research sites were located in four research 'clusters' across the province, involving a sample population of 400 households. Masvingo is a relatively dry province, with average annual rainfall ranging from around 1000mm to under 300mm. Former land uses of the research sites included livestock ranches (sometimes with limited irrigation plots), with low capitalisation and limited labour forces, as well as, for several A2 sites, irrigated farms, including those linked to sugar estates in the lowveld. Different types of survey were conducted in these sites between 2000 and 2010, including a full census (N=400 in 2007-08), a stratified sample survey (N=277 in 2008, stratified according to cattle ownership, a key indicator of wealth) and individual household biographies (N=110, across all 'success groups'), as well as more qualitative observations in all sites. Records of crop production, sales and inputs were carried out each season, and livestock and other asset holdings were monitored, in all cases through recall interviews. A detailed study of investment took place in 2007-08, involving assessments for all households. The research team included a group of field researchers resident in Masvingo province – in Masvingo, Hippo Valley and Chikombedzi. The study area stretched from the relatively higher potential areas near Gutu to the sugar estate of Hippo Valley to the dry south in the lowveld, offering a picture of diverse agro-ecological conditions (Figure 2.1). What we found was not what we expected. It contradicted the overwhelmingly negative images of land reform presented in the media, and indeed in much academic and policy commentary besides. In sum, the realities on the ground did not match the myths so often perpetuated in wider debate. Most commentary on Zimbabwe's land reform insists that agricultural production has almost totally collapsed, that food insecurity is rife, that rural economies are in precipitous decline, that political 'cronies' have taken over the land and that farm labour has all been displaced. The reality however is much more complex. In our research we needed to ask far more sophisticated questions: Which aspects of agricultural production have suffered? Who is food insecure? How are rural economies restructuring to the new agrarian setting? And who exactly are the new farmers and farm labourers? By countering one myth of disaster and catastrophe, we must of course be wary of setting up an opposite myth of rose-tinted optimism. Instead, we should offer an empirically-informed view based on detailed analysis and solid evidence. This has been the aim of our research, and we offer a taste of the findings below.

Figure 2.1: Map of Masvingo province, showing study areas



Of course a focus on Masvingo province gives only a partial insight into the broader national picture. With most land being previously extensive ranch land, with pockets of irrigated agriculture outside the sugar estates, it is clearly different to the Highveld around Harare, where highly capitalised agriculture reliant on export markets did indeed collapse and where labour was displaced in large numbers (Sachikonye, 2003). But the picture in the new farms of Masvingo is not unrepresentative of broad swathes of the rest of the country, as research across multiple districts, from Mazoe to Mutoko to Mangwe is now showing (Moyo et al., 2009; Matondi 2010; plus contributions to this special issue from across the country, see Cliffe et al., for an overview)². Smallholder farmers have dominated the allocations under the 'Fast Track Land Reform Programme' (FTLRP), and many are doing well; surprisingly so given the parlous economic conditions over much of the past decade.

But any good analysis must take a differentiated view, unpacking

diverse trajectories; successes as well as failures. Contributions to this special issue demonstrate this diversity, much of which is encompassed in the Masvingo study. For example Zamchiya (this issue), shows how some high-value sites were captured by elites in Chipinge, while in peri-urban Goromonzi, Marongwe (2009, this issue) shows how allocation of A2 farms was manipulated by political connections. These were all patterns observed in Masvingo province, as shown below. But individual cases should not detract from a balanced overall assessment, and only a broader overview can provide a firm basis for thinking about future policy. Subsequent sections of this paper offer such an overview of the key findings from the Masvingo study, starting with a summary of the broader national changes before focusing on the results from Masvingo province.

A RADICAL CHANGE IN AGRARIAN STRUCTURE

Across the country, the formal land re-allocation since 2000 has resulted in the transfer of land to nearly 170,000 households by 2010 (Moyo, 2011a: 496). If the 'informal' settlements, outside the official 'fast-track' programme are added, the totals are even larger.

Events since 2000 have thus resulted in a radical change in the nation's agrarian structure (Table 2.1). At Independence in 1980, over 15m hectares was devoted to large-scale commercial farming, comprising around 6,000 farmers, nearly all of them white. This fell to around 12m hectares by 1999, in part through a modest, but in many ways successful, land reform and resettlement programme, largely funded by the British government under the terms of the Lancaster House agreement (Gunning et al., 2000).

The Fast Track Land Reform Programme, begun in 2000, allocated to new farmers over 4,500 farms making up 7.6m hectares, 20% of the total land area of the country, according to (admittedly rough) official figures. In 2008-09 this represented over 145,000 farm households in A1 schemes and around 16500 further households occupying A2 plots (Rukuni et al., 2009)³, equivalent to 11.7% of farm households in the country.⁴

Overall, there has been a significant shift to many more, smaller-scale farms focusing on mixed farming, often with low levels of capitalisation. Much of this expansion of agricultural activity is on land which was previously under-utilised (Moyo 1998), and in the Masvingo case often involving a transfer of land which was used for ranching at low stocking rates with limited herding labour to more intensive smallholder crop and livestock production. But this is not to say that large-scale commercial units

Table 2.1: Changes in the national distribution of land, 1980-2009

Land category	Area (million ha)		
	1980	2000	2009
Communal areas	16.4	16.4	16.4
Old resettlement	0.0	3.5	3.5
New resettlement: A1	0.0	0.0	4.1
New resettlement: A2	0.0	0.0	3.5
Small-scale commercial farms	1.4	1.4	1.4
Large-scale commercial farms	15.5	11.7	3.4*
State farms	0.5	0.7	0.7
Urban land	0.2	0.3	0.3
National parks and forest land	5.1	5.1	5.1
Unallocated land	0.0	0.0	0.7

*Source: derived from various government sources and compiled by the African Institute of Agrarian Studies * includes all large commercial farms, agro-industrial estate farms, church/trust farms, BIPPA farms and conservancies (Scoones et al. 2010: 4).*

no longer exist. Especially important in Masvingo province is the estate sector, including for example the major sugar estates in the lowveld. These largely remained intact following land reform, without-grower areas being transferred to sub-divided A2 plots. Today, there are still around 3.4 m hectares under large-scale farming, some of it in very large holdings, such as the 350,000 hectare Nuanetsi ranch in Masvingo province⁵. There are, however, perhaps only 200 white-owned commercial farmers still operating across 117,000 ha nationally, complemented by 950 black-owned large scale farms on 530,000 ha (Moyo 2011a:514). Most white-owned farms were taken over, with a substantial number of farm workers displaced.

Two main 'models' have been at the centre of the land reform process since 2000 - one focused on smallholder production (so-called A1 schemes, either as villagised arrangements or small, self-contained farms) and one

focused on commercial production at a slightly larger scale (so-called A2 farms). Much larger A2 farms, replicating the large-scale farms of the past, have also been created, many later in the land reform process (Moyo 2011a,b).

In practice, the distinction between these models varies considerably, and there is much overlap, with some self-contained A1 schemes, for example, being very similar to smaller A2 schemes. As Zamchiya's study (this issue) shows, processes of land allocation, rather than their administrative definition, have more importance in understanding who ended up on the land and what happened next. Most A1 schemes, and all 'informal' land reform sites, were allocated following land invasions starting from 2000⁶. These had diverse origins, but were usually (but not always) led by war veterans and involved groups of people from surrounding communal areas and nearby towns (Chaumba et al., 2003; Moyo 2001). More formal allocation of plots happened later, with the pegging of fields and settlement sites as part of the 'fast track land reform programme' (FTLRP) and the issuing of 'offer letters'⁷.

Depending on the pressure on the land, the local demands and often the discretion of the planning officers, A1 sites were demarcated as villages (with shared grazing and clustered homesteads) or 'self-contained' plots, with houses, arable fields and grazing within a single area. The 'informal' A1 sites, by contrast, were usually organised in line with local preferences. These sites, with their origins in land invasions, took on a particular social and political character, organised initially by a 'Seven Member Committee', often with a war veteran base commander in the lead. Later these became village committees, and were incorporated into chiefly authorities and local government administrative systems (Scoones et al., 2010: 188-212). By contrast, A2 schemes were allocated later (from around 2002) as a result of business plan applications to the Provincial and District Land Committees.

The membership of each of these 'schemes' is thus highly dependent on the politics of the allocation process, with final outcomes highly contingent on local situations. The land invasions, while of course highly politicised, and supported by ZANU-PF and the military, had diverse origins and participation: some were made up largely of poor, local villagers from nearby areas, while others involved a smaller group of organised war veterans (Hammar et al., 2003; Marongwe 2003). In our Masvingo cases, each site was different (Scoones et al., 2010:46-51). A2 schemes by contrast required a formal application process, and officially there were strict criteria for acceptance. Many who applied were civil servants, often linked to the agriculture ministry, who had few strong political connections if any;

although in some instances were able to manipulate the administrative procedures in their favour⁸. The most obvious, and often blatant, corrupt practices linked to political patronage were associated with the later allocation of larger A2 farms, especially around the time of the 2008 elections when the struggle for power and the deployment of political patronage by the ZANU-PF elite was at its height. Moyo (2011a: 514) reports 53 large-scale A2 farms in Masvingo province across 110,719ha.

In sum, the land reform has resulted in a very different farming sector, with a radically reconfigured agrarian structure. While the old dualism has been disrupted, with many more smallholder farmers on the land, elements of the large-scale farming structure remain. Yet despite these major changes, the new setting, as we show below, is not without considerable entrepreneurial dynamism and productive potential. This major restructuring of course has had knock-on consequences for the agricultural sector as a whole. Any radical reform will of course have a transitional phase, as production systems, markets and trading priorities readjust (Kinsey 2003), but the key questions are how long will the transition take, and what form will the agriculture sector take in the longer term? In the period between 2001 and 2009, national production of wheat, tobacco, coffee and tea all declined, as did the export of beef (Scoones et al., 2010: 148). Compared to 1990s averages, wheat production decreased by 27% and tobacco production by 43%, with more dramatic declines from 2006 (Moyo 2011a), yet some recovery, particularly for tobacco, in 2010 and 2011 (Anseeuw et al., 2011). Equally, national maize production has become more variable, because of the reduction of irrigation facilities and significant droughts have resulted in shortages, with average production over this period down by 31% from 1990s levels. However, other crops and markets have weathered the storm and some have boomed. Aggregate production of small grains (sorghum and millet) has exploded, increasing by 163% compared to 1990s averages, while cotton production has also increased, up 13% on average by 2009. The agricultural sector therefore has certainly been transformed, and there are major problems in certain areas, but it certainly has not collapsed.

TRANSFORMING LAND AND LIVELIHOODS IN MASVINGO PROVINCE

Aggregate figures – with all the necessary caveats about their accuracy - only tell one part of the story. To get a sense of what is happening in the

fields and on the farms, we need a more local focus. Only with such insights can we really begin to understand the impacts of Zimbabwe's land reform. In this section, we zero in on Masvingo province in the central south and east of the country.

In Masvingo province about 28% of the total land area was transferred as part of the FTLRP, according to 2009 official figures. Much of this land was previously cattle ranches, with limited infrastructure, low levels of employment and only small patches of arable land outside the irrigated lowveld areas. This was taken over by over 32,500 households on A1 sites (making up 1.2 m hectares) and about 1,200 households in A2 areas (making up 371,500 ha), alongside perhaps a further 8,500 households in informal resettlement sites, as yet unrecognised by the government. Although there is much variation, the average size of new A2 farms is 318 hectares, while that of A1 family farms is 37 hectares, including crop and grazing land⁹. At the same time one million hectares (18.3% of the province) remains as large-scale commercial operations, including some very large farms, wildlife conservancies and estates in the lowveld that remained largely intact (Moyo 2011b).

Table 2.2 offers an overview of the socio-economic characteristics of the different sites in our study, presented in relation to the four districts and the four different types of resettlement 'scheme', highlighting the diversity of contexts, livelihood assets and strategies. Land holdings vary significantly between the 'scheme' types, with the A2 small-scale commercial units having the largest land areas. A1 self-contained scheme areas include both grazing and arable land, while A1 villagised and informal areas represent only the arable land. Maize production and sale varies significantly, with A1 self-contained schemes performing best and, with a few notable exceptions, A2 schemes performing poorly. Average crop production levels unsurprisingly decline between the relatively wetter sites of Gutu and Masvingo to the dry area of Mwenezi. Cattle ownership is highest in the A2 ranches of Mwenezi, although with stocking rates still low and cropped area minimal¹⁰. The overall profile of the new settlers is presented in the table, referring to the age and educational qualifications of 'household heads'. A2 farmers tend to be slightly older and better educated, but overall, compared to nearby communal areas, this is a relatively well educated and young population.

This radical transformation of land and livelihoods has resulted in a new composition of people in the rural areas, with diverse livelihood strategies. In order to understand more about who was doing what we undertook a 'success ranking' exercise in all 16 sites across Masvingo province. This

Table 2.2: A socio-economic profile of the study sites (average amounts across survey households)

Cluster	Gutu		Masvingo		Chiredzi		Mwenezi		
	A1 self-contained	A1 villagised	A2	A1 self-contained	A1 villagised	A2	A1 villagised	A1 informal	A2
Age of household head	39	34	43	36	40	43	37	46	44
Educational level of household head	Form 2	Form 2	Form 3 or higher	Form 2	Form 2	Form 3 or higher	Grade 7	Form 3 or higher	Form 2
Land holding (ha)	35.5	4.0	232.1	33.0	3.9	167.0	6.2	39.1	868.7
Area cropped (ha)	5.6	3.1	6.6	8.4	3.4	n.d.	4.6	16.8	0.5
Cattle owned (nos)	6.9	5.4	25.2	11.9	4.4	11.7	4.4	14.8	60.3
Maize output in 2006 kg	2790	2627	3133	7385	3140	65000	2256	2582	n.d
Sales (GMB and local) in kg in 2006	1310	1157	896	5283	1766	54563	378	1357	n.d
% owning a scotch cart	32%	24%	20%	68%	63%	75%	40%	33%	64%
House type (% with tin/asbestos roof)	43%	40%	25%	45%	44%	100%	42%	78%	100%
% receiving remittance	44%	39%	15%	n.d.	23%	0%	21%	28%	64%

Source: Survey data, 2007-08 (n.d. means no data available, or not applicable) (Scoones et al., 2010: 44)

Table 2.3: Livelihood strategies in Masvingo province

Category	Livelihood strategy	Proportion of households
Dropping out (10.0%)	Exit – leaving the plot	4.4%
	Chronically poor, local labour	3.3%
	Ill health affecting farming	2.2%
Hanging in (33.6%)	Asset poor farming, local labour	17.8%
	Keeping the plot for the future	10.3%
	Straddling across resettlement and communal areas	5.6%
Stepping out (21.4%)	Survival diversification	2.8%
	Local off-farm activities plus farming	5.3%
	Remittances from within Zimbabwe plus farming	5.0%
	Remittances from outside Zimbabwe plus farming	4.4%
	Cell phone farmers	3.9%
Stepping up (35.0%)	<i>Hurudza</i> – the ‘real’ farmers	18.3%
	Part-time farmers	10.6%
	New (semi-)commercial farmers	4.7%
	Farming from patronage	1.4%

Source: summarised from Scoones et al., (2010:228-229)

involved a group of farmers from the area ranking all households according to their own criteria of success. A number of broad categories of livelihood strategy emerged from these investigations (following Dorward (2009) and Mushongah (2009)). These are listed in Table 2.3.

Over a half of all the 400 sample households – across A1, A2 and informal resettlement sites - were either ‘stepping up’ – accumulating assets and regularly producing crops for sale – or ‘stepping out’ – successfully diversifying off-farm. These households were accumulating and investing, often employing labour and ratcheting up their farming operations, despite the many difficulties being faced. But not everyone has been successful. 46.5% of households were finding the going tough, and were not regarded as ‘successful’ at this stage. Some were really struggling and only just ‘hanging in’; others were in the process of ‘dropping out’.

Table 2.4: Settler profiles across schemes.

	A1 villagised	A1 self contained	Informal	A2	Total
'Ordinary': from other rural areas	59.9	39.2	69.7	12.2	49.9
'Ordinary': from urban areas	9.4	18.9	22.6	43.8	18.3
Civil servant	12.5	28.3	3.8	26.3	16.5
Security services	3.6	5.4	3.8	1.8	3.7
Business person	3.1	8.2	0	10.5	4.8
Former farm worker	11.5	0	0	5.3	6.7
N	192	74	53	57	376

Source: Census data, 2007 (N=376), including all sites (Scoones et al., 2010: 53)

through a combination of chronic poverty and ill health. Joining the land invasions and establishing new farms in what was often uncleared bush, previously not used for arable agriculture, was not easy. It required commitment, courage and much hard work. It was not for everyone.

Others without start-up assets have been unable to accumulate, and have continued to live in poverty, reliant on the support of relatives and friends. Some have joined a growing labour force on the new farms, abandoning their plots in favour of often poorly-paid employment. Within the 'stepping out' category, some are surviving off illegal, unsafe or transient activities that allowed survival but little else. Still others are straddling across two farms – one in the communal area and one in the new resettlement – and not really investing in the new areas, while some are simply keeping the plot for sons or other relatives.

It is not surprising that there have been such variable outcomes. In the period since 2000 there has been virtually no external support. Government was broke and focused support on the elite few, and the NGOs and donors have shied away from the new resettlement areas for political reasons. Instead, most new farmers have been reliant on their own connections, enterprise and labour. Without support to get going, many have found it difficult, and it has been those with a combination of access to assets, hard work and luck that have really made it.

Overall, in our study sites there is thus a core group of ‘middle farmers’ – around half of the population – who are successful not because of patronage support, but because of hard work. They can be classified as successful ‘petty commodity producers’ and ‘worker peasants’ who are gaining surpluses from farming, investing in the land from off-farm work and so are able to ‘accumulate from below’ (Scoones et al. 2010; cf. Cousins 2010). This is, as discussed below, having a positive impact on the wider economy, including stimulating demand for services, consumption goods and labour.

NEW LAND, NEW PEOPLE

One of the most repeated myths about Zimbabwe’s land reform is that all the land went to ‘Mugabe’s cronies’; those with access to elite connections and benefiting from political patronage. This did, of course, happen, and continues to do so. Tackling such extreme excesses of land grabbing through a land audit, as provided for in the ‘Global Political Agreement’ for power sharing, remains a major challenge. But elite capture is not the whole story of Zimbabwe’s land reform; nor indeed the dominant one.

Who got the land and what is the profile of the new settlers? Our study of 400 households across the 16 sites from Masvingo province showed by far the majority of the new settlers are ordinary people (Table 2.4). While ‘ordinary’ is certainly a category that lacks clarity, these are essentially people who had little or very poor land in the communal areas or were unemployed or with very poorly-paid jobs and living in town. About half of all new settler households were from nearby communal areas and another 18% from urban areas. These people joined the invasions because they needed land, and thought that the new resettlements would provide new livelihood opportunities. As discussed further below, this was not a politically-organised grouping with strong connections to ZANU-PF. The remaining third of household heads was made up of civil servants (16.5% overall, but increasing to around a quarter of all settlers in A1 self-contained and A2 sites), business people (4.8% overall, but again proportionately higher in the A1 self-contained and A2 sites), security service personnel (3.7% overall, employed by the police, army and intelligence organisation) and former farm workers (6.7% overall).

Farm workers made up 11.5% of households in the A1 villagised sites, with many taking an active role in the land invasions. In one case a farm worker organised and led the invasion of the farm where he had worked. Given

that in other parts of the country, farm workers were displaced in large numbers, often ending up destitute, living in camps on the farms (Chambati this issue), this is perhaps surprising. Yet this reflects the extent and nature of labour on the former large-scale farms in Masvingo province. Unlike in the Highveld farms, where large, resident labour forces existed without nearby communal homes, our Masvingo study sites were formerly large-scale ranches where labour was limited, and workers came, often on a temporary basis, from nearby communal areas, and were not permanent residents attracted originally as migrant labour from nearby countries.

Across all of these categories are 'war veterans'. As household heads they make up 8.8% of the total population. The category 'war veteran' is however diverse and again perhaps misleading. Prior to the land invasions, most were farming in the communal areas, a few were living in town, while some were civil servants, business people and employees in the security services. At the time of the land invasions in 2000, many indeed had long dropped their 'war veteran' identity and had been poor, small-scale farmers in the communal areas for 20 years since the end of the liberation war. Those who led the land invasions were often able to secure land in the A1 self-contained plots, but many were sidelined in the allocation of larger A2 farms. However, most were not well connected politically before 2000, although through the Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association, they became so and part of the political drive towards land reform, although with multiple disputes with the party leadership (Sadomba 2011).

Land was allocated unevenly to men and women. In most cases it is men whose names appear on the 'offer letters', the permits issued to new settlers by the government. Yet women were important players in the land invasions, providing support to the base camps during the '*jambanja*' period, and subsequently investing in the development of new homes and farms, as wives, sisters, daughters, aunts and so on. However, across our sample only 12% of households had a woman named as the land holder on the permit. The highest proportion of such cases was in the informal settlements, as women often saw the land invasions as an opportunity to make a new independent life and escape abusive relationships or accusations of witchcraft, for example (cf. Manjengwa and Mazhawidza, submitted unpublished paper).

So who amongst these groups are the so-called 'cronies' of the party, well-connected to the machinery of the state and able to gain advantage? As discussed above, those able to gain land through patronage included those who grabbed often large farms around 2008, as well as some of the

A2 farmers able to manipulate the system. While the A2 farmers in our sample are certainly more 'elite' than those who invaded farms and took on small A1 farms, many could not be described as rich or politically well-connected. Former teachers, extension workers, office clerks and small-scale business people dominate this group. Others however have political connections that have allowed them access to patronage support from the state during the last decade. These are often absentee land owners – so-called 'cell phone farmers' – presiding over often under-utilised land, perhaps with a decaying new tractor in the farmyard. Yet, despite their disproportionate influence on local politics, these well-connected elites are few-and-far between, making up around 5% of the total population in our study areas (see the categories 'cell phone farmer' and 'farming from patronage' in Table 2.3, for example). A few gained access to farms with good irrigation infrastructure (such as in the sugar estates), but there is no consistent pattern in their distribution, as others took on dryland ranches. Perhaps because of the distance from Harare, the relatively poorer agro-ecological conditions, the lack of high value infrastructure and the particular local political configurations, in Masvingo province such elite capture is not the dominant story, despite the media assumptions. Masvingo is of course not Mazowe or Marondera, but even in such Highveld areas the situation is much more diverse than what mainstream portrayals suggest with the new land reform areas dominated by smallholder farmers in A1 schemes, as Matondi (2010) and Sadomba (2011) attest for Mazowe, for example.

How much land did each of these groups get? Table 2.5 shows this for each of the scheme types, dividing the A2 sites into irrigated and dryland farms. For the A1 villagised and informal sites, the area measurements refer only to arable land, while for the other sites it represents the whole allocation to the households. Land cleared represents that where arable fields had been created and cultivated in 2007-08. The data shows that, for each of the scheme types, so-called 'ordinary' settlers did not receive any less land than other groups; in some cases more. Business people and civil servants were able to clear more land in most instances, due to access to resources to hire labour. Those linked to the security services – the group most likely to be associated with the political-military elite – received marginally more land than the average in the A1 self-contained and informal sites, but less in other sites.

As Table 2.5 shows, the different 'scheme' types thus create a pattern of differentiation within the land reform areas, with A1 villagised and informal sites receiving the least arable land, although with access to communal

grazing (not included in the data). A1 self-contained land (including both arable and grazing) is larger, and where the highest areas of land cleared for production are observed. But it is the relatively small number of A2 farmers who receive the largest land areas, including some large ranches in the dryland areas, where very limited areas are cleared for arable production, as well as often quite large plots with irrigation potential. Compared to the small-scale farmers on the A1 schemes where intensive mixed farming has taken off, the A2 farmers have found the establishment of new farms much more difficult. With larger areas, the need for equipment and labour, as well as financial investment, the economic conditions pertaining for much of the study period made getting new enterprises going very difficult. This is reflected in the relatively low areas cleared and low stocking rates, for instance.

Table 2.5: Land owned and cleared by settler and scheme type

	A1 villagised		A1 self-contained		Informal		A2 dryland		A2 irrigated	
	Ha owned	Ha cleared	Ha owned	Ha cleared	Ha owned	Ha cleared	Ha owned	Ha cleared	Ha owned	Ha cleared
'Ordinary' – rural	4.8	3.8	31.9	9.3	6.6	5.1	247.0	7.0	-	-
'Ordinary' – urban	4.1	3.5	35.1	9.3	6.6	5.4	194.5	3.5	84.5	31.2
Civil servant	4.1	3.5	35.5	7.3	7.5	5.3	248.3	16.0	67.8	24.4
Security services	3.8	3.5	36.3	9.7	6.7	6.5	-	-	54.0	9.0
Business person	4.0	4.0	36.4	14.1	-	-	272.0	5.0	39.6	32.5
Farm worker	4.4	3.9	29.0	8.5	8.0	4.0	-	-	-	-
Average	4.6	3.8	33.9	8.9	6.7	5.1	232.0	8.7	70.2	27.3

Source: Census data, 2007 (A2 dryland excludes Asveld farm due to lack of area data)

The land reform has thus involved diverse people with multiple affiliations. Being influential in the land invasions, war veterans often managed to secure better plots, although not always larger ones¹¹. We were unable to ascertain party affiliation of those on our sites, but figures from recent elections suggest that there are significant numbers of MDC opposition supporters in these areas, even if they do not admit this publicly¹². Given the often violent clashes associated with electoral politics, especially linked to ZANU-PF youth militia, many sensible people carry a ZANU-PF party card, even if they vote for the opposition. Many of those who joined the land invasions could not be regarded as 'cronies' in any reasonable sense; many had no party affiliation, they were simply interested in gaining access to land so long denied them¹³. While the land invasions clearly became highly politicised, and the atmosphere of the 'base camps' on the invaded farms was tightly ordered and politically controlled (Chaumba et al., 2003), those who ultimately benefited were much more diverse than those with close political ties. Again, as discussed above, who got the land in the A1 sites very much depended on the very particular dynamics of an individual invasion, who was leading it and how contested the farm was.

The large group of civil servants, particularly on the A2 plots - and in our sample especially in the sugar estates - were often teachers, agricultural extension workers and local government officials. While not being poor and landless from the communal areas, most could not be regarded as elite, nor often particularly well-connected politically. Indeed, in simple financial terms many were extremely poor, as government wages had effectively ceased during the economic crisis to 2009.

The net result is a new mix of people in the new resettlements. In the A2 schemes, for example 46.5% of new farmers have a 'Master Farmer' certificate¹⁴, while in the A1 self-contained schemes 17.6% do. 91.6% of A2 farmers had at least three years of secondary schooling, while this proportion is 71.6% and 44.8% in the A1 self-contained and villagised schemes respectively. The new resettlements are dominated by a new generation of farmers, with most household heads being under 50, many born since Independence. A2 schemes are dominated by the over 40s, but often include people with significant experience and connections. That overall 18.3% of households came from urban areas (increasing to 43.8% in the A2 schemes) is significant too, as connections to town have proved important in gaining access to services and support in the absence of official programmes in the rural areas.

These data from Masvingo province are reflected in other studies from

other areas of the country (Moyo et al., 2009; Matondi 2010 and contributions to this issue reviewed by Cliffe et al). The overall picture is complex, but a simple narrative that land reform has been dominated by grabbing by elites is clearly inaccurate. Land previously occupied by a single farmer, often absent but with a manager and a few workers resident, is now being used by a highly diverse group of people. Overall, the new resettlements are populated by younger, more educated people with a greater diversity of backgrounds, professional skills and connections than their neighbours in the communal areas and old resettlements.

The land reform has resulted in a new social composition of people on the land, with a diversity of people from different backgrounds, with new skills, connections and sources of capital for investing in production. The new resettlements are therefore not a replication of the 1980s resettlement schemes or an extension of the communal areas, nor are they simply scaled-down version of large-scale commercial farms. Instead, a very different social and economic dynamic is unfolding, one that has multiple potentials, as well as challenges.

INVESTING IN THE LAND

One of the recurrent myths about Zimbabwe's land reform is that investment has been insignificant in the new resettlements: the land lies idle, people are not committed to farming and infrastructure is destroyed, neglected or non-existent. Perceptions of a lack of order and poor tenure security have further contributed to this view. Many assume that investment will not proceed without legally enforceable property rights, yet in our sites no leases have been agreed, and in some sites 'offer letters' (permits to occupy issued by the state) have not even been issued. Our studies have shown this narrative of low investment, disorder and lack of development is far from the case. Unlike the old resettlements which were plagued by a sense of insecurity, at least in the 1980s, due to the permit system and top-down imposition of planning requirements (Bruce 1990), it seems that trust in local authorities, combined with political assurances from across the political divide, has been sufficient for many to invest significantly in the new resettlements. This is of course not to say that insecurities do not exist. In the 'informal' settlements, unrecognised by the state, threats of eviction continue, and appropriation by political elites, particularly around the 2008 election period, represented another source of insecurity. Certainly, unstable macroeconomic factors until 2009 added to this and undermined opportunities for capital investment. But, despite

this, impressive strides have been made in clearing the land, in purchasing livestock, equipment and transport and in building new settlements.

In developing their farms, most new farmers have had to start from scratch. For the most part the Masvingo study sites were ranches: large expanses of bush grazing, with limited infrastructure. There were scattered homesteads, a few workers' cottages, the odd dip tank, small dam and irrigation plot, but not much else. When groups of land invaders took the land they established 'base camps', under the leadership of war veteran commanders. Surveys of soil types and water sources were undertaken by the land invaders. The new settlers then pegged fields and marked out areas for settlement. Soon, once the official FTLRP was launched, officials from the government arrived and imposed an official plan, based on land use planning regulations, as well as much pressure to accommodate more people. Some had to move their shelters and clear fields anew. But, within a remarkably short time, people began to invest in earnest. There was an urgency: fields had to be prepared for planting, structures had to be built for cattle to be kraaled in, granaries had to be erected for the harvests to be stored, and homes had to be put up for growing numbers of people to live in. A peopled landscape of houses, fields, paths and roads soon emerged. Human population densities increased significantly and livestock populations grew. Stocking densities on beef ranches were recommended to be around one animal per ten hectares; now much larger livestock populations exist, combining cattle with goats, sheep, donkeys, pigs and poultry. Investment in stock has been significant, with cattle populations in particular growing rapidly, especially in the A1 sites. One of the major tasks facing new settlers has been clearing land. In A1 village sites, on average each household had cleared 6.8ha by 2008-09, while in A1 self-contained and A2 sites an average of 13.3ha and 23.7ha had been cleared. In the A1 sites most of this was being cultivated, while in the A2 sites much less intensive land use is observed (Table 2.5). In addition, people have constructed numerous gardens, all of which have required investment in fencing. In addition, people have dug wells, built small dams, planted trees and dug soil conservation works. Investment in fields was complemented by investment in farm equipment, with ploughs, cultivators, pumps and scotch carts purchased in numbers.

Building has also been extensive in the new resettlements. Some structures remain built of pole and mud, however, after a year or two, when people's sense of tenure security had increased, buildings using bricks, cement and tin/asbestos roofing increased. Some very elaborate homes have been built with the very best materials imported from South Africa.

Transport has been a major constraint on the new resettlements. With no roads and poor connections to urban areas, there were often no forms of public transport available. This was compounded by the economic crisis, as many operators closed down routes. This had a severe impact. Lack of access to services – shops, schools, clinics – and markets meant that people suffered. Investing in a means of transport was often a major priority. Bicycles in particular were bought in large numbers, but also cars, pick-ups and trucks.

What is the value of all this investment? A simple set of calculations which compute the cost of labour and materials used or the replacement cost of the particular item show that, on average, each household had invested over US\$2000 in a variety of items in the period from settlement to 2008-09 (Table 2.6).

This is of course only a small subset of the total, as such private investment does not account for investments at the community level. Across our sites, churches have been established, schools have been built, roads cut and areas for shops carved out as part of community efforts. Labour and materials have been mobilised without any external help. In the A1 sites in particular this highly-motivated and well-organised pattern of self-help has dominated (cf. Murisa, this issue). While the state has been

Table 2.6: The value of investments in the new resettlements

Focus of investment	Average value of investment per household (US\$)
Land clearance	\$385
Housing/buildings	\$631
Cattle	\$612
Farm equipment	\$198
Transport	\$150
Toilets	\$77
Garden fencing	\$29
Wells	\$79
Total	\$2161

Source: Scoones et al., (2010: 87)

present, it has not always been helpful. The re-planning of village and field sites was resented by many, as the land use planning models dating from the 1930s were re-imposed, with fields removed from near rivers and streams and villages placed on the ridges far from water sources. Planning laws were also invoked in the destruction of nascent business centres as part of Operation Murambatsvina (Potts 2008).

Extension workers are few-and-far-between and veterinary care almost non-existent. Instead, people have used their own knowledge, skills and connections in developing their agriculture, often relying on those with Master Farmer qualifications which they had gained in their former homes in the communal areas. Without dipping, the explosion of tick-borne animal diseases has been devastating, but many farmers have purchased spray-on chemicals, often organising themselves in groups to tackle the problem.

So without the state and without the projects of donors and NGOs – and significantly without formal title or leasehold tenure - the new settlers have invested at scale. Extrapolating the results from our sample and for the limited set of items assessed to the whole province this adds up to an investment of US\$91m across all new resettlements; a substantial amount by any calculation (Scoones et al., 2010:86). Such a level of investment suggests that in most resettlement sites (perhaps with the exception of the ‘informal’ sites, where no ‘offer letters’ have been issued) there is a sufficient sense of security of tenure to allow investment at scale, undermining the claim that what is needed now is a formalisation of tenure regimes and the offering of some form of title (Matondi 2010).

But is this an argument that people can just do it on their own, and should be left to their own devices? Emphatically: no. There are plenty of things that need to be done, and where external support is necessary. In order to get farming moving in the new resettlements a significant investment in infrastructure – roads, wells, dams, dips and so on – will be needed. This is unlikely to come from individual and community contributions, although the considerable entrepreneurial initiative and deep commitment to investment in the new resettlements is an important platform on which to build.

A SMALLHOLDER AGRICULTURAL REVOLUTION IN THE MAKING?

A recurrent myth about Zimbabwe’s land reform is that it has resulted in agricultural collapse, precipitating widespread and recurrent food

insecurity. There is little doubt that the agricultural sector has been transformed, as discussed above, but our data show that there has been surprising resilience in production.

Take maize production on the resettlement farms in Masvingo province. We tracked production on all 400 farms in our sample over seven seasons between 2002 and 2009 (Table 2.7). The data shows a steady increase in output over time as farms became established, and draft power and other inputs were sourced. The trend was not smooth, however, and the major droughts in this period saw low yields. Availability of seeds and fertiliser was also highly variable across years, with various government schemes delivering patchily and unreliably. And patterns of differentiation across households were also very evident.

As Table 2.7 shows, in the better rainfall years of 2005-06 and 2008-09

Table 2.7: Percent of farmers harvesting greater than a tonne of maize

District	Scheme Type	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
Gutu	A1 self-contained	18.4	50.0	45.5	75.0	63.4	28.6	61.5
	A1 villagised	13.3	39.1	24.0	79.3	63.3	36.7	78.6
	A2	0.0	0.0	44.4	75.0	66.7	n.d	63.6
Masvingo	A1 self-contained	55.3	63.2	56.4	100.0	100.0	51.3	100.0
	A1 villagised	28.0	38.1	45.8	95.7	91.2	15.8	77.9
	A2	0.0	25.0	25.0	n.d	75.0	75.0	100.0
Chiredzi	A2	14.3	38.5	46.2	50.0	66.7	50.0	88.9
	Informal	18.8	10.2	3.9	86.5	51.0	24.5	62.5
Mwenezi	A1 villagised	26.9	8.0	0.0	4.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Informal	11.5	11.5	0.0	0.0	26.7	6.7	0.0

Source: Maize census, 2003-09 (N=400; n.d = no data) (Scoones et al., 2010: 108)

the proportion of households producing more than a tonne of maize – sufficient to feed an average family for a year - was significant across all sites. For example, following the 2009 harvest between 63% and 100% of households outside the lowveld sites in Mwenezi produced more than this threshold. If sorghum and millet were added to the tally, more than 60% of households, even in the dryland Mwenezi sites, produced sufficient for self-provisioning. Surpluses may be sold or stored, providing a buffer for future years. Around a third of households sold maize, sorghum or millet regularly in this period. For example in 2009 two-thirds of such households in the A1 self-contained settlement sites sold over a tonne of maize, although marketed output was not so high on the A2 farms, by contrast.

A major constraint especially to maize production in this period, however, has been input supply – both of seed and fertiliser. Local production of agricultural inputs declined dramatically from 2000 due to the economic conditions prevailing. Attempts to provide inputs through government programmes – whether the Agricultural Sector Productivity Enhancement Facility, Operation Maguta or the Champion Farmer programme – largely failed. The agricultural policy environment until 2009 was characterised by “heavy-handed state intervention funded through quasi-fiscal means which distorted markets and incentives and undermined the economy” (Scoones et al., 2010: 99). These schemes benefited some, but they also opened up significant opportunities for corruption. Most new

Table 2.8: Changes in cotton production in Uswhaushava, Chiredzi cluster, 2001-2008 harvests

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
% farmers growing cotton	18%	35%	29%	35%	29%	68%	92%	89%
For cotton farmers, average area planted to cotton (ha)	1	1.5	1.6	1.4	1.4	1.7	1.7	2.1
For cotton farmers, average output of cotton (bales = 200kg)	2.3	1.7	0.8	1.6	0.6	5.8	7.5	6.4

Source: Annual crop census (Scoones et al., 2010: 114)

resettlement farmers had to source their own seed, reverting to local re-use and imports from South Africa. Fertiliser use dropped dramatically, although the new farmers had the benefits of relatively virgin soils for a period.

By contrast, in some sites, cotton production has boomed. This is particular so in the 'informal' site of Uswaushava in the Nuanetsi ranch. Here cotton production has increased significantly (Table 2.8). Cotton sales provide significant cash income for nearly all households. Six different private cotton companies operate in the area, supplying credit, inputs and marketing support - allowing cotton producers to access inputs and other support through other means. New cotton gins have opened up too, creating employment further up the value chain.

Investment in cattle has been particularly important across the sites, but particularly in the A1 schemes, and for certain 'success groups'¹⁵ (Table 2.9). Contrary to the pattern noted by Dekker and Kinsey (this issue) for the old resettlement areas, cattle numbers are increasing in the new resettlement areas, providing an important source of draft power, milk, meat and cash sale and savings. Particularly dramatic increases in holdings since settlement are seen in the A1-self contained sites (across all 'success groups'), and in the top success group in the A1 villagised and informal sites. Again, by contrast, the A2 farmers were accumulating less, often because of disease outbreaks and theft.

Table 2.9: Mean cattle holdings changes by scheme type and success group

Scheme type	Success Group 1		Success Group 2		Success Group 3	
	At settlement	2008	At settlement	2008	At settlement	2008
A1 villagised	6.3	10.4	4.5	4.5	1.9	2.6
A1 self-contained	11.2	16.2	1.3	10.9	0.9	3.7
A2	18.9	20.5	13.6	14.8	11.1	4.4
Informal	7.5	12.5	4.5	3.8	0.0	0.5

Source: Survey data, 2007-08 (N=177) (Scoones et al., 2010: 118)

Markets are key to the resettlement farming enterprises, and these are expanding in new ways around different commodities (see Mavedzenge et al., 2008, for example, for livestock). These are new markets, often operating informally, sometimes illegally. Compared to those that existed before, they have been radically reconfigured by the restructuring of the agrarian economy following land reform and deeply affected by the economic crisis that plagued the country for much of the past decade. Detailed studies by Mutopo (this issue), for example, show the gendered dimensions of such new informal markets, as well as their impressive dynamism. Yet, since they are evolving at such a pace, it is difficult to keep track of how agricultural markets work, and formal data on agricultural production and sales is very shaky indeed; and inevitably highly politicised with different arms of government and different international agencies presenting figures, based on very little ground-truthing, to support a particular view. The statistical basis for assessing the success or otherwise of land reform at a national level thus remains extremely limited, and so detailed local studies of the form of production and the functioning of markets are essential to build a more complete picture.

While across our research sites there are of course some who produce little and have to rely on local markets or support from relatives, overall we did not find a pattern of production failure, widespread food insecurity and lack of market integration. On the contrary, we found a highly differentiated picture, but one which has at its centre smallholder agricultural production and marketing; one that could, given the right support, be the core of a new 'green revolution' in Zimbabwe. By contrast to the previous boom in smallholder production in the early 1980s following Independence, the Masvingo sample suggests a larger proportion of farmers is involved. Around half are succeeding as 'middle farmers' and a third as highly commercialised producers, compared to only 20% in the 1980s (cf. Stanning 1989); and of course at a much larger scale than the rather isolated successes of that earlier period (Eicher 1995, Rohrbach 1989).

DYNAMIC LOCAL ECONOMIES

Of course on-farm success can result in off-farm economic growth, as linkages are forged in local economies (cf. Delgado et al., 1989). This is an important dynamic in the new resettlement areas, given the geographical juxtaposition of new resettlement areas of different types, with old communal and resettlement areas. Since 2000, the rural economy has been

radically spatially reconfigured, with the old separated economic spheres of the large-scale farms and the communal areas being broken down. The result is a shift to new sites for economic activity, connected to new value chains and new sorts of entrepreneur, linking town and countryside.

The dynamic entrepreneurialism resulting should, we argue, not be underestimated and represents an important resource to build on. Across our sites, we have small-scale irrigators producing horticultural products for local and regional markets; we have highly successful cotton producers who are generating considerable profits by selling to a wide number of competing private sector companies; we have livestock producers and traders who are developing new value chains for livestock products, linked to butcheries, supermarkets and other outlets; we have traders in wild products, often engaged in highly profitable export markets; and we have others who are developing contract farming and joint venture arrangements, for a range of products, including wildlife. We also have an important group of sugar producers with A2 plots on the lowveld estates who, very often against the odds due to shortages of inputs, unreliable electricity supplies and disadvantageous pricing, have been delivering cane to the mills, as well as other diverse markets, alongside diversification into irrigated horticulture production on their plots.

The new farmers are also employing labour (Table 2.10; see Chambati, this issue). This is often casual, low-paid employment, often of women, but it is an important source of livelihood for many – including those who are not making it as part of the new ‘middle farmer’ group identified above.

Table 2.10: Patterns of permanent and temporary labour hiring for cropping and livestock rearing

	Temporary cropping		Temporary livestock		Permanent both		Permanent cropping		Permanent livestock	
	A1 & informal	A2	A1 & informal	A2	A1 & informal	A2	A1 & informal	A2	A1 & informal	A2
% of hhs employing workers	20	67.6	13	43.5	9	44.8	11	71.9	9.3	43.3
% of these female	48	27	31	7	26	23	32	26	25	28

Source: Survey, 2007-08 (N=177) (Scoones et al., 2010:132)

The new resettlements sites have become a magnet for others, and households on average have grown by around three members since settlement through the in-migration of relatives and labourers (cf. Deininger et al., 2004 for discussion of a similar dynamic in the old resettlement areas). On average, A2 farm households have employed 5.1 permanent workers and regularly employ 7.3 temporary labourers, while those households in A1 schemes and in informal resettlement sites employ on average 0.5 permanent workers and 1.9 temporary labourers. Comparing this level of employment with what existed before on the former cattle ranches, where perhaps one herder was employed for each 100 animals grazed over 1000ha, the scale of employment generation afforded by the new resettlement farms is considerable

There is frequently a sense of optimism and future promise amongst many resettlement farmers we have worked with. SM from Mwenezi district commented "We are happier here at resettlement. There is more land, stands are larger and there is no overcrowding. We got good yields this year. I filled two granaries with sorghum. I hope to buy a grinding mill and locate it at my homestead". Comparing the farming life to other options, PC from Masvingo district observed: "We are not employed, but we are getting higher incomes than those at work". Despite the hardships and difficulties – of which there are many – there is a deep commitment to making the new resettlement enterprises work.

FUTURE POLICY CHALLENGES

Despite the political and economic challenges that Zimbabwe continues to face (Raftopolous 2010), along with outstanding legal challenges and concerns of the international community, there is a broad consensus that Zimbabwe's land reform is not reversible. To move ahead, a sustainable and democratic political settlement is clearly an essential precursor, one that balances rights (of different sorts, and not only those over former private freehold property) and redistribution (and so issues of equity, broad participation in economic activity and redress of historical disadvantage). But whatever new political alliance runs the country in the future, a major challenge remains: what should be done in the new resettlements to build a sustainable, growth-oriented agricultural base? As we found in Masvingo, and others have discovered elsewhere in the country, there is much to build on in terms of basic investment, as well as the skills and knowledge of the new settlers. The challenge is a new one however for agricultural research and development. As the head of extension in the province put it: "We

don't know our new clients: this is a totally new scenario"¹⁶. Responding to this scenario requires careful thought. As discussed, the new resettlement areas are not a replication of the communal areas, nor are they a scaled-down version of the old commercial sector. These are very different places with new people with new production systems engaging in new markets – all with new opportunities and challenges. The new farmers are often highly educated, well-connected and with important skills. Support for marketing or input supply via mobile phone updates, or agricultural extension or business planning advice offered via the Internet offer real opportunities, for example. If given the right support, we argue, the emergent group of new 'middle farmers' on the new resettlements, both A1 and A2, can drive a vibrant agricultural revolution in Zimbabwe (Scoones et al., 2010).

This has of course happened before: with white commercial farmers from the 1950s and with communal area farmers in the 1980s (Rukuni et al., 2006). But both past agricultural revolutions required support and commitment from outside, something that has been starkly absent in the past decade. Zimbabwe's green revolution of the 1980s has been much hailed, but this was mostly in high potential communal areas and was quickly extinguished following structural adjustment. The nascent green revolution in the resettlement areas potentially has far wider reach, both geographically and socio-economically. But if the new resettlements are to contribute to local livelihoods, national food security and broader economic development, they unquestionably require investment and support. This means infrastructure (dams, roads), financing (credit systems), input supply (fertilizer, seed), technology (intermediate and appropriate) and institutions and policies that allow agriculture to grow.

Getting agriculture moving on the new resettlements through building on existing achievements must be central priority for policy today. What should the top priorities be now? A commentary on our book's conclusions, suggested that these were merely 'gestural' and would surely be made irrelevant by the on-going political contests at the national level¹⁷. Yet the existence of a pervasive, violent, militarised corrupt politics, which entrenches certain positions and dominates a negative cycle of elite capture, does not mean that there are no countervailing forces, driven by other interests. We believe that the political struggle for an accountable, democratic politics must be linked to changing practices on the ground, and to energised policy thinking that takes the new realities into account. With a new progressive narrative on land and rural development, for example, a new vision for Zimbabwe might yet emerge which cuts across currently

extreme politically-entrenched divisions. This means, we suggest, that engaging with a future policy agenda is not simply irrelevant hand waving, but a practical means to realise broader, widely shared, goals. Here we identify three inter-related challenges.

First, security of land tenure is an essential prerequisite for successful production and investment in agriculture. Tenure security arises through a variety of means. Existing legislation allows for a wide range of potential tenure types, including freehold title, regulated leases, permits and communal tenure under 'traditional' systems. All have their pros and cons. Policymakers must ask how tenure security can be achieved within available resources and capacity; how safeguards can be put in place to prevent land grabbing or land concentration; and what assurances must be made to ensure that private credit markets function effectively. Lessons from across the world suggest there is no one-size-fits-all solution centred on freehold tenure (World Bank 2003), despite its continued allure in the Zimbabwe debate (Rukuni et al., 2009).

Instead, a flexible system of land administration is required – one that allows for expansion and contraction of farm sizes, as well as entry and exit from farming. Informal (actually illegal) land rental markets are already emerging on some sites, allowing land transfers to occur. While the excesses of elite patronage and land grabbing must be addressed through a land audit, a successful approach, overseen by an independent, decentralised authority, must not be reliant on technocratic diktat on farm sizes, business plans and tenure types alone. This will mean investing in land governance - building the effectiveness of local institutions to manage resources, resolve disputes and negotiate land access in clear and accountable ways. Without attention to these issues, conflicts will escalate as uncertainties over authority and control persist. This will have damaging consequences for both livelihoods and environmental sustainability. Support for rebuilding public authority from below must therefore be high on the agenda, linked to a revitalisation of local government capacity. Only with this longer-term effort, will a more accountable and democratic approach to land be realised, and the depredations of a greedy elite avoided.

Second, as discussed above, land reform has reconfigured Zimbabwe's rural areas dramatically. No longer are there vast swathes of commercial land separated from the densely-packed communal areas. The rural landscape is now virtually all populated. Links between the new resettlements and communal and former resettlement areas are important, with exchanges of labour, draft animals, finance, skills and

expertise flowing in all directions. As a result, economic linkages between agriculture and wider markets have changed dramatically.

This has given rise to the growth of new businesses to provide services and consumption goods, many only now getting going. Yet the potentials for economic diversification – in small-scale mining, hunting, cross-border trade and a host of other enterprises – are currently constrained by legal and regulatory restrictions. While a regulatory framework will always be required, it must not be excessively and inappropriately restrictive. Businesses must be encouraged to flourish in support of rural livelihoods, capturing synergies with local agricultural production.

To make the most of the new mosaic of land uses and economic activities, an area-based, local economic development approach is required. This would facilitate investment across activities, adding value to farm production. Today, with a new set of players engaged in local economic activity, many possibilities open up. An area-based approach needs to draw in the private sector, farmer groups and government agencies, but with strong leadership from a revived local government, with rethought mandates and rebuilt capacities. Investing in such capacities and building local economies will in turn improve sources of local revenue beyond patronage and so build systems of local accountability.

Third, reflecting a wide range of interests, the new resettlement farmers are highly diverse in class, gender and generational terms. This diversity has many advantages, adding new skills and experiences, but it is also a weakness. Formal organisation in the new resettlements is limited. The structures that formed the basis of the land invasions – the base commanders and the Committees of Seven, for example – have given way to other arrangements, and there is often limited collective solidarity. There are of course emergent organisations focused on particular activities – a garden, an irrigation scheme, a marketing effort, for example – but these are unlikely to become the basis of political representation and influence. Because politics has been so divisive in recent years, many shy away from seeing political parties as the basis for lobbying for change, and there are few other routes to expressing views.

Building a new set of representative farmers' organisations, linked to an influential apex body, will be a long-term task, and will be highly dependent on the unfolding political alliances in rural areas. As we have shown, the new resettlements are characterised by an important and numerically large 'middle farmer' group. There is also a significant group of less successful farmers with different needs and interests. And there are those elites reliant on political patronage who, despite being relatively few in number,

are disproportionately influential.

In contrast to the past when smallholders could easily be marginalised and were courted only at elections for their votes, the new farmers – and particularly the burgeoning group of ‘middle farmers’ - now control one of the most important economic sectors in the country, and must be relied upon for national food supply. Today, the politics of the countryside cannot be ignored, and organised farmer groups may exert substantial pressure in ways that previously seemed unimaginable.

For this reason, the debate about land, agriculture and rural development urgently in Zimbabwe urgently needs to move beyond the ideological posturing of ZANU-PF, wrapped up in violent nationalist rhetoric, or the startling silences on land issues by the opposition political parties and civil society. A new narrative on land is urgently needed, based firmly on the realities on the ground. How the new configuration of political forces will pan out in the future is a subject of fierce contest, but the role of diverse agrarian interests, including new small-scale farmers, will certainly be important.

REFRAMING THE DEBATE ON LAND IN ZIMBABWE

The Masvingo study has challenged a number of recurrent myths about Zimbabwe’s land reform: for example, that there is no investment going on, that agricultural production has collapsed, that food insecurity is rife, that the rural economy is in precipitous decline and that farm labour has been totally displaced. Getting to grips with the realities on the ground is essential for reframing the debate. This is why solid, empirical research is so important. Only with these facts to hand can sensible policymaking emerge. Evidence rather than emotion must guide the process. While it remains essential to address abuses of the land reform programme according to strict criteria set by a land audit, it is also important to focus on the wider story, dispelling myths and engaging with the realities of the majority.

Land and politics are deeply intertwined in Zimbabwe. The current impasse cannot be resolved by technocratic measures alone: plans, models, audits and regulations are only part of the picture. A reframed debate must encompass redistribution and redress, as well as rights and responsibilities. The recent divisive debate on land in Zimbabwe has seen these as opposites, creating what has been called a ‘dangerous rupture’ in Zimbabwe’s political discourse (Raftopolous 2009).

The past decade of land resettlement has unleashed a process of radical agrarian change. There are now new people on the land, engaged in multiple forms of economic activity, connected to diverse markets and carving out a variety of livelihoods. Bringing a broad perspective on rights together with a continued commitment to redistribution must be central to Zimbabwe's next steps towards democratic and economic transformation. Only with land viewed as a source of livelihood and redistributed economic wealth, and not as a political weapon or source of patronage, will the real potentials of Zimbabwe's land reform be fully realised.

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NOTES

- 1 The paper draws from the book, as well as a series of feature articles prepared for The Zimbabwean newspaper (see <http://www.ids.ac.uk/go/news/zimbabwe-s-land-reform-ten-years-on-new-study-dispels-the-myths>).
- 2 The papers produced as part of the Livelihoods after Land Reform small grants competition show an extraordinary range, but again some important common themes (<http://www.lalr.org.za/zimbabwe/zimbabwe-working-papers-1>)
- 3 Total land allocations have continued to increase. Moyo (2011a:497) claims that total land allocations amount to nearly 9m ha by 2010, as more larger A2 farms have been allocated.
- 4 Nationally, the agrarian structure now includes smallholder farms (made up of communal area households (82.1%), old resettlement households (5.4%) and A1 households (10.5%) medium-scale farms (made up of old small-scale commercial farms (0.6%) and A2 farms (1.1%)) and large-scale farms, conservancies and estates (0.4%). In other words, today 98% of all farms can be classified as smallholdings (Scoones et al., 2010: 6).
- 5 Moyo (2011a:514-7, 2011b: 262) divides this between large scale farms, including white and black owned farms and new A2 farms (1.5m ha, including about 500,000ha allocated to 200 very large scale A2 farms) and estates/conservancies/institutions (1.2m ha). However, in the absence of a detailed land audit these aggregate figures are prone to error, and remain estimates.
- 6 Exceptions exist, such as the case studied by Zamchiya (this issue) which involved A1 self-contained schemes allocated by the state and not through land occupations, showing more similarity with the A2 pattern elsewhere.
- 7 These are documents providing a permit to occupy the land, but no formal title or lease.
- 8 Political manipulation of allocation processes was more common in areas close to towns (Marongwe this issue) and where high value crops were at stake (Zamchiya this issue).
- 9 The acquisition of whole farms without subdivision to create 'large-scale A2' farms has occurred in recent years and has been characterised by political corruption. In Masvingo province, these farms average over 2000ha.
- 10 Stocking rates on the Mwenezi A2 ranches average 14.4 ha per animal, although herd sizes are building up. Recommended rates are around 10 ha per livestock unit for beef production in this dry area.
- 11 War veterans had land areas above the average in the A1 villagised schemes only (at 6.8ha). In all other instances their land holdings were actually on average marginally lower than the average.
- 12 The MDC-T party won in seven of the 15 constituencies across the four districts of our study area in the 2008 parliamentary election, taking 41.2% of the vote, against ZANU-PF's 52.3%. ZANU-PF maintained its stronghold in Mwenezi and Chiredzi districts, but lost in Gutu and parts of Masvingo district (Scoones et al., 2010:29).

- ¹³ In this respect, we disagree with Zamchiya's analysis (this issue) which assumes that nearly everyone is a 'crony' and/or a 'party supporter', rather than accepting that people switch allegiance opportunistically to gain strategic advantage, as described by Mkodzongi (this issue). Such an alternative interpretation recognises the complexity and contradictions of public and private politics in the highly contested Zimbabwe setting, which of course varies significantly by region.
- ¹⁴ A quite rigorous agricultural qualification, the result of training by the ministry of agriculture's extension arm.
- ¹⁵ As discussed above, this is the local characterisation of 'success' used in the study to differentiate settlers, with success group 1 being the most 'successful' according to local criteria. Cattle ownership and accumulation was, unsurprisingly, one of the key indicators.
- ¹⁶ Comment by the provincial agricultural extension officer at a workshop in Masvingo in 2006.
- ¹⁷ <http://anothercountryside.wordpress.com/2011/03/23/potential-of-zimbabwe-land-reform-limited-by-violent-state/>

3

LAND REFORM, LIVELIHOODS AND THE POLITICS OF AGRARIAN CHANGE IN ZIMBABWE

Ian Scoones

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INTRODUCTION

Misperceptions about the outcomes and implications of Zimbabwe's land reform persist even 15 years after the major redistribution of land took place in 2000. Perspectives have been dominated by images of chaos, destruction and violence. While these have been part of the reality, there is also another side of the story. This chapter argues that the story is not simply one of collapse and catastrophe; it is much more nuanced and complex, with successes as well as failures. The processes of social differentiation that have occurred following land reform have resulted in a new politics of the countryside.

This chapter reports on work carried out in Masvingo province in the southeast of the country since 2000. It updates and extends the story presented in the book, *Zimbabwe's Land Reform: Myths and Realities* (Scoones et al., 2010). The question posed for our research was simple: what happened to people's livelihoods once they got land through land

reform from 2000? We can also add: what have been the implications for rural politics? Yet, despite the simplicity of the questions, the answers are extremely complex.

The research has involved in-depth field research in 16 land reform sites located in four research 'clusters' across the province, involving a sample population of 400 households. The study area stretched from the relatively higher potential areas near Gutu to the sugar estate of Hippo Valley to the dry south in the lowveld, offering a picture of diverse agro-ecological conditions (Figure 3.1).

Most commentary on Zimbabwe's land reform insists that agricultural production has almost totally collapsed, that food insecurity is rife, that rural economies are in precipitous decline, that political 'cronies' have taken over the land and that farm labour has all been displaced. The reality however is much more complex. In our research we asked: Which aspects of agricultural production have suffered? Who is food insecure? How are rural economies restructuring to the new agrarian setting? Who are the new farmers and farm labourers? And what class and political positions do they adopt, and what alliances and conflicts are evident?

Of course a focus on Masvingo province gives only a partial insight into the broader national picture. With most land being previously extensive ranch land, with pockets of irrigated agriculture outside the sugar estates, it is clearly different to the Highveld around Harare, where highly capitalised agriculture reliant on export markets did indeed collapse and where labour was displaced in large numbers (Sachikonye, 2003). But the picture in the new farms of Masvingo is broadly representative of broad swathes of the rest of the country, as research across multiple districts, is now showing (Moyo et al., 2009; Cliffe et al., 2011; Matondi 2012; Mkodzongi 2013; Mutopo 2014).

A RADICAL CHANGE IN AGRARIAN STRUCTURE

Across the country, the formal land re-allocation since 2000 resulted in the transfer of land to nearly 170,000 households by 2010 (Moyo, 2011: 496). If the 'informal' settlements, outside the official 'fast-track' programme are added, the totals are even larger.

Events since 2000 have thus resulted in a radical change in the nation's agrarian structure (Table 3.1). At Independence in 1980, over 15m hectares was devoted to large-scale commercial farming, comprising around 6,000 farmers, nearly all of them white. This fell to around 12m hectares by 1999,

Table 3.1: Changes in the national distribution of land, 1980-2013

Land category	Area (million ha)		
	1980	2000	2013
Communal areas	16.4	16.4	16.4
Old resettlement	0.0	3.5	3.5
New resettlement: A1	0.0	0.0	4.1
New resettlement: A2	0.0	0.0	3.5
Small-scale commercial farms	1.4	1.4	1.4
Large-scale commercial farms	15.5	11.7	3.4*
State farms	0.5	0.7	0.7
Urban land	0.2	0.3	0.3
National parks and forest land	5.1	5.1	5.1
Unallocated land	0.0	0.0	0.7

*Source: derived from various government sources, as presented in the 2013 ZANU-PF manifesto (p. 57). * includes all large commercial farms, agro-industrial estate farms, church/trust farms, BIPPA farms and conservancies*

in part through a modest, but in many ways successful, land reform and resettlement programme, largely funded by the British government under the terms of the Lancaster House agreement (Gunning et al., 2000).

The Fast Track Land Reform Programme, begun in 2000, allocated to new farmers over 4,500 farms making up 7.6m hectares, 20% of the total land area of the country, according to (admittedly rough) official figures. This represented over 145,000 farm households in A1 schemes and around 16500 further households occupying A2 plots (Rukuni et al., 2009; ZANU-PF 2013: 57).

Overall, there has been a significant shift to many more, smaller-scale farms focusing on mixed farming, often with low levels of capitalisation. This is not to say that large-scale commercial units no longer exist. Especially important in Masvingo province is the estate sector, including for example the major sugar estates in the lowveld. These largely remained intact following land reform, with out-grower areas being transferred to sub-divided A2 plots. Today, there are still around 3.4 m hectares under

large-scale farming, some of it in very large holdings. There are, however, perhaps only 200 white-owned commercial farmers still operating across 117,000 ha nationally, complemented by 950 black-owned large scale farms on 530,000 ha (Moyo 2011: 514). Most white-owned farms were taken over, with a substantial number of farm workers displaced (Scoones et al., 2010: 127; Chambati 2011).

Two main 'models' have been at the centre of the land reform process since 2000 - one focused on smallholder production (so-called A1 schemes, either as villagised arrangements or small, self-contained farms) and one focused on commercial production at a slightly larger scale (so-called A2 farms). Much larger A2 farms, replicating the large-scale farms of the past, have also been created, many later in the land reform process (Moyo 2011).

In practice, the distinction between these models varies considerably, and there is much overlap, with some self-contained A1 schemes, for example, being very similar to smaller A2 schemes. Processes of land allocation, rather than their administrative definition, have more importance in understanding who ended up on the land and what happened next. Most A1 schemes, and all 'informal' land reform sites, were allocated following land invasions starting from 2000. These had diverse origins, but were usually (but not always) led by war veterans and involved groups of people from surrounding communal areas and nearby towns (Chaumba et al., 2003; Moyo 2001). More formal allocation of plots happened later, with the pegging of fields and settlement sites as part of the 'fast track land reform programme' (FTLRP) and the issuing of 'offer letters'¹.

Depending on the pressure on the land, the local demands and often the discretion of the planning officers, A1 sites were demarcated as villages (with shared grazing and clustered homesteads) or 'self-contained' plots, with houses, arable fields and grazing within a single area. The 'informal' A1 sites, by contrast, were usually organised in line with local preferences. A1 sites, mostly with their origins in land invasions, took on a particular social and political character, organised initially by a 'Seven Member Committee', often with a war veteran base commander in the lead. Later these became village committees, and were incorporated into chiefly authorities and local government administrative systems (Scoones et al., 2010).

By contrast, A2 schemes were allocated later (from around 2002) as a result of business plan applications to the Provincial and District Land Committees. Many who applied were civil servants, often linked to the agriculture ministry, who had few strong political connections if any; although in some instances were able to manipulate the administrative

procedures in their favour². The most obvious, and often blatant, corrupt practices linked to political patronage were associated with the later allocation of larger A2 farms, especially around the time of the 2008 elections when the struggle for power and the deployment of political patronage by the ZANU-PF elite was at its height. There are large-scale A2 farms in Masvingo province across 110,719ha (Moyo 2011: 514).

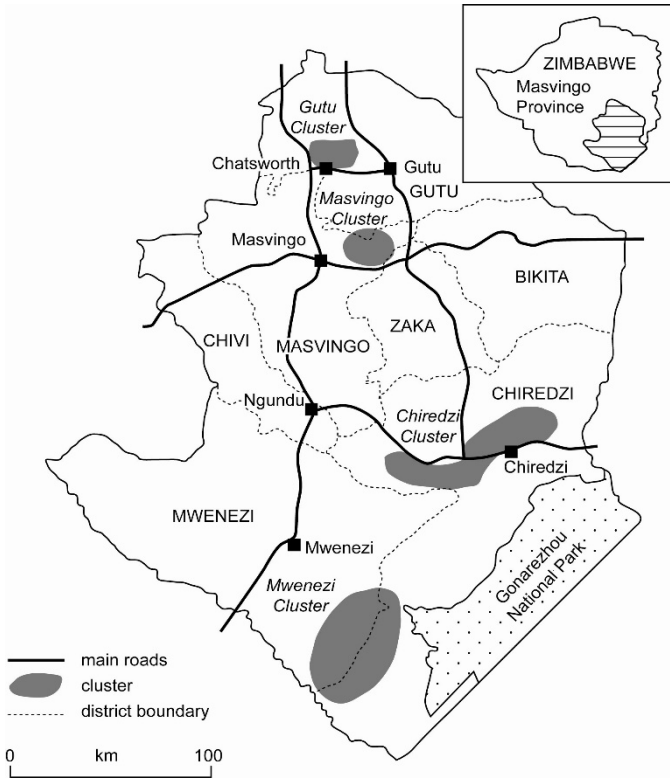
In sum, the land reform has resulted in a very different farming sector, with a radically reconfigured agrarian structure. The following sections of this chapter explore the patterns of production, investment and accumulation of the 'new' farmers over the past 15 years, and the implications this has for patterns of social differentiation. In the final section, I turn to the implications for rural politics.

CHANGING LIVELIHOODS: INVESTMENT, ACCUMULATION AND SOCIAL DIFFERENTIATION

This focuses on Masvingo province and explores the outcomes of land reform across our research sites in the period 2000-2013. This was a time of variable rainfall, and periodic droughts (Figure 3.2). It was also a period of extreme economic stress, particularly from around 2005 to 2009 when hyperinflation took hold. Since 2009, there has been relative stability following the establishment of a Government of National Unity (2009-2013), and from July 2013 a return to a ZANU-PF government. Pressures on the economy through withdrawal of international finance has persisted, and this has had impacts throughout the economy. While 2014 saw a bumper harvest, both of maize and of other crops, notably tobacco, the recovery of the agricultural economy following land reform has been slow.

Across the province about 28% of the total land area was transferred as part of the FTLRP, according to official figures. Much of this land was previously cattle ranches, with limited infrastructure, low levels of employment and only small patches of arable land outside the irrigated lowveld areas. This was taken over by over 32,500 households on A1 sites (making up 1.2 m hectares) and about 1,200 households in A2 areas (making up 371,500 ha), alongside perhaps a further 8,500 households in 'informal' resettlement sites where 'offer letters' had not been issued. Although there is much variation, the average size of new A2 farms is 318 hectares, while that of A1 family farms is 37 hectares, including crop and grazing land. At the same time one million hectares (18.3% of the province)

Figure 3.1: Map of Masvingo province.

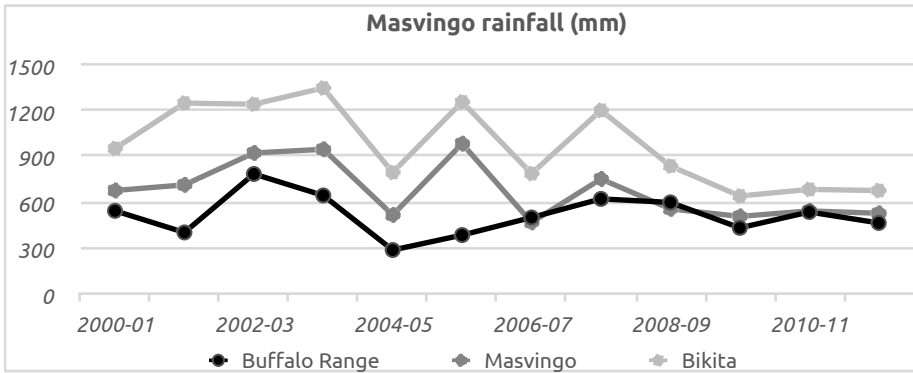


remains as large-scale commercial operations, including some very large farms, wildlife conservancies and estates in the lowveld that remained largely intact (Scoones et al., 2010: 32-33).

Table 3.2 offers an overview of the socio-economic characteristics of the different sites in our study, presented in relation to the four districts and the four different types of resettlement 'scheme', highlighting the diversity of contexts, livelihood assets and strategies. The data come from 2010-11, after the stabilisation of the economy and decade after land reform, but at a time of low rainfall and sequential droughts (cf. earlier 2009 data in Scoones et al., 2010).

This radical transformation of land and livelihoods has resulted in a new composition of people in the rural areas, with diverse livelihood strategies. This has major implications for rural politics as explored in the final section of this chapter. In 2008 we undertook a 'success ranking' exercise in all 16 sites. This involved a group of farmers from the area ranking all households

Figure 3.2: Annual rainfall totals (mm) across three stations in Masvingo province



according to their own criteria of success. A number of broad categories of livelihood strategy emerged from these investigations (following Dorward (2009) and Mushongah (2009)). These are listed in Table 3.3.

Over half the 400 sample households – across A1, A2 and informal resettlement sites - were either ‘stepping up’ – accumulating assets and regularly producing crops for sale – or ‘stepping out’ – successfully diversifying off-farm. These households were accumulating and investing, often employing labour and improving their farming operations, despite the many difficulties being faced. But not everyone has been successful. Some were really struggling and only just ‘hanging in’; others were in the process of ‘dropping out’, through a combination of chronic poverty and ill health.

Others without start-up assets have been unable to accumulate, and have continued to live in poverty, reliant on the support of relatives and friends. Some have joined a growing labour force on the new farms, abandoning their plots in favour of often poorly-paid employment. Within the ‘stepping out’ category, some are surviving off illegal, unsafe or transient activities that allowed survival but little else. Still others are straddling across two farms – one in the communal area and one in the new resettlement – and not really investing in the new areas, while some are simply keeping the plot for sons or other relatives.

Overall, in our study sites there is thus a core group of ‘middle farmers’ – around half of the population – who are successful not because of patronage support, but because of hard graft. They can be classified as successful ‘petty commodity producers’ and ‘worker peasants’ who are gaining surpluses from farming, investing in the land from off-farm work

and so are able to 'accumulate from below' (Scoones et al. 2010; cf. Cousins 2010). This is, as discussed below, having a positive impact on the wider economy, including stimulating demand for services, consumption goods and labour. This group is also significant in terms of political dynamics, as new farmers on the resettlements become a potentially important political force.

Table 3.3: Livelihood strategies in Masvingo province

Category	Livelihood strategy	Proportion of households
Dropping out (10.0%)	Exit – leaving the plot	4.4%
	Chronically poor, local labour	3.3%
	Ill health affecting farming	2.2%
Hanging in (33.6%)	Asset poor farming, local labour	17.8%
	Keeping the plot for the future	10.3%
	Straddling across resettlement and communal areas	5.6%
Stepping out (21.4%)	Survival diversification	2.8%
	Local off-farm activities plus farming	5.3%
	Remittances from within Zimbabwe plus farming	5.0%
	Remittances from outside Zimbabwe plus farming	4.4%
	Cell phone farmers	3.9%
Stepping up (35.0%)	<i>Hurudza</i> – the 'real' farmers	18.3%
	Part-time farmers	10.6%
	New (semi-)commercial farmers	4.7%
	Farming from patronage	1.4%

Source: summarised from Scoones et al., (2010:228-229); see also Scoones et al., (2012a)

WHO GOT THE LAND?

Who got the land and what is the profile of the new settlers? Our study from Masvingo province showed by far the majority of the new settlers are 'ordinary' people (Table 3.4); those who had little or very poor land in the

communal areas or were unemployed or with poorly-paid jobs and living in town. About half of all new settler households were from nearby communal areas and another 18% from urban areas. These people joined the invasions because they needed land, and thought that the new resettlements would provide new livelihood opportunities. As discussed further below, this was not a politically-organised grouping with strong connections to ZANU-PF. The remaining third of household heads was made up of civil servants (16.5% overall, but increasing to around a quarter of all settlers in A1 self-contained and A2 sites), business people (4.8% overall, but again proportionately higher in the A1 self-contained and A2 sites), security service personnel (3.7% overall, employed by the police, army and intelligence organisation) and former farm workers (6.7% overall).

Former farm workers made up 11.5% of households in the A1 villagised sites, with many taking an active role in the land invasions. In one case a farm worker organised and led the invasion of the farm where he had worked. This reflects the extent and nature of labour on the former large-scale farms in Masvingo province. Unlike in the Highveld farms, where large, resident labour forces existed without nearby communal homes (Chambati

Table 3.4: Settler profiles across schemes

	A1 villagised	A1-self contained	Informal	A2	Total
'Ordinary': from other rural areas	59.9	39.2	69.7	12.2	49.9
'Ordinary': from urban areas	9.4	18.9	22.6	43.8	18.3
Civil servant	12.5	28.3	3.8	26.3	16.5
Security services	3.6	5.4	3.8	1.8	3.7
Business person	3.1	8.2	0	10.5	4.8
Former farm worker	11.5	0	0	5.3	6.7
N	192	74	53	57	376

Source: Census data, 2007-08 (N=376), including all sites (Scoones et al., 2010: 53)

2011), our Masvingo study sites were often formerly large-scale ranches where labour was limited, and workers came, often on a temporary basis, from nearby communal areas.

Across all of these categories are 'war veterans'. As household heads they make up 8.8% of the total population. The category 'war veteran' is however a diverse and again perhaps a misleading one. Prior to the land invasions, most were farming in the communal areas, a few were living in town, while some were civil servants, business people and employees in the security services. At the time of the land invasions in 2000, many indeed had long dropped their 'war veteran' identity and had been poor, small-scale farmers in the communal areas for 20 years since the end of the liberation war. Those who led the land invasions were often able to secure land in the A1 self-contained plots, but many were sidelined in the allocation of larger A2 farms. However, most were not well connected politically before 2000, although through the Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association, they became so and part of the political drive towards land reform, although with multiple disputes with the party leadership (Sadomba 2011).

Land was allocated unevenly to men and women. In most cases it is men whose names appear on the 'offer letters', the permits originally issued to new settlers by the government. Yet women were important players in the land invasions, providing support to the base camps during the '*jambanja*' land invasions period, and subsequently investing in the development of new homes and farms. However, across our sample only 12% of households had a woman named as the land holder on the permit. The highest proportion of female-headed households was in the informal settlements, as women often saw the land invasions as an opportunity to make a new independent life and escape abusive relationships or accusations of witchcraft, for example.

Who amongst these groups are the so-called 'cronies' of the ruling party, well-connected to the machinery of the state and able to gain advantage? Those able to gain land through patronage included those who grabbed often large farms around the elections in 2008, as well as some of the A2 farmers able to manipulate the system. Many are absentee land owners – so-called 'cell phone farmers' – presiding over often under-utilised land, perhaps with a decaying new tractor in the farmyard. Yet, despite their disproportionate influence on local politics (see below), they are few-and-far between, making up around 5% of the total population in our study areas (Table 3.3) on around 10% of the new resettlement land area.

How much land did each of these groups get? Table 3.5 shows land

Table 3.2: A socio-economic profile of the study sites (average amounts across survey households)

Cluster	Gutu		Masvingo		Chiiredzi		Mwenezi		
	A1 self-contained	A1 villagised	A1 self-contained	A1 villagised	Informal	A2	A1 villagised	A1 informal	A2
Age of household head	39	34	36	40	37	46	n.d.	33	44
Education at level of household head	Form 2	Form 2	Form 2	Form 2	Grade 7	Form 3 or higher	Grade 7	Grade 7	Form 2
Land holding (ha)	35.5	4.0	33.0	3.9	6.2	39.1	7.9	8.0	868.7
Area cropped (ha)	5.6	3.1	8.4	3.4	4.6	16.8	3.6	4.0	0.5
Cattle owned (nos)	6.9	5.4	11.9	4.4	4.4	14.8	4.7	4.9	60.3
Maize output in 2006 kg	2790	2627	7385	3140	2256	2582	449	104	n.d.
Sales (GMB and local) in kg in 2006	1310	1157	5283	1766	378	1357	104	0	n.d.
% owning a scotch cart	32%	24%	68%	63%	40%	33%	55%	50%	64%
House type (% with tin/asbestos roof)	43%	40%	45%	44%	42%	78%	96%	100%	100%
% receiving remittance	44%	39%	n.d.	23%	21%	28%	44%	52%	64%

Source: Sample census, 2011-12 across 400 households.

allocated, cleared and ploughed in 2011 for each of the scheme types. For the A1 villagised and informal sites, the area measurements refer only to arable land, while for the other sites it represents the whole allocation to the households. The data shows that, for each of the scheme types, so-called 'ordinary' settlers did not receive any less land than other groups; in some cases more. Business people and civil servants were able to clear more land in most instances, due to access to resources to hire labour. Those linked to the security services – the group most likely to be associated with the political-military elite – received marginally more land than the average in the A1 self-contained and informal sites, but less in other sites.

The land reform has thus involved diverse people with multiple affiliations. Being influential in the land invasions, war veterans often managed to secure better plots, although not always larger ones³. While the land invasions clearly became highly politicised, and the atmosphere of the 'base camps' on the invaded farms was tightly ordered and politically controlled (Chaumba et al., 2003), those who ultimately benefited were much more diverse than those with close political ties. Again, as discussed above, who got the land in the A1 sites very much depended on the very particular dynamics of an individual invasion, who was leading it and how contested the farm was.

The large group of civil servants, particularly on the A2 plots - and in our sample especially in the sugar estates - were often teachers, agricultural extension workers and local government officials. While not being poor and landless from the communal areas, most could not be regarded as elite, nor particularly well-connected politically. Indeed, in simple financial terms

Table 3.5: Land owned and cleared

Scheme type	Average/household (ha)		
	Area allocated	Area cleared 2011	Area ploughed 2011
A1 villagised	4.42	3.42	3.80
A1 self-contained	23.72	7.77	5.74
A2	64.18	18.63	8.79
Informal	7.45	5.27	5.05

Source: Census data 2011-12

Table 3.6: The value of investments in the new resettlements: from settlement to 2008, and from 2008 to 2012.

Focus of investment	Average per household (US\$) at standardised 2009 prices	
	Settlement to 2008	2008-2012
Land clearance	385	-
Housing/buildings	631	684
Cattle	612	247 (purchase), all increases 961
Farm equipment	198	271
Transport	150	320 (232 excluding tractors)
Toilets	77	51
Garden fencing	29	-
Wells	79	57
Total	\$2161	\$1491 to \$2293

Source: Scoones (2014a)

many were extremely poor, as government wages had effectively ceased during the economic crisis to 2009.

The net result is a new mix of people in the new resettlements. In the A2 schemes, for example 46.5% of new farmers have a 'Master Farmer' certificate⁴, while in the A1 self-contained schemes 17.6% do. 91.6% of A2 farmers had at least three years of secondary schooling, while this proportion is 71.6% and 44.8% in the A1 self-contained and villagised schemes respectively. The new resettlements are dominated by a new, younger generation of farmers. On settlement most were under 50 in the A1 schemes. A2 schemes are dominated by the over 50s, but often include people with significant experience and connections. That overall 18.3% of households came from urban areas (increasing to 43.8% in the A2 schemes) is significant too, as connections to town have proved important in gaining access to services and support in the absence of official programmes in the rural areas. These backgrounds, experiences, educational profiles, affiliations and connections have major influences on the new politics of the countryside, as discussed below. The new resettlements are therefore not a replication of the 1980s resettlement schemes or an extension of the

communal areas, nor are they simply scaled-down version of large-scale commercial farms. Instead, a very different social, economic and political dynamic is unfolding, one that has multiple potentials, as well as challenges.

INVESTMENT ON THE LAND

In developing their farms, most new farmers have had to start from scratch. For the most part the Masvingo study sites were ranches: large expanses of bush grazing, with limited infrastructure. There were scattered homesteads, a few workers' cottages, the odd dip tank, small dam and irrigation plot, but not much else. But, within a remarkably short time, people began to invest in earnest. There was an urgency: fields had to be prepared for planting, structures had to be built for cattle to be kraaled in, granaries had to be erected for the harvests to be stored, and homes had to be put up for growing numbers of people to live in.

A peopled landscape of houses, fields, paths and roads soon emerged. Human population densities increased significantly and livestock populations grew. Stocking densities on beef ranches were recommended to be around one animal per ten hectares; now much larger livestock populations exist, combining cattle with goats, sheep, donkeys, pigs and poultry. Investment in stock has been significant, with cattle populations in particular growing rapidly, especially in the A1 sites.

One of the major tasks facing new settlers has been clearing land (Table 3.5). In addition, people have constructed numerous gardens, all of which have required investment in fencing. In addition, people have dug wells, built small dams, planted trees and dug soil conservation works. Investment in fields was complemented by investment in farm equipment, with ploughs, cultivators, pumps and scotch carts purchased in numbers. Building has also been extensive in the new resettlements. Some structures remain built of pole and mud, however, after a year or two, when people's sense of tenure security had increased, buildings using bricks, cement and tin/asbestos roofing increased. Some very elaborate homes have been built with the very best materials imported from South Africa.

Transport has been a major constraint on the new resettlements. With no roads and poor connections to urban areas, there were often no forms of public transport available. This was compounded by the economic crisis, as many operators closed down routes. This had a severe impact. Lack of access to services – shops, schools, clinics – and markets meant that people

suffered. Investing in a means of transport was often a major priority. Bicycles in particular were bought in large numbers, but also cars, pick-ups and trucks.

What is the value of all this investment? A simple set of calculations that compute the cost of labour and materials used or the replacement cost of the particular item show that, on average, each household had invested US\$2161 in a variety of items in the period from settlement to 2008 and a further \$1491/\$2293 in the period to 2012 (Table 3.6).

This is of course only a small subset of the total, as such private investment does not account for investments at the community level. Across our sites, churches have been established, schools have been built, roads cut and areas for shops carved out as part of community efforts. Labour and materials have been mobilised without any external help. In the A1 sites in particular this highly-motivated and well-organised pattern of self-help has dominated (cf. Murisa, this issue). While the state has been present, it has not always provided assistance. The re-planning of village and field sites was resented by many, as the land use planning models dating from the 1930s were re-imposed, with fields removed from near rivers and streams and villages placed on the ridges far from water sources. Planning laws were also invoked in the destruction of nascent business centres as part of Operation Murambatsvina (Potts 2008).

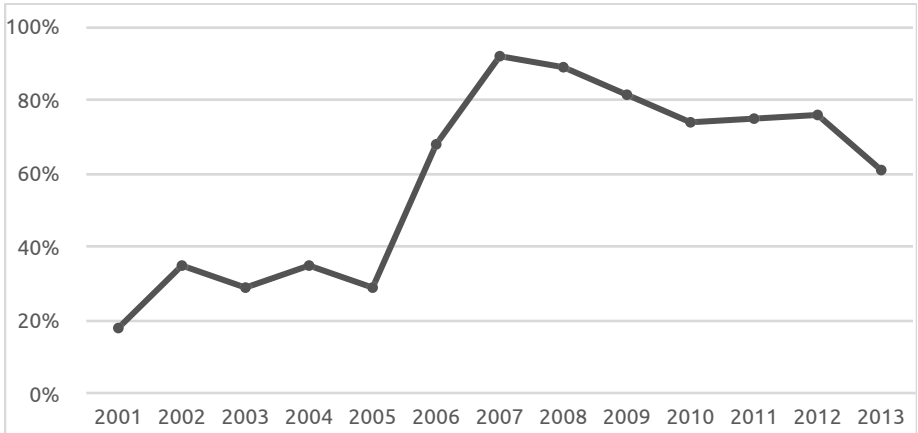
Thus with limited state support and without the projects of donors and NGOs – and significantly without formal title or leasehold tenure - the new settlers have invested at scale.

FARM PRODUCTION

A recurrent myth about Zimbabwe's land reform is that it has resulted in agricultural collapse, precipitating widespread and recurrent food insecurity. There is little doubt that the agricultural sector has been transformed, as discussed above, but our data show that there has been surprising resilience in production.

We tracked maize production on all 400 farms in our sample now over 11 seasons from 2002-03. Table 3.7 indicates the proportion of households who produced more than a tonne (sufficient to feed a family). The data shows an increase in output in the early years, as farms became established, and draft power and other inputs were sourced, but variability since then as both droughts and the economy (especially in the mid-2000s) hit. Production levels of maize are inevitably lowest in the drier regions,

Figure 3.3: Percentage of farmers growing cotton in Uswaushava, 2001-2009 (source: annual crop census, 2009 data estimated).



although food security is enhanced by a greater production of small grains, such as sorghum and millet.

To complement grain production, in some sites, cotton production has boomed. This is particular so in Uswaushava in the Nuanetsi ranch. Here cotton production has increased significantly (Figure 3.3). Cotton sales provide significant cash income for nearly all households. Six different private cotton companies operate in the area, supplying credit, inputs and marketing support - allowing cotton producers to access inputs and other support through other means. New cotton gins have opened up too, creating employment further up the value chain.

Investment in cattle has been particularly important across the sites, but particularly in the A1 schemes, and for certain 'success groups'⁵ (Table 3.8). Cattle numbers are increasing in the new resettlement areas, providing an important source of draft power, milk, meat and cash sale and savings. Accumulation has been most evident in the A1 self-contained sites and in the top success groups; in recent years extending from the top group to others, as they establish themselves. A2 farmers were accumulating less in the economic crisis period, but investment in cattle has picked up since.

While across our research sites there are of course some who produce little and have to rely on local markets or support from relatives, overall, and especially in the wetter sites of Gutu and Masvingo districts, we did not find a pattern of production failure, widespread food insecurity and lack of market integration. We found a highly differentiated picture, but one which has at its centre smallholder agricultural production and marketing; one

Table 3.8: Mean cattle holdings: changes by scheme type and success group

Scheme type	Success Group 1			Success Group 2			Success Group 3		
	At settle- ment (2000- 02)	2008	2012	At settle- ment	2008	2012	At settle- ment	2008	2012
A1 villagised	6.3	10.4	11.0	4.5	4.5	5.7	1.9	2.6	3.4
A1 self- contained	11.2	16.2	10.7	1.3	10.9	8.2	0.9	3.7	9.0
A2	18.9	20.5	34.6	13.6	14.8	22.9	11.1	4.4	13.8
Informal	7.5	12.5	10.8	4.5	3.8	6.3	0.0	0.5	2.7

Source: Census data 2007-08, 2011-12

that could, given the right support, be the core of an agricultural revolution in Zimbabwe. By contrast to the previous boom in smallholder production in the early 1980s following Independence, the Masvingo sample suggests a larger proportion of farmers is involved. Around half are succeeding as 'middle farmers' and a third as highly commercialised producers, compared to only 20% in the 1980s (cf. Stanning 1989); and of course at a much larger scale than the rather isolated successes of that earlier period (Eicher 1995, Rohrbach 1989).

LOCAL ECONOMIES AND LINKAGES

On-farm success can result in off-farm economic growth, as linkages are forged in local economies. This is an important dynamic in the new resettlement areas, given the geographical juxtaposition of new resettlement areas of different types, with old communal and resettlement areas. Since 2000, the rural economy has been radically spatially reconfigured, with the old separated economic spheres of the large-scale farms and the communal areas being broken down. The result is a shift to new sites for economic activity, connected to new value chains and new sorts of entrepreneur, linking town and countryside.

The dynamic entrepreneurialism resulting should, we argue, not be

Table 3.7: Percentage of farmers harvesting greater than a tonne of maize

District	Scheme Type	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	Average
Gutu	A1 self-contained	18.4	50.0	45.5	75.0	63.4	28.6	61.5	38.1	42.9	48.8	34.1	46.0
	A1 villagised	13.3	39.1	24.0	79.3	63.3	36.7	78.6	37.9	48.3	34.5	24.1	43.6
	A2	0.0	0.0	44.4	75.0	66.7	n.d	63.6	71.4	42.9	58.3	33.3	45.6
Masvingo	A1 self-contained	55.3	63.2	56.4	100.0	100.0	51.3	100.0	74.4	64.1	50.0	44.7	69.0
	A1 villagised	28.0	38.1	45.8	95.7	91.2	15.8	77.9	21.7	16.5	26.5	22.2	43.6
	A2	0.0	25.0	25.0	n.d	75.0	75.0	100.0	100	50	0	0	45.0
Chiredzi	A2	14.3	38.5	46.2	50.0	66.7	50.0	88.9	24.1	6.9	21.4	14.3	38.3
	Informal	18.8	10.2	3.9	86.5	51.0	24.5	62.5	48.2	0	1.9	18.5	29.6
Mwenezi	A1 villagised	26.9	8.0	0.0	4.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	9.1	9.1	0	9.6	6.1
	Informal	11.5	11.5	0.0	0.0	26.7	6.7	Nd	0	0	0	11.5	6.8

Source: Maize census, 2003-13 (N=400)

underestimated and represents an important resource to build on. Across our sites, we have small-scale irrigators producing horticultural products for local and regional markets; we have highly successful cotton producers who are generating considerable profits by selling to a wide number of competing private sector companies; we have livestock producers and traders who are developing new value chains for livestock products, linked to butcheries, supermarkets and other outlets; we have traders in wild products, often engaged in highly profitable export markets; and we have others who are developing contract farming and joint venture arrangements, for a range of products, including wildlife. We also have an important group of sugar producers with A2 plots on the lowveld estates who, very often against the odds due to shortages of inputs, unreliable electricity supplies and disadvantageous pricing, have been delivering cane to the mills, as well as other diverse markets, alongside diversification into irrigated horticulture production on their plots.

Off-farm employment was important in 2012 for 58% of households surveyed, resulting in important flows of remittance. Other off-farm activities include trading (27%), building and carpentry (12%), pottery and basket-making (11%), brick-making and thatching (11%), as well as involvement in fishing, tailoring, grinding mills and transport businesses⁶.

Resettlement farmers are also employing labour (Table 3.9). This is often casual, low-paid employment, often of women, but it is an important

Table 3.9: Farm labour

	A1 self-contained		A1 villigised		Informal		A2	
	Temp.	Perm.	Temp.	Perm.	Temp.	Perm.	Temp.	Perm.
% of households employing workers	42%	16%	12%	17%	4%	1%	63%	78%
Nos of male workers	76	18	56	32	13	1	239	193
Nos of female workers	28	2	30	4	6	0	114	64

Source: 2011-12 Census

source of livelihood for many – including those who are not making it as part of the new ‘middle farmer’ group identified above. The new resettlement sites have become a magnet for others, and households on average have grown by around three members since settlement through the in-migration of relatives and labourers (cf. Deininger et al., 2004 for discussion of a similar dynamic in the old resettlement areas). Comparing this level of employment with what existed before on the former cattle ranches, where perhaps one herder was employed for each 100 animals grazed over 1000ha, the scale of employment generation afforded by the new resettlement farms is considerable.

There is frequently a sense of optimism and future promise amongst many resettlement farmers. SM from Mwenezi district commented “We are happier here at resettlement. There is more land, stands are larger and there is no overcrowding. We got good yields this year. I filled two granaries with sorghum. I hope to buy a grinding mill and locate it at my homestead”. Comparing the farming life to other options, PC from Masvingo district observed: “We are not employed, but we are getting higher incomes than those at work”. Despite the hardships and difficulties – of which there are many – there is a deep commitment to making the new resettlement enterprises work.

AGRARIAN CHANGE, SOCIAL DIFFERENTIATION AND THE NEW POLITICS OF THE COUNTRYSIDE⁷

As previous sections have shown for Masvingo province, the reconfiguration of land and economic activity following land reform has resulted in a new politics of the countryside. Yet this politics is contested: especially between the interests of new ‘middle farmers’ who are ‘accumulating from below’ and politically-connected elites.

Our analyses of the socially differentiated patterns of production, investment and accumulation show how a new emergent middle farmer group is potentially a key political force. In a rough calculation, this group represents about a quarter of the rural electorate, around a million voters (Scoones 2014c). Indeed, it is this group that showed its influence in the 2013 elections. The new ‘middle farmers’, now with land, have connections in town, they often have other jobs, they are relatively asset rich, and they have connections, both political and economic. They are very different to the mass of rural people in the communal areas.

Alongside the middle farmer accumulators, in small numbers on smaller

land areas in the A2 farms there is the military-business-party elite, well connected to the ruling party, ZANU-PF. Extractive, corrupt and dependent on patrimonial relations, they are using land as one of a number of resources to extend their political-economic hold (along with mines, wildlife, business networks and so on). In our study areas we estimate they represent around 5% of the households on around 10% of the new resettlement land (Scoones et al., 2011).

Overall, the A2 farmers who were allocated the larger farms were not classic elites. They were more a richer, middle class group of (former) civil servants (including lots of agricultural extension workers), business people and others (Table 3.4). Patronage was unquestionably important in some allocations (Marongwe 2011), but the A2 schemes certainly cannot be described only in terms of patronage-driven elite capture.

Those who did 'grab' land, especially around the time of the 2008 elections, were widely resented, and often shunned by the more legitimate beneficiaries. Other forms of resistance have occurred too⁸. Some A2 farms have been subject to further invasions by local people. Many of course did not benefit from the land reform in 2000, particularly the youth, and demand for land is increasing once again.

In this chapter there has been a focus on the patterns and processes of social differentiation, highlighting differential patterns of asset ownership, styles of accumulation and dependence or involvement in labouring. It shows how a class of petty commodity producers or 'middle farmers' with a mix of origins – from the peasantry but also from the urban middle classes, including business people and civil servants in particular – are emerging as a potential political and economic force. These people are not the classic rural peasantry of populist land reform are renditions, nor are they by-and-large the elite 'cronies' of the many critics of Zimbabwe's land reform. Instead they are a well-connected, entrepreneurial group, with clear political demands.

The focus of attention on party-connected elites has meant that such a political dynamic, emergent from the processes of production, accumulation and social differentiation that have unfolded over the last 15 years, has meant that most analysis has missed this new political dynamic. It is playing out in different ways in different places, and even with Masvingo there are contrasts between the core land reform areas, and the lowveld periphery (Scoones 2014c; Scoones et al., 2012). This does not mean such elite capture and party patronage is not important. It is, but must be put in context, and seen as part of a wider struggle for political control in the post-land reform setting.

There is therefore an intense political struggle in the countryside that has emerged since land reform. This is between a small group of well-connected elites plagued by factional politics, and a variegated grouping of poorer smallholder farmers, farm labourers, and a new class of 'middle farmer' petty commodity producers. Electorally, if representative democracy is upheld, any party must rely on the latter to supply the votes, while the rich pickings of land and resources as patronage are to be gained by alliances with the former. As the Masvingo studies show, it is currently a fine balance.

The dynamics of production, investment and accumulation that have been the focus of this chapter will be crucial to the longer-term outcomes, as political fortunes and alliances will turn on the economic basis of different positions. Currently the 'middle farmer' group looks to be on the ascendancy, while corrupt elites are under fire. Key will be bargains that are made with political parties and the state, and as the opposition reforms after their demolition in the 2013 elections, and ZANU-PF contemplates a post-Mugabe era, these political calculations and alliances will be crucial. Land reform has created a dramatically new politics, and new analyses must focus on the complex intersections of economy and politics in the countryside to assess options and ways forward for a more stable, productive and just future in Zimbabwe's rural areas.

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NOTES

¹ These are documents providing a permit to occupy the land, but no formal title or lease.

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- ² Political manipulation of allocation processes was more common in areas close to towns (Marongwe 2011) and where high value crops were at stake (Zamchiya 2011).
- ³ War veterans had land areas above the average in the A1 villagised schemes only (at 6.8ha). In all other instances their land holdings were actually on average marginally lower than the average.
- ⁴ A quite rigorous agricultural qualification, the result of training by the ministry of agriculture's extension arm.
- ⁵ This is the local characterisation of 'success' used in the study to differentiate settlers, with success group 1 being the most 'successful' according to local criteria. Cattle ownership and accumulation was, unsurprisingly, one of the key indicators.
- ⁶ Source: 2011-12 Census
- ⁷ This section builds on Scoones (2014).
- ⁸ See Scoones (2014b)

4

LIVELIHOODS AFTER LAND REFORM IN ZIMBABWE: UNDERSTANDING PROCESSES OF RURAL DIFFERENTIATION

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INTRODUCTION

Zimbabwe's land reform from 2000 has resulted in a massive agrarian restructuring with huge economic, social and political consequences. Since 2000, the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) has allocated over 4,500 farms to around 170,000 new farmers. This has represented around 8 million hectares, 20 per cent of the total land area of the country, according to (admittedly rough) official figures. In 2009, this was made up of over 145,000 farm households in smallholder A1 schemes (including both self-contained farms and village settlements with individual arable fields and communal grazing) and around 16,500 further households occupying larger-scale A2 plots, aimed at small-scale commercial farming (Rukuni et al. 2009). If the informal settlements, which are unrecognized by the government's FTLRP, alongside additional large-scale A2 farms allocated in recent years are added in, the totals are even larger (Moyo 2011b).

This paper explores the consequences of this land reform for the

dynamics of differentiation in Zimbabwe's countryside by reporting on the results from a 10-year study in Masvingo province, in the south and east of the country (Scoones et al. 2010). Zimbabwe's land reform has resulted in what some might term a 'repeasantization' of the rural areas (van der Ploeg 2008), displacing large-scale capitalist agriculture with a much more differentiated pattern of livelihoods, centred on small-scale farming, but also including off-farm enterprises, informal mining and hunting, migration and remittance earning. In some important respects, the new agrarian structure runs counter to the oft-noted wider trend in Africa of 'deagrarianization' and the loss of peasant livelihoods in the face of wider economic and political forces (Bryceson 1996; Bryceson et al. 2000; Weis 2007). Populist commentators might hail the Zimbabwe case as an instance of the triumph of efficient small-scale peasant farming resulting from land reform (Rosset et al. 2006). Yet acquiring land through reform processes – in this instance through land occupations and state expropriation – and allocating it to a mix of largely land- and income- poor people from nearby rural areas is not the end of the story. As new livelihoods are established, investments initiated and production, business, trade and marketing commence, processes of differentiation begin – within households, between households in a particular place and between sites.

This paper explores this unfolding dynamic across 400 households at 16 sites in Masvingo province, with the aim of trying to understand the new agrarian dynamic in Zimbabwe's countryside, and the implications for the future. These processes of differentiation are not without conflict and contest. This is not a story of a homogenous peasantry suddenly created through a back-to-the-land populist land reform. Multiple social forces – of class, gender, age and ethnicity – are at play, creating a differentiated pattern of livelihoods, with both winners and losers. These processes are highly contingent and very dynamic. Each site has a particular story, rooted in very particular histories of land invasion, the diverse origins of new settlers, the forms of authority and the degree of external intervention (Scoones et al. 2010).

The paper will offer some sense of these specificities, but will also try to explore the wider story, asking what new agrarian classes are emerging on the new resettlements, what processes of accumulation are occurring, and what new political, economic and social relations are being forged. In particular, the paper examines whether the new agrarian setting, rooted in a diversity of forms of essentially 'smallholder' production, offers a new possibility for agrarian transformation, based on a process of 'accumulation from below', driven by small-scale petty commodity

production (Neocosmos 1993; Cousins 2010).

Some dismiss this possibility as naively 'populist', arguing that it runs against any historical analysis, which inevitably sees the triumph of capitalist agrarian relations over subsistence-orientated peasant production systems (Byres 2004). A variety of paths to agrarian transition can be mapped out, echoing different historical experiences (cf. Bernstein 2010), but support for land reform focused on smallholder production is sometimes seen as inappropriate, given the changing nature of agri-food systems under globalization, where large-scale options are needed with scale efficiencies, market connections and capitalization (cf. Sender and Johnston 2003). Such conditions, Bernstein (2004, 221) argues, give rise to a new agrarian question, one focused on questions of labour and 'rooted in crises of employment, and manifested in struggles over, and for, land to secure some part of its reproduction needs'. As Hart (2002) argues, redistributive land reform must be seen in relation to these dynamics of labour and the processes of differentiation that they entail. Could it be, then, that under conditions of extremely insecure formal employment, smallholder production on land reform sites is simply a survivalist response, reliant on informal livelihood activities across urban and rural spaces, combining agriculture with employment and off-farm enterprises, but ultimately with little prospect of escaping long-run, deep poverty and marginalization?

Given these wider debates, how should we conceptualize the relationships between land and livelihoods in Zimbabwe? What is the future for agrarian livelihoods following land reform?

Does land redistribution, primarily to small-scale producers, only prolong the transition to capitalist agriculture, leaving an increasing number of people impoverished, and reliant on informal, fragile and insecure livelihoods from diverse sources or, by contrast, can redistributive land reform result in a revitalization of small-scale agriculture as a primary motor of growth and employment in ways that were prevented by the colonial inheritance? We ask, in turn, what do new patterns of livelihood activity imply for patterns of agrarian change, and the unfolding class and political dynamics in the countryside? Has land reform produced such a radically altered agrarian structure that a new economic dynamic is emerging? What forms of production, investment and accumulation are ongoing, and how is this affecting patterns of social and economic differentiation? Is there, as a result, the potential for substantial and sustained 'accumulation from below', rooted in new forms of rural petty commodity production and centred on small-scale agriculture? Looking to

the future, we ask: What are the longer-term implications of the replacement of a developed capitalist agricultural sector, based on large-scale commercial farms owned and controlled by a small group, with a more diverse set of farming enterprises of different scales? Can the new farmers generate not only subsistence livelihoods, but also surpluses to feed the nation and create broader wealth?

Only a detailed examination of the Zimbabwe situation can help us ascertain what broad scenario (or, most likely, combination of these) holds. This paper attempts this through a detailed examination of a particular set of sites in one region of the country, attempting to draw broader conclusions on the unfolding process of agrarian and livelihood change following land reform. Inevitably, through a detailed, empirical case study approach, there are severe limits to generalization, but the aim is not to be prescriptive; it is merely to offer some questions, issues and hints about future patterns in order to enrich the policy debate about what might happen next. The study sites are based in an area of low-to-medium agro-ecological potential, and so outside the areas of the Highveld, where land reform transformed highly capitalized cropping systems. While necessarily speculative and inevitably partial, such insights allow us to make some assessments about likely future changes, and the longer-term impacts of Zimbabwe's land reform.

Our starting point is a detailed investigation of livelihoods, and in particular patterns of differentiation and accumulation. In particular, as already mentioned, we explore the potentials and limits of 'accumulation from below' resulting from the reconfiguration of economic opportunity following land reform. As Cousins (2010, 15) argues: 'land reform and accumulation from below are necessary to reconfigure a dualistic and unequal agrarian structure which is itself a structural cause of poverty'. This requires the creation of a new group of farmers and entrepreneurs to fill the 'missing middle' between very small-scale survival farming and large-scale commercial operations (Cousins 2007; Hall 2009). Accumulation from below implies that 'the inherited agrarian structure is radically reconfigured so that much larger numbers of people begin to participate in the agricultural sector and benefit substantially from such participation. However, it also suggests that these new producers must be able to produce at least as much (if not more) than large-scale commercial farmers, replacing them in supplying local, national and international markets' (Cousins 2010, 16). The big question is, therefore: is this happening in Zimbabwe?

AGRARIAN TRANSFORMATION IN ZIMBABWE'S COUNTRYSIDE

In the past, a number of studies have attempted to assess the pattern of rural differentiation and its broad class characteristics in Zimbabwe (Bush and Cliffe 1984; Cousins *et al.* 1992; Moyo 1995). Based on an extensive review of the 1980s literature on rural differentiation in Zimbabwe's communal areas, for example, Ben Cousins and colleagues (1992, 12–13) identified four types of rural household, distinguishing 'petty commodity producers' from 'worker-peasants', the 'semi-peasantry' and the 'rural petit bourgeoisie'. In their categorization, petty commodity producers combine capital (owning the means of production) and labour (providing primarily family labour) in the farm enterprise. They can meet a significant proportion of their simple reproduction needs¹ from direct production. While they have the potential to engage in expanded reproduction, their capacity to sustain capital accumulation is still constrained. Worker-peasants are a hybrid group, combining elements of the proletariat and (partially commoditized) petty commodity producers. The semi-peasantry are the most marginalized and impoverished group, and include significant numbers of women. They are insecure with respect to both rural production and wage labour. Finally, the rural petit bourgeoisie have, according to this classification, moved beyond simple reproduction and into (relatively) sustained capitalist accumulation, employing and extracting surplus from wage labour. They often have diversified livelihoods, drawing on rural and urban sources of income. However, according to Cousins and colleagues (1992, 13), 'they are only petty capitalists and clearly not an "agrarian bourgeoisie" in the classical sense'.

These agrarian class dynamics necessarily take on a particular character in southern Africa, given the historical distortions of a colonial settler migrant labour economy. The relationships between the core economy and the rural 'labour reserves' had huge impacts on patterns of class and social differentiation in the countryside (Arrighi 1973). However, in contrast to some assessments that view rural people as a relatively homogenous 'semi-proletariat', there are important patterns of differentiation. These are not necessarily along classical lines, as parallel processes of proletarianization and the emergence of successful petty commodity production take place, creating important hybrid class categories such as 'worker-peasants' or the 'semi-peasantry' (Cousins 2010). As Bernstein (2009, 73) explains, many must seek their livelihoods through a range of informal, insecure and precarious means across different sites, both rural and urban. These include

different activities, both agricultural and non-agricultural and different forms of employment, both waged and non-waged. As he comments, 'This defies inherited assumptions of fixed, let alone uniform, notions (and "identities") of "worker", "trader", "urban", "rural", "employed" and "self-employed".'

Given this diversity of hybrid livelihood strategies and class identities, how does accumulation take place? As Cousins (2010, 17) argues for South Africa: 'Successful accumulation from below would necessarily involve a class of productive small-scale capitalist farmers emerging from within a larger population of petty commodity producers, worker-peasants, allotment- holding wage workers and supplementary food producers.' In Zimbabwe, the potential for this is highly dependent on wider political and economic relations, and most especially on those elites who, despite their political rhetoric, are not fully committed to a more radical reconfiguration of land, livelihoods and agrarian relations.

This paper therefore asks whether in the new resettlements of Masvingo province we are seeing a process of accumulation from below – where new 'middle farmers' are contributing to economic development, urban food supplies and employment – or whether relationships are dominated by processes of accumulation from above – where accumulation derives from oppressive, exploitative and extractive political and market relations, de-linked from local-level commodity production and focused on large-scale capitalist farming; or whether, indeed, there is some combination of these two contrasting dynamics, and hence tensions and conflicts between groups and emerging rural classes.

In order to answer these central issues, we must delineate the patterns of economic and livelihood activity and their relational and political dimensions, identifying in the process the contours of social differentiation and class formation. We adopt, following Marx, a critical political economy approach that aims to expose the 'rich totality of many determinations and relations'.² A 'concrete' understanding thus emerges through iteration between conceptual abstractions and detailed empirical observation: 'The concrete is concrete because it is the concentration of many determinations, hence unity of the diverse' (Marx 1973, 101). Such an approach therefore allows us not only to describe the diversity of livelihood strategies observed, but also to evaluate the longer-term trajectories being pursued, and also what political and economic alliances are being forged between different classes, and so structuring the wider agrarian political economy. It is this movement between the diverse specifics of particular livelihood contexts and the wider abstractions and tendencies associated

with a relational understanding of class and its dynamic tendencies that offers important insights into longer- term trajectories of agrarian change and processes of differentiation (Bernstein 2010, 109).

THE CHANGING AGRARIAN STRUCTURE IN MASVINGO PROVINCE

What broad patterns have emerged following land reform in Masvingo province, in the south and east of the country? In 2000, Masvingo province had a total of 623 large-scale commercial farms, covering 2.1 million hectares.³ By 2009, a total of 176 farms, with an area of 371,520 hectares, were acquired under the A2 model. A further 244 farms (1,195,564 ha) were acquired under the A1 model. In terms of area, 23.7 per cent of the acquired land was allocated to A2 farmers and 76.3 per cent to A1 farmers. A total of 1,169 and 32,597 households benefited under the A2 and A1 schemes respectively, covering a total of 28 per cent of the province's land area, or 1.5 million hectares. The number of official, recorded land reform beneficiaries (certainly an underestimate) for Masvingo is 33,766 households – perhaps over 200,000 people in total. In addition, Masvingo has a large number of informal settlements not registered under the fast-track programme, with around 8,500 households currently settled in this way, and around 6,000 of these concentrated in the Nuanetsi ranch area.

This was not land reform at the margins; this was a major transformation in agrarian structure and relations. Data are difficult to get hold of and often inconsistent, and the situation has been very fast-moving, with official statistics not covering contested areas and new invasions. However, Table 4.1 gives an overview of Masvingo province's new agrarian structure in 2009.

While land reform was dramatic, it did not cover all large-scale commercial farms. Some estates, conservancies and large-scale farm units were largely unaffected. Although the situation remains changeable, with evictions continuing to occur,⁴ white-owned, large-scale farms do still exist in Masvingo province; even if in most cases other properties owned by the same individual were taken. Around the 2008 elections, however, there was a peak in land insecurity, and a number of properties were allocated to politically connected elites as large-scale A2 farms, now amounting to over 110,000 hectares in the province, some in very large tracts. These represent the retention of a large-scale capitalist class of farmer, but under new ownership arrangements. In other areas, 'joint ownership' arrangements

have been imposed on wildlife conservancies;⁵ and equally controversial developments have occurred in the Development Trust of Zimbabwe (DTZ) land at Nuanetsi ranch, where external investment has been sought for large-scale plantation agriculture, crocodile farming and ethanol production.⁶ A substantial proportion of Masvingo's lowveld citrus and sugar estates at Triangle, Hippo Valley and Mkwazine remained under the

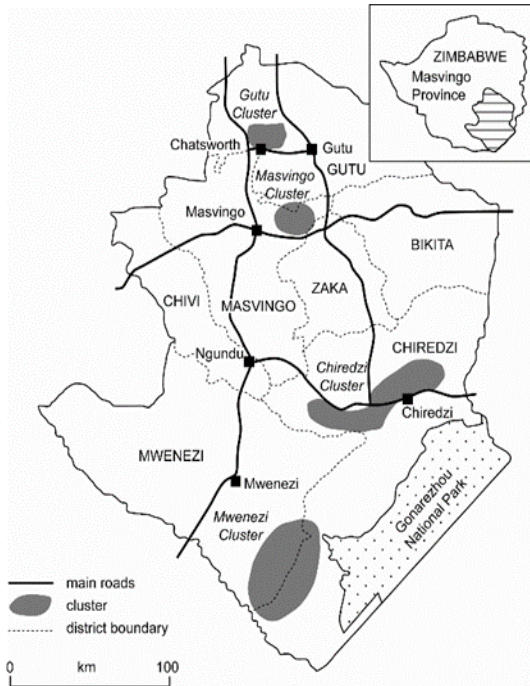
Table 4.1: An overview of the land distribution in Masvingo province, 2009

Category	Area (ha)	Percentage of total
A1	1,195,564	21.1
A2	371,520	6.5
Old resettlement	440,163	7.8
Communal area	2,116,450	37.4
Gonarezhou National Park	505,300	8.9
Remaining large-scale farms, conservancies, small-scale farms, state farms)	1,027,603	18.3 ^a
Total	5,656,600	100

Source: Compiled from various sources, including Masvingo Lands Department data, 2009.

^a *This includes large-scale farms (black- and white-owned before FTLRP), making up 11,319 ha (average size 404 ha) and a number of new large-scale A2 farms over 110,718 ha with an average size of 2,089 ha allocated to new farmers from around 2008, often through processes of political patronage. In addition to the 315,255 ha that made up the four wildlife conservancies in the province (Save Valley, Chiredzi, Malilangwe and Masvingo), 211,474 ha remains, although ownership is contested, with the government attempting to enforce a series of 'joint venture' partnerships. In addition, Nuanetsi ranch, owned by the Development Trust of Zimbabwe, still amounts to around 350,000 ha, although around 100,000 ha is now being transferred to A1 pschemes, formalizing what had been 'informal' resettlements inside the ranch. In addition, parastatals hold land, including the CSC and ARDA. ARDA, for instance, holds 16,227 ha as state land (data from Moyo 2011b). In other words, large-scale capitalist farming persists, but in a different form, and under a different ownership structure, which often remains contested*

Figure 4.1: Map of Masvingo province, showing study areas.



original ownership structure, although in the sugar estates outgrower plots were redistributed as part of land reform, as A2 farms.⁷ The national parks estate, most notably Gonarezhou National Park in the south-east, was also largely left untouched, except for one high-profile invasion by the Chitsa people (Chaumba et al. 2003a), where some 16,000 hectares of the park were occupied by over 700 families from the Chitsa community (Mombeshora and Le Bel, 2009). Outside the parks estate, some state and parastatal land was transferred as part of the FTLRP, but much has remained under the control of organizations such as ARDA (the Agricultural Rural Development Authority) and the CSC (the Cold Storage Company).

Thus areas redistributed as part of the FTLRP represent one part of a larger jigsaw (Scoones et al. under review). Yet their longer-term future is bound up with political struggles over land and resources within the province – and indeed the country – as a whole, and it is this wider political economy of land that will ultimately determine what happens to the livelihoods of the new settlers. These themes will be returned to briefly at the end of the paper, but now we turn to the detailed analysis of processes of differentiation in the study sites.

THE MASVINGO STUDY LIVELIHOODS AFTER LAND REFORM

The Masvingo study involved in-depth field research at 16 land reform sites located in four research 'clusters' across the province, involving a sample population of 400 households. Each cluster included different types of land reform model, including A2, A1 (self-contained and villagized) and, at some sites, informal settlements.⁸ The study area stretched from the relatively higher potential areas near Gutu to the irrigated sugar estate of Hippo Valley to the dry south in the lowveld, offering a picture of diverse agro-ecological conditions (Figure 4.1). Initial research commenced in 2000, around the time of the land invasions (Chaumba et al. 2003a,b; Wolmer et al. 2004), and continued until 2010, offering insights at many sites over a full decade. This was a period of extreme political and economic turmoil, highlighted by violent elections, especially in 2008, and the collapse of the formal economy during the mid-2000s, with hyperinflation peaking at 231 million per cent. Following the establishment of the Government of National Unity in early 2009, some level of stability returned, but the story told below unfolded under very challenging conditions.

A mix of quantitative and qualitative research methods were used (Scoones et al. 2010), including a census of all households and a detailed sample survey of 177. A household ranking exercise was also carried out at all sites, in order to provide insights into local understandings of social and economic differentiation. With a group of key informants, these rankings explored how settlers themselves ranked households on the site according to a composite idea of 'success', and discussions explored the criteria used. Local indicators of success focused on asset ownership (notably cattle), market engagement (crop and livestock sales), home infrastructure and equipment (the quality of the homestead and ownership of ploughs, cultivators etc.), labour hiring (employment of permanent and temporary workers), as well as off-farm linkages (notably access to remittances). Non-material indicators were important too. The health of household members was seen as important, as was farming knowledge and skills, and perceptions of the standing of individuals in the local community (Scoones et al. 2010, 62–63). In addition to the 'success ranking' of all households, we undertook 120 detailed biographical interviews examining people's own perceptions and strategies, as well as a focus on intra-household dynamics, and especially the gender and age differentiation. These were selected from the household sample, and so represented a range of households across 'success groups' (denoted by 'SG' below).

Success ranks (SG1 more 'successful', SG3 less so) in each site correlated with a range of quantitative indicators derived from the survey and census data, including asset ownership, income-earning activities, agricultural production and sales, as shown in Table 4.2. Some significant contrasts exist, indicative, as discussed below, of emerging class dynamics. For example, at A1 self-contained sites, SG1 households' maize production in 2006 was nearly three times that of SG2 households at the same sites, while sales were nearly four times as large, despite land holdings and cropped areas being comparable. The SG1 households, however, own more than double the number of cattle and significantly more own scotch carts than their SG2 counterparts, demonstrating the differentiated nature of asset accumulation across households.

But 'success' is clearly more than just such simple household level indicators: relationships, histories, intra-household dynamics, age and gender all construct cross-cutting patterns of difference within and between households. The following section offers more qualitative insights from a selection of the 120 biographies collected (drawn from Scoones et al. 2010, 61–69), highlighting these dimensions, and especially insights into the dynamics of accumulation and differentiation.

SUCCESS GROUP 1

FV – Lonely Farm, Gutu cluster (A1 villagized). I was born in Gutu in 1950, and am a father of nine children. My previous home was in Serima nearby, and I have kept that home and field. I have a small engine for irrigation which is moved between my two farms. I irrigate maize, wheat, rice, beans, vegetables and fruit trees. At my Serima home I have seven wells and two small dams. At my new farm I have already dug two deep wells, and am planning more. My main reason for transferring to Lonely was to gain access to good grazing for livestock. In Serima it is very crowded, and the livestock suffer in the dry season. My wife trades vegetables from our plot. We also have a good trade in green mealies and other crops. Some of my children are now grown up and send us remittances as both cash and groceries. Two of my sons are teachers and two are builders. With the good grazing our animals are thriving. The cows are producing new calves every year, and we have plentiful milk supplies.

SM – Edenvale, Mwenezi cluster (A1 villagized). Since we arrived here, six of my sons have married and got land in the resettlement. My role in the land invasions was recognized with a large area, as well as giving my sons land. With a large family you must think of the future. We have spent a lot

of time clearing fields. We grow a range of local sorghum varieties. My wives make and sell ilala palm trays, while some of my sons are border jumpers. One son is a gunner who works with safari hunters based in Chiredzi. He is well paid, has a car and assists us. I keep four orphans left by my late daughter. I had just a few cattle before coming here, but now I have 18. We are happier here at resettlement. There is more land, plots are larger and there is no overcrowding. Last season I got very good yields, and filled two granaries with sorghum. Following resettlement, there is now a future for my family, and my sons will have land.

EG – Wondedzo Extension. Masvingo cluster (A1 self-contained). We came to this place in 2000, coming from Buhera communal area. We came looking for land, as our original home was very crowded. Since coming we have had much better crop production than we had before. We have learned a lot, and developed skills in producing soya beans and sugar beans that earn good cash. I must get water from my neighbours, as we do not have a well. When we get maize we buy cattle. One tonne of maize allows us to buy a cow. My husband is retired and we work the farm together. He used to be a police officer and later worked at a store in town. We have five children: four boys and a girl. I also look after two orphans, the children of my brother who passed away. Before, we had no cattle and little farm equipment. We now have cattle, and are able to sell up to eight litres of milk per day in Masvingo when the cows are milking. In the future, we have plans to dig a well, so that water supplies are close by and we can irrigate a garden.

SUCCESS GROUP 2

JM – Lonely Farm, Gutu cluster (A1 villagized). I was born in Gutu in 1979. I am married and have one child. In Gutu I had very little land to farm. It was not a good life for a young no cattle, but now I own five head, all purchased through farming. I have also managed to buy a plough. Now I help my family back in Gutu during drought years with food, and I send cash for my young brothers to pay for school fees. All of this is from our hard work. I have cleared 4 hectares of land and I employ two workers on the farm, who stay with us. My wife has a vegetable garden and sells tomatoes and onions locally. She also has a small business selling second-hand clothes. The new land has transformed our lives.

MM – Turf Ranch, Mwenezi cluster (informal). I was born in 1956 in Makhanani communal land. I worked for 10 years as a herd boy and got a beast in payment. This became the foundation of my life. Its offspring paid

lobola [bridewealth], and I was able to marry. In my old home there were very poor soils, and the place was so overcrowded. Here the soil is first class, and there is underground water. I have dug a well at my homestead, and my dream is to start irrigating. We keep in good touch with those from our previous home. When there are ceremonies, we brew beer together. I have a few cattle myself but I also look after others' animals as part of a sharing agreement. In addition to agriculture, we have a number of other activities. For example, I sometimes do some small-scale hunting in the area. I also sometimes do part-time piecework jobs on the nearby plots: maintaining fences for example. The pay is poor, but at least it is something. My wife makes mats and baskets and also does gardening and sells the vegetables. However, her main business is selling milk. Mrs M explains: I make a deal with farm workers on nearby farms, and purchase the milk which they are selling – usually without the knowledge of the plot owner. I can make a real profit in a single day. I then buy maize with the proceeds.

DN – Fair Range, Chiredzi cluster (A2). I am now 60 years old, and I come from the Gonakudzingwa small-scale farming area where my father had a plot. I have a general dealer business at Chanyenga Business Centre near Chikombedzi. I am a member of the Agrodealers Association of Zimbabwe, and a member of the Dairy Association in the new resettlement areas. I settled here in 2003 with an offer letter. I am married and have two sons and one daughter. It was my interest in livestock production that encouraged me to apply for a farm under the fast track programme. My plot is 66 hectares in size, but I have only cleared ten so far. I am irrigating a portion, but otherwise I keep my livestock. I now have 12 cattle and 35 goats. These are sold sometimes in Chiredzi. I live at the farm with my wife and one son and daughter who are still schooling. We hire workers on a temporary basis. I have been unwell recently, so it is mostly my wife that does the work. Farming like this is my dream, and if I get the resources I plan to develop the farm.

SUCCESS GROUP 3

AG – Edenvale, Mwenezi cluster (A1 villagized). I was born in 1966, the daughter of headman Gezani. I was married to a businessman in Chikombedzi, but he passed away. I suffered a lot bringing up my children following the death of my husband. Most of the cattle were distributed to his other wives, and I had very little. However, the few animals I got paved the way for a new life. The land reform programme was a great boost, and I soon joined the land invasions. My old home is still nearby, and

I keep good connections. But I have worked hard on my new land and cleared 6 hectares. Rain is the biggest problem in this area, but I have good soils and have been getting good crops. These can pay for school fees for my two daughters. I now have my own place. I am free from others and can do my own farming.

EM – Wondedzo Extension, Masvingo cluster (A1 self-contained). I have married two wives, each now with one young child. I am also staying with three brothers and a sister. There was no land for me at my home area, so resettlement was a good option. When we came to this place we had nothing. We now have one donkey and one goat, and I have bought a bicycle too. We now produce good crops, and we can send food to our relatives at our original home. I also do some clay pot making which gets a bit of extra money. Now we eat well and have better clothes. In the future I want to become a Master Farmer, and help my young brothers and sister go to school.

PP – Northdale, Gutu cluster (A2). I live in town where I work for the Vehicle Inspection Department. I have three houses in Masvingo, but I was keen to have a farm. I do not have any connections to the rural areas, as I have always been in town. So in 2000 I applied for land and got my plot at Northdale. It is 278 hectares in size, but is not yet developed. I have not had the resources. I have five cattle on the plot and have cleared 6 hectares. We have employed some temporary labour to farm, but the yields have been poor. Last year I did not plant anything, as I could not get hold of inputs and there are so many animals that come and destroy the crops. My eldest daughter stays at the plot and manages the farm. She grows a few vegetables and does some trading in the area. I stay with my wife and younger children who go to school in Masvingo. Hopefully in the future the farm will take off.

From the 120 biographies collected, these cases offer some inevitably limited glimpses of the processes of reproduction, accumulation and differentiation at play across the resettlements. Some are accumulating (notably those in SG1 and to some extent SG2); mostly through surpluses from agriculture, but also through patronage (as in the case of SM, who was allocated substantial land as a reward for leading the invasions). Others are struggling, barely creating a subsistence livelihood from farming, and selling their labour or engaging in off-farm income earning, sometimes illegally (such as hunting). Still others have other options, such as PP with a job in town, and so are not investing significantly in their new land assets. Some women, such as AG, have seen the option of resettlement as ‘paving the way for a new life’, escaping oppression and poverty elsewhere. Other

Table 4.2: Socio-economic differentiation by study site and success group (SG).

	A1 villagized			A1 self-contained			A1 informal			A2		
	SG1	SG2	SG3	SG1	SG2	SG3	SG1	SG2	SG3	SG1	SG2	SG3
Age of household	41	39	38	38	38	36	42	36	30	44	44	47
Educational level of household head	Grade 7	Form 2	Form 2	Form 2	Form 2	Form 2	Grade 7	Grade 7	Grade 7	Form 3 or better	Form 3 or better	Form 3 or better
Land holding (ha)	4.8	4.3	4.5	37.1	33.3	32.5	7.0	6.7	6.7	182.5	126.8	153.1
Area cropped (ha)	3.8	3.3	3.2	9.9	6.0	5.7	5.9	4.9	2.8	11.3	12.4	8.1
Cattle owned (numbers)	6.8	4.3	2.7	15.4	6.9	6.2	12.2	3.3	0.8	48.5	24.5	8.9
Maize output in 2006 (kg)	3,466	2,593	2,105	9,900	3,480	2,695	2,626	1,863	1,006	25,150	2,914	6,100
Sales, GMB and local (kg, 2006)	1,968	1,319	1,076	7,302	1,950	1,305	632	142	196	19,550	1,477	4,375
Percentage owning a scotch cart	65	50	55	79	46	33	53	50	21	29	48	27
House type (percentage with tin/asbestos roof)	51	48	54	35	48	48	53	54	67	71	78	58
Percentage receiving remittance	41	33	21	43	46	43	26	29	35	29	27	31

Source: Survey data, 2007-08 (Scoones et al., 2010: 222)

Table 4.3: A livelihood typology for new resettlement households in Masvingo province

Livelihood d	Livelihood strategy	Total			Livelihood description	
		A2	A1 self- contained	A1 villagised		
N=		54	72	159	75	360
Dropping out (10.0%)	Exits	3.7%	2.8%	4.4%	6.7%	4.4%
	Chronically poor, destitute	0.0%	1.4%	4.4%	5.3%	3.3%
	Ill-health	0.0%	1.4%	3.8%	1.3%	2.2%
Hanging in (33.6%)	Asset poor farming	1.9%	16.7%	16.4%	33.3%	17.8%
	Keeping the plot	11.1%	15.3%	8.8%	8.0%	10.3%
	Straddling	0.0%	1.4%	10.1%	4.0%	5.6%
Stepping out (21.4%)	Survival diversification	0.0%	2.8%	1.9%	6.7%	2.8%
	Local off-farm activities	5.6%	1.4%	7.5%	4.0%	5.3%
	Reliance on remittances from within Zimbabwe	0.0%	2.8%	9.4%	1.3%	5.0%
	Reliance on stable remittances from outside	0.0%	0.0%	5.0%	10.7%	4.4%
	Cell phone farmers	16.7%	6.9%	0.0%	0.0%	3.9%
Stepping up (35.0%)	<i>Hurudza</i>	0.0%	26.4%	22.0%	16.0%	18.3%
	Part-time farmers	33.3%	11.1%	6.3%	2.7%	10.6%
	New (semi) commercial farmers	22.2%	6.9%	0.0%	0.0%	4.7%
	Farming from patronage	5.6%	2.8%	0.0%	0.0%	1.4%

Source: from Scoones et al.,

women have established thriving businesses, linked to agricultural activities (e.g. milk selling) or access to new resources (e.g. palm mat making). Relations between new and old homes remain important, with transfers of food, labour and income. Those accumulating are employing labour, sometimes permanently (often relatives from nearby areas) and sometimes temporarily (often poorer SG3 households in the schemes). The overall image is a complex dynamic of rapidly changing social and economic relations. By looking at the different livelihood strategies linked to different success groups, the beginnings of a livelihood typology can be developed, as explored in the following section.

LIVELIHOOD TRANSITIONS AND PATTERNS OF DIFFERENTIATION

How, then, can we classify these often highly individualized, context-specific experiences in a way that makes sense of emerging patterns of differentiation and class formation across the sites? Previous work on livelihoods in rural Zimbabwe has offered various livelihood typologies. For example, Chimhowu (2002) and Chimhowu and Hulme (2006) offer five broad categories based on work in the frontier lands of northern Zimbabwe, both on formal and spontaneous resettlement sites. These include 'back-foot' strategies, pursued by chronically poor households, without productive assets and no external support, who are often candidates for exit; 'crisis' strategies, involving households with a semi-subsistence farming strategy and who are often casualties of retrenchment or HIV/AIDS; 'survivalist' strategies, followed by vulnerable, non-poor households of average wealth who have secure livelihoods in good seasons, but are vulnerable during bad ones; and two types of 'accumulation' strategy, the first being farmers with assets and savings, focusing on agriculture, a high-risk strategy that works as long as rains fall and markets function, and the second being village entrepreneurs who base their livelihoods on the buying and selling of agricultural commodities, and local business activity. Echoing this classification, a more generic livelihood typology has also been proposed by Dorward (2009) and Dorward et al. (2009). This emphasizes the dynamic changes and wider aspirations of households, contrasting those that are 'hanging in' (surviving, but poor – including crisis and survival strategies), 'stepping out' (diversifying away from agriculture, both locally and through migration) and 'stepping up' (accumulating locally, largely through agriculture). Mushongah (2009) has added a fourth strategy, 'dropping out', focusing on those essentially

destitute households, reliant on different forms of social protection, and often in the process of exiting.

In Table 4.3, 15 different livelihood strategies are identified, which broadly cluster into the categories of dropping out, hanging in, stepping out and stepping up. The table shows the distribution of livelihood strategies for each of the scheme types and for the sample as a whole (each column adding to 100%). Our livelihood typology is based on a detailed analysis of the transcripts of the success-ranking workshops at all sites, where 360 individual households across the sites were discussed, together with more detailed information from the 120 household and individual biographies. These different categories are linked to particular livelihood strategies, which are in turn associated with overlapping class groupings, as well as the 'success groups' (SG) discussed earlier. So, for example, within the 'hanging in' category, dominated by SG3, we have identified asset-poor farmers and those pursuing straddling livelihoods, linking farm production in the resettlement areas while maintaining a home in the communal areas. While most are perhaps best characterized as a struggling 'semi-peasantry', such farmers also show emergent features of petty commodity production. In the 'hanging in' category we also have those who are simply 'keeping the plot': not really a rural livelihood strategy at all, but an insurance for the future. In the 'stepping out' category, we have a full range of success groups, from those who are just coping through 'survival diversification', involving selling labour or being engaged in self-employed off-farm work (worker-peasants), to those who have access to off-farm work and remittances and are accumulating on farm, as part of a hybrid livelihood strategy linking town and countryside. In the 'stepping up' category, dominated by SG1, we have the *hurudza* ('the real farmers'), part-time and semi-commercial farmers. These groups are 'accumulating from below' through local petty commodity production, with a growing number who could be defined as part of an emerging rural petit bourgeoisie. Alongside these groups, we have rural entrepreneurs (successful worker-peasants) and those who are 'accumulating from above' through patronage connections.

In sum, a highly complex pattern of livelihood differentiation is observed, with hybrid class categories, defying any simple ideal-type categorization. Thus, for example, some households combine agricultural petty commodity production with employment elsewhere, linking on-farm accumulation from below with the selling of labour in urban areas in Zimbabwe or abroad. The inherently contradictory, and often unstable, character of

agricultural petty commodity production is demonstrated, as petty commodity producers are shown to be highly diverse, represented across all success groups and with multiple, divergent livelihood trajectories, including those characterized as hanging in, stepping out and stepping up.

The distribution of different livelihood types varies significantly by scheme type. A2 farmers are well represented, for example, in the new (semi-)commercial farmer group, as are part-time and so-called 'cell phone farmers'. A smaller group is identified as 'farming from patronage', deriving substantial benefits from external linkages. Those in the informal settlements have the highest percentage in the 'asset poor farming' and 'chronically poor and destitute' groups, while self-contained A1 farmers have the highest percentage in the stepping up '*hurudza*' (successful farmer) group.

Overall, the distribution of households across the broad livelihood categories shows 35 per cent 'stepping up' – on a significant upward accumulation trajectory based on farming. Most of these households were categorized as SG1 and, in the terms described above, accumulating from below, while a small minority (1.4 per cent) are accumulating from above, through patronage relationships. A further 21.4 per cent of households are also accumulating and have livelihood strategies centred on diversification ('stepping out'), and can be seen as a diverse group of 'worker-peasants', associated with both SG1 and SG2 categories. Of this group (representing the categories 'local off-farm activities' and 'reliance on remittances'), 70 per cent are also accumulating from below, linking on-farm production with off-farm income earning in different ways. Others include those who are struggling ('survival diversification'; 2.8 per cent of all households, largely SG3), as well as those 3.9 per cent of households who are 'cell phone farmers', who are not investing significantly in their farms (mostly SG1).

In sum, nearly half of all households, according to this classification, are 'accumulating from below', driven in large part by production from small-scale agriculture. Given the pessimism often associated with small-scale farming in Africa (Collier 2008) and Zimbabwe in particular (Frost et al. 2007), this result is perhaps surprising. And especially so, given that this has been occurring in a situation in which production often had to start essentially from scratch and with no external support. Our studies show that, on average, households across our sites have invested the equivalent of US\$2161 in land clearance, building, cattle, farm equipment, transport, fencing, and constructing wells and toilets (Scoones et al. 2010, 87), while government support, except for poorly targeted and often highly corrupt input programmes, has been minimal.

The proportion of these emerging 'middle farmers' is higher than that observed in the 1980s, when a boom in smallholder agricultural production occurred in the communal areas following Independence, supported by the state (Eicher 1995). Estimates then showed that only around 20 per cent of households were selling maize regularly and accumulating (Stanning 1989). Also, patterns of accumulation appear to be faster and more extensive than in the early years of the old resettlement programme initiated after Independence in 1980 (Kinsey 1999; Gunning et al. 2000). For example, in the period from 2005–6 to 2008–9, in all years but one (a major drought), a significant percentage of our sample farmers sold more than a tonne of maize (Table 4.4). This was especially apparent at the A1 sites, and among those in 'success groups' 1 and 2. And this is occurring in an area that is much more marginal in agro-ecological terms than where the 1980s 'Green

Table 4.4: The percentage of households selling more than one tonne of maize by scheme type and success group across four seasons

Scheme type	Success group	2005–6	2006–7	2007–8	2008–9
A1-self-contained	1	95.7	78.3	4.3	65.2
	2	66.7	30.8	0	25.9
	3	48.4	25.8	0	17.2
A1 villagized	1	74.1	33.3	0	31.5
	2	59.3	38.9	0	11.3
	3	52.6	33.9	0	10.7
A2	1	55.6	20	50	20
	2	33.3	33.3	0	20
	3	12.5	0	0	10
Informal	1	31.6	0	0	0
	2	8.3	0	0	0
	3	8.3	0	0	0

Source: Annual crop census, 2003–9 (N = 400) (Scoones et al. 2010, 110).

Revolution' success was focused.

There are of course, in addition, 34 per cent who are only 'hanging in' and an additional 10 per cent who are 'dropping out', including some who have already left. Over the period from settlement to 2007–8, 20 per cent of households who originally established homes had left. The main reasons for the dissolution of households were death (46 per cent of 78 such exits), finding farming difficult (18 per cent), tenure insecurity (lack of an 'offer letter' – a government permit to occupy the land) (15 per cent) and domestic problems (8 per cent). Other reasons included expulsion, movement to another plot on another scheme and community disputes (Scoones et al. 2010, 74).

Those 'hanging in', while pursuing some agriculture, were also selling their labour to the more successful 'middle farmer' group. On average, A2 farm households have employed 5.1 permanent workers and regularly employ 7.3 temporary labourers, while those households in A1 schemes and at informal resettlement sites employ on average 0.5 permanent workers and 1.9 temporary labourers (Scoones et al. 2010, 131). Over the whole sample, 45 per cent of households hire out labour (35 per cent on a temporary basis, 13 per cent more permanently and some both). Hiring out temporary labour is more common in SG3 households, mostly for local agricultural labour. People more frequently leave SG1 than SG3 households on more permanent contracts, including leaving for higher-paid employment (Table 4.5). In terms of the supply of agricultural labour, then, the main local source is SG3 households, alongside others from the communal areas and other resettlement sites. The SG1 households are more likely to contribute salaried non-agricultural labour away from the site. This confirms the class-based dynamic commented on above, with hiring in and hiring out agricultural labour within sites linked to the emerging class positions associated with different households.

Non-farm diversification ('stepping out') is significant both for processes of accumulation and for survival. Table 4.6 lists the dominant activities across all sites. Some of these are highly specialized and skilled, and are pursued by very few households (such as many craft activities), while others are more common (such as trading and off-farm employment). Off-farm employment is associated more with SG1 households and is an important driver of accumulation on farm. But most other activities do not show much differentiation between 'success groups', suggesting that the main source of accumulation for those in SG1 is agriculture, with many off-farm activities being a complement.

As already noted, within our sites there was in addition a small group

Table 4.5: Labour hiring by activity across success groups (SG)

		A1 and informal			A2
		SG1	SG2	SG3	All success groups
Seasonal, temporary labour	Percentage of households hiring in seasonal labour for clearing and ploughing	28	22	23	44
	Percentage hiring in for planting/transplanting	13	20	8	42
	Percentage hiring in for weeding	51	37	18	64
	Percentage hiring in for harvesting	31	16	13	68
	Percentage hiring in for herding	22	13	3	43
Permanent labour	Percentage of those hiring permanent labour for cropping	11	14	8	72
	Percentage hiring for livestock	14	14	0	43

Source: Survey data, 2007–8 (N = 177) (Scoones et al. 2010, 144).

reliant on processes of ‘accumulation from above’, in particular through state patronage. These included some of the cell phone farmers and those who were being continuously supported through input supply and mechanization programmes. We estimate that the total proportion of this category amounts to around 5 per cent of households at our study sites (Scoones et al. 2011). These elites own larger plots, mostly at the A2 sites, and are often allied politically to those who have been allocated land in recent years as large A2 farms outside our study areas. While not numerically large in number, nor even owning very large land areas overall, this group, as we discuss further below, is important in social and political terms, and in many respects key to the unfolding political economic dynamics in the countryside.

Of course, no typology is ever definitive, and this is inevitably a subjective interpretation of complex data. There is always variation and blurring of categories, as people move between categories over time, sometimes quite suddenly. However, a typology of this sort does highlight the significant variation in conditions and potentials of new resettlement farmers at our study sites. As the biographies clearly show, there is immense dynamism, as people move from phases of ‘stepping out’, accumulating assets through off-farm activities, to periods of ‘stepping up’,

where accumulation occurs through farming. Others suffer downward trajectories, precipitated by misfortune or ill health. The loss of a job may mean that an individual or household may shift from a 'stepping out' strategy to one that is just 'hanging in'. A poor harvest or an illness may then push them further towards 'dropping out'. And, of course, all these categories are highly gendered, with men and women often pursuing different livelihood strategies within households.

Our detailed empirical observations of diverse livelihood strategies – representing the 'many determinations and relations' of real-life experience – clearly challenge any simple, idealized categorizations, with patterns of differentiation showing huge variation (cf. Bernstein 2009, 2010). Thus 'the *tendency* to differentiation that can be identified theoretically from the contradictory unity of class in petty commodity production is not – and cannot be – evident in identical *trends*, rhythms or forms of class differentiation everywhere' (Bernstein 2010, 109; original emphases). As suggested for the critical political economy method proposed by Marx (1973) discussed earlier, there is always mediation between broader tendencies and particular patterns in different places. This makes especially powerful a situated, relational analysis of the tendencies of class formation based on differential processes of reproduction and accumulation (and so more generic categories such as petty commodity producer, worker-peasant and so on) and an analysis of the particular patterns of livelihoods (and so more detailed descriptions and typologies of actual strategies and practices – such that presented in Table 4.3, as well as the analysis of 'success groups').

Such an approach allows us to move beyond the limitations of simply descriptive assessments of livelihood types to a more analytical focus on class dynamics and agrarian political economy, while at the same time not ignoring the complex specificities of particular settings. Yet while an analysis of generalized tendencies helps us to understand some of the underlying processes, pressures and constraints producing patterns of differentiation, such a focus alone cannot, of course, account for the diverse forms that differentiation takes in a particular place. We suggest that the result of such a combined analysis, as attempted in this paper, is a richer understanding with more 'fluid boundaries' that 'defy inherited assumptions of fixed and uniform notions' of class, occupation and identity (Bernstein 2010, 111), as well as understanding longer-term trajectories of agrarian change, the subject of the next section of the paper.

Overall, therefore, across our sample we see a significant group of households accumulating from below following land reform. This includes

both an emergent rural petit bourgeoisie (accumulating assets, hiring in labour, selling surplus produce etc.) and a larger group of petty commodity producers. Some of these households are more successful than others, as, for many, a dominant focus of livelihood strategies is on reproduction, with only perhaps intermittent accumulation. Worker-peasant households, able to link off-farm income with successful agricultural production, are also evident. As discussed further in the next section, a distinction between those accumulating from below and those reliant at least in part on accumulation from above is important, given their very different nature of political and economic alliances and commitments to the land. By contrast, there are also many so-called semi-peasants and worker-peasants who often are selling their labour to others, at least on a seasonal, temporary basis, and are failing to accumulate, with many barely able to reproduce themselves. They must either leave the area or survive through often desperate means. Between these two extremes are a mixed group. Here, we see multiple class identifications, ranging from those who are on the upward track and rapidly accumulating (and so moving from petty commodity production towards being part of a rural petit bourgeois) to those who are surviving, while not doing badly, but through a variety of means (petty commodity production, off-farm diversification, employment etc.). Overall, then, emerging class dynamics in the new resettlements are complex, often highly contingent and not easy to categorize neatly; and with age, gender and ethnic differences cutting across these dimensions made even more so.

But what does all of this mean for the longer-run trajectories of agrarian change? What are the social, economic and political consequences of such rural differentiation? These questions are the focus of the next section.

THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES OF RURAL DIFFERENTIATION

Such patterns of differentiation challenge any populist pretence that all new farmers on the resettlements are somehow members of a uniform semi-subsistence peasantry or, by contrast, a fanciful vision that all have the potential to be new capitalist farmers. They also reject the dismal view of a simple crisis of labour, and a downward spiral of informality and subsistence. A more informed, empirical engagement with emerging livelihood and agrarian change dynamics is instead required.

What, then, are these emerging patterns of agrarian change, and how

do they relate to changing class formations in the Zimbabwean countryside? In the 1990s, Cousins and colleagues (1992, 21–22) argued that, despite the successes of smallholder production in the 1980s, the prospects for agricultural petty commodity producers were likely to be constrained during the 1990s by the just-emerging impacts of structural adjustment and economic reform; although a few in some areas they were likely to thrive. The expansion of a rural petit bourgeoisie in the absence of significant agrarian reform was unlikely, they argued. Structural adjustment, they suggested, was likely to hit worker-peasants hardest, with remittance flows and employment opportunities constrained. The semi-peasantry was similarly likely to be hard hit, and a growing 'feminization of poverty' in the rural areas was predicted. Alliances between worker-peasants and the semi-peasantry, with a rallying call around land reform and job creation, was, they argued, the most likely political outcome of the class dynamics of that period.

In important respects, these predictions were highly accurate. After 1997 in particular, alliances were struck across these and other groupings not yet identified in this earlier analysis and land reform was indeed the rallying point (Moyo and Yeros 2005). What a new agrarian class structure implies for the future of agrarian politics remains less clear. Alliances are often highly fragile, contradictory and always shifting. With such a diverse group of people on the new land, with complex and hybrid identities – in class, ethnic, political and other terms – simple formulae for understanding the relations emerging in the new resettlements do not exist.

Returning to the questions posed earlier, we need to explore whether land reform resulted in a 're-peasantization' of the countryside, or whether we are seeing the emergence of new capitalist forms of farming for a few, with others providing 'footloose' labour and surviving in an informal economy. Has land reform resulted in an explosion of productive activity, based on dynamic accumulation from below, with the potential to drive economic growth more broadly? Or has land reform undermined the capacity for successful capitalist production by the division of land into plots insufficient for a successful livelihood, resulting in ever-increasing cycles of poverty and destitution? Or, indeed, is there some combination of all these dynamics in play? A decade after the land reform, and in a period of substantial political and economic upheaval, it is perhaps too early to tell what agrarian economic and political dynamics will emerge in the longer term. But hints are evident. As the previous sections have shown, the new resettlements are not replicas of what has gone before. A new process of agrarian change has been unleashed, although its directions and

Table 4.6: Non-farm income earning across the study sites

Activity	% of household s engaged in activity	% of women	Of those engaged			
			% in SG1	% in SG3	% of households with head below average age (45 years)	% of households with head with educational level above average (8 years)
Building and carpentry	3	0	50	33	33	33
Brick-making and thatching	6	43	40	40	22	33
Fishing	3	56	17	50	33	33
Wood-carving	1	0	50	0	100	0
Tailoring	3	29	60	20	40	60
Transport business	2	100	33	0	50	50
Grinding mills	1	33	50	50	100	0
Pottery- and basket-making	16	62	28	34	57	21
Trading	18	59	29	29	44	50
Employment off farm	16	28	39	21	44	71

Source: Survey data, 2007–8 (N = 177) (Scoones et al. 2010, 170).

consequences remain highly uncertain. The political and economic alliances that will be struck in the coming years will define whether an emerging group of ‘middle’ farmers and entrepreneurs – representing, as indicated above, around half of all households in our sample – will be able to help transform the rural economy, or whether older patterns of dualism, with new elites in the driving seat, will be re-imposed.

Certainly, while numerically small, the elites, reliant in recent years on accumulation from above, exert disproportionate influence, and may yet

act to upset or frustrate the energetic entrepreneurialism of others. The influence of the military–political elite in all areas of the Zimbabwean economy is very apparent. By capturing important land and agriculture assets, particularly in the Highveld, but also in other parts of the country, a very powerful grouping has emerged, reliant on political patronage, but also with growing independent wealth, derived from the land and mineral assets that they have appropriated (Raftopoulos 2009).⁹ These individuals, linked to powerful economic actors and political interests, reside in the new large A2 farms, the estates and the conservancies (Moyo 2011a; see footnote 3, above); right alongside the other resettlement areas, which are dominated, as we have seen, by a middle farmer group, making a success of farming through accumulation from below. While the old dualism of the past has not returned, some of the tensions that existed from the colonial era and throughout the first 30 years of independence remain. Rooted in different interests, different visions are projected of what farming is for and what farms should be like, and this is in turn translated into policy framings and support structures (Cousins and Scoones, 2010). While a much smaller bloc than the large-scale white commercial farmers of the past, will these new powerful agrarian interests impose their vision and perspectives, and so garner policy support, in a similarly effective way in the future?

Some new alliances are already being struck between the new black elite on the land and former white commercial farmers, through contract farming arrangements, consultancies and management arrangements. Will the effective organization and political lobbying power of the white farming community, which proved so massively successful right into the 1990s (Herbst 1990), be recaptured by a new alliance of elite interests that cuts across the racial divide, arguing that a resuscitation of the commercial farm economy, and the reimposition of a dualistic structure, is the only way in which Zimbabwean agriculture, ‘the backbone of the economy’, can be revived on an efficient basis, able to operate in a globalized economy with important regional competitors?

This is a powerful and well-rehearsed argument. But on the ground we also have another dynamic emerging on the new resettlements. In earlier sections, we have described the successes of especially the A1 and informal settlers (and some A2 farmers) – and particularly a significant group of ‘middle farmers’. This we have described in terms of ‘accumulation from below’: local investment and local gains through petty commodity production. Can this provide the basis for solid economic growth in the longer term, feeding the urban areas, generating employment and added-value economic linkages, as well as providing subsistence for the increasing

numbers of rurally based people? Our data suggest that the prospects are actually quite bright, even though limited availability of finance in the past decade has prevented the emergence of a significant capitalist class of farmer – whether on the A2 or A1 self-contained sites. However, such setbacks may be only temporary, and patterns of investment by some – and shifting labour relations – identify the emergence of a group of petty commodity producers and some rural petit bourgeoisie. Will these ‘middle farmers’ on the new resettlements – younger, better educated and more connected politically and economically than their counterparts in the communal and earlier resettlement areas – be able to forge an effective, organised group, able to make claims on state support, against the interests of the small, but powerful, elite?

Currently, resettlement farmers are not organised in any sense. Having invaded the land, or having had it allocated to them by the state, they are often highly divided, with few organizational ties beyond those operating at the very local level (Murisa 2011). But as a large group they are a significant part of the electorate and, although with different interests (say, between a villager in an informal scheme and someone with an A2 farm), they do have some common ones, particularly in opposition to the capture of land and resources by a corrupt elite. However, the direction of any longer-term transition will be highly dependent on the resolution of some key politically charged considerations, and in particular the emergence of a form of land administration and tenure that provides tenure security.¹⁰ While a reversion to individualized freehold tenure may be inappropriate, a guaranteed leasehold or permit system that allows for long-term investment and the emergence of a land market to allow some to drop out and others to accumulate will have to be part of the solution if a longer-term dynamic of ‘accumulation from below’ is to be sustained.

And where do the 44 per cent of households in the ‘hanging in’ and ‘dropping out’ categories fit into this picture? Will they be able, with the right support and incentives, to accumulate in the future and join this class of ‘middle farmers’? Or will they drop out from farming as a core livelihood strategy? Will they instead supply the labour for emergent capitalist farmers, and so transform into a new rural proletariat, servicing elite capitalist interests as in the past? Or will they move into non-farm work, adding value to local production, and so contributing to a new local economic regeneration, rooted in local accumulation from below? Or will they, as some assume, become destitute and require external support and protection, as their new farming enterprises fail?

Of course, there is no crystal ball that can show which way things will go,

but our findings from Masvingo province certainly suggest that the countryside will remain the site of political and economic contest for some time to come. Clearly, the outcome is highly dependent on the wider political struggles at the centre and the restructuring of the Zimbabwean state, and hence on the way in which alliances are struck within and between political formations. At the moment, the 'securocrat' political elite, linked to key elements of ZANU-PF, have the upper hand, offering liberal doses of nationalist rhetoric about the benefits of redistributive land reform, but at the same time capturing land and other resources for themselves. Yet, despite the strong association of land reform areas with ZANU-PF, especially in the early years, there is greater ambivalence today towards the party. Across the then eight constituencies represented in our sites, only one voted for the opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), in 2000 and 2005 (the largely urban Masvingo Central), but seven out of the 15 new constituencies voted for the opposition in the highly contested 2008 elections (Scoones et al. 2010, 29). Future elections may yet offer new patterns.

However, if any opposition movement, emerging through whatever alliances that are struck within and between parties, is to gain any purchase, and broader rural support, it will certainly have to develop a more convincing narrative about land, agriculture and rural livelihoods than has been offered to date. Beyond the rhetoric, no one, from any political party, appears to acknowledge the importance – in both economic and political terms – of the emergent middle farmer group, who have now been carving out their livelihoods with some success on the resettlements for more than a decade. In addition to the wider political struggles, how this group fares in the future will also be highly dependent on the future dynamics of the national economy. With some degree of economic stability, economic opportunities are once again emerging, and formal employment may again become more attractive than farming to those with the requisite skills and experience. The process of re-agrarianization may, as a result, be reversed as some leave the farms that they acquired a decade ago; a process that could act to dilute the economic success of the new resettlements, and forms of investment and accumulation that have occurred, along with the potentials for political voice and influence.

CONCLUSION

Of course, only time will tell who will win and who will lose from this political competition between these still-forming class-based groupings

and interests. This paper has examined the highly differentiated tapestry on which this process will be played out in Masvingo province. As the paper has shown, there is much differentiation within and between the new resettlement areas, and these exist within a radically reconfigured overall agrarian structure. Following land reform, new livelihoods were created, in turn generating new processes of class formation, inflected by gender, age and ethnic differences. These processes are ongoing, but they suggest the emergence of a significant and successful 'middle farmer' group, reliant on 'accumulation from below'. In addition, there are others who are accumulating, but from above, through patronage and corrupt practices. While small in number, this group has significant political and economic influences, and is embedded in powerful alliances that have fundamental impacts on the wider political-economic dynamics. In addition, there are those who are struggling – a significant group – whose livelihoods remain vulnerable and whose prospects for accumulation are limited on the resettlements.

A clear message emerging from this analysis is the need to support flexibility and dynamism, and to avoid the dangers of locking people into particular livelihood options by virtue of their status, location or through unnecessary and restrictive planning or administrative frameworks. If the changes unleashed by land reform are to generate wider, longer-term benefits, processes of accumulation from below must be supported – both those 'stepping up' into more productive agriculture, and those 'stepping out', generating surpluses through linking on- and off-farm enterprises. While the wider benefits of land reform should not be ignored, those who are unable to benefit from new land should be allowed to seek alternatives. As rural economies grow, this may involve farm-based employment, or it may involve engaging in non-farm enterprises. For some, exit through migration elsewhere may be a better option, releasing land for others who can make use of it.

At this juncture, however, multiple futures are possible in the Zimbabwean countryside, representing some key political and economic choices, which to date remain largely unexplored – and, as a result, not debated (although see Cliffe et al. 2011). Will the future bring a rural revival driven by accumulation from below by a strongly organised and politically influential group of 'middle farmers' (both petty commodity producers and a small group of rural petit bourgeoisie), allied to worker-peasants and semi-subsistence producers, and resident (largely) in the rural areas, and particularly the new resettlements? Or will a new form dualism be reimposed, driven by a new elite, allied to the state, business interests

and foreign investors, through the scaling up of A2 farms to recreate a large-scale commercial farming sector under a new ownership structure, in turn squeezing those struggling to accumulate, but unable to benefit from state patronage and support?

The data presented in this paper – from one province across multiple sites and over a turbulent decade – therefore offer some insights into the options, trajectories and choices, but ones that remain highly uncertain, contingent and contested.

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NOTES

- ¹ Including daily reproduction (maintaining the means of production and levels of consumption) and generational reproduction (raising the next generation of family labour) (Bernstein, 2010).
- ² See, for example, 'the method of political economy' in Marx's *Grundrisse* (Marx 1973: 101).
- ³ The ownership of these farms was varied. They were black-owned, white-owned, church-owned (especially the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe, the Apostolic Faith Mission, the Zion Christian Church, the African Independent Churches and the Catholic Church) and state institutions – especially the Agricultural Rural Development Authority (ARDA) and the Cold Storage Company (CSC).
- ⁴ In 2009, for example, three farms (3,000 ha) in Gutu, seven farms (18,400 ha) in Masvingo and ten farms (22,900 ha) in Mwenezi district were acquired, including some under bilateral investment treaties.
- ⁵ See <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/safari-operators-enraged-as-zanupf-rewards-the-faithful-with-stolen-share-of-lucrative-trade-1786869.html> (accessed 20 May 2011).
- ⁶ This has involved deals between ZANU-PF politicians, reputedly at the highest level, and the notorious businessman Billy Rautenbach, who is investing in a sugar plantation and an ethanol plant, alongside various wildlife enterprises, including crocodile farming, on the DTZ ranch. This has resulted in an intense political struggle between informal settlers, local politicians and the investors. See, for example: <http://www.zimbabwemetro.com/news/rautenbachpercentE2percent80percent99s-links-to-zanu-pf-reap-rewards-for-him-and-misery-for-25-families-on-nuanetsi-ranch/>; <http://www.theindependent.co.zw/local/24785-party-bigwigs-locked-in-nuanetsi-ranch-turf-war.html>; <http://www.thezimbabwean.co.uk/2010010927709/sunday-top-stories/nkomo-orders-war-vets-off-nuanetsi.html> (accessed 20 May 2011).

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- ⁷ At Mkwesine, 3,871 ha of the 4,880 ha were allocated under the FTLRP, leaving only about 442 ha to the estate. Hippo Valley Estate was less targeted, with most of the land taken being that of outgrowers who bought the farms from the estate in the 1960s. Hippo Valley estate still has 19,917 ha of cane land. Triangle Limited was largely unaffected, and still has 21,553 ha of land (Sierevogel et al. 2007; <http://www.hulets.co.za/au/introduction.asp>).
- ⁸ The smallholder farming resettlement model, A1, is divided into 'villagized' schemes that have individual allocations of land for arable, settlements in village areas and communal grazing land, and 'self-contained' schemes that involve the allocation of individual farm plots. 'Informal' settlements are those where land invasions took place and people settled on farms, but settlers have not been formally allocated land, and issued 'offer letters' or 'permits to occupy' under the Fast Track Land Reform Programme.
- ⁹ This includes the involvement of a well-connected political–military elite in the mining sector, profiting from the commodity boom and the discovery of new deposits, notably of diamonds.
- ¹⁰ This includes the thorny issues of a land audit to assure compliance with land ceiling and multiple holding regulations and compensation for those whose land has been taken through the land reform. While tentative moves have been made, some form of compensation for 'land improvements' will have to be brokered before uncontested leases can be issued.

5

MEDIUM-SCALE COMMERCIAL AGRICULTURE IN ZIMBABWE: THE EXPERIENCE OF A2 RESETTLEMENT FARMS

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INTRODUCTION

Across Africa, the size structure of farms is changing, with an increasing proportion of medium-scale farms (Jayne et al. 2016). This is having profound implications for the patterns of agrarian accumulation and the possibilities of commercialisation. In Ghana and Zambia, for example, medium-scale farms now account for more land area than small-scale farms, defined as cultivating under five hectares (Sitko & Chamberlin 2015; Jayne et al. 2016).

Land concentration in medium-scale farms, under new ownership and land tenure arrangements, occurs through different routes – either through accumulation of land by those who earlier had smaller plots via local land markets, or acquisition of land by ‘outsiders’ through political and other connections. In Zimbabwe, the emergence of a medium-scale farm sector is linked to land reform after 2000, which created around 23,000 additional medium-scale farms (ranging in size from c. 10 ha to over a thousand hectares, averaging 153 ha). These land reform resettlement

farms (denoted A2) account for 3.5 million hectares, nearly 9% of the area of all agricultural landholdings (Moyo 2011: 498).

This paper explores the origins and implications of these medium-scale farms in Zimbabwe, asking how they fit into the post-land reform agrarian structure, who the owners are, what they produce and sell and how they are differentiated. As a now major, but poorly understood, part of the agricultural economy, the aim is evaluate the A2 farm experience against the wider story of the rise of medium-scale farms in Africa more broadly, examining in particular the processes of differentiation among such farms, and so the diverse trajectories of change observed.

Farm size distributions in agrarian economies matter, as they influence overall patterns of inequality, the opportunities for accumulation and the potential linkage effects between farm sectors in regional economies (Sitko & Jayne 2012). Agrarian structure also often reflects rural political settlements, with different agrarian classes linked to farms of different sizes (Moyo 2011; Scoones 2015). In former settler economies, land reforms have been focused on overturning a highly unequal land distribution, creating new opportunities for both smallholders and 'emergent' commercial farmers.

In Zimbabwe, land reform was aimed at transforming the former dualistic structure, creating a 'tri-modal' structure (Moyo & Chambati 2013). This involves small-scale farms, including communal areas, as well as old and new (A1) resettlement areas (total 1.3 million farms, over 25.8 million ha), medium-scale farms (A2 farms, plus older small-scale commercial farming areas, total 31,200 farms, over 4.4 million ha) and large commercial farms and estates (total 1,618 farms, over 2.6 million ha) (Moyo 2011: 512).¹

Medium-scale farms are crucial in this new agrarian structure. They are neither small-scale, often subsistence-oriented peasant farms, nor are they large-scale, highly capitalised farms and estates, sometimes owned by multinational capital. Previously, black-owned, medium-scale farms were created as 'Purchase Areas' from the 1930s (Cheater 1984), but the extent was limited. Today, medium-scale farms in Zimbabwe, as defined by the A2 'model', are mostly sufficiently large that they offer the opportunities for commercialised agriculture, involving mechanisation, the employment of a permanent workforce, the use of high levels of 'modern' inputs and the generation of substantial market offtake. All this requires capitalisation and regular flows of finance, as well as considerable skill in both production and marketing. Of intermediate scale, embedded in regions where smallholder farming dominates, they take on a new role in regional economies, potentially offering support for equipment sharing, labour

employment and market assistance.

This is the theory at least and was the driving inspiration behind Zimbabwe's resettlement planning from the 1990s. This paper explores the practice, nearly 20 years after the land reform of 2000, asking whether such medium-scale farms offer a vision of the future of commercial agriculture, as some claim based on studies elsewhere in Africa, or whether in fact there are more diverse trajectories of change emerging, with some succeeding, while others struggle.

STUDY AREA AND METHODS

This study was undertaken in Mvurwi, a high-potential area to the north of Harare, and Gutu and Masvingo districts in Masvingo province, in the drier south-east of the country. The study focused exclusively on those farms designated as A2 during the 'fast-track' land reform programme. The study therefore does not adopt the size classifications used in other recent studies of medium-scale farms, which rather arbitrarily designate medium-scale to be any farm above five hectares and below 100 hectares (e.g. Jayne et al. 2016).² Nor does it include farms that are medium-scale operations, such as those designated as self-contained A1 (smallholder) farms or former 'Purchase Areas' (Scoones et al. 2018a).

In each of the study regions, a full list of A2 farms was compiled. This had to rely on a variety of sources, given the sensitivity of the data. A government audit of all A2 farms undertaken in 2006 was also used, along with data held by the then ministries of land and agriculture. We also cross-checked these listings with farmers, extension officers and government officials in the field. There has been a large turnover in A2 areas, with take-overs, inheritances and subdivisions affecting farm owner listings, making establishing a sampling frame especially challenging.

From these comprehensive listings, we collected basic census data for all farms, including date of settlement, farm size, main farm activities and former/current non-farm occupations.³ The listings were then used to draw a random sample in each site. In the end, the sample was 39 farms in Mvurwi (19% of A2 farms in the area), reduced because of drop-outs, and 51 across the Masvingo-Gutu sites (21% of farms). Our sample was broadly representative of the wider population, in terms of land area, focal activities and occupations of the farm owners, as indicated by an analysis of census results. A random sample, however, presented problems for data collection given the dispersed geography of the farms and the frequent

absence of farm owners, and the survey took a long time to implement. A short questionnaire survey,⁴ combined with in-depth interviews with owners/managers/workers, was conducted with all sampled cases. In both sites, the sample overlapped with earlier surveys undertaken in 2006–07, allowing some limited analysis across time.⁵

A preliminary stratification into three categories was generated, based on the survey data. Sample households were ranked according to the average of maize and tobacco (for Mvurwi only) output for the 2016–18 seasons, as well as cattle ownership in 2017. These variables were chosen following discussions with farmers, who confirmed that these were the most significant factors that differentiated farms. A composite ranking was created and then the full listing was divided into three, as there were no obvious breaks in the data distributions. While a simple division into three equal groups means that the distinctions between the bottom of one group and the top of the next are not significant, the overall categorisation correlated well with a range of other variables (relating to income, marketing, asset ownership and other indicators of agricultural commercialisation; see Tables I–IV), even though the distribution of values overlap, as indicated by often wide ranges. The broad correlation between indicators gave us confidence in this initial categorisation, and so the stratification of the survey data. However, to gain a deeper insight into processes of differentiation and accumulation, the farmer categorisation and the associated survey results must be taken together with the other more qualitative data from particular cases, which were collected through interviews in each site.

As we discuss below, while there are broad trends and tendencies highlighted by the three farmer categories, there are other cases that are outliers. For example, some who engage in particular ‘projects’, may generate significant income, say from broiler production, but may not be ranked highly in relation to crop income and cattle ownership. The advantage of a small sample size of course is that we know each of the cases well, and the story that emerges below – including the identification of ‘projects’, such as broiler production, as a key commercialisation strategy – derives from a triangulation of insights, with the three categories only being a useful starting point. To complement the survey and case study interviews, we therefore conducted 20 more detailed follow-up interviews with farmers and farmworkers selected purposively in both sites and across the three categories, focusing on farm and household biographies, and so changes over time.

In addition to our core sample, we also undertook seven studies of joint-

Table 5.2: Previous/current occupations of farm owners.

Farmers categories	Mvurwi				Masvingo-Gutu			
	1	2	3	Overall	1	2	3	Overall
Communal area farmer	8	23	23	18	12	6	29	16
Farmerworker	8	0	0	3	6	0	0	2
Urban employed	54	38	31	41	6	24	6	12
Civil servant	0	8	23	10	65	24	18	35
Security services	15	23	15	18	0	6	24	10
Self-employed businessperson	8	0	8	8	0	24	12	12
Other	7	8	0	2	11	16	11	13

venture A2 farms in Mvurwi; these included farms operated both by Chinese companies and those managed by displaced white farmers. As discussed later, a simple classification of ‘commercial’, ‘aspiring’ and ‘struggling’ farmers emerged through an interpretation of the data. While broadly centred on the three categories derived from our survey data, the classification takes into account other factors. It focuses less on the static patterns of agricultural output and asset ownership, but more on the dynamics of change, linked to ongoing processes of social differentiation, accumulation and class formation, in turn offering insights on the emergent politics in Zimbabwe’s post-land reform countryside as influenced by medium-scale A2 farms.

A NEW AGRARIAN STRUCTURE: WHO ARE THE MEDIUM-SCALE FARMERS?

The A2 model was proposed as part of the 1998 land policy, with land allocated mostly during 2001–2, as part of the ‘fast-track’ land reform programme. The new farm structure reflected a commitment to supporting commercial agriculture outside remaining large-scale farms and estates. Allocations of medium-scale farms represented a political class compromise by the party-state to help satisfy land demands from the middle class (mostly professionals, including many civil servants) and party-

military-business elites (members of the security forces, as well as businesspeople and ruling party officials). While land demands of mostly poorer people involved in land invasions were met under the A1 scheme, the A2 resettlement areas targeted a different group (Moyo & Chambati 2013).

One frequently heard narrative about land reform in Zimbabwe is that it was captured by 'cronies', with allegedly over half the land taken by ZANU-PF officials.⁶ However, such claims are disputed, as research shows how the A1 smallholder resettlement areas were largely occupied by landless/land-poor peasants from nearby communal areas and un/underemployed people from urban areas (Moyo et al. 2009; Scoones et al. 2010; Matondi 2012). Within the A2 medium-scale farm areas, there is a mixed population, which includes well-connected elites, but nowhere near to the extent claimed.

Officially, applicants for A2 farms had to present a business plan and show they had the necessary experience and sufficient capital before allocation. However, political factors did intervene and this technocratic allocation process could be overridden through influence on provincial and district land committees (Marongwe 2011). Subsequent to initial allocations, rearrangements were sometimes forced, particularly around election times, with this rising to a peak before the contested elections of 2008, when political favours were granted and scores settled. Those with significant influence – notably government ministers and high-ranking military officers – were also able to break the land-ceiling regulations and the ban on multiple holdings. However, as our data show, these instances were rare. War veterans were notionally given preferential access, with 20% of farms supposedly reserved for them (Matondi 2012: 64). However, most only managed to gain access to A1 farms, as they helped lead invasions, and it was usually only war veteran association leaders and officials who were allocated A2 plots.

The result is a diverse population on the A2 farms, as we explore below. How does this match up to the pattern seen elsewhere in Africa? Studies from Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Malawi, Tanzania and Zambia (Sitko & Chamberlin 2015; Anseeuw et al. 2016; Jayne et al. 2016; Hall et al. 2017; Muyanga et al. 2019), for example, show that medium-scale farms emerge both through land consolidation in an area, as locals buy out smaller farmers, and through the purchase of blocks of land from outside. This is sometimes combined with state-directed redistribution, and assistance with settlement. Those occupying such farms include both active and retired civil servants, investing salaries and pensions in farms; businesspeople, with urban enterprises, but a desire to extend commercial activities to agriculture; as well as councillors, chiefs, politicians and others

with connections. Patronage politics and processes of 'accumulation from above' are common (Mamdani 1987), and such farms represent the fast-changing political and commercial interests in agriculture across Africa (Morris et al. 2009).

How does this compare with A2 medium-scale farms in Zimbabwe? Table 5.1 offers profiles of the farmers in our sample, comparing the two sites. It shows that household heads are mostly men and relatively old, more so in Mvurwi where the average age was around 60. The younger average age of the farm owners in Masvingo-Gutu reflects a process of inheritance since settlement, as many original occupants have died and farms have been passed on to sons and wives, indicated by the higher proportions of female-head owners. Most farm owners had completed secondary education, and over half in Mvurwi had completed an agricultural qualification (concentrated in category 1 households), including 'Master Farmer' certificates and agricultural diplomas, especially among those previously working as extension agents. Some had university degrees, even one MSc in agricultural economics. Others also had specific tobacco-related qualifications, gained at the nearby Blackfordby College. The lower level of agricultural qualification in Masvingo-Gutu reflects the turnover in household heads, as sons and wives of the original owners had not pursued such courses, even if the original owner had gained access to the land on the back of such qualifications.

The patterns of residence are quite different. In Mvurwi, over two-thirds of household heads were based on the farm (all of those in category 2), even though nearly three-quarters also had houses in town (usually Harare, 100 km away), especially those in category 1. This relates to the intensity of production (often of tobacco) and the need for regular, on-site supervision. This pattern has changed since 2000, as farmers have retired from jobs, and moved to engage in farming. Many realised that 'cell-phone' farming does not necessarily deliver. In Masvingo-Gutu, by contrast, only a third are based on their farms full-time, although this rises to just over a half among category 1 farmers. Partly this is due to the lack of infrastructure in many of the Masvingo-Gutu farming areas, making it difficult to settle for families used to the relative comforts of town life. It also relates to the nature of production in low-potential agro-ecological regions, with many operating extensive cattle ranches, which require less supervision and so the possibilities of managing the farm through weekend visits.

Table 5.2 indicates the previous/current occupations of A2 farmers across the sites. The narrative that these farms were captured by 'cronies' is not supported. That said, those in the 'security services' category, including

those employed by the police, army and Central Intelligence Organisation, were often able to manipulate the application process and gain access to land. Those with jobs, current or past, in the security services were more common in Mvurwi (18% compared with 10%), which is closer to Harare and has more desirable land. Civil servants were especially common in Masvingo-Gutu, concentrated in category 1, and included many teachers/headmasters, health professionals, agricultural extension officers, veterinarians and others, including those working in local government. Some of these individuals were able to manipulate the system too, especially if they also had a political position, but many simply applied and met the criteria.

Those defined as urban employed were the dominant category in Mvurwi, again especially concentrated in category 1, and included those cutting across a range of jobs outside the civil service. This again reflects the proximity of the site to Harare, where those jobs are more common. Most had applied through the formal routes, demonstrating a business plan and a level of capital available. Jobs included those in private sector companies, NGOs, charities and churches. Again, some were able to influence allocations through political connections, but this was very much the minority. Those defined as self-employed business people were present in both sites, and include those working locally, frequently in nearby towns, often in transport firms, restaurants/bars and retail shops. In addition, there were a few former farmworkers in both sites, who, having been displaced from farms by the land invasions in 2000, applied for land; perhaps surprisingly all within category 1, possibly reflecting their high skills at farming and so higher output.

Finally, there were politicians. There were no serving politicians in our random samples, but there were cases within the whole population, including several retired ministers, one now late Vice-President and some MPs, current and past, as well as a few with political posts in the ruling party. All these, we suspect, gained land outside the formal application procedure. Political favours do not necessarily last, however, and there were several cases where high-ranking figures were removed in both sites. Data on political party affiliation cannot be collected because of sensitivities, but most resettlement areas, as with the rural areas of the country in general, have consistently voted for ZANU-PF. That said, there are plenty of opposition supporters in these areas too, who will 'perform' being ruling party members to avoid retribution (Mkodzongi 2013).

Across these groups, 31% and 18% identified as war veterans in Mvurwi and Masvingo-Gutu respectively. This category is a flexible one, and

includes many who were war collaborators, rather than liberation war fighters. However, the data show the continuing influence of the 'war veteran' identity in political processes in Zimbabwe. War veterans appear across all occupation groups, except for farmworkers. Since demobilisation after Independence, they have taken up diverse jobs, many returning to farming in their original communal areas.

In sum, the A2 farms are populated by a hugely diverse group of people, with different identities, occupations and affiliations. While certainly existing, so-called cronyism does not dominate, and the population is the result of a combination of allocation processes: some formal and technocratic, others based on political position and patronage. As already discussed, the overall composition is actually very similar to that recorded in the other studies of medium-scale farms elsewhere in Africa.

In class terms, we observe an influential, but numerically relatively small, group of business-political-military elites, combined with a much larger professional middle class (often former and current civil servants), together with urban-based, well-networked business people, and some former peasant farmers from communal areas and a few former farmworkers. People's identities are complicated by political affiliations, historical associations with the liberation war and also regional and local alliances, including with influential churches. For example, in the wider census in Masvingo-Gutu, there were five farmers who were officials of the ruling party-aligned Apostolic Faith Mission church, including a bishop and several pastors.

However, to understand the class dynamics emerging in the A2 areas, we cannot rely on these simple assignments of occupation or affiliation; indeed, class formation and emerging relations are highly dynamic, and have changed significantly over the last 20 years. Therefore, in the next sections, we focus on processes of accumulation and differentiation across farms, and ask the key questions of critical agrarian studies, following Bernstein (2010): who owns what, who does what, who gets what and what do they do with it?

SETTLEMENT AND BUILDING ASSETS FOR AGRICULTURE

Most farmers in our sample got allocated land in 2002. The A2 allocations followed on from the land invasions, which subsequently became A1 resettlement schemes. The sub-division of large farms into A2 plots involved more planning, as attempts were made to distribute land and farm

assets in ways that a single operational farm could emerge. There were disputes over who got what, with some rejecting their allocations, while others contested allocations of farmhouses and other desirable assets. In Mvurwi area, the issue of control over and responsibility for farm labour compounds was contentious, with some welcoming access to labour from a nearby compound, often housing several hundred former farm worker families, while others mentioned in interviews that the presence of such populations was a liability, blaming them for thefts, disruption and refusing to work. It was a turbulent period, and initially little farming was carried out.

Even when disputes cooled off and new patterns of labour hiring and control were negotiated, establishing a farm required considerable investment of time, money and skill. With land audits always on the horizon, assuring occupancy and some level of activity was always important. This sometimes meant the placing of a few workers or relatives to hold the farm, while resources were mobilised. For those who gained farms with previously cultivated land, it was possible to move into production relatively quickly; for others it was more challenging. For tobacco, Chinese finance through contracting arrangements was essential (Mukwereza 2015). For those establishing livestock operations, acquiring or moving stock was the first step, often starting with small herds and flocks.

The studies in these sites from the mid-2000s showed that, with a few exceptions, the A2 farms were performing extremely poorly, with extensive under-utilisation of land and limited production (Moyo et al. 2009; Scoones et al. 2010; Matondi 2012). Unlike for the smallholder A1 settlements, getting started without capital and with limited external support was challenging. While there were various schemes, initiated through the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe, these were ad hoc and notoriously corrupt, making accessing equipment, cattle or finance difficult for many (Shonhe 2018). From around 2006 inflation accelerated, rising to a peak in 2008, after which the economy was dollarised. The hyperinflationary period disrupted investment plans and, while some were able to exploit the parallel currency arrangements through black market deals, most suffered through losses of money value. Production, which by then was beginning to get going, collapsed. It was only during the period from 2009, coinciding with the Government of National Unity and a period of relative stability, that things picked up again. This period was when some people were able to accumulate and the pattern of differentiation seen today emerged. With inflation rising and an economic crisis engulfing the country once again from 2018, the threats to investment in the A2 farms are high, potentially

Table 5.1: Profiles of A2 farmers

	Success group	Urban house	Based on farm	Female headed	Agricultural qualification	Educational qualification (completed secondary)	Age of household head	Sample size (N)
Mvurwi	1	92%	77%	15%	62%	77%	Late 50s	13
	2	62%	100%	0%	46%	85%	Around 60	13
	3	62%	69%	15%	46%	77%	Early 60s	13
	Overall	72%	82%	10%	51%	79%	Around 60	39
Masvingo-Gutu	1	82%	53%	18%	18%	82%	Late-40s	17
	2	76%	24%	18%	12%	88%	Late-40s	17
	3	59%	24%	35%	29%	71%	Mid-40s	17
	Overall	73%	33%	24%	20%	80%	Mid-to-late 40s	51

undermining the gains made.

What is the pattern of asset ownership seen across the three farmer categories identified from the survey data according to ranked crop output and cattle ownership? Table 5.3 offers a snapshot from 2018–19, showing clear trends across the categories, but also large variations within. Land holdings are lower in high-potential Mvurwi than lower-potential Masvingo-Gutu, but vary significantly. There is high variation in land utilisation, where only those in the top category are cropping significant areas. Tractor ownership is surprisingly low given the areas cropped by the top farmer categories, but there is a vibrant rental market in the A2 areas. Cattle holdings are unsurprisingly much higher in Masvingo-Gutu, but those in the bottom category have very few on average. The same applies to categories 2 and 3 in Mvurwi, and it is only those in the top group who have a commercial herd (above 10). Goats are not common in any site, and relatively few are kept as a household flock. In terms of other equipment, at least one car or truck is owned by 51% of households in Mvurwi and by 57% of households in Masvingo-Gutu. The long distances to town and the lack of any other transport make having vehicles crucial, and many category 1 farmers have invested in small five-tonne trucks. With electricity being so unreliable, many have also bought generators, which power homes as well as small-scale irrigation operations.

PATTERNS OF PRODUCTION AND EMPLOYMENT

How does asset ownership translate into agricultural production and income? As Table 5.4 shows, the difference between the top category and the others is stark. With some exceptions, it is mostly those in category 1 who have the resources and external finance to crop significant areas, although the ranges of production/sales levels are large. The top farmer category is the only group who employ significant numbers of permanent employees (at least in Mvurwi to run tobacco operations), and they are most likely to employ a farm manager to oversee the farm. They also have the greatest number of pig and broiler projects, although these are relatively few in number. Horticultural production is again most common among category 1 farmers, although most are trying some at varying scales. Irrigation facilities are unevenly distributed, and it is category 2 that has the highest proportion in both sites. Access to irrigation partly depends on inherited installations; although, as time has passed, many farmers, especially in Mvurwi, have invested in boreholes, pumps, pipes and generators.

The pattern of differentiation observed reflects a divergence in strategies amongst A2 farmers. Those who are able to raise finance from different sources are able to invest and make profits from maize and tobacco production. Production among the more commercially oriented farmers is increasingly mechanised. For example, land preparation in 2017 was by tractors in 34% of farms in Masvingo-Gutu and 79% in Mvurwi, much of it through rental/borrowing arrangements. From small beginnings, Mrs M explains how she is slowly building a commercial operation:

When we came here there was nothing. Just tall grass. We had to build houses, dig boreholes. My late husband was a farm manager. He wanted to farm. We came with two head of cattle, one plough and the clothes we were wearing. We had two young kids at that time. It was tough. The first year we grew only maize and beans on a small plot. Today we plough seven hectares (of a total farm size of 27 ha), and have ten cattle. I don't have a tractor, but hire, and also use my own oxen. This last year I harvested four tonnes of maize from three hectares, retaining several tonnes to feed the family and pay labour. I also planted 0.75 ha of sweet potatoes, selling 500 buckets, together with groundnuts (80 buckets) and Bambara nuts (40 buckets) at the roadside. My son is now 24 years old and is married. He works together with me, but also brings in money from a taxi service he runs using a car we bought from our farming. I rent out three hectares and get paid in fertiliser. I also sell gum poles from the plantation to pay for labour from the nearby compound. I want to expand further, especially in horticulture if I can get another borehole.⁷

Alternative strategies involve intensification of production through investment in irrigation for commercial horticulture. With markets locally, as well as through contracts with supermarkets, hospitals and boarding schools, this is an option favoured by many, as it is easier and less risky than crop production. However, as many noted, there are today multiple challenges arising from the variable supply of fuel or electricity for generators and pumps, and this is hitting aspiring horticultural farmers hard. Mr M from Gutu explained:

I am a retired teacher and got the farm in 2003 through an application. I only started farming in 2006, and initially focused on maize. The maximum we got was 23 tonnes. This year it was little because of drought. We do not live on the farm, but it's near and go most days. These days, I am concentrating on pig farming and horticulture. I irrigate one hectare of vegetables. I get orders from hotels, restaurants and shops from as far as Kwekwe and Harare. One of my sons works in a hotel and purchases

Table 5.3: Asset ownership patterns (average, with standard deviation in parentheses)

	Farmer categories	Generator	Trucks (%)	Cars (%)	Tractors (% of households)	Goats (N)	Cattle (N)	Area cropped (ha)	Land area (ha)
Mvurwi	1	54	38	46	62	18 (44)	33 (49)	52.5 (74.9)	94.8 (119.0)
	2	38	0	46	62	0 (1)	9 (4)	13.7 (7.6)	34.8 (12.4)
	3	23	8	31	46	4 (7)	6 (6)	8.9 (7.1)	36.0 (17.9)
Masvingo -Gutu	1	47	53	47	29	14 (36)	67 (69)	33.9 (99.7)	367.4 (447.8)
	2	18	29	53	24	12 (18)	74 (126)	3.2 (4.2)	326.9 (568.0)
	3	18	24	35	41	4 (6)	6 (6)	3.9 (4.4)	196.6 (312.0)

*vegetables, and also invests in the garden project.*⁸

Projects, including pig farming, aquaculture and broiler production, require limited land areas, but significant funds. Across our cases, there were multiple cases, usually involving investment from sons and daughters of farm owners through remittances, very often from the diaspora.

Levels and styles of employment also differentiate sites and categories of farmers. In Mvurwi, labour compounds provide a ready pool of labour, which can be hired on a piecework basis, via intermediaries. Temporary hiring is common in Mvurwi among all categories of farmer, where 67% of male temporary workers and 74% of female temporary workers are recruited from the compounds. However, those living in the compounds, in order to survive, are also diversifying their livelihoods, and many have acquired small plots of land, and so have partially withdrawn from the labour market (Scoones et al. 2019), making labour recruitment more challenging.

Some, however, prefer to hire permanent labour. The highest level of permanent employment was 13 in Masvingo-Gutu and 100 in Mvurwi, while maximum temporary employment was 40 and 110 respectively. Those with skilled farm managers, and with a well-remunerated labour force, are profiting, but some offer poor, exploitative conditions and labour unrest is common. Most however have a hybrid arrangement, with a few permanent employees, often guards and housemaids, and rely on temporary employment for agricultural labour, hired on a seasonal basis. Mr C explained:

*There is a large compound near our farm. In the beginning, I hired some of the workers of the former farmer, and in those days we produced a lot of tobacco. Up to 30 tonnes. This allowed me to buy tractors, cars, motorbikes and cattle. But later I failed to keep up with salary payments. It was a tough time when inflation hit. I now hire temporary workers from the compound. They are often unreliable though. Last season I produced 45 tonnes of maize, and I have 600 broilers and 300 indigenous chickens. It's difficult farming here. The workers from the compound frequently steal from the farm. The transformer was stolen, and we now cannot irrigate the citrus.*⁹

Wage employment is much less common in Masvingo-Gutu given the different pattern of extensive livestock production. Here, with farm owners often absent, there are farm managers, guards and herders employed, and often a different trajectory of accumulation centred on cattle production.

Table 5.4: Patterns of production and farm employment (average, with standard deviations in parentheses)

	Farmer categories	Farm manager (%)	Permanent employees (N)	Broilers (%)	Pigs (%)	Horticulture sales (%)	Irrigation (%)	Cattle sales (% of households)	Mean annual tobacco sales 2016-18 (kg)	Maize fertiliser 2017-18 (kg)	Mean annual maize sales 2016-18 (kg)	Mean annual maize output 2016-18 (kg)
Mvurwi	1	46	17.9 (30.3)	31	13	62	38	69	48,992 (32,353)	25,723 (36,991)	187,154 (268,790)	192,692 (267,697)
	2	23	1.6 (1.7)	23	0	38	46	69	6242 (5590)	3219 (4396)	26,231 (27,156)	31,462 (25,462)
	3	8	1.3 (1.5)	15	0	54	8	54	4200	2396 (2862)	15,939 (14,883)	16,889 (14,503)
Masvingo -Gutu	1	35	4.5 (3.7)	29	24	82	6	82	-	1123 (1172)	9363 (14,666)	14,183 (14,725)
	2	29	2.4 (1.6)	24	12	71	12	71	-	600 (475)	1270 (2348)	2903 (3517)
	3	29	2.6 (0.8)	6	0	35	6	35	-	350 (152)	438 (1046)	686 (1195)

FINANCING AGRICULTURE

Access to finance is perhaps the key factor affecting commercial agriculture on the A2 farms. As discussed already, economic conditions since 2000 have not been favourable, especially between 2006 and 2009 and again since 2018. Lack of financing for agriculture contrasts with the situation before Independence, when large-scale commercial farming was heavily subsidised and received generous soft finance through seasonal and medium-term bank loans. This was essential for both the establishment of white commercial agriculture at the beginning of the twentieth century and for its sustenance thereafter (Dunlop 1971; Palmer 1977). While state subsidies were progressively withdrawn after Independence, there were effective subsidies operating through preferential trade deals and continued generous financing from commercial banks. This has not been available to the A2 farmers over the last 20 years.

In the absence of this level of support, how have A2 farmers fared? Table 5.5 offers an overview of the different financing options observed in 2018–19. Many farmers make use of a variety of options. With the exception of category 1 farmers in Mvurwi, bank loans and credit were accessed by under a third of farmers. This contrasts very unfavourably with the previous era. This relates in part to the liquidity crisis in the country and the preference of banks to loan outside the agricultural sector. It also links to the collateral requirements of banks. While all farmers in our sample had ‘offer letters’ from the state, only four had leases; and even those with leases have been refused credit because of ongoing disputes around the lease terms. Without having their land to offer as collateral, some have mortgaged houses or business properties in town, but this is not available to everyone.

Instead, many in Mvurwi have gone into contract arrangements for the production of tobacco with private companies. This is most common among category 2 farmers, who do not have the independent resources of category 1 farmers, but can afford the risk of a contract arrangement unlike category 3 farmers (Scoones et al. 2018b). Sixteen tobacco contracting companies were operating in Mvurwi area in 2017, offering seed/seedlings, fertiliser and fuel, as well as technical support and guaranteed markets. Many of those with their own resources prefer to farm independently than sell through contract arrangements, as they get a better price on the merchant auction floors. However, as a way of securing stable financing and a route to accumulation, contracting tobacco production is important for others.

Command agriculture is a government-financing scheme, supported by the military and the current president. It offers subsidised inputs, including seed and fertiliser, and is focused on maize production in A2 farms in the higher potential areas, particularly those with irrigation (Mazwi et al. 2019). Access to the scheme, at least to timely provision of the full package of inputs, is often reliant on having the right patronage networks. Nevertheless, this has been an important source of financing for some in Mvurwi in particular.

Some, however, can go it alone, or at least combine independent resources with institutionally derived financing. Remittances, from both local sources and the diaspora, are especially important. In both sites, but particularly in Masvingo-Gutu, A2 farmers also have businesses that help finance agriculture, including shops, bars, transport businesses and house rentals. Investment in shops and transport is essential in areas in the land reform areas where formerly there was no transport or market infrastructure. Over the last decade, particularly in the period when the economy stabilised, farmers have invested farm profits in real estate, often in booming small towns such as Mvurwi, so generating rental income (Scoones & Murimbarimba 2020). For many, though, self-financing of agriculture from agricultural production surpluses is the most common route. Profits from one crop can be invested in the next, and particularly the paying of labour and the purchase of fertiliser. Others choose to sell some cattle to finance the purchase of inputs and payment of labour, while others rely on maize to pay labour. Those growing tobacco may choose to make arrangements with workers for payment at the end of the season or to pay through allocation of pieces of land or bales of tobacco. This is a

Table 5.5: Financing options.

Farmer categories	Mvurwi			Masvingo-Gutu		
	1	2	3	1	2	3
Credit/loan (% of households)	46	31	31	18	18	6
Contracting (%)	46	62	0	0	0	6
Command (%)	62	23	46	24	0	12
Remittances (%)	31	38	54	41	41	24
Business income (%)	31	15	31	53	47	35

slow route to accumulation and holding onto cash across a season in the absence of an effective banking system, and with periods of high/hyperinflation, is challenging.

Finally, there are those who prefer to let others finance and run the farm. We undertook a focused study of the seven joint-venture arrangements in Mvurwi to complement the randomly sampled survey. Joint ventures involve foreign or local private investors who invest in A2 farmers jointly with the land beneficiary or sub-lease whole or sections of the farms and share profits annually after the marketing of farm produce. These joint ventures arise either through choice, recognising that they have neither the resources nor skills to run the farm, or out of necessity, as banks reclaim the farm due to outstanding loan repayments. In Mvurwi, there are several former white farmers who sub-lease farm sections, while Chinese investors in tobacco are operating four farms as joint ventures. These involve significant external investment in building infrastructure and covering operating costs. For instance, a Chinese firm from Szechuan has leased a farm with 146 ha of arable land north of Mvurwi. An annual lease payment is made of a fixed amount over a 20-year period, and the owner has no role in the operation. One of the Chinese managers explained:

All but 20 ha is under pivot irrigation. We grow tobacco intensively. We have invested in a new 'rocket barn', and sell to different companies, depending on the type of tobacco. We have bought all new equipment – generators, irrigation, tractors, pivots. Perhaps a million US dollars. We suffered a major hailstorm last season, but still managed 3.15 tonnes per hectare. We also have a cattle-fattening project, but it's just getting going. Yes, we manage a compound here, and employ around 100, mostly on a temporary basis. It's difficult to do business in Zimbabwe – we have a consultant who used to be in the tobacco business, who helps us, but it's a challenge here.¹⁰

In sum, A2 farmers, and their joint-venture counterparts, have found it difficult to finance farming since land reform. They use a variety of routes, but all have their downsides. The problems become exacerbated with the fragility of the macro-economy, notably the lack of liquidity, the intransigence of the banking sector to use leases/permits as collateral, the shortages of physical cash, the wildly fluctuating parallel currency rates and the bouts of high inflation. The controlled and changing tobacco pricing structure where farmers are paid only 50% in US dollars, with the balance being paid in local currency using the official exchange rate, also lowers their earnings. Our data show how different people navigate such complexity and so gain access to finance. Mr M from Mvurwi explained the

challenges he has faced:

I started the farm when I was still in my (agricultural extension) job, but I couldn't farm and work at the same time, so committed to farming. We harvested lots of maize – several hundred tonnes per year! Then inflation hit, and we suffered. I had to sell my cars, and 30 cattle, which I had accumulated from farming. Since dollarisation things improved, but I have not been able to get finance from the banks. I haven't got access to command agriculture. In my view it's designed for looting! I cannot finance 30 hectares from my own pocket. This year, we planted only one hectare of maize, and concentrated on sugar beans (sold on contract to boarding schools) and sweet potatoes (bought by traders from Mbare in Harare). Next year, I will scale down and look for joint ventures or sub-letting arrangements.¹¹

Access to finance therefore substantially underpins the variations in outcomes in terms of production, agricultural investment and household accumulation from agriculture. Those in category 3 are unable to move beyond effectively subsistence production; those in category 2 aspire to step up to more independent commercial production and often make use of contract farming to do so; but it is only those in category 1 who really offer an example of 'successful' medium-scale farming, although many struggle too.

PATTERNS OF DIFFERENTIATION AND ACCUMULATION

Locating our understanding of medium-scale farms in a relational and dynamic understanding of agrarian change is essential. We have asked 'who owns what?', through an assessment of assets owned, and have explored 'who does what?' in terms of differentiated livelihoods. The key remaining questions now are 'who gets what?' and 'what do they do with it?', requiring an exploration of how patterns of accumulation result in differentiated livelihood pathways.

In particular, we must ask how on-farm and own-business profits are translated into farm-based 'accumulation from below' (Neocosmos 1993), whereby a positive cycle of investment and asset building results in the growth of farm income and employment (Cousins 2010). An exploration of the opposite trend is also important. If on-farm or business profits are limited, through lack of finance, scarcity of labour, limited assets and lack of markets, then how do people construct their livelihoods? For example, how is social reproduction squeezed due to the deployment of family labour,

particularly that of women and children? What alternative income-earning options are sought? What relations of labour emerge, as people engage in employment, including with richer farmers, to survive? And cutting through all these processes, what is the role of the state – and networks of patronage associated with the party-state – in supporting some trajectories of accumulation, while preventing others?

In the analysis above we have contrasted three categories of farmer, derived through a ranked ordering of indicators of crop output and cattle asset holding. As we have shown, these in turn relate to a range of other variables that influence how people make a living. While recognising that there are large ranges, overlaps between categories, significant outliers and particular cases, how can we make sense of the emerging differentiation in A2 farms? Mapping broadly, but not exclusively, onto our three farmer categories, we suggest a simple typology below, focusing now less on static outputs and assets, but more on the processes of social differentiation and accumulation. This in turn can inform our understanding of the emerging dynamics of class formation in these areas, and so rural political dynamics.

Commercial farmers

First, there are what might conventionally be designated commercial farmers. They are producing substantial quantities of agricultural outputs, selling large proportions and making profits. They are, in turn, investing on the farm, whether in farm equipment or infrastructure, as well as ploughing back funds to purchase inputs and build up assets, including livestock. They are employing others in significant numbers, including having a permanent workforce, and very often a professional farm manager. In other words, such farmers, centred broadly, although not exclusively so, on category 1 farmers described above, are ‘stepping up’ (Dorward et al. 2009), accumulating from farm production, even if this is co-financed.

There are two routes to accumulation for such farmers. One is ‘from below’, from own-farm production, combined with other businesses, where investment from profits moves between different enterprises in a portfolio. External finance may be important, but this involves paying loans and interest, as part of a business plan. The other route to an upward dynamic of accumulation is through involvement in patronage networks, including access to ‘command agriculture’ subsidies for around 40% of category 1 farmers. The net effect is the same – often an outwardly highly successful commercial operation, but accumulation is both ‘from above’ as well as ‘from below’. The first trajectory is the ideal-type commercial

farmer: independent, hard-working, business-oriented and profitable. As we have seen, these exist but they are rare, and all are finding it difficult to run farm businesses. The other trajectory is one that is reliant on subsidies, soft loans and close connections with the state. This is of course another classic route to commercial agriculture, given the nature of farm support the world over; and indeed was the way settler agriculture was nurtured in Zimbabwe throughout the colonial era (Hanlon et al. 2012). Most farmers in this category show a combination of these trajectories – demonstrating effective business management and generating their own profit, but also being reliant on external support of different sorts.

The joint ventures discussed earlier do not fit easily into either of these patterns. These are certainly ‘commercial’ farms, although questions must be raised about the timeframe for generating profit streams. They are, however, less embedded in the A2 areas, and rather an external model is transplanted, with a very separate system of management and business practice, linked, in the case of the Chinese investors, to a large, sometimes global, portfolio of diverse operations. They certainly have an impact on the local agrarian economy, as they sell to the same markets, employ from the same labour pool and make use of the same natural resources, but the ‘farm owners’, while profiting from the arrangement, are set apart from those engaging directly in agriculture.

Commercial farmers, of the sort described here, are more common in Mvurwi than in Masvingo-Gutu, but breaking into this group is hard given the economic conditions constraining the first accumulation trajectory and the closed nature of political networks constraining the second.

Aspiring farmers

There are also what we call ‘aspiring farmers’; those who would like to be commercial farmers, but are constrained by lack of finance and face challenges of production and investment. These farms, centred on category 2 explored earlier, are not reaching their potential, either as tobacco/maize farms in Mvurwi or as livestock ranches in Masvingo-Gutu, and many have limited areas cultivated and large under-grazed areas. There is sporadic investment and some basic assets, such as tractors and irrigation equipment, but these may be in a state of disrepair. They are largely not employers of much permanent labour and rely on temporary employment. For many, the role of external jobs and partnership connections is less evident, and they rely more on their own, often limited, production. However, although they are ranked lower in terms of crop outputs and livestock ownership, they are aspiring to improve, and deploy a variety of

strategies to do so.

Two trajectories of (constrained) accumulation are evident in this group. These include those who attract family members to come and stay on the farm, and share assets, labour and management of often quite large properties. This we call the 'villagisation' strategy; something seen over generations in the former 'Purchase Areas' (Scoones et al. 2018a). As Mr C explained, this is now beginning to emerge on the A2 farms, as sons establish homes and join their now ageing parents:

Four of my sons are resident here, three are married. I have two wives, each with five children. The farm is essential for our family. We have nearly 20 hectares of arable land in a 30 ha farm. Normally we cultivate the full arable area. Everyone works on their own plot, and all my sons have a tobacco grower number. I came from the communal areas in 2002, when my family was young. We had 12 cattle, one scotch cart and two ploughs. I applied through the normal route, as I had a Master Farmer certificate from Chiweshe. Today we have 40 cattle, a truck, a trailer and much other farm equipment. We had a tractor, but sold it to raise capital, and now hire. We all have contracts for tobacco, and this year sold seven tonnes (less than before, as prices are so low). Together, we also produced 26 tonnes of maize. We hire temporary labour from the compound nearby, but rely on family labour a lot. I also make money from transporting tobacco with my truck, and sell vegetables and 'road runner' chickens. I don't receive any external finance: everything is from the farm.¹²

Another trajectory also involves other family members, but through investment in 'projects' from outside. Sons and daughters working elsewhere, very often abroad, invest in particular 'projects', whether a pig unit, broiler production, fish farming, an orchard or a focused agricultural project, such as chilli production. The relative covers the costs through remittances, while residents, often ageing parents and workers, manage the project. Mr D, a worker, highlighted the importance of such projects:

This farm is quite large (over 600 ha), but we don't do much cropping (just four ha), and there are only five cattle. We produce maize just for the home and the workers. The main business is pig production. We have several hundred in well-constructed sheds. We sell perhaps 20 per month, mostly to restaurants in nearby Masvingo. A more recent project is fish farming, and we have six ponds now constructed, and sell bream. The farm is looked after by myself and two other permanent workers, and I have been here for eight years. The owner lives in Masvingo town, and gets support from her children who are living in different countries, including the UK.¹³

Both these strategies act to mobilise finance and/or labour in different ways and help such otherwise constrained but aspiring farmers to improve livelihoods, and begin to accumulate. Such aspiring farmers must rely primarily on kin relations to support production and accumulation. As they are less well-connected politically, they are not big beneficiaries of state subsidies and loans, nor do they have the connections to broker joint-venture arrangements, although, as they explain, they would certainly like both.

Across our sample, aspiring farmers are perhaps the most common group. Some are tentatively 'stepping up', others are 'stepping out' and diversifying, while others are simply 'hanging in'. For them, economic, social and political constraints faced in Zimbabwe seriously limit potentials.

Struggling farmers

Finally, there are those whom we call struggling farmers. They are simply 'hanging in', if not 'dropping out'. On these farms, broadly centred on category 3, there is frequently little happening. There are few farm assets, limited production and the farm is occupied often by an elderly person; sometimes the owner, but often a relative, perhaps together with some workers. This may be due to a mix of misfortune, age or ill-health, and this befalls both young and old farmers. Quite a few war veterans are in this group, as they came with few physical assets, relying on their political capital to gain access to land. Many are of an age when ill-health and infirmity strike, and some have abandoned the farms, returning to communal areas or seeking plots in A1 schemes, where the social fabric of a farming community is more evident. Mrs M explained:

I come from a family of war veterans. I fought in the war, and was later a school teacher. I got the farm in 2002, but came in 2007 with little – a scotch cart, a harrow and a plough. I bought cattle when here, and now there are 25. I have 22 ha arable on a 54 ha farm, but I cannot farm much. Last year I farmed a few hectares, but started too late. I slipped a disc and couldn't work. I live alone here, with a worker and survive off my pension, renting my house in Harare and help from my son. Last year he paid for tractor ploughing. He also helps with a chicken project, and I sell in Harare. Right now, he's not interested in farming, and is working in town as a lawyer for a bank. He wanted to join the 'command' programme, but failed. I hope he will take over, as there's now a good house and lots of potential.¹⁴

Overall, there are struggling farmers of very different types. There are also those whose farms are not producing and are being held for the future, as

part of an investment for the next generations, for retirement or as speculation. This group has a very different social profile to those who have fallen on hard times and are struggling. They are absent from the farm, leaving workers or relatives to give the impression of occupation, and may be involved in jobs or businesses in town, or even abroad. They have sufficient political connections to retain the land in the face of an audit inspection, but are not using these to leverage investment.

CONCLUSION

What then does this analysis mean for the future of medium-scale farms in Zimbabwe? Over nearly 20 years, a process of differentiation has emerged in the A2 areas, as it has in the A1 schemes (Scoones et al. 2012) and before in the communal areas (Cousins et al. 1992). Redistributing land unleashes a set of social, economic and political processes that are complex and intertwined, and our analysis suggests a number of different trajectories of accumulation, within and between commercial, aspiring and struggling farmers.

In class terms, we can observe the emergence of a distinct group of capitalist farmers, perhaps a new rural bourgeoisie, amongst the commercial farmer group, but linked to quite different underlying drivers. Not all in this group are so-called 'cronies', connected to and dependent on the party-state. Some have made links with external, global and agribusiness capital to develop partnerships, while others are accumulating 'from below'. Aspiring farmers contain a significant proportion of what we might call 'petty commodity producers', combining family-based production with forms of capitalist production. All aspire to become successful rural capitalists, although many cannot. The final group includes those who, because of hard times, are operating essentially as peasant producers, but on often very large land areas. Some have moved into combining limited agricultural production, with selling labour, merging with the fragmented 'classes of labour' (Bernstein 2006), common amongst both landholders and former farm workers across the communal and smallholder resettlement areas (Scoones et al. 2019). Those whose farms are struggling, but are just holding the land for speculation, may occupy a variety of class positions, from salaried workers to urban-based capitalists to the political-military elite.

The A2 areas are therefore a complex socio-political mix. The analyses of medium-scale farms in Africa that have dominated the literature to date

focus only on size and operated area distributions, together with a limited assessment of the profiles of farmers. These assessments tell us neither about the social and political importance of such farms in the wider agrarian setting, nor about the longer-term consequences of differential accumulation on rural class formation. Only with a more detailed delving into social, political and economic relations, as has been attempted here, can we get a sense of what these farms mean in terms of the wider agrarian political economy. This study suggests therefore a new avenue for Africa-wide research, going beyond simply describing changes in farm size structure to understanding the underlying dynamics of on-going agrarian change. For Zimbabwe, our analysis suggests a rejection of the simplistic assessments that claim the overwhelming dominance of 'cronies' or the writing-off of such areas as wholly unproductive and under-utilised. As our disaggregated analysis shows, there is much more going on both within and across areas, reflected in very different patterns of accumulation. While the assumption that the A2 farms would uniformly unleash a new form of commercial agriculture in Zimbabwe after land reform has to be significantly tempered, there is clearly potential. As noted at the beginning of this article, Zimbabwe's land reform was a cross-class compromise, with the A2 farms being part of a political deal with the professional middle class and the party-military elite. That a diversity of outcomes on these farms has been experienced over nearly 20 years should not be a surprise.

The implications for rural politics are not straightforward. If the A2 'commercial farmers' continue to gain state support and are able to extend processes of accumulation, they may act to push out the 'struggling farmers', who may lease (or informally sell) land and take up labouring for the larger, more successful farmers, or move away altogether. Much will hinge on the significant group of 'aspiring farmers', whose political connections, and so allegiances, are less certain. With greater stability in Zimbabwe's political and economic context, they may yet emerge as the new drivers of commercialisation, as seen elsewhere in Africa.

Such a differentiated examination of what people are doing, and the underlying trajectories of accumulation, to date largely absent in the wider literature on medium-scale farms in Africa, suggests diverse implications for policy. A dominant theme is access to finance and markets, sufficient to allow those who are aspiring – and often trying under desperate circumstances – to step up to a more stable, commercial trajectory. The wild fluctuations in macro-economic conditions in Zimbabwe, and periodic bouts of extreme economic chaos, mean that attempts to accumulate are wiped out. A stable, functioning economy is a basic requirement for any

business and, if there is any single policy priority for the future of medium-scale farms in the post-land reform setting of Zimbabwe, macro-economic stabilisation must be it. This must come with effective financing options, including private finance using land leases as collateral, as well as transparent, accountable, but time-limited and targeted, subsidy policies. Lessons from the past are relevant. The emergence of large-scale commercial agriculture in Zimbabwe during the colonial era and into Independence occurred through an alliance between white-owned agrarian capital – ranging from family farmers to large agribusiness concerns – and the state (Scoones et al. 2020). This was essential to the political compact that existed through colonial occupation, the Unilateral Declaration of Independence period and that continued after Independence (Herbst 1990).

That large areas of potentially productive land are being under-used is clear. But we also have to recall that extensive use of land for livestock grazing (in Masvingo-Gutu) and cultivation in patches due to the rocky, mountainous terrain (in Mvurwi) means that land utilisation figures have to be evaluated with caution. Equally, it is not as if commercial agriculture in the past always fully used the land. Indeed, estimates from the 1960s to the 1990s have shown only 15–23% of land being used in ‘European’ commercial farm areas,¹⁵ even in the productive Mazowe district (Weiner et al. 1985). Nevertheless, land utilisation on the A2 farms remains a key policy issue.

What, then, is the significance of medium-scale farms for Zimbabwe's agrarian future? Compared with the earlier surveys in the mid-2000s, there was much more activity in 2018–19 and, from some farms, a considerable volume of production and sale. Sometimes very closely allied with the party-state, sometimes as independent or joint-venture arrangements, there is an emergence of a new form of capitalist, commercial agriculture, and this is especially evident in Mvurwi on the back of the tobacco boom. Beyond this, there are others who aspire to become part of a new class of capitalist farmer, but remain severely constrained. The state's lack of resources, combined with entrenched corruption and patronage relations, means that this group is not achieving what it might. But with new investment, new forms of joint-venture and an injection of flexible finance, the scope of vibrant commercial agriculture could be expanded. Meanwhile, the dynamics of what we have termed ‘villagisation’ and investment in ‘projects’ will continue, often linked to diaspora remittance finance.

The now numerous studies of medium-scale farms across Africa have highlighted their importance for the future of Africa's agrarian economies.

As this article shows, the emergence of medium-scale farms in Zimbabwe, in this case through land reform, is also reshaping the political economy of agrarian change. We must, however, avoid taking medium-scale farms as a unitary category. In Zimbabwe, processes of differentiation are resulting in different trajectories of accumulation and class formation, with commercial, aspiring and struggling farmers. These differentiated groups have divergent political interests, with some closely allied with the party-state and reliant on patronage connections for accumulation, while others are 'accumulating from below' or not at all, joining wider, fragmented 'classes of labour' in Zimbabwe's post-land reform countryside. As the focus for emergent capitalist agriculture and the location of influential political, military and professional elites, the medium-scale A2 farms are thus defining a new politics of commercial agriculture in Zimbabwe's countryside following land reform.

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NOTES

- ¹ The land reform of 2000 transferred around 9.3 million ha of formerly large-scale commercial farms and created two major resettlement types: A1 (smallholder farms, 145,775 farms over 5.8 million ha) and A2 (medium-scale farms, 22,896 farms over 3.5 million ha) (Moyo Reference Moyo2011: 498).
- ² This literature confusingly shifts definitions between held/controlled land and cultivated/operated land, ignoring extensive grazing.
- ³ Census: Mvurwi (N=206, excluding Forrester; average farm size, 80 ha, range 11–1300 ha), Masvingo-Gutu (N=243, average farm size, 217 ha, range 19–2223 ha). Average farm sizes derived from the survey data were: 54 ha in Mvurwi and 301 ha in Masvingo-Gutu. The national average A2 farm size is 153 ha, but with a huge range (Moyo Reference Moyo2011: 498).
- ⁴ The short survey had modules on household characteristics (including gender, education, training, previous occupation, additional residences, posts held); asset ownership (including land, farm equipment, cattle, housing, transport); crop production (including amounts of crops produced and sold, whether fertiliser applied, access to gardens and irrigation); labour (permanent and temporary, by gender), off-farm sources of income and patterns of expenditure.
- ⁵ See Matondi (Reference Matondi2012) and Scoones *et al.* (Reference Scoones, Marongwe, Mavedzenge, Mahenehene, Murimbarimba and Sukume2010).
- ⁶ See: <https://zimbabweland.wordpress.com/01///ho-took-the-land-more-on-the-crony-debate/> (accessed 17 November 2019).
- ⁷ Mrs M, Mvurwi, 14 September 2019; also 20 March 2017 (aspiring farmer, category 2).
- ⁸ Mr M, Gutu, 16 September 2019 (aspiring farmer, category 2).
- ⁹ Mr C, Mvurwi, 14 September 2019; also 23 March 2018 (commercial farmer, category 1). The price of maize was US\$390/tonne, and chickens sold for around US\$5.
- ¹⁰ Chinese manager, Joint Venture farm, Mvurwi, 26 November 2017.
- ¹¹ Mr M, Mvurwi, 15 September 2019 (commercial farmer, category 1).
- ¹² Mr C, Mvurwi, 15 September 2019 (aspiring farmer, category 2).
- ¹³ Mr D (worker), Masvingo, 17 September 2019 (struggling farmer, category 3).
- ¹⁴ Mrs M, Mvurwi, 15 September 2019 (struggling farmer, category 3).
- ¹⁵ <https://zimbabweland.wordpress.com/01///nderutilised-land-in-zimbabwe-not-a-new-problem/> (accessed 24 October 2019).

Political Contestations

6

FROM *JAMBANJA* TO PLANNING: THE REASSERTION OF TECHNOCRACY IN LAND REFORM IN SOUTH-EASTERN ZIMBABWE?

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INTRODUCTION¹

A visitor to Fair Range ranch in Chiredzi District of southeastern Zimbabwe in early 2000 would have encountered a scene familiar to news- paper readers at the time around the world. What had once been a heavily forested cattle and game ranch was 'scarred' by the randomly scattered rudimentary huts of 'farm invaders'. Fences had been pulled down, trees chopped, cart-tracks and footpaths established, pasture ploughed up, and wildlife and cattle slaughtered. This ostensibly chaotic space was peopled by an anarchic bunch of self-proclaimed liberation war veterans, disaffected jobless and landless youths, and spirit mediums who appeared to be beyond the restraint of the police, and were even encouraged in their lawlessness by members of the governing ZANU(PF) party. However, a closer inspection of the former ranch would have revealed that all was not quite as disordered and chaotic as first appeared. The rudiments of a self-imposed technical land-use plan were evident in the siting and layout of the new homesteads and arable plots. These had been carefully pegged at regular intervals - in some cases measured out with tape measures - and

the apparently motley collection of invaders were carefully organised into cells run by base commanders. By May 2001 the state agricultural extension service had arrived to allocate plots formally, using the technical criteria of the colonial period, and the base commanders had been joined by village committees, with chairman, secretaries and women and youth league members.

The farm invasions and subsequent 'fast-track' land reform process have been described as just one element of a 'normalising of the abnormal'² in Zimbabwe since 2000. There has been a widely heralded collapse in the rule of law, economic meltdown, political instability and a food security crisis. All of this has been accompanied by an upsurge in violence unseen in rural Zimbabwe outside Matebeleland since the liberation war of the 1970s. It is the land reform process, however, that has received the most coverage in the international media. The underlying narrative of many accounts of this process describes the abandoning of the bureaucratic and technical practice of most of the post-independence period for a period of chaotic and violent state sanctioned appropriation of land. This has been held directly responsible for the country's transition from 'breadbasket to basket case',³ and for 'plunging the country headfirst into a morass of lawlessness and, ultimately starvation'.⁴ These accounts play into a well-rehearsed narrative on 'African crises' of economic collapse, political instability, socioeconomic inequalities, corruption, crime and war, and depictions of 'failed', 'vampire' or 'collapsed' African states.⁵ Until recently, Zimbabwe, along with South Africa, was excluded from this pejorative categorisation of sub-Saharan African states. But, in the wake of recent developments, it is now being cast in the same light. In fact it is increasingly held up as an exemplar of African state collapse and disorder, with the chaotic land reform process as emblematic of this.

It is not our intention here to focus on the rights or wrongs of this broad characterisation of contemporary governance in Zimbabwe,⁶ or of the land reform process specifically,⁷ but, locating our analysis explicitly in one particular part of Zimbabwe - Chiredzi district in the south-east lowveld - we argue that the broad-brush representation of the farm occupation and fast-track resettlement process as chaotic and unplanned is misleading. During Zimbabwe's recent land reforms, familiar, deeply embedded instruments and mechanisms of order have asserted themselves, even in the midst of violent ostensible disorder. The on-going deployment of the formal and technical tools of land-use planning - albeit often short circuited and adapted - has been instrumental in securing the visibility and legitimacy of Zimbabwe's new settlers, whilst being potentially inimical to their

interests in the longer term.

RESETTLEMENT BEFORE 2000

The events since 2000 - the focus of this paper - have emerged against a backdrop of authoritarian and technical land-use planning and of extreme contestation over land dating from the colonial era. Rhodesia's long history of highly coercive intervention in land use and agricultural practice reached its peak with the 1951 Native Land Husbandry Act. This was enforced by technically orientated agrarian and planning bureaucracies, and made provision for the reorganisation of rural settlement into lines and the division of land into separate, consolidated land-use types. A large body of research shows how this remodelling of landscape and society on scientific and economically rational terms was anathema to rural Zimbabweans and was bound up with the colonial state's civilising and disciplining vision.⁸ Grievances about these coercive, technical restrictions on where and how people lived and farmed - alongside grievances about land alienation - were central to the mobilisation of support for liberation fighters. The active breaking of draconian colonial land-use legislation through *madiro* or 'freedom farming' was a symbolic and direct rejection of the state's authority (Ranger 1985).

At Independence in 1980, Zimbabwe inherited a highly skewed land distribution, with about 6,000 white-owned farms and a number of large agro-industrial estates occupying over a third of the country's land area, much of it areas of higher agricultural potential (Weiner 1988: 74). Despite the new government's commitment to land reform, it was highly constrained by the constitutional provisions of the Lancaster House agreement signed the previous year. The limitations on compulsory acquisition through the 'willing seller/willing buyer' approach, with full compensation in foreign exchange, meant that any resettlement was going to be slow and expensive. No major agrarian reform was on the cards - this was all going to be 'carefully planned' and designed to increase 'farming efficiency'. The inherited dualistic structure of the farming sector, it seemed, was not open to question.⁹

This did not, however, prevent the government setting a number of increasingly ambitious targets for resettlement. In 1980 a target of 18,000 households was set. This was increased to 54,000 in 1982 and then 162,000 households in two years, later that year. Although the resettlement programme never reached these more ambitious levels, it did have some

significant impact. By 1989 some 52,000 households had been resettled and 2-7 million hectares, around 16 %, of commercial farmland purchased; and by 1996, a total of 71,000 families had been resettled (Moyo 1995, 2000; Palmer 1990).

At Independence, the government saw the resettlement programme as necessary to 'neutralise a looming crisis of expectation on the part of a land hungry population' (Ministry of Economic Planning and Development 1981: 124; cited by Alexander 1994). Indeed, immediately after Independence there were large-scale occupations of abandoned and vacant land by 'squatters' seeking to assert their claims on ancestral land and reject the colonial state's technical prescriptions and proscriptions on access to and use of land (Alexander 1994, 1996; Ranger 1985). However, this proved to be only a transitional window of opportunity before the reassertion of a Rhodesian-style top-down, interventionist and technically driven approach to resettlement planning. In the first years, an 'accelerated' resettlement approach was adopted, focused on displaced persons, ex-combatants and others. This was done with relatively limited planning and infrastructure development, but later a more planned, technocratic approach was adopted, centred on a series of schemes, with associated plans and technical specifications. Resettlement was conceived as a mechanism for creating stability and so promoting economic growth, while 'squatting' was increasingly defined as a 'menace' to be controlled (Alexander 1994; Ranger 1985).

In Zimbabwe, land reform is basically framed in terms of resettlement schemes, of which a number of models were developed in the early 1980s. While the cooperative Model B schemes were the ideologically preferred options of the new government (still with its socialist colours flying), most settlers (93% by 1996) were resettled in the Model A village schemes. These were designed by planners in the Ministry of Agriculture and bore a striking resemblance to earlier plans central to the Native Land Husbandry Act of the 1950s. The assumptions embedded in the technical models 'left unchallenged colonial myths about African farmers as subsistence oriented and inefficient, in contrast to market oriented European farmers' (Alexander 1994: 331). The appropriation of the same technical arguments used as the core of Rhodesian policy approaches was striking (Alexander 1994; Drinkwater 1991; Munro 1998).

A series of commissions in the early 1980s reinforced this.¹⁰ While recognising the importance of land reform, they made the case for rational planning and an emphasis on sound land husbandry, highlighting the supposed ills of the communal areas: communal tenure, overstocking, soil

erosion, poor land husbandry, and part-time farmers not committed to climbing the ladder to full commercial enterprises. The aim was to create a population, in the words of one commentator, of 'small big farmers',¹¹ mirroring the success of their commercial counterparts, with similar technical recommendations imposed. As such, these resettlement schemes were perceived as 'self-contained islands of modernisation' (Alexander 1994: 334), distinct and separate from the 'backward' communal areas.

Given the assumptions deeply held by Zimbabwean policymakers, technocrats and others about the technical requirements of 'modern' agricultural development, it is not surprising perhaps that the resettlement programme was very much in the mold of previous attempts at technocratic intervention in the rural areas. While the rhetorical gloss of development had changed from the colonial era (participation, for instance, became *de rigueur*), this was perhaps only skin deep: 'Popular participation in planning was reduced to an exercise in convincing people that experts knew best' (Alexander 1994: 332).

The 'target beneficiaries' for resettlement during the 1980s were largely resource poor farmers in the existing communal areas, returning war veterans and those displaced by the war. Very often these people had few assets of their own (physical, financial or social) and found it difficult to get started in new resettlement areas, particularly when the models assumed an ability to farm a relatively large plot, access oxen, and to farm full time. The idea was to transform the poor, 'backward', 'inefficient' farmer from the 'reserves' to a full-time farmer who followed all the recommendations stipulated by the planners and extensionists.

This vision of development was set alongside the perception that existing political and administrative systems were conservative and anti-development. Some of the key culprits were chiefs, headmen and other 'traditional' elements of rural society who were seen to be holding things back. A 1983 Department of Rural Development report noted:

The resettlement process discourages spontaneity in settlements and fights against attempts at reversion back to traditional methods of agriculture Thus re-settlement can never be about ... extending the boundaries of existing communal areas ... creating new power bases for those clamouring for the restoration of traditional authorities, such as chiefs, headmen etc. (cited by Alexander 1994: 334; Drinkwater 1991: 100)

In the implementation of resettlement through the 1980s - and indeed in much communal area development more broadly - tensions existed between political posturing around the land issue, the reform of

'traditional' institutions, and a well-orchestrated bureaucratic and technocratic response, informed by a deeply held modernist.

Through the 1990s, despite the flow of policy proclamations and much political rhetoric around election periods, little happened on the ground. This suited many. Land became available to government which it duly rented out at nominal rents to political officials, civil servants, army personnel and others. Government continued to blame a combination of lack of funds and technical, legal and bureaucratic delays for the slow pace of implementation.¹² Others less keen on the resettlement programme highlighted other apparent costs, such as potential production losses, market confidence and stability, and unemployment knock-on effects. It was only in the late 1990s that longer-term systematic research on resettlement scheme performance showed that - despite the bad press - they were performing rather well. Households in resettlement schemes had higher incomes, lower income variability and more evenly distributed incomes (but worryingly higher childhood malnutrition levels) than their counterparts in the communal areas (Gunning et al. 2000; Kinsey 1999).

Following the presidential election in 1996, there was another attempt to raise the tempo in the land debate. In November 1997 (under the powers of the Land Acquisition Act), the government engaged in a sweeping designation of 1,471 farms.¹³ The resettlement programme was officially focused on two target groups (a shift encapsulated in the new land policy from 1990): poor, landless rural farmers from the communal areas; and potential entrepreneurial farmers (with appropriate qualifications, including college training and 'Master Farmer' certificates). Implicit in this strategy was the maintenance of a dualistic structure, with the policy approach combining welfarist support alongside an increasing emphasis on creating a new commercial small-scale farming sector.

The whole process of land acquisition which ensued, however, got embroiled in an inordinately complex bureaucratic process including the tracing of inaccurate land deeds and registration, creating delays and confusion. The result was much uncertainty, and a growing lack of trust in the government's policy approach. However, by 1998 a new initiative was on the cards with a new donor-backed proposal from the government (Government of Zimbabwe 1998). Yet again there was no questioning of the basic technical premises of the resettlement models. A series of (now familiar) models was suggested (with planners' diagrams attached to show how it would all look). Again an ambitious target of resettling 91,000 families in five years was set, and a complex institutional framework (involving linking eight ministries) was elaborated. Criteria for the selection

of settlers were set which again emphasised a particular sort of background and technical knowledge, in order to create a particular sort of farming community on the new resettlement areas.¹⁴

But the land acquisition process faltered during 1999. Political proclamations from senior government ministers put the diplomatic and aid communities on edge, the British government was reticent about paying for land acquisition on a large scale, and lobbying by commercial farmers' representatives and others helped delay the momentum established during the previous year. The context dramatically changed during 2000, when, led by the war veterans lobby (who had already been engaged in major strikes and protests around compensation claims in 1997), land invasions accelerated, particularly in the lead up to the much delayed elections in 2000. Land invasion and squatting, of course, were not new, but this time such protests were more overtly political and aimed to gain national (and international) attention. It was this new political setting, yet, significantly, contextualised by a long history of a particular style of technocratic intervention, that set the scene for the major land invasions in 2000, and with these the 'time of *jambanja*'.

THE TIME OF *JAMBANJA*

In February 2000, ZANU(PF) suffered an unprecedented popular rejection when it lost a referendum for a new constitution incorporating a controversial clause obliging Britain as the former colonial power to pay compensation for compulsory land acquisition.¹⁵ This coincided with the unprecedented emergence of a strong opposition party (the Movement for Democratic Change) in advance of the 2000 general election, and popular dissatisfaction with the desperate state of the economy and Zimbabwe's involvement in the war in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Soon after, spearheaded by the War Veterans' Association with the tacit support of government, there were large-scale occupations of principally white-owned commercial farms across the country. These were initially cast as political 'demonstrations' at the government and donors' failure to address the highly charged 'land question' after 20 years of independence, and anger at the rejection of the new constitution. Explanations of the farm occupations have tended to cast them as either a spontaneous rejection of bureaucratic process of land reform or a state-orchestrated process. But this dichotomy is not necessarily helpful. There were a variety of further motivations for the farm occupations, ranging from top-down directives to bolster support

for ZANU(PF) in its rural heartlands, to localised desires for the restitution of ancestral land, to opportunist 'poaching' (see Alexander & McGregor 2001; Chaumba *et al.* 2003; Marongwe 2001; Moyo 2001; Wolmer 2001).

A word that quickly became popular to describe this new, uncertain and dangerous time was *jambanja*. The term had been popularised by the singer Marko Sibanda in his chart-topping song *Jambanja Pahotera* about a fight in a hotel between two naked couples discovering they had exchanged partners in separate extra-marital affairs. Literally meaning violence or angry argument, *jambanja* has been used in subtly different contexts to refer to different people and places, including the ex-combatant farm invaders themselves,¹⁶ the farm invasions, and more broadly politically instigated violence. A popular war veteran catch-phrase was *jambanja ndizvo* (violence is the answer). In some cases the term has also been appropriated by opposition supporters to mean fighting back against a bully, or by the workers' movement to refer to mass protest and direct action.¹⁷ But in essence it has come to refer to a time and space of at best confusion and nonsense,¹⁸ and at worst disorder and chaos.¹⁹ As Tagwirei Bango put it in the Daily News (27.11.2001):

For new words to get accepted into a language, they must reflect the mood of the time, fill in a vacuum in the standard lexicon and be accepted as an appropriate form of expression. Thus, the word jambanja which became part of our vocabulary in the past two years, helped people to accept their confusion with an executive order directing the police to ignore crimes classified as political. Jambanja means state-sponsored lawlessness. The police are not expected to intervene or arrest anyone in a jambanja scene because those taking part will have prior state blessing and approval. But, only one interest group, war veterans and ZANU(PF) supporters, is allowed to engage in a jambanja.

This term needs to be understood within the broader politics of Zimbabwe of the time. President Mugabe and war veterans' leaders such as Chenjerai Hunzvi and Joseph Chinotimba were deliberately deploying the language and symbols of the liberation war. These included reviving the former enemies (Rhodesians and imperialist, mainly British, aggressors), slogans, *pungwes*, and the creation of a new cadre of youth brigades. Mugabe was at pains to assert that 'ZANU(PF) has a degree in violence' (Blair 2002) and threatened to 'go back to the trenches'.²⁰ The political turbulence and violence of the 2000 parliamentary election segued into a drawn-out, and equally violent campaign for the 2002 presidential election. *Jambanja*, in

this context, also stood for the erosion of certain social norms - particularly shocking to many was the lack of respect from the young for the elderly. Sixteen-year-old party youth brigade members were to be seen ordering around, interrogating - and sometimes even beating - their elders after stopping vehicles and searching them at road blocks and asking people to produce ZANU(PF) cards, sing liberation war songs and chant party slogans. This was an opportunity for score settling as, for example, youths beat their former teachers; and for theft and extortion from those accused of being MDC supporters.

The time of *jambanja* brought more subtle changes too. This was a new space and time where the fact that certain laws and norms no longer applied enabled the creation of new identities on the 'development frontier' (Worby 1998). In particular, settlers on the former lowveld ranches liked to portray themselves as heroic pioneers²¹ - directly paralleling the discourse of the earlier white colonial settlers in the lowveld (Wolmer 2001). *Jambanja* also gave younger settlers the opportunity to win their stripes as loyal party followers and hence lobby for a position on the new village committees or receive further land.

JAMBANJA AND THE LAND OCCUPATIONS

In February 2000 the Chiredzi District War Veterans' Association mobilised people largely drawn from neighbouring communities to invade a number of properties in sequence across the district. On each farm 'demonstration', occupiers led by 'base commanders' were left behind to report back to a district committee. The dynamics of this 'time of *jambanja*' and farm invasions as perceived by the war veterans are revealed in some detail by one of the base commanders in the former Fair Range Ranch:²²

It was a hard time for us as the pioneers of jambanja. We must all be frank, it was a tough time. Imagine [having] to sleep in the bush not knowing when your next meal will be coming from. We just survived on handouts from different people including farmers and relatives. I was one of the first people to come here [Fair Range ranch]. Before that we had held several meetings at cell, ward, branch and district levels to plan and mobilise people to go into the farms. It was a difficult time trying to convince people that we mean it and, mind you, MDC [the opposition Movement for Democratic Change] had infiltrated quite a lot. Many youth were MDC supporters. We had to use force. We sometimes had to force people to attend meetings in rural areas. We also got help from councillors, the

District Administrator's office, the army and the CIO [Central Intelligence Organisation]. We finally came in on 14th February and erected our tents which we got from the army. We then went back to the communal areas and told the masses that land is now available in the farms. And we told them that the government had delayed in fulfilling its promise. On 16th February more than 1000 people, mainly from Sangwe communal area and Chiredzi, came. We thought it wise to elect leaders in different places. Youths were also chosen and elected to maintain vigilance. During this time food came from rural areas. There was a register that was marked every day and a roll call done twice a day during the morning and evening. This was all for security reasons. If someone wanted to go to his rural area he would tell the seven member [settlers'] committee his reasons for going, how many days for and when he was likely to come back. We then decided to demand food from ranch owners. During holidays like Easter, Independence Day and Heroes Day a proposal was sent to the ranch owners to supply meat, sugar, salt, bowsers of water, mealie meal and people would come together and celebrate the holiday. Failure to supply these in time would mean that that person is an enemy and security and youth would then be sent to his farm house to get a full explanation on why that person did not bring the items.

In the early stages this movement onto the farms was perceived as a risky thing to do. There were relatively few people involved in many cases, and there was no guarantee that the lack of intervention by the police would continue. To begin with, there were cases of farm invaders being attacked or having their huts burnt by opposition supporters; fear of retaliation by well-armed farmers; and numerous 'arrests' of poachers by game guards. People with assets to lose were wary about moving too many of them on to the newly occupied areas. Each base camp had a high turnover of settlers and there was a lot of movement between base camps. Young men were deployed as sentries to guard against 'infiltrators', morning and evening roll calls were held, and men and women were segregated at night (although some settlers were visited regularly by their wives who would bring food and do their washing) (see also Chaumba *et al.* 2003).²³

However, as it became clear that the invaders had the active support of government, the occupiers increasingly grew in confidence. *Jambanja* came to refer to all the illicit activities on these farms that rapidly became normalised. On Fair Range this included closing farm roads; cutting down trees; poaching; cattle theft and mutilation; starting fires; attacking game guards; demanding meat and mealie meal from white farmers; looting property and sugar cane; ordering farmers, farm workers and neighbouring

villagers to attend political rallies; defying police orders; and, at one stage, appropriating a police vehicle.²⁴

The *jambanja* landscape was characterised by a proliferation of signposts proclaiming 'No go area - war veterans inside'. This was a visibly politicised landscape where Zimbabwean flags were planted on anthills or hung from trees and ZANU(PF) posters proclaiming that 'Land is the economy, the economy is land' and 'Zimbabwe will never be a colony again' plastered on trees and gate posts. This was countered by the message 'Vote MDC' spray painted on every available surface from rocks to road signs, to the road itself. The presence of the farm invaders thus served a dual role. As well as appropriating land they were part of the ongoing ZANU(PF) political campaign for the parliamentary and presidential elections of 2000 and 2002. The invaded farms were often literally a no-go area for outsiders (even the police sometimes) - somewhere for those instigating political violence to hide securely and from which to base intimidatory attacks on opposition supporters in neighbouring communal areas (Human Rights Watch 2002). They were also cast by some, particularly evangelical Christians, as spaces of immorality, inhabited by 'degenerates' and 'drunkards' who otherwise would 'roam around shopping centres'.²⁵

During the 'time of *jambanja*' ZANU(PF) and the war veterans described the farm occupations as 'demonstrations'. These were symbolic occupations, intended not as permanent allocations, but to draw attention to the land issue generally and certain land claims specifically, and symbolically stake claim to that land through visible occupation. There was a substantial ebb and flow of numbers of occupiers on most properties. These demonstration occupations would, at some stage in the future, be 'properly planned' and land allocated to settlers. Given this scenario, it is rather surprising that the occupiers often went to great lengths to employ the formal and technical tools of land-use planning. As the sketch at the beginning of this paper shows, on Fair Range ranch, for example, the occupiers conducted their own survey and allocated plots. As another base commander put it:²⁶

People were allocated 50 ha as part of the demonstrations. We pegged ourselves, when giving plots we used a tape measure. We could not give land in the water- ways although some did it. Some cleared, few farmed, although a woman got some bales of cotton. We were doing the occupations in order to make the government see us. The pegging of lands helped them see us.

'Pegs' were initially rudimentary boundary markers: large stones, tree

branches, poles, anthills, axe marks on trees, debarked trees, or hoe marks in the ground. The base commander or another senior war veteran would walk the plot boundaries with the settlers from either side fixing the demarcation lines. Even riverbank cultivation bans, dating from colonial legislation, were enforced to a surprisingly great extent.

The recourse to the technical practices and tools and linear spatial ordering of colonial land-use planning was a mechanism by which the occupiers sought to become 'visible' and gain official recognition. This is in a sense an inversion of the more familiar thesis that the state seeks to 'see' and thereby control people by the disciplining measures of planning (Comaroff & Comaroff 1992; Foucault 1977; Scott 1998). Instead, local actors were seeking to enhance their visibility to the state. The new re-settlements were not considered 'proper' or official unless they conformed to certain prescribed and 'modern' criteria - in this case the land-use planning criteria inherited by the agricultural extension bureaucracy from the colonial era. After so many years of technocratic land-use planning, these criteria appear to have been internalised by the very people who might have been expected to resist them. This can be contrasted with the 'freedom farming' of the liberation war or the 'squatting' on vacant land immediately after independence, when colonial land-use plans and restrictions on where and how people lived and farmed were explicitly resisted. This is particularly ironic given the revival by ZANU(PF) and the war veterans of liberation era anti-imperialist rhetoric.

FAST-TRACK RESETTLEMENT

These new resettlement areas were soon to acquire an even greater air of legitimacy when the state arrived to conduct further surveys, planning and pegging - and the invaded farms transmuted into 'fast-track' resettlement areas. The accelerated Land Reform and Resettlement Implementation Plan ('Fast Track') Approach²⁷ was announced on 15 July 2000 by Vice President Joseph Msika:²⁸

Under this approach priority is given to land acquisition, demarcation, settler emplacement and the provision of basic infrastructure such as water points and access roads. More comprehensive infrastructure and other support services will be provided later.

These minimalist planning targets had much in common with the accelerated resettlement scheme in the early 1980s. During 2000 and 2001 there was a massive escalation of farm designation and resettlement, with

a view eventually to redistributing 9.2 million ha from the commercial farming sector (or approximately 80% of the land in this sector) to 160,000 poor beneficiaries and 51,000 small to medium-scale indigenous (black) commercial farmers.²⁹ According to official records, by January 2002 7.3 million ha on 3,074 farms had been planned and pegged by the Ministry of Land, Agriculture and Rural Resettlement and 114,830 households had already been resettled on 4.37 million ha (UNDP 2002).³⁰ Efforts were made to legitimise the process retrospectively by back-dating legislative amendments.³¹

In Chiredzi district the fast-track land reform programme was being implemented in earnest by January 2001;³² 23,500-25,000 people had been resettled under the programme in Masvingo Province by November 2001.³³ Teams of Agritex³⁴ officers were at work seven days a week surveying and pegging the already invaded farms officially designated for resettlement. This heralded a shift to a new, and symbolically different, phase of land reform - as shown in the following quotes:

*Jambanja was there, then government came and now jambanja is over.*³⁵

*Now we are doing it the Agritex way. The other time it was the political way.*³⁶

*Last season things were haphazard, now things are more ordered.*³⁷

*Last year we clearly told people not to build permanent structures. It was to get the planning process to catch up. Today we are saying we want you to build houses, but not pole and dagga houses ... because we expect people to plan properly so that there is a proper village with running water, electricity, toilets and proper granaries.*³⁸

The violent political demonstration element of the farm invasions during the 'time of *jambanja*' of 2000 was to be replaced with the imposition of a particular type of 'order' and 'planning', and a shift in register from the political to the technical.³⁹ It also saw a return to the maps, photo mosaics and chinograph pencils of land-use planners used from the colonial era through to the resettlement planning of the 1980s and 1990s (see above). As we have seen, this did not necessarily mean bringing planning to bear on a state of absolute chaos. Instead, it was often a case of superimposing state planning on settlements which, in many cases, had already been 'planned' and surveyed by war veterans and other occupiers who had measured out fields using tape measures, and settled in tidy lines.⁴⁰

The massive ambition and expected speed of the fast-track land reform process inevitably brought about a conflict between political imperatives

(the need for speed, large numbers and fast evidence of production on resettled lands) and technical procedures and accuracy. Formalised planning procedures were further constrained by fuel and manpower shortages (exacerbated by the recruitment of large numbers of people from the Agritex Planning Branch into the Ministry of Lands) and severe funding constraints (operational costs were slashed in austerity measures imposed by the Ministry of Finance).⁴¹ This meant that formal planning mechanisms had to be short-circuited or adapted to greater or lesser extents. As Agritex staff admitted:

Our politicians wanted people settled. They needed resettlement in advance of the ploughing season. We had serious deadlines.⁴² They wanted numbers, numbers, numbers, but we came to a compromise. You need to compromise technical principles because of politics.⁴³

It is haphazard on the ground. We hope to make corrections later. Planning is a dynamic process.⁴⁴

In 'proper' Agritex planning we put a cut line. This time we used existing features, rivers, roads, fence lines ... mark and connect.⁴⁵

These tensions between political goals and technical criteria were played out in practice in the form of continual negotiations and trade-offs between Agritex planning officials and settlers on the ground, as formal technical criteria were shaped to local political and geographical contexts (wetlands, water ways, soil types etc.). In practice, certainly on the former ranches of Chiredzi district, the war veteran commanders of the new resettlement areas and local political leaders were able to exert considerable influence, not just over plot allocation, but also over the precise size and location of plots, frequently making minor adjustments to 'official' practice.⁴⁶ The war veterans perceived the pegging as a joint exercise with Agritex.⁴⁷ They often downplayed their role as just 'helping to carry pegs',⁴⁸ and sometimes 'advising Agritex on knowledge of the area'.⁴⁹ However, many extension officials saw things rather differently: according to one, 'We were just following behind the war vets, they were in charge not us.'⁵⁰ Another was even more explicit:⁵¹

Fast-track is not planning, it's guided by war vet commanders. We tend just to ratify existing plots. We don't have time to deploy criteria of land-use planning. Agritex will go as a team with the plan, but the base commander will be in the same vehicle. There's lots of pressure to pack more and more people. So if the plan recommends 5 ha per family then it may end up as 3 ha, or the grazing area will be squeezed. The plans and reality are very

different. Plans are sent to Harare to tell them what's happening - that's where they get all the information. But on the ground it may be a very different story. ... Early occupations were supposed to be just demonstrations, and then planning would follow. But in practice people have found land and put up structures. Planning then must work around this. Often pegging is simply establishing things that have already been put on the ground.

Similarly, the Commercial Farmers Union complained that 'contrary to the very strict rules of the Surveyor General's Department, unqualified people are being used to conduct pegging and surveying'.⁵² On the other hand: 'war vets are the contact persons in the area for Agritex. It makes work more straightforward.'⁵³ The fast-track planning process was thus sometimes merely ratifying and formalising existing self-allocations and at other times involved considerable reallocations of land. The over-stretched planners were also unable and unwilling to stay on beyond the initial pegging exercises and, in practice, there was a degree of latitude for settlers to adjust the position of their homestead stands and arable fields post-pegging, and even, in some cases, extend their cultivation into wetlands and streambanks.⁵⁴

Another notable departure from the previous tenets of planning for land reform in Zimbabwe is that there has been much less emphasis than previously on the qualities of settlers (other than on the A2 schemes). Previously, as we have seen, there was a drive to attract the 'small big farmer' to resettlement schemes - someone with agricultural qualifications, skills and capital. Now at least 20% of the land is reserved for war veterans, who have first choice of plots. The question is whether this consequently constitutes a more equitable land reform exercise, or a party-politicised mode of beneficiary selection offering more patronage opportunities (see Chaumba *et al.* 2003). Notwithstanding the accommodations and short-cuts outlined above, however, it is important to note that there has been a significant imposition of plans and regulations on invaded plots which were often themselves already much more 'planned' and 'regulated' than has often been supposed.

THE REASSERTION OF TECHNOCRACY?

Alongside *jambanja*, 'fast-track' is another recent addition to Zimbabwe's popular lexicon, with fast-track metaphors cropping up all over the place, such as when the minister for Information attempted to set up information

command posts to get 'fast-track facts' on land reform out to the media.⁵⁵ But does the rapid implementation of the fast-track scheme constitute a reassertion of the technocratic imperative that has so frequently resurfaced in Zimbabwe prior to and after Independence, or has there been a decisive break with the conventions of rigid land-use planning?

The fast-track resettlement process has been criticised in coruscating terms by the opposition MDC, as well as by the independently owned press, almost all Zimbabwe's former donors, at times the ZFU (Zimbabwe Farmers' Union), ICFU (Indigenous Commercial Farmers' Union), many NGOs and some chiefs. It is too hasty, incoherent, haphazard, un-systematic, chaotic and lacking in rigour. The criteria for settler selection have been untransparent, vague and subject to cronyism; and there has been frequent and sustained criticism of the 'dumping' of people on land without adequate infrastructure (roads, shops, clinics), and with insufficient provision of inputs, credit and marketing assistance, and agricultural extension advice.⁵⁶ According to the MDC: 'the land allocation exercise [has] been ZANU-ised and was more political and not genuine ... [it was] designed to hoodwink people into voting for ZANU(PF) in the 2002 presidential election';⁵⁷ and is 'sentencing people to perpetual subsistence because the land is not surveyed and there are no roads, clinics and other basic infrastructure ... One cannot take a group of people, settle them in a bush and expect them to engage in meaningful production.'⁵⁸ As a commentator in the *Zimbabwe Independent* argued:

The current phase of the land redistribution exercise is bound to fail as long as land re-organisation is not focused on enhancing productivity and preserving the environment. The present pattern is a far cry from what is required for a proper land resettlement programme to succeed. Politicians' emphasis on the current exercise has been land to the people, negating the fundamental issue of land husbandry and the competency of those to be settled. The government's failure to carry out a scientific analysis on the efficacy of the programme, coupled with the irrational politics surrounding land, has dramatised the situation and thrown it back into the cauldron of partisan and racial politics. It is no longer an issue of land resettlement planned on the basis of poverty alleviation and improved productivity, but an exercise that gives primacy to political considerations under the guise of social justice.⁵⁹

It has also been depicted as an ecological and moral catastrophe leading to 'scorched earth' and a 'drought of reason',⁶⁰ with particular outrage reserved for the slaughter of wild animals (see Wolmer *et al.* 2004).

On the other hand, by the end of 2001 there was evidence of quite significant progress in the establishment of fast-track resettlements in the former ranches of Chiredzi district. There had been significant state assistance in the form of seed and input packages, tillage provision, loans for restocking and, in Fair Range ranch, even a school built by the settlers with teachers recruited and two permanent extension officers resident at the former farm compound. The young, women, unemployed and landless had indeed received land, as well as war veterans, local elites and party stalwarts (Chaumba *et al.* 2003).

Despite admitting that the settlers usurped them to some extent in the planning and pegging of the resettlement areas, land-use planners envisaged the balance of power shifting back to the technocracy over time:

When the dust has settled, it will give new opportunities to exercise existing laws and legislation. In the new situation we will have to enforce legislation, as planned resettlement occurs. But the pressure of land is just too much. We will need to revisit some pieces of legislation.⁶¹

When pegging we use the 30 metre rule of thumb.⁶²

We made sure it was followed, there was no resistance even from war vets. When it comes to it history has it that the madomeni [agricultural extension worker] is to be feared. The war vets are new in the trade; they will try and befriend the extension workers to help them with farming.⁶³

We will produce model by-laws which will guide all these [new resettlement] villages to produce their own.⁶⁴

The settlers' deployment of the language and practice of technocratic planning may prove to be a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it helped them swiftly become visible and legitimate and allowed them to exert considerable influence on the state's subsequent formalisation of their plots. On the other hand, as the land occupiers of 20 years earlier discovered, this discourse is rooted in long-held and institutionally embedded traditions of planning and control. The danger for the settlers is that, by choosing this path, they have bought into a process that - as so often in Zimbabwe's history - will re-impose coercive land-use regulations that are at odds with their livelihood strategies and seek to vet settlers on the grounds of 'competency' and 'productivity' and so undermine populist claims of redressing inequalities and providing land to the landless and poor.

CONCLUSION

Zimbabwe has undoubtedly seen a radical recasting of patterns of political authority in the last three years (see Chaumba *et al.* 2003; McGregor 2002; Raftopolous 2001; Worby 2001). Some have argued, following Chabal and Daloz (1999), that disorder, violence and confusion have been strategically deployed by war veterans and the state as instruments of control (Hammar 2001; McGregor 2002). It is certainly true of the invaded, later fast-tracked, farms of Zimbabwe's Chiredzi District that a range of opportunist actors have used *jambanja* to further their ends (see also Chaumba *et al.* 2003; Wolmer 2001). But it is not just disorder and violence that has been instrumental.

Even in the most violent and chaotic farm invasions during the 'time of *jambanja*' there was an equally instrumental order beneath ostensible disorder. In a strange and typically Zimbabwean contradiction, the ethos of professionalism embodied by land-use planners was threatened and yet simultaneously reinforced by the ZANU(PF) government and war veterans' actions. At the same time as they were riding roughshod over the rule of law, war veterans and other land occupiers employed the tools and practices of colonial land-use planning to become visible and 'legitimate'. The subsequent formal planning by Agritex recast the invasions as re-settlement areas - legitimising their presence with codes which are familiar to all Zimbabweans. Ironically, the very people who might be expected to argue for throwing off the technocratic yoke inherited from the colonial regime to return to 'freedom farming' have embraced the colonial language, practices and procedures of land-use planning with many of their accompanying regulations. There has been no emancipatory release from these strictures and the technical parameters of disciplining development, and many of embedded colonial myths about African farmers remain unchallenged.

What is new, however, is that new actors are negotiating land reform on the ground, situated in a new political terrain where new identities, patronage and client networks are at play (Chaumba *et al.* 2003). The speed and short-cuts of the fast-track land reform process and vagueness of policies to date have, in the short term at least, opened up a degree of leeway and flexibility in land-use planning and allocation. This is a very important shift in the functioning of a top-down, centralised and authoritarian bureaucracy with no history of being responsive to local constituencies.⁶⁵ But these improvements may prove to be temporary. Notwithstanding the new political context, the quest for 'order' and the

imprint of technocracy continue to run deep when it comes to land-use planning, resettlement and rural development in Zimbabwe.

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NOTES

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² Masipula Sithole, 'Public Eye', *Financial Caz.et/E*, 28.3.2001.

³ This is a particularly popular metaphor - see, for example, *The Observer*, 18.5.2003.

- ⁴ JAG Zimbabwe, <http://www.justiceforagriculture.com/newsrelease1312o2.shtml>.
- ⁵ See Bayart *et al.* 1999; Frimpong-Ansah 1991; Zartman 1995.
- ⁶ On this theme see Chan 2003; Worby 2001b.
- ⁷ See, for example, Shaw 2003.
- ⁸ See Alexander 1994, 1996; Drinkwater 1991; Munro 1998; Ranger 1985; Robins 1994; Walmer & Scoones 2000; Worby 2001a; and *cf.* Comaroff & Comaroff 1992, and Scott 1998.
- ⁹ In 1982 the Tribal Trust Lands had been renamed 'communal lands', in contrast to 'commercial' areas.
- ¹⁰ Notably the Riddell Commission of 1980 and the Chavanduka Commission of 1982.
- ¹¹ Interview with donor official cited by Keeley & Scoones 2003.
- ¹² Only 20,000 households were resettled between 1990 and 1996 (Kinsey 1999).
- ¹³ The criteria for listing were: multiple ownership, absentee ownership, derelict or underutilised, farm borders a communal area. These were of course controversial and open to interpretation. By 1998, 510 (plus some mistakes) were degazetted on the basis of incorrect assignation. A further 841 were challenged in the courts, with only 85 being uncontested. In November 1998 acquisition orders were signed for all 926 farms.
- ¹⁴ *The Herald*, 2.9.1999, listed the criteria that farmers on resettlement schemes were supposed to meet: technical knowledge in agriculture; certificate, diploma, degree or other qualification in the field; command of sufficient resources to carry out a self-initiated and approved agricultural programme; being prepared to reside on allocated land unit or employ technically competent managers; have developed financially viable and agro-ecologically suitable five-year farming programme. The article went on to stress that 'Government wants to disabuse people of the view that farms are weekend holiday resorts.'
- ¹⁵ In the event the land issue played second fiddle in the referendum to the issue of governance. Voters rejected the proposed constitution's attempts to entrench further the power of the executive, despite repeated demands for the opposite during the consultation process.
- ¹⁶ *Daily News*, 1.8.2000.
- ¹⁷ *Daily News*, 28.11.2002. It has also become common for letter writers to newspapers to sign themselves 'anti-jambanja'.
- ¹⁸ Human Rights Watch 2002: 17.
- ¹⁹ Another popular metaphor used to exemplify the farm invasions is 'DRC' - meaning the war torn Democratic Republic of Congo. Poachers hunting on the invaded farms, for example; often refer to their expeditions as 'going into DRC'.
- ²⁰ *Daily News*, 3-4-2000.
- ²¹ Interview with Ward 1 Councillor, Sangwe CA, 14.12.2001.
- ²² Interview with base commander, Village 1, Fair Range, 3.12.2001.
- ²³ Interview with settler, Village 3, Gonarezhou, 13.11.2001.
- ²⁴ According to the owner of Fair Range his attempts to report the invasions to the police were thwarted by the police saying they had no crime report books and were unable to react unless they received instructions from the CIO (Central Intelligence Organisation, CFU Situation Report, 12.2.2000). However the farm invaders on Fair Range had a rather different perspective: 'policemen are being bribed and given diesel, meat and beer [by the white farmer] to torment us day and night' (interview with war veteran, Fair Range, 9.11.2001).
- ²⁵ Interviews, Sangwe communal area, November 2001 to July 2002.
- ²⁶ Interview with base commander, Village 2, Fair Range, 20.11.2001.

- ²⁷ In May 2001 this was ratcheted up to an 'ultra fast track' '40 days and 40 nights' programme designed to settle an additional 35,000 people in advance of the rainy season (*The Mirror*, 4.5.2001). The official policy document outlining the fast-track process was not released until a year later, see: 'Basic infrastructure for resettled families: Made' (*The Herald*, 19.7.2001).
- ²⁸ <http://www.gta.gov.zw/Land%20ls>
- ²⁹ *People First - Zimbabwe's land reform programme*, Ministry of Lands, Agriculture and Rural Settlement in conjunction with the Department of Information and Publicity, Office of the President and Cabinet, June 2001 (<http://www.zimbabwepeoplefirst.com>); *Zimbabwe Land Reform and Resettlement: assessment and suggested framework for the future - interim report*, UNDP 2002; 'Govt seizes 90% of CFU farms', *Zimbabwe Independent*, 6.7.2001. According to the UNDP report this was an aggregation of a series of one-off executive actions which incrementally increased the target hectareage from 5 million ha in 1998 to 9.2m in January 2002.
- ³⁰ This data needs to be treated with caution due to multiple discrepancies, bureaucratic confusion, duplicates and the political capital to be made from inflating the figures. See, for example, '35,000 people settled', *Zimbabwe Independent*, 3.8.2001.
- ³¹ See *Zimbabwe Independent*, 16.11.2001 and UNDP 2002. Examples include the April 2000 constitutional change; amendments to the Land Acquisition Act; and the passing of Rural Land Occupiers (Prevention from Eviction) Act in July 2001 which removed responsibility from complying with previous court judgements.
- ³² See Commercial Farmers' Union situation reports, <http://www.samara.co.zw/cfu/news/sitrep.htm>
- ³³ Interview with Agritex officer, Masvingo, 17.11.2001.
- ³⁴ Department of Agricultural Technical & Extension Services, now known as AREX (Agricultural Research & Extension).
- ³⁵ Interview with Village chairman, former Fair Range Ranch, 2011. 2001.
- ³⁶ Interview with Agritex officer, Chiredzi, 21.11.2001.
- ³⁷ Interview with Agritex officer, Chiredzi, 21.11.2001.
- ³⁸ Interview with Ignatius Chombo, minister of local government and national housing, in *The Mirror*, 4.5.2001.
- ³⁹ Two broad models for resettlement were defined during this period. The A1 'decongesting' model is based on allocations of individual arable and usually communal grazing with village settlements, and clearly owes much to the former Model A schemes. The A2 'deracialising' model assumes a small-scale commercial production unit, with farm and business plans.
- ⁴⁰ We do not mean to suggest by this that *jambanja* in its broader interpretation is over in other contexts. Indeed the term continues to be current and is still regularly used in the Zimbabwean media to refer to ongoing incidents of violence and disorder.
- ⁴¹ 'No surveyors for land reform', *Zimbabwe Standard*, 3.9.2000.
- ⁴² Interview with Agritex officer, Harare, 14.11.2001.
- ⁴³ Interview with Agritex officer, Masvingo, 17.11.2001.
- ⁴⁴ Interview with Agritex officer, Harare, 14.11.2001.
- ⁴⁵ Interview with Agritex officer, Masvingo, 17.11.2001.
- ⁴⁶ For an earlier description of on-the-ground negotiations in resettlement scheme planning, see Alexander 1994: 334-5.
- ⁴⁷ Interview with settlers, Village 4, Gonarezhou, 20.11.2001.
- ⁴⁸ Interview with councillor, Sangwe communal area, 12.11.2001.

- ⁴⁹ Interview with base commander, Chiredzi district, 9.11.2001.
- ⁵⁰ Interview with Agritex officer, Chiredzi, 21.11.2001.
- ⁵¹ Interview with Agritex officer, Masvingo, 16.11.2001.
- ⁵² CFU situation report, Masvingo Province, 26.7.2001.
- ⁵³ Interview with senior agricultural extension officer, Chiredzi, 21.11.2001.
- ⁵⁴ In contrast to previous resettlement schemes in Zimbabwe there is no automatic provision for a resident resettlement officer.
- ⁵⁵ Interview with Agritex officer, Harare, 4.11.2001.
- ⁵⁶ For example: 'Resettled farmers abandon land', Zimbabwe Independent, 1.12.2000.
- ⁵⁷ 'Biti dismisses government's fast track land reform', Daily News, 11.8.2000.
- ⁵⁸ 'Tsvangirai condemns fast-track resettlement', Daily News, 18.8.2000.
- ⁵⁹ 'Fast-track land resettlement a cocktail for disaster', Zimbabwe Independent, 11.8.2000 (our emphases).
- ⁶⁰ See, for example, 'Govt draws up \$1,3b budget for land reform', Zimbabwe Independent, 21.7.2000.
- ⁶¹ Interview with Agritex officer, Masvingo, 17.11.2001.
- ⁶² This rule, banning cultivation on riverbanks, dates from the Natural Resources Act of 1941 and has been contested ever since (see Scoones & Cousins 1994).
- ⁶³ Interview with Agritex officer, Chiredzi, 21.11.2001.
- ⁶⁴ Interview with Chiredzi RDC official, 22.11.2001.
- ⁶⁵ This point was emphasised by an anonymous reviewer.

7

ZIMBABWE'S LAND REFORM: NEW POLITICAL DYNAMICS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

Ian Scoones

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INTRODUCTION

Zimbabwe's land reform from 2000 has resulted in major changes in production, marketing and livelihoods (Scoones et al. 2010). These reconfigurations have had a dramatic influence on rural politics, creating new political dynamics in the countryside. This relationship between politics and economy is key for understanding longer-term trajectories of agrarian change and development.

Through a mix of spontaneous invasions and orchestrated occupations, the net result of what came to be called the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) was that around 150,000 households were settled in smallholder areas (called A1 schemes in Zimbabwe), plus a further 30,000 households were allocated medium-scale so-called A2 farms. In addition there were many thousands of 'informal' settlers who claimed land but were not recognised by the state, and given registration documents ('offer letters').

The numbers remain rough, as a full audit has yet to be undertaken, but the scale is significant, representing well over a million people moving to new land, along with many labourers and other family members who have joined over time. This represented around eight million hectares, around one-fifth of the total land in the country. This was one of the largest land

redistributions in the last 30 years; a period when land reform had largely gone off the policy agenda. This reform has had major implications for Zimbabwe – and its lessons are relevant to many other countries where skewed land distributions persist, especially in the southern African region.

The land reform has therefore resulted in a new agrarian structure (Table 7.1). Most farmers – over 90% – are smallholders, now on over 80% of land. But, as will be discussed below, these ‘new farmers’ are highly differentiated. According to official figures from 2010, 12% of all land holdings are A1 smallholder plots. There has been a significant shift from the large-scale farm and estate sector from 34% of land area to just over 10%, although many large commercial estates in particular, controlled by international capital, persist. There is also now a medium-scale farm sector (A2 farms), which is meant to focus on commercial production.

The aim of this paper is not to discuss the economic and livelihood characteristics of the new agrarian setting, as this has been discussed extensively elsewhere (see Moyo et al. 2009; Scoones et al. 2010; Cliffe et

Table 7.1: Changing distributions of land and people in Zimbabwe, 2000-10

	No. of households (000s)				Hectares (000s)			
	2000		2010		2000		2010	
	No.	%	No.	%	ha	%	Ha	%
Communal	1050	92.2	1100	81.2	16,400	50.1	16,400	49.8
Old resettlement	75	6.6	75	5.5	3667	11.2	3667	11.1
A1	-	-	146	10.8	-	-	4137	12.6
Small-scale commercial farms	8.5	0.7	8.5	0.6	1400	4.3	1400	4.3
Small A2	-	-	22.7	1.7	-	-	3000	9.1
Large-scale Estates	4.7	0.4	1.4	0.1	7905.6	24.1	1156.9	3.5
					3384	10.3	2401.6	7.3

Source: Scoones et al. 2010; Moyo 2011a, 2011b).

al. 2011; Matondi 2012).¹ Instead, the paper attempts a political reading of the new situation, something that reviews of earlier work suggested was missing (Rutherford 2012). The results of the July 2013 elections perhaps give a clue to some of the story, as, despite considerable irregularities, many commentators now agree that the Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF), the ruling party and the backer of the land reform, won, and a new era is emerging (Raftopoulos 2013b; Tendi 2013).

In this paper, I argue that the reconfiguration of land and economic opportunity has resulted in a new politics of the countryside that emerges from the processes of accumulation and differentiation set in train by the land reform. Yet this politics is contested: between the interests of new ‘middle farmer’ accumulators and politically connected elites and large-scale capital. These dynamics are being played out in different ways in different parts of the country, depending on local political processes, the way land reform unfolded and the agroecological potential of the area. Based on a detailed longitudinal analysis, this paper examines two areas in Masvingo province: the ‘core’ land reform areas of Gutu and Masvingo districts, and the more ‘peripheral’ areas in Chiredzi and Mwenezi.

NARRATIVES OF LAND REFORM

Over the last decade or so there have been many excellent studies on Zimbabwe’s land reform, providing a rich empirical picture of the impacts, consequences and outcomes of land reform. While there are important variations and nuances, there are many important convergences. Unfortunately, the wider debate about the politics of land reform has often been dislocated from this grounded, empirical reality. Instead this has been dominated by two broad narratives.

The first is a nationalist, populist perspective that emphasises ‘the people’ taking back the land through a bottom-up process (Hanlon et al. 2012). The land invasions were thus part of a rural popular, political movement (Moyo and Yeros 2005). For some this was the ‘third Chimurenga’, the culmination of the liberation struggle (Moyo and Yeros 2007a). The state and party appropriately backed this, as a response to a political will of the people, and so provided the legal and technocratic framework for redistributive reform as part of the FTLRP (Moyo and Chambati 2013).

The second is very different. This argues that the land reform was an orchestrated response to the outcomes of the referendum of 2000, and a

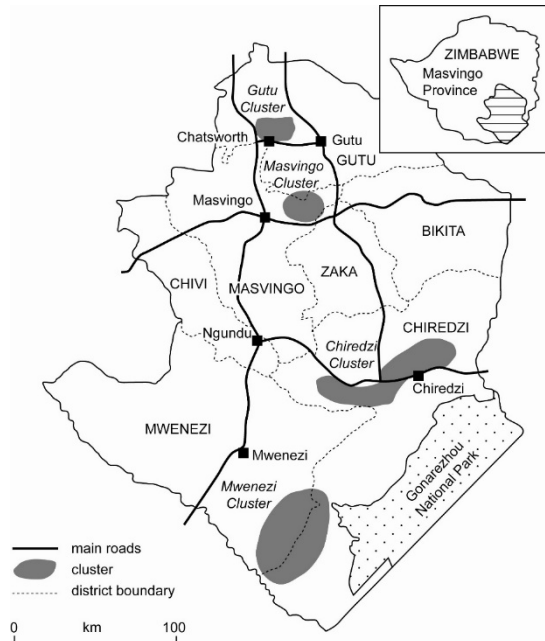
panic within ZANU-PF, who saw its support leaching away to a growing opposition (Sachikonye 2002; Hammar, Raftopoulos, and Jensen 2003). ZANU-PF, and its political–business–security elite in particular, had become used to the benefits of corrupt state patronage, and was in danger of losing control (Bracking 2005; Raftopoulos 2009, 2013a). The move to take over land by force and with violence was a desperate response, but had all the hallmarks of the violent, racially defined nationalist politics of ZANU-PF, which emphasised exclusionary sovereignty over development, and violence and patronage over democracy (Moore 2012; Alexander and McGregor 2013). Some even referred to ‘the end of modernity’ (Worby 2003), and land reform, along with a range of practices in the post-2000 era, has been defined in terms of a patronage politics (Zamchiya 2013).

Neither of these narratives, however, hold up to any close scrutiny. The two narratives have of course been presented here in a rather simplistic and stereotypical form; and indeed all the authors quoted above nuance their arguments significantly, and none adhere to these overly neat renditions in their entirety and without qualification. Yet, nevertheless, division between these two narratives, and their multiple variations – described by Moyo and Yeros (2007b) in terms of ‘the two lefts’ – is clear in popular, political, media and academic discourse, and often reflects the political rhetoric of the major political formations in the country.

In this paper, I want to explore why these narratives are not useful, and what a more sophisticated assessment of rural politics might look like, more rooted in the empirical realities on the ground than the ideological grandstanding that has so polarised the debate on land in Zimbabwe since 2000. I will do this through reflections from Masvingo, where I have worked with colleagues over the past 14 years investigating the consequences of land reform.

Since 2000, we have been tracking what has happened to around 400 households who got land in the early 2000s in 16 sites in Masvingo province, covering different agroecological zones and different resettlement models. I want to concentrate on the political dynamics in two areas in particular. These represent first what might be called the ‘core’ land reform areas. Here there are higher population densities, more resettlement areas, better-quality land and more formal planning of new resettlements, associated with greater state presence. In our study area this is represented by Gutu and Masvingo clusters to the north. The second area is what might be termed the ‘peripheral’ areas in the Lowveld. These are where land reform was much more contested, as land was taken over in state land, on the estates, and very often new settlements ended up not

Figure 7.1: Map of study area.



being confirmed by the FTLRP, at least for a long period. Being drier and more marginal, the agroecological potential is lower, with implications for risks, returns and the dynamics of accumulation. In our study, these are represented by Chiredzi and Mwenezi clusters (Figure 7.1).

The contrasts explored below tell us about how locally specific political dynamics, alliances and resistances are important; and how outcomes are often contingent and unexpected. They tell us about how patterns of social differentiation have resulted in political dynamics that are always evolving, as some accumulate while others struggle. This results in changing class positions and shifting class relations, as some emerge as small-capitalist farmers, while others are more reliant on selling their labour. They tell us about how elites are important and capture, grabbing and expropriation of resources is a feature; but the cases also show how elites are not necessarily all-powerful, and how resistance can be important, and sometimes successful. And the analysis shows how the state operates in very different ways, even within one province, with the 'peripheral' areas being very much on the margins of state power, while formal bureaucratic and political authority is much more evident in the 'core' areas.

While our Masvingo studies are of course specific to the provincial context, and very much wrapped up in a particular Masvingo politics, the

findings do however tell a broader story about agrarian change and politics, increasingly borne out by the wider set of studies that have now taken place across the country.

A NEW RURAL POLITICS?

Rural issues are important in Zimbabwean politics, both numerically and rhetorically. They always have been, and it is no surprise that the liberation war was fought from a rural base, with a rural constituency supporting the struggle (Ranger 1985). Rural issues are also important for urban voters, given the strong connections between town and countryside, and the patterns of migration that occur across a very blurred divide (Potts and Mutambirwa 1990).

A quick review of Table 7.1 shows the implications for electoral politics of the new agrarian configuration. Smallholder farmers dominate. Most are of course in the communal areas, but the links between the communal areas and the new resettlements are strong through kinship ties, economic links, labour sharing and aspirations for a better life that the land reform areas hold up.

As I will argue below, a new emergent middle farmer group centred on the new resettlements but extending beyond is potentially a key political force. In a rough calculation, this group represents about a quarter of the rural electorate, around a million voters.² It is this group indeed that may have shown its influence on 31 July 2013. Within and beyond this group are alliances between the rural population and a middle class with rural interests. This middle class, now many with land, have links to town, they often have other jobs, they are relatively asset rich and they have connections, both political and economic. They are very different to the earlier mass of rural people in the former 'reserves' (now communal areas), created in the colonial era as a labour pool and place for retirement where small amounts of poor-quality land provided some form of social security, in the absence of other state support (Arrighi 1970), although class divisions and development challenges remain similar (cf. Bush and Cliffe 1984; Cousins, Weiner, and Amin 1992).

Finally, Table 7.1 clearly shows that state and large-scale capitalist agriculture is still a feature of the Zimbabwean agrarian landscape, and the interests of capital, and what alliances these fractions forge, should not be forgotten in any analysis of agrarian trajectories (Moyo and Chambati 2013).

Key questions for a political analysis therefore centre on how the new 'middle farmer' class mobilises, across communal and resettlement areas, and whether this is feasible given the disparate origins. Further, it is important to ask who will such a group ally with – particularly the poor, women and the youth, who have benefited less from land reform but have aspirations. And also we need to know where the state will put its emphasis, and material and political resources. Ultimately, we must ask who will be backed? Will it be a politically connected elite demanding further patronage, or will the aspirations and demands of a new middle farmer class hold sway? And which political parties or factions across Zimbabwe's political formations will back who? Of course the answers to these questions cannot yet be known. But an analysis of political dynamics, contrasting the core and peripheral areas of Masvingo, does throw some light, as I will show below.

Table 7.2: Land reform beneficiaries (% households from 'core' Gutu/Masvingo sample only).

	A1 self-contained (N=75)	A1 villagised (N=142)	A2 (N=18)	Total (N=235)
Origins	%	%	%	%
'From nearby rural areas'	41	59	22	51
'From nearby urban areas'	17	10	22	13
Civil servant	28	14	28	20
Business person	8	4	22	6
Former farm worker	1	10	6	7
Security services	4	4	0	3

LAND, SOCIAL DIFFERENTIATION AND PATTERNS OF ACCUMULATION IN THE CORE FARMING AREAS

Who got the land in our 'core' Masvingo and Gutu study areas? Table 7.2 shows the data. The land reform beneficiaries were a mix. But, as already noted, they were very different to the communal area populations from where many originally came. Overall, those who got new land were younger, better educated, more connected to urban settings and had better access to even limited capital. The social mix was also different, with those who had off-farm jobs, businesses and political connections (for example, across our sample 9% were identified as 'war veterans', many having been civil servants, or retired in the communal areas).

Table 7.2 offers a snapshot of the origins of the new settlers in the Gutu and 'core' Masvingo resettlement areas of our sample. But we have to understand the pattern of differentiation that has emerged since land reform to get a sense of the emergence of new classes, and how these intersect. An analysis of social differentiation therefore gives us a clue to an emerging political dynamic. From detailed household-level livelihood analysis across our full provincial sample of 400 households, we identified four broad groups, and a range of 15 livelihood strategies shown in Table 7.3 (Scoones et al. 2010, 2012a).

From these data from across the province, three key points can be drawn out. First, a pattern of 'accumulation from below' (cf. Neocosmos 1993; Cousins 2010) is observed whereby there is a group of new petty commodity producers who regularly sell, continuously invest, and who are new farm-based entrepreneurs. This group are stepping up and out (cf. Dorward et al. 2009), and are involved in a range of farm and off-farm activities in combination. In Table 7.3, the bold/italicised livelihood strategies represent 48% of the population, although those who are regularly accumulating are between 30% (in the drier peripheral areas) and 40% (in the wetter, core areas). Second, there is a process of social differentiation going on. There are clear winners and losers. Those who are not accumulating are combining farming with labouring (farmer-workers), others are dropping out and joining a rural proletariat, or are engaged in survivalist coping strategies and 'straddling' livelihoods. Third, a pattern of elite capture is part of the story. This includes some of the 'cellphone' farmers and those we defined as 'farming from patronage'. This amounts to around 5% of farmers. Such elite capture is far from dominant, contrary to the suggestions of some (cf. Zamchiya 2011), but in some A2 areas in particular we can observe patterns of 'accumulation from above', where

patronage connections offer opportunities unavailable to others. While small in number, this group is disproportionately influential in social and political terms, and certainly cannot be ignored.

The significant point for this paper is that in the new resettlement areas, there is an important new 'middle farmer' group, rooted in petty commodity production and linked into successful accumulation from below. This may be 30–40% of the total population, even in the relatively dry areas of Masvingo province (we can expect this to be higher in the tobacco boom areas of the Highveld for example).³ These new accumulators are especially evident in the A1 areas, particularly the 'self-contained' schemes, and they are regularly selling, investing and accumulating assets,⁴ with production often linked to a cash crop such as vegetables or cotton and, in A2 outgrower areas in the Lowveld, sugar. Combined with similar accumulators in the communal areas (smaller in proportion, but overall large in number), this group is highly significant in the new politics of the countryside, and must be set alongside the new rural elite, often connected to the party-state through patronage, in any political analysis.

Why are the new accumulators important politically in these core areas? First is the connection between the food economy and politics. The new land reform areas are central to supplying food, particularly for urban consumers. While there are frequent debates about impending food shortages, there remains a poor understanding of the national food economy post land reform. In particular, the scale of food production from the new resettlements is seriously underestimated, as the national aggregate figures simply do not match the reality on the ground.⁵ Second, commercialised farm production links product markets with the core economy. Whole value chains, including links with input suppliers, distributors, aggregators, transporters, retailers, supermarkets and more, are reliant on successful producers. Third, farm employment is important for the livelihoods of many. In our Masvingo sites, 42% of A1 self-contained and 63% of A2 farmers hire temporary workers, while 16% and 78% hire permanent workers respectively (Scoones et al. 2010). This group, along with the workers across the value chains linked to farm production, are reliant on successful farm-based accumulators. Finally, the linkages to the communal areas remain important. The new resettlements are often adjacent to communal lands, and various kin, friendship, church-based and other connections tie people together in arrangements around cattle grazing/sharing/loaning, food relief/transfers and labour, with new land reform areas attracting new members to the resettlement households. A much wider group is reliant on and has connections with the new

accumulators than the immediate household therefore. All these factors combine to re-emphasise the role of the new middle farmers in both economic and political terms.

But what about elite capture, party dominance and patronage? This has been the standard critique of land reform in Zimbabwe. While it is often based on spurious data on 'crony' capture⁶ this does not mean that it is irrelevant. What is the story in our areas? Around 5% of farms, perhaps 10% of land, mostly A2, can be described as captured by a political-military connected elite. As noted, this group can be very influential in certain areas, and at certain times. Land reform areas certainly were no-go areas for the opposition, especially in the 2008 elections when violence erupted (although in Masvingo not in the same way as in certain parts of Mashonaland East, for example).⁷ But this does not mean that people did not vote for the Movement for Democratic Change in the resettlements. In 2008 they did in numbers, but in 2013 they switched back to ZANU-PF, and with less violence and intimidation. Party affiliation, as Zamchiya (2013) argues, is important, but people are well practised at 'performing ZANU-PF' (Mkodzongi 2012). War veterans are important (9% of the beneficiaries in our areas), but there is rather a myth about this group of people. Most had not identified themselves as such for years. Many were communal area dwellers, low-paid employees in town or farm workers. They often led the invasions, and used their influence to get allocated better plots, but they often lost out to better-connected elites in contests over larger land areas in the A2 farms in particular.

Yet overall, the A2 farmers who were allocated the larger farms were by and large not classic elites; they were more a richer, middle-class group of (former) civil servants (lots of agricultural extension workers for example), business people and others (Table 7.2). Patronage was unquestionably important in some allocations (Marongwe 2011), but the A2 schemes certainly cannot be described only in terms of patronage-driven elite capture.

And indeed those who did 'grab' land, especially around the time of the 2008 elections, were widely resented, and often shunned by the more legitimate beneficiaries. Other forms of resistance have occurred too. The underutilised areas of A2 farms were often subject to secondary invasions. Many of course did not benefit from the land reform in 2000, particularly the youth, and a decade on demand for land was building up. Examples of land invasions in the core areas of Masvingo continue.⁸ Some have occurred on remaining 'white' farms, but other black elites were targeted too. The outcomes are variable. Sometimes a land holder defends their farm against

invaders, and uses their connections to get the police to remove people; in other cases invaders have been allowed to stay. The balance of forces is not certain, as in the fickle politics of Masvingo people move in and out of favour with remarkable rapidity.

Therefore, in thinking about the emergent politics in the 'core' land reform areas of Masvingo, we have to disaggregate the so-called elite, and be realistic about what role ZANU-PF, war veterans and others actually played by looking at the process of farm invasion and acquisition in detail. This differed farm by farm, and generalisations are impossible. We also have to understand the patterns of differentiation, and recognise the relationships that are emerging between a significant group of 'middle farmer' accumulators and others, both in the resettlements but also in the communal areas, and up and down value chains to which they are connecting. It is in this highly dynamic livelihood setting within which an understanding of politics must be set.

UNCERTAINTY, INSECURITY AND RESISTANCE: THE PERIPHERAL LOWVELD AREAS

In this section I turn to the more peripheral areas of the province further south in the Lowveld. Here we see a similar dynamic of social differentiation and class formation, as illustrated in Table 7.3, but with some important twists.

As mentioned earlier, these were areas where the new settlers invaded not only former white commercial farms, but often state land operated by parastatals or trusts (such as the Nuanetsi ranch controlled by the Development Trust of Zimbabwe [DTZ] on behalf of Joshua Nkomo's estate); private wildlife conservancies and national parks (such as the Save Valley conservancies or Gonarezhou National Park) or private commercial estates controlled by international capital (Tongaat Hulett in the case of the sugar estates of Triangle and Hippo Valley).

These are areas where other politics are at play. The estates and the wildlife areas were largely protected from land reform, as high-level deals were struck and people were evicted if invasions took place. State farms similarly were areas that were deemed inappropriate for new settlement. But this did not mean that people took notice. For example, the northern edge of Nuanetsi was invaded, further south Gonarezhou National Park (or at least the veterinary corridor) was similarly settled, and the former large-scale outgrower areas of the sugar estates were in the end allocated as

part of A2 settlements (Chaumba, Scoones, and Wolmer 2003; Scoones et al. 2012b). There have been intense contests over these areas over the last 14 years.

The case of Nuanetsi illustrates some of the dynamics. One of our study sites, designated when we started as 'informal', as land had not formally been allocated under the fast-track programme, was in Uswaushava area on the northern edge of the ranch. It became very quickly a booming cotton production zone. But the area was being eyed up by others. The DTZ had made alliances with potential Chinese investors (for sugar) and the notorious businessman Billy Rautenbach (again for sugar, but also for crocodile farming among other enterprises). Rumours abounded about political connections at the highest level.⁹ The Chinese project never materialised, but the Rautenbach investment did – large centre pivots appeared, a huge investment in a crocodile farm was installed and land was cleared for planting sugar.

Not surprisingly, people in Uswaushava had other views, as they did not want to abandon their cotton production, now highly profitable and linked to a number of companies that had gins nearby (Scoones et al. 2010). They had previously tried to get their land recognised under the land reform programme, and had blocked the road between Ngundu and Chiredzi, setting fire to brushwood as part of a protest during 2001. They had petitioned politicians in Masvingo and Harare continuously but to no avail. Wider political forces, they suspected, were at play.

Later, the DTZ and the investors tried to make a deal with the war veteran group at the centre of local political organisation in the area, offering them new houses, irrigated plots, electricity connections and more, if they abandoned their compatriots in the informal settlements. This attempt to buy off the local political leadership badly backfired, and a furious row broke out, with the government and DTZ officials held hostage for some hours before the situation was defused by a local politician.

Recognising that this was going to be a long and possibly impossible battle to win, Rautenbach withdrew, shifting his investment to Chisumbanje to the east, and contracting his operations in Nuanetsi to areas further south. The villagers had won – and soon after the authorities provided 'offer letters' for the 188 villages and c.5400 households across 150,000 hectares in Uswaushava. They could return to their cotton production with some level of security.

Similar standoffs have occurred in the wildlife areas, where again the land invaders eventually extracted concessions from the National Parks Authority after an extended dispute (Scoones et al. 2012b). Disputes have

also flared in the sugar estates. Here there have been multiple conflicts between the estate owners, the South African conglomerate Tongaat Hulett, who tried for years to block out the new farmers through consistent undermining of their production and marketing operations (relatively easy since they had monopoly control of the mill), in the hope that they would give up and a more easy-to-manage, consolidated outgrower arrangement would return.

However, following the improvement in the economy after dollarisation in 2009, the A2 outgrowers returned to sugar production, and have persisted with remarkable success.¹⁰ The estate owners have realised the land reform is not going away, and in fact relatively small growers can deliver high-quality cane, desperately needed by the faltering mill businesses. Thus an accommodation has been reached, at least for now, between large-scale international capital and the land reform outgrowers, with the backing of the state.

In the sugar areas, a further conflict has arisen between those allocated sugar farms under A2 schemes, and local Shangaan elites who mostly did not gain from the initial allocations, as this was an area where external civil servants – especially officials of the agriculture and lands ministries – and former estate officials gained (Scoones, Mavedzenge, and Murimbarimba 2014). Shangaan elites now argue that some form of ‘restitution’ to ‘original’ owners is required.¹¹ This was a tactic used successfully by the Sangwe invaders of Gonarezhou National Park (Chaumba, Scoones, and Wolmer 2003; Wolmer et al. 2004). However, restitution claims are very explicitly not part of government policy on land reform, so restitution claimants, despite the protests, find it difficult. Whether the restitution argument will gain traction will depend on the local politics of Masvingo and how Shangaan groupings influence the political factions in the province over time. No doubt, as in other cases, informal deals will be struck on occasions.

Given the different context for land reform in these peripheral areas of the Lowveld, and the more tenuous reach of the party and state, the nature of political contestation is different. Here land claimants were up against large, well-organised capitalist and state interests – in the commercial farming estates and wildlife areas – and not white commercial farmers, who were clearly not in favour politically in the post-2000 era.

While the dynamics of differentiation and class formation mirrors that seen in the core areas, with the emergence of a ‘middle farmer’ group of accumulators, the political impact of such a group, and its ability to form alliances, is tempered by a number of factors. First, the possibilities of

accumulation outside the irrigated sugar estates is relatively limited owing to unfavourable agroecological conditions. This is a dry and marginal area where extensive beef ranching and wildlife use previously dominated. A shift to small-scale crop farming has not always been successful, although the cotton farmers of Uswaushava prospered when the cotton price was high. Second, other factors have come into play that have prevented new farmers from establishing themselves. The 10-year struggle for recognition by the farmers of Uswaushava is witness to this. In this period, they suffered extreme insecurity and uncertainty. While 'offer letters' are not full guarantees of tenure security, they at least demonstrate a commitment by the state to the area as a smallholder farming zone. Third, the type of conflicts over land in the Lowveld is of a different type and order compared to the 'core' areas. Smallholders are pitted against very powerful interests. This is not just local elites with connections to the political hierarchy, but major corporations with international interests or big-time entrepreneurs with access to the very top of the political hierarchy. In the conflicts in the wildlife areas, international conservation interests are aligned with the state authorities against land invaders, again with very powerful backers.

As in the 'core' areas, the political dynamic is one between elite interests and those of a growing middle farmer group, but the contours of this struggle are different, as are the balance of forces. The ability of the new land reform beneficiaries to take on international capital or conservation interests is limited, yet in several cases, as discussed, they have been successful. This is in part due to a recognition that the political costs of shifting people from invaded land would be too high, even if the state could be convinced to do it. There have been tussles between the central and provincial state on such issues, with edicts coming down from on high that have been avoided or diverted by local state officials who knew the impossibility of implementing the proposed plans. In the case of conflicts with the sugar estates or the Rautenbach enterprises, in the end capital seeks its own profitable solution, and for sugar this has meant an accommodation with the new outgrowers, and on Nuanetsi an acceptance that expansion into settled areas is not feasible, and alternative land had to be sought.

CONCLUSION

The simple narratives that have dominated discussion of the politics of land reform in Zimbabwe to date are insufficient. It is neither a story of an undifferentiated mass of peasants taking the land as part of a populist-

nationalist struggle, nor solely a story of elite capture and political patronage. As with all narratives there are elements of truth in both, but the reality is far more complex.

What then are the new politics of the countryside post-land reform, at least in the areas of Masvingo that are the focus of this paper? An emphasis on processes of social differentiation – of the patterns of accumulation, dependency and the emergence of a labouring class – and socio-economic linkage – between, for example, resettlements and communal areas, and across value chains – offers insights into how a class of petty commodity producers, with a mix of origins – from the peasantry but also from the urban middle classes – business people and civil servants in particular – are emerging as a political and economic force. They are not the classic rural peasants of the populist pro-land reform imagination, nor are they the elite cronies of the critics of land reform. They are a new entrepreneurial, well-connected group of actors, with clear political demands that are not being responded to by any organised political party formation.

For over more than a decade, the opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), largely ignored land and rural issues. They failed to articulate an effective alternative narrative on land and rural issues to ZANU-PF, and instead were too reliant on the framings of their backers from the white large-scale farming community. Coming from urban, labour union and human rights backgrounds, the opposition focused instead on, admittedly highly important, rights and service provision issues, as well as macro-economic reform.¹² While gaining access to some rural areas was challenging owing to tight control by ZANU-PF, the lack of a convincing vision for agriculture and rural development damaged their credibility in many people's eyes. By contrast, ZANU-PF exploited its association with the land reform ruthlessly, deploying a nationalist political rhetoric that had wide popular appeal in the rural areas. This was a tactic that paid off in 2013. However, without a substantial commitment to post-land reform support for the new settlers, even 14 years on, many remain sceptical of the party and its leadership, as rhetoric does not translate into action.

Alongside the middle farmer accumulators, in small numbers on smaller land areas there is the military–business–party elite, well connected to ZANU-PF. They have been accumulating too, but not 'from below'. Extractive, corrupt and dependent on patrimonial relations, they are using land as one of a number of resources to extend their political-economic hold (along with mines, wildlife, business networks and so on). Yet their position is not at all certain. Examples of resistance – as seen in the Lowveld or on some A2 farms near Masvingo – are evident. Resistance has

Table 7.3: Livelihood groups and strategies.

Livelihood group	Livelihood strategy	Total	Livelihood description
Dropping out (10.0%)	Exits	4.40%	Those who have abandoned their plot, owing to deaths in the family, other commitments, or having been removed through administrative (land audit) or political means. No one living there currently.
	Chronically poor, destitute	3.30%	No assets, reliant on help from others, limited farming.
	Ill health	2.20%	As above, but suffering severe consequences of death or ill health of one or more family members.
Hanging in (33.6%)	Asset-poor farming	17.80%	Limited assets (of cattle, labour etc.), relying on others to help out with draught power etc.
	Keeping the plot	10.30%	The plot is being kept for the future - either for inheritance purposes or for later investments when conditions improve. A few relatives and/or workers occupy the plot.
	Straddling	5.60%	Maintaining multiple homes/farms/herds, both in the resettlement area and the communal land, but not producing much on new plot.
Stepping out (21.4%)	Survival diversification	2.80%	Border jumping, gold panning, <i>makorokozo</i> (dealing), sex work. Limited farm assets and low production, sufficient for household food security in only some years.
	Local off-farm activities	5.30%	Building, trading, craft activities etc. complement accumulation from farming, and offset production deficits in some years.
	Reliance on remittances from within Zimbabwe	5.00%	Teachers, civil servants and others, with a farming base and some remittance income, allowing investment and some accumulation on farm.
	Reliance on stable remittances from outside Zimbabwe	4.40%	Those receiving regular remittances from abroad, allowing more substantial investment in the resettlement home and farming, and a complement to farm-based accumulation.
	Cellphone farmers	3.90%	Those with other business interests/sources of income who fail to visit the farm regularly and are not really investing significantly. Workers and farm managers run the operation, while the plot holder lives and works elsewhere.
Stepping up (35.0%)	<i>Hurudza</i>	18.30%	The 'real farmers', accumulating through agriculture, as some in the communal areas did before. They sell regularly to a diversity of markets. Sufficient farm resources - cattle/draught, equipment etc. Often hire in significant labour.
	Part-time farmers	10.60%	Farming not the sole enterprise, but a core livelihood activity supported by off-farm work. Accumulation on farm significant, and assets sufficient for farming. May hire in labour through remittance income sources.
	New (semi-)commercial farmers	4.70%	Those with skills and resources who have a large plot (A2 or A1 self-contained). Investment into farm through off-farm businesses or employment paying in foreign exchange. They have started to farm productively, reinvesting in the plot.
	Farming from patronage	1.40%	Those who have received support from the state through various forms of patronage, who have been able to invest in the farm. Mostly A2 farmers. Production may be significant.

Source: Scoones et al. 2010, 2012a

been both passive and more organised, including hostage-taking, road protests, invasions and so on. And successes have been possible, even when the alliances of the elite go to the highest level, and with significant financial backing from external investors. In the same way the Shangaan restitution campaign in the sugar estates and wildlife areas may yet have purchase, shifting patterns of elite control.

It is a volatile and dynamic context. The state – and the ruling party – do not have full control. The agency of particular coalitions of actors is substantial. And the processes of socio-economic differentiation are such that new political forces are fast emerging.

In the past decade or more, all political formations have misjudged these changes in the rural economy and politics, and have failed to analyse their implications. Most liberal academic commentary and political and civic opposition focused on exposing cronyism, but did not engage with understanding rural social differentiation, and the building of new alliances and constituencies. This in part contributed to failure in electoral terms. By contrast, the nationalist populists in ZANU-PF failed to engage with the new emergent entrepreneurial class of 'middle farmers', and continued to back a narrow elite who remain widely resented.

There is thus a struggle at the heart of countryside: between a small group of well-connected elites and domestic and international capital on one side, often in an uneasy alliance, and a variegated grouping of poorer smallholder farmers, farm labourers and a new class of 'middle farmer' petty commodity producers on the other. Electorally, if representative democracy is upheld, any party must rely on the latter to supply the votes, while the rich pickings of land and resources as patronage are to be gained by alliances with the former. As the Masvingo cases show, it is currently a fine balance.

What of the future? Will there be a capitulation to the elites and the alliance with fractions of (inter)national capital, and so a pushing aside of the emergent middle farmer class? This can only be achieved by the continuation of a non-democratic solution of obstructive, violent politics, especially given the electoral forces weighed against such an elite position. Given the track record of ZANU-PF and the embedded reliance on crony capitalism and of a growing dependent network, this is a firm possibility (Raftopoulos 2013a). Or can a more democratic and accountable state be rebuilt from below, forged by the new alliances of farmers and workers, including women, youth and others, who are prepared to vote for a party that delivers on the demands of a new resurgent agrarian class, and its allies?

This latter option, given recent history, may be naively optimistic; but any political formation, no matter what its ideology or democratic traditions, cannot ignore the new politics of the countryside, and must garner support from a radically reconfigured set of interests and alliances. Inability to do so will result in electoral failure, as well as the sort of persistent and disruptive resistance we have seen in the Masvingo cases. As the 2018 election approaches, a deeper understanding of the changed dynamics of rural economy and politics will certainly be required.

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NOTES

- ¹ See also multiple blog contributions at <http://www.zimbabweland.wordpress.com>.
- ² Assuming that nationally rural 'accumulators' are found on 20% of communal area farms (Stanning 1989), 40% of A1 and old resettlement farms (see text), 50% of medium-scale A2 farms and 80% of remaining large-scale farms and farms in small-scale farming areas, this amounts to nearly two million people or approximately a quarter of the voting population. This calculation is based on Table 7.1, and the most recent national census and voter registration data, and is, as a result, only indicative, and probably an underestimate particularly in relation to new resettlement populations.
- ³ "The Golden Leaf: Boom Time in Zimbabwe." Accessed April 23, 2014. <http://zimbabweland.wordpress.com/2012/07/09/the-golden-leaf-boom-time-in-zimbabwe/>
- ⁴ See blog series "How Have the 'New Farmers' Fared? An Update on the Masvingo Study, Parts I–IV." Accessed April 23, 2014. <http://zimbabweland.wordpress.com/2014/04/21/1049/>
- ⁵ "Food Crisis in Zimbabwe: 2.2 Million at Risk. But Where Do the Figures Come from and What Do They Mean?" Accessed April 23, 2014. <http://zimbabweland.wordpress.com/2013/09/16/food-crisis-in-zimbabwe-2-2-million-a-risk-but-where-do-the-figures-come-from-and-what-do-they-mean/>
- ⁶ "Who Took the Land? More on the Crony Debate." Accessed April 23, 2014. <http://zimbabweland.wordpress.com/2012/06/18/who-took-the-land-more-on-the-crony-debate/>
- ⁷ "Geographies of Violence in Zimbabwe." Accessed April 23, 2014. <http://zimbabweland.wordpress.com/2012/10/15/geographies-of-violence/>.
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- ¹⁰ "The Sweet Smell of Success. The Revival of Zimbabwe's Sugar Industry." Accessed April 23, 2014. <http://zimbabweland.wordpress.com/2013/01/28/the-sweet-smell-of-success-the-revival-of-zimbabwes-sugar-industry/>; Scoones, Mavedzenge, and Murimbarimba (2014).
- ¹¹ "Shangaan Speakers Invade Sugar Farms in Tribal War." Radio VOP, September 12, 2012. Accessed April 23, 2014. http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/sep20_2012.html#Z14.
- ¹² "The MDC's Agenda for Real Transformation. Why the Land and Agriculture Sections Need More Thought." Accessed April 23, 2014. <http://zimbabweland.wordpress.com/2013/06/17/the-mdc-ts-agenda-for-real-transformation-art-why-the-land-and-agriculture-sections-need-more-thought/>.

8

NEW POLITICS OF ZIMBABWE'S LOWVELD: STRUGGLES OVER LAND AT THE MARGINS

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INTRODUCTION

Zimbabwe's land reform has attracted much political, media, and academic commentary. The focus has been on the transfer of over 8 million hectares to around 170,000 farm households across a number of different 'schemes', both small and large-scale, under the 'fast track land reform programme' that unfolded from 2000 (Cliffe *et al.* 2011). But on the margins of this land reform has been a major tussle over land that remained outside the formal programme. Commercial estates and ranches, government farms, wildlife conservancies, and national parks have all been contested, despite official assurances that such areas should remain untouched.

Nowhere has this been more evident than in the lowveld areas of Masvingo Province in the south-east of the country. In Masvingo such areas make up 27 percent of the total land area, amounting to over 1.5 million hectares in all, an area comparable to that allocated under 'fast-track' to A1 and A2 schemes.¹ This includes the sugar and citrus estates of Triangle, Hippo Valley, and Mkwazine, totalling 22,000 hectares; the huge Nuanetsi ranch controlled by the Development Trust of Zimbabwe, which covers

376,994 hectares; Agricultural and Rural Development Authority (ARDA) estates, Cold Storage Company (CSC) ranches, the Save Valley Conservancy, a consolidated group of 24 private wildlife ranches, encompassing over 338,700 hectares; the Chiredzi River Conservancy with over 110,000 hectares; and the Gonarezhou National Park, covering 505,300 hectares and envisaged as part of the Greater Limpopo Transfrontier Park (GLTP) (Moyo, 2011a; Moyo, 2011b; Moyo, 2011c).

The lowveld is at the margins of central state power, a borderland where political contests take on a different character. It contrasts in important respects with the highveld around the capital, Harare, where a different political dynamic plays out. Most analysis of Zimbabwe's political crisis is focused on the centre,² but what happens on the margins of state power and authority? The lowveld has long been characterized as a land of adventure, mystique, and danger (Wolmer, 2007), an area where smugglers and labour recruiters ply their trade, where illegality and legality have flexible definition, where entrepreneurs, dealers, and characters who would not survive in the mainstream can flourish (Baud and van Schendel, 1977). It is as a result a place where innovation emerges, and where practising the 'art of not being governed' (Scott, 2009) is essential. It is not surprising therefore that the point where the borders of South Africa, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe meet is called 'Crooks' Corner'.

Before 2000, land in the lowveld was dominated by a (mostly) white elite:³ they controlled the hunting and tourism trades; they owned and ran the ranches, sugar estates, and most of the associated businesses; they managed the development NGOs and the various aid-funded conservation and developments initiatives. This was a racialized landscape, built on a violent colonial inheritance of dispossession and highly skewed land ownership. The sugar barons, the hunting consortia, and the tourism groups were a privileged group who were able to be successful because of the highly unequal ownership of land.

Others remained marginal and silenced. They were brought in as bit-part players in concessionary schemes such as CAMPFIRE (Communal Area Management Programme for Indigenous Resources) (Martin, 1986) or as faithful and skilled workers. Yet the estates, the ranches, the conservancies, and the national park make up a lived-in landscape, with a history. People were moved off these areas at various times; yet memories and ancestral spirits lingered, while initiation ceremony sites and graveyards were witness to past uses (Bannerman, 1980).⁴ These areas are therefore seen very differently by local people: by livestock keepers, ranches are seen as undergrazed and in need of stocking; by farmers, sugar estates are seen as

places where maize and horticultural products could be grown; and by hunters, parks and conservancies are seen as potential hunting areas (Wolmer, 2004).

Yet the period since 2000 has opened up possibilities. For some this has meant reclaiming ancestral lands long made inaccessible by state and capitalist land expropriation; for others new livelihood opportunities have been generated, including irrigated agriculture and extensive grazing not feasible in the cramped communal lands they had known (Chaumba *et al.*, 2003b). Large land areas in the lowveld also presented new business opportunities, most notably investment in sugar cane and biofuel production and wildlife-based enterprises. For others the prospect of a transfrontier park, with new tourist and hunting income, presented a lucrative opportunity on the horizon (Wolmer *et al.*, 2004).

These struggles over land use have been negotiated within a highly contested political, economic, and cultural setting. Much of this area is populated by Shangaan-speaking people, with a very particular cultural history, and with strong resentment of displacement and exploitation at the hands of both colonial and the post-independence rulers. Conflicts over rule by chiefs and headmen, district or village councils, and even central party formations have been intense. At the edge of central state power, the future of the lowveld will emerge from a complex local politics involving informal settlers/squatters, fast-track beneficiaries, war veterans, chiefs and traditional leaders, spirit mediums, senior party officials and politicians, white farmers, conservancy owners, conservationists, tourist and hunting businesses, estate owners, government parastatals, and external investors and financiers, among others.

This article explores the political economy of these new contests over land, livelihoods, and development. Historically, the lowveld has been shaped by different cultural imaginaries and contested politics, and today the same processes are occurring – but now under very different circumstances and with very different players. It is in these marginal, borderland areas, often beyond the influence of state technocratic control, that important future trajectories of political-economic and agrarian change are being forged. It is in these areas, populated by rogue capitalists, elite politically connected securocrats, entrepreneurial investors, and large numbers of peasant farmers eking out a living, that new patterns of control, authority, and legitimacy are being constructed. Through a comparative examination of who the main players are and what they represent in three cases, the article offers insights into patterns of attempted land capture by elites and the strategies of resistance by local

people.

A particular dynamic of elite accumulation and control over resources is observed, yet this is resisted by alliances of land invaders, war veterans, and local political and traditional leaders – a mix of migrants and autochthons brought together in the struggle over land. The cases shed light on the nature and limits of state power at the margins, and on the potential for alternative social, economic, and political trajectories, often in opposition to those imposed by the centre. This is the untold story of land reform – on the margins and outside the mainstream ‘fast-track’ programme – but, we argue, it is one which may have much longer-term significance than is currently appreciated. While much recent commentary on Zimbabwe has correctly emphasized the oppressive, controlling, and sometimes violent nature of central state power, particularly as influenced by the nationalist politics of ZANU-PF, this is far from uniform. Internal divisions, bureaucratic manoeuvres, and local disputes often create a very particular, variegated, place-specific local politics, especially at the geographic margins of the nation. As this article shows, this offers opportunities for a variety of expressions of agency and resistance, which counter the impositions of centralized state power.

The article is based on research carried out over the past decade in Masvingo’s lowveld areas.⁵ It draws particularly on some concentrated field investigations between 2009 and 2011 across three cases – Nuanetsi ranch, the Save Valley/Chiredzi River conservancies, and the Chitsa occupation of Gonarezhou National Park. The article complements research carried out on the core ‘fast-track’ resettlement areas of Masvingo (Scoones *et al.*, 2010, 2011 and 2012) by telling the story of what happened in other areas of the province. It adds to the emerging national picture, which shows the highly varied processes and outcomes of land reform (Cliffe *et al.*, 2011). While Masvingo’s lowveld is in no way ‘typical’, it is an important area economically, given the major estates and wildlife and tourism resources, and may in important respects reflect patterns seen in other areas on the margins of the state.

SUGAR AND CROCODILES: COMMERCIAL AMBITIONS FOR NUANETSI RANCH

The Nuanetsi ranch, covering nearly 1 percent of the country’s whole area, was established by the Imperial Cold Storage and Supply Company in 1927, having been alienated by the British South Africa Company in 1914. This

represented a vision of a cattle-based economy run on a massive scale, linked to processing and export plants (Phimister, 1978). A newspaper article from the 1950s asserted: 'it is widely recognized that the lowveld is the cattle country of Africa' (*Fort Victoria News*, 1950). As the tsetse fly was forced back into the river valleys and national park by intensive efforts from the 1950s (Ford, 1971), the lowveld ranching industry took off in a big way, with herds growing despite the harsh conditions.

In 1989, the ranch was acquired by the late Vice-President and former ZAPU leader, Joshua Nkomo, but is now owned by the Development Trust of Zimbabwe (DTZ). According to Nkomo, this vast property was to provide the motor for economic development of the area. But by 2000, the ranch had long been underutilized and there was a need to inject new capital. In 2007, a deal was struck to transform the area.

Zimbabwe Bio-Energy (Pvt) Ltd announced a plan to invest in a major development of sugar production in a section of the ranch. A fertile cornucopia was envisaged, transforming the dry scrubland of the ranch, with water that could be channelled to make use of the rich soils and hot sun. The aim was to replicate the extraordinary engineering feats that went into the creation of the sugar and citrus estates, led from the 1930s by Murray MacDougall at Triangle Estates (Saunders, 1989; Mlambo and Pangeti, 1996; Wolmer 2007). At Triangle, Hippo Valley, and Mkwasi, dams were built, canals dug, and land levelled on a massive scale. Large industrial mills were constructed and townships and smart suburbs were built to house thousands of workers of all ranks. Schools, hospitals, shopping centres, and even a village green were laid out. By 2005, the sugar industry in the Masvingo lowveld represented 1.4 percent of the national GDP, directly employing around 25,000 workers (Sierevogel *et al.*, 2007), and, since 2000, involving around 600 outgrowers as part of A2 schemes under 'fast-track' land reform. With the main estates owned by international companies – including the Hulett Corporation and Anglo-American – these were substantial investments, making big money. Zimbabwe Bio-Energy (Pvt) Ltd. hoped to replicate this, tapping into the lucrative ethanol biofuel markets opening up. The company was to make use of new dam and irrigation structure and ultimately the long-awaited completion of the Tokwe-Mukorsi dam. Investment would allow the completion of the dams, the building of irrigation systems, and the planting of over 100,000 hectares of sugar cane. An ethanol plant would be built and a major contribution to Zimbabwe's fuel shortages would be made.⁶ It was argued that this investment would bring new jobs and commercial opportunities to the lowveld.

The backer of this plan was Billy Rautenbach, a notorious Zimbabwean businessman who had been wanted in South Africa in connection with a fraud case and was on the 'banned' list of the US and the European Union. He had built a large fortune through mining and transport businesses, including in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) (*Politics Web*, 2008). Many of his business dealings had been reliant on political connections with the ruling elite in Zimbabwe. With such links he was able to cash in on the economic chaos of the 2000s, seizing many opportunities.

Acquiring land and investing in Nuanetsi was one such project. The deal struck in Nuanetsi was rumoured to involve President Mugabe along with Defence Minister Emerson Mnangagwa as business partners (*Zimbabwe Standard*, 2009). This was high politics, especially given the tense political accommodation of the Nuanetsi operation. The DTZ was seen in many circles as a PF-ZAPU business in the ZANU-PF province of Masvingo. This had long been a source of tension. As the then Vice-President Msika viewed it: 'good project, but wrong province' (*Zimbabwe Independent*, 2009). Add to this the internal wrangles between different ZANU-PF factions within Masvingo, and it is clear that the Nuanetsi area is the site of some serious political tensions.

Not surprisingly, then, the Rautenbach investment in Nuanetsi became a source of hot debate. Political factions within Masvingo either backed it or rejected it, depending on political allegiance and timing. The sitting governor, Titus Maluleke, apparently argued: 'We cannot give one man such a huge piece of land when black people are landless,' (*Zimbabwe Times*, 2009). Centrally, ZANU-PF put its weight behind the idea, with Vice-President John Nkomo being quoted as arguing: 'Those opposing the project... are witches.' His local ally Dzikimai Mavhaire reportedly argued: 'Those who want to scuttle this project need to be beaten up.' Meanwhile Minister Stan Mudenge reportedly said: 'Billy is our friend and a ZANU-PF friend and therefore those who want his eviction are MDC supporters,' (*Zimbabwe Times*, 2010). Media commentaries continued to highlight the highly contested politics, and a UK Channel 4 documentary featured the case as an example of President Mugabe's alleged ruthless financial dealings.⁷

Yet, while such debates raged at the provincial, national, and even international levels, the contest over land took on a different dimension at the local level. By 2000–1, this was not empty or underutilized land – as over 6,000 households (estimates vary hugely) had invaded Nuanetsi ranch as part of the jambanja phase of land reform (Chaumba *et al.* 2003a). Along

the roads to Beitbridge and Chiredzi new homes had been established as part of informal land invasions, led by a mix of war veterans, local traditional leaders, and people from surrounding communal area villages. Following invasions, people quickly began carving out fields, establishing homes, and assembling small-scale business centres. These areas also became the focus for significant cotton production (Scoones *et al.*, 2010). In addition, 25 A2 farms were designated for grazing and 'offer letters' were issued.⁸ Meanwhile, the wider ranch was being hired out on lease grazing contracts to many former white ranchers who had moved their cattle away from land taken over by the 'fast-track' land reform programme.⁹

In the informal settlement of Uswaushava along the northern border of Nuanetsi, agricultural production took off, particularly focused on cotton. Cotton-buying companies flocked to the area offering contracts, and the 'invaders' made some serious money. Over the period from 2000 to 2008, cotton production increased significantly, from 18 percent of farmers growing cotton after settlement to 89 percent in 2008, with average areas allocated to cotton increasing from 2.3 to 6.4 hectares (Scoones *et al.*, 2010: 114). Yet, despite numerous political assurances, no offer letters were forthcoming for the land invaders of Uswaushava. Nevertheless, state authorities did engage with the area, providing agricultural extension support, school teachers, and other services. But the key for the settlers was to have formal recognition of their right over the land. This led to some major protests. In 2001, under the charismatic war veteran leader, Comrade Kid, demonstrators blocked the main Ngundu to Chiredzi highway, lighting brush fires to block the traffic. They sent delegations to Harare to lobby the President, and received backing from local political players. Influential chiefs, eager to expand their territory, backed their cause too. These allies included Chief Tsovani, a politically well-connected chief who has been influential in brokering deals over land across the lowveld (see below). Meanwhile, local bureaucrats accepted that they were likely to stay; no-one would risk a mass eviction anywhere near an election, and with certain Masvingo factions switching to support of the invaders, the shrill interventions from the centre had little effect.

However, Rautenbach and DTZ were determined to go ahead. In 2009, the 25 A2 graziers were evicted, and their offer letters were rescinded (Sokwanele, 2009). This caused further protest, but it was politically more manageable than evicting thousands and allowed the clearance of the area destined for sugar cane. Meanwhile, white ranchers had to move their animals to the furthest reaches of Nuanetsi, steering clear of the highly political investments. By mid-2010, land had been cleared and planted with

sugar cane. But the ongoing disputes over land within Nuanetsi had also meant that some grander plans had to be shelved. The ethanol plant planned for Nuanetsi was instead developed on the massive ARDA state farm in Chisumbanje. This seemed a safer bet, with less uncertainty over land use – although disputes nonetheless emerged.¹⁰ Within Nuanetsi, alongside the sugar cane, a major investment in crocodile farming proceeded, with some 100,000 crocodiles being farmed. This made use of the new dam infrastructure, and was located in a more concentrated, and hence manageable, area.

Despite the stand-off in Uswaushava and other areas with illegal settlement, the Ministry of Lands still insisted officially that the settlers should move. During 2009–10 there were several attempts to co-opt them. The authorities knew that Comrade Kid had passed away, and assumed that a resulting leadership vacuum would allow compromises to be reached. An irrigation scheme was developed, with new houses and centre-pivot irrigated plots, which some settlers were supposed to occupy, while others were offered land elsewhere. However, this was rejected immediately. Even without their charismatic leader, others had stepped in. A strong sense of solidarity had emerged through the process of invading the land and defending themselves from eviction. ‘We brought these people here. They are part of us. We will not move!’ one leader commented.¹¹ As far as the community was concerned they were there to stay. Following various attempts to attract people to the irrigation scheme, the company eventually dismantled it, moving the centre-pivots to the new irrigation developments at the centre of the ranch. Subsequently, a more devious divide-and-rule strategy was adopted. Another site was offered, but this time to the group of war veteran leaders across the area. Full infrastructure was to be provided for three-hectare irrigated plots and electricity supplied to brand-new houses. The war veteran leaders were taken in September 2010 to see the site and discuss the plan. The visit was organised by the district administrator and government officials from Chiredzi, together with DTZ personnel. When the details of the plan emerged, the group from Uswaushava became furious, and held the officials hostage for several hours, demanding that the whole land be designated as part of the land reform programme. They argued: ‘This is our land: we came together, and we will stay together.’¹² A witness reported: ‘The officials were surrounded by many people and were beaten. They were not allowed to leave.’¹³ The impasse was only broken when the ZANU-PF MP from Chivi was called. He was a strong ally of the invaders, given that many had come from his constituency, and he brokered a truce. The government and DTZ officials were then released, but the stalemate continued.

Dismayed by the attitude of ZANU-PF centrally, the war veterans forged strong alliances with the local chiefs, who also wanted the land to come under the control of the villagers. They felt that they were up against an uncaring, centralized state elite, locked into corrupt interests, which worried more about their own personal businesses than about local people and their livelihoods. They felt that the liberation struggle, focused on reclaiming land, had been neglected. A local resident asked: 'How can land be taken away from blacks and be given to a white man? The land reform programme was meant to empower us blacks who had no land, and we begin to ask ourselves who are the people now being empowered.'¹⁴

At the end of 2011 a deal was eventually struck. Local officials realized that they were not going to succeed in evicting so many people, and convinced the DTZ and their central political backers to seek a compromise. In the end, a portion of the ranch along its northern border – a substantial area of 150,000 hectares, including 188 villages with 5,420 households¹⁵ – was designated state land and became part of the land reform programme. Eleven years on, offer letters were issued and formal planning of A1 farms commenced. This meant that even-sized plots had to be pegged, and villages formed. Some people had to move from homes they had lived in for over a decade, and some had their field sizes reduced. This included the war veterans who had led the invasions and had initially given themselves upwards of 50 hectares. Compromises were made, and some lands were divided to sons and other relatives, as they too were demanding land in the area. Despite this disruption, people were relieved that – at last – their struggle had been won, and their rights over land had been recognized. One local farmer said: 'We can now relax and get on with farming.'¹⁶

Peasant-led struggle and resistance – allied to some important local political players and traditional authorities – had, it seemed, won: a remarkable feat given the powerful forces lined up against them. The limits of centralized state power were, in this case, very real. Pragmatic bureaucrats unwilling to push forward an infeasible and disruptive eviction, and local politicians with an eye on their future electoral fortunes were able to broker a compromise: local pressure did, it seems, make a difference. From now on, the people of Uswaushava north of the Runde River could focus on their booming cotton-growing enterprises without fear of eviction, while further south – in the rest of the massive ranch – the Rautenbach-financed sugar and crocodile enterprises continued.

WILDLIFE PARTNERSHIPS: NEW ALLIANCES IN THE CONSERVANCIES

The disastrous drought of 1991–2 hit the struggling lowveld cattle ranching industry hard. This provided added impetus to those who had long advocated wildlife as the ideal lowveld land use (Dasmann and Mossmann, 1961; Jansen *et al.*, 1992). In the early 1990s, the Save Valley Conservancy was formed by taking down fences across 24 ranch properties, creating the world's largest private game reserve (3,387 square km) (Lindsey *et al.*, 2009).

Some conservancies developed CAMPFIRE approaches to benefit sharing, but the benefits were small and intermittent (Wels, 2003). Resentment towards what were seen as elite, white business ventures ran deep. During 2000–1, invasions occurred in a number of conservancy ranches, notably Humani, Levanga, and Senuko in the Save Valley Conservancy¹⁷ Several thousand people set up homes as part of new settlements, removing the boundary fence in places, carving out fields and snaring wildlife. Poaching escalated, with data from conservancy operators showing massive losses (*The Daily Telegraph*, 2000; Save Valley Conservancy Crime Statistics Update, 2002).

The invasions of the conservancies attracted much media coverage, locally and internationally, and outrage in conservation circles. The prestige projects – protecting the black rhino and wild dogs – financed by international conservation organizations were seen to be under threat. In addition, the transfrontier park was also being jeopardized, as connectivity was being lost. It was not only the (largely white) conservation lobby that was outraged. The conservancies had, through some very careful political manoeuvring, excellent public relations, and significant commercial success,¹⁸ managed to position themselves as distinct from 'white farming'. They were part of a commercial vision for a dry and barren part of the country that would bring national riches, especially through the high-profile political project of the Greater Limpopo Transfrontier Park (GLTP).

In the lowveld this represented a powerful coalition. Conservancy landowners, made up of long-time residents, who knew the local politics, and foreign investors, notionally protected through investment treaties, combined with international conservation organizations, local university research groups, wider research-policy networks, field-based NGOs, and local leaders such as Abraham Sithole, a leading light in the CAMPFIRE Association.¹⁹ This loose grouping was committed to a vision in which the

conservancies and the transfrontier park would play an important route to sustainable development in the lowveld.

However, after 2000 such a vision – and the coalition underlying it – looked increasingly shaky in the wake of the land invasions, which undermined the ecological integrity that was essential to the transfrontier park, and the conservancies in particular were under pressure from land invasions. The old debate about the feasibility or otherwise of combining wildlife and development had re-emerged, and the uneasy consensus of the 1980s and 1990s, as typified by CAMPFIRE initiatives, had been challenged by the momentum of land reform. As one local ministry of agriculture official put it: 'It's either people or elephants: you cannot have both. There is such demand for land, we must favour the people.'²⁰

But the conservancies came under threat from a different direction during 2009. In a bid to implement a 'wildlife-based land reform', the Environment Minister, Francis Nhema, decided that the conservancies should be subject to a joint venture partnership arrangement, whereby new business partners were assigned.²¹ This would, he argued, maintain the conservation status and business focus of the conservancies, but restructure the ownership, in line with a commitment to 'indigenize' business. A meeting was held in Chiredzi when conservancy owners were supposed to meet their new partners. As one somewhat bewildered conservancy owner commented: 'He [the Minister] just gets you into a room and says, "Meet your partners" You say, "What do you mean? I don't need partners." And they say "I told you, you are going to get new partners,"' (*The Independent*, 2009).

The new 'partners' were a veritable roll call of the political-military elite, with a scattering of chiefs, influential war veterans and community organization leaders thrown in to provide local 'legitimacy'. The press carried a number of reports of this new land grab elite, listing names that included local MPs, ministers, and army and police chiefs, and their relatives.²² Official data confirm this, indicating that a total of 143 new partners had been assigned across 27 'wildlife' properties in Chiredzi, Mwenezi, and Masvingo districts, covering 284,455 hectares across both private conservancies and state-owned properties (ZPWMA, 2011). Under the wildlife-based land reform policy, leases were supposed to be offered for 25 years, and the process overseen by the Ministry of Environment. The Minister argued that this was part of the indigenization process and an extension of land reform into wildlife areas, so all could profit from wildlife as a national resource. Indigenization Minister Saviour Kasukuwere stepped up the rhetoric when he was reported as saying he would 'drive all the

animals on the conservancies into Gonarezhou National Park and ... braai whatever remained behind' (*Zimbabwe Standard*, 2011).

By 2012, many conservancy owners had not even met their new 'partners', let alone established joint ventures. Some supposed partners claimed they did not even know they had been offered such deals. Some had moved onto the conservancies, but, without knowledge of hunting and tourism businesses, they reverted to cattle ranching. This was causing consternation among parks authority officials and conservancy owners alike, especially as one high-profile property was creating a blockage to the notional wildlife corridor from the national park via the 40,000 hectare Malilangwe conservancy to the Save Valley area.

The partnership deals raised many questions around the sanctity of investment treaties, as a number of properties were governed by BIPPAs (bilateral investment promotion and protection agreements). This included the Malilangwe conservancy, owned by an elusive American investor and a top-rank tourism destination for safaris.²³ To the surprise of many, this remained completely untouched, both during the jamba period, and subsequently. Political connections and pay-offs were rumoured. Others with investment treaty protection were not so fortunate. For example, Willy Pabst, a German national with a property in the Save Valley, had seen his business subject to a forced partnership. Despite objections by the German government, who stated diplomatically that 'the concept of partnership as advocated by the "Masvingo Initiative" does not seem to be based on normal business considerations', his land was not afforded the same protection (*African Press Agency*, 2011).

A tense stand-off continued. The World Cup hosted in South Africa came and went in 2010, and promised business opportunities were lost due to the continued confusion over ownership and control. Despite the rhetoric, the shareholdings of the conservancies were not divided, and the original owners had found ways of presenting their accounts to avoid dividend payments. Many have continued their businesses, but under considerable uncertainty. With land invasions continuing, particularly in the Chiredzi River Conservancy, the future looked very unclear. Here invasions accelerated in 2010 and 2011, as people who had not managed to secure land as part of the 'fast-track' programme sought their opportunity. Land was cleared along the Chiredzi River, but this was also the watering site for a herd of elephants that had been established in several former ranches following the 1991–2 drought. An international internet campaign was launched to save the Chiredzi River elephant herd from the invaders, and pictures were released to the press of slaughtered animals (CFU, 2011).²⁴

Some commentators, however, argued that the conservancies, and perhaps especially latecomers like Chiredzi River, were last-ditch attempts by white ranchers to save their land from land reform.⁵⁸ Interpreted in this light, the consolidation of ranches, putting up fences, and importing wildlife were strategies used by land owners to ward off more unpalatable alternatives by allying themselves with the powerful wildlife and conservation lobbies who enthusiastically backed them with restocking and fencing programmes. A conservancy therefore did not count as a justified reason to abandon plans to redistribute the land. And, in any case, critics argued, were these conservancies really a better use of land, given the pressures being felt? The whole debate about wildlife versus people, with its clear racial overtones, thus became much more acute in the post-2000 period.

Meanwhile, the chaos and confusion that had emerged around the conservancies provided a perfect opportunity for unscrupulous poaching syndicates to operate in the area. The capacity of the parks authority was extremely limited, and the conservancies' own security and anti-poaching operations ineffective. Even if not involved, the presence of invaders on the land allowed poachers to operate under cover, and no doubt pay-offs were made. Some of these operations involved well-connected individuals, allegedly linked to high-ranking Zimbabwean political and military figures. The notorious 'Musina Mafia', operating out of the South African town across the border, was led by Dawie Groenewald, and was apparently linked to Asian syndicates smuggling rhino horn.²⁵ Groenewald was arrested in 2010 and this particular group disbanded, but others are ready to fill the vacuum (*Daily News*, 2011; *Times Live*, 2011b).

Today, with the pressure on land continuing, and with repeated calls for the eviction of white elite wildlife operators in favour of takeover by local people, some compromise deals are being brokered under the radar. Existing conservancy owners recognize that some pact with the new elite partners is probably inevitable, as only through such deals can boundary fences be re-secured and squatters evicted. To secure investment and business interests, white conservation interests are reluctantly contemplating deals with black political-military elites as a pragmatic, if undesirable, solution to protect their vision. This is not an easy compromise on many fronts, and one that is always fragile. For, in the febrile politics of Zimbabwe, the composition of 'the elite' is never stable for long, as illustrated by the changing lists of conservancy 'partners' divulged in the press. As a government official noted: 'No-one wants to take responsibility for this mess... . It would be OK if the big guys stayed the same, but they

keep changing! This is not the way to do sensible business.’²⁶ And brokering deals at the same time with top-brass generals, highly divided local chiefs and war veterans is never going to be easy.

In 2004, we asked: ‘Can land reform and wildlife management be successfully reconciled?’ We concluded: ‘The answer is, yes, but probably not in a particularly equitable way. It is more likely to provide business opportunities for local and non-local elites with wildlife interests than an impetus for broad-based rural development,’ (Wolmer *et al.*, 2004). This conclusion remains relevant today. While resistance occurs through land invasions, the elite hold on the conservancies remains strong, even if such alliances are shifting. As lucrative business ventures, the conservancies are increasingly targets for politically driven accumulation, even if the new business ‘partnerships’ are currently barely functional. While the central state offers a solution based on ‘indigenization’ of wildlife-based businesses, within the conservancies, the previous white owners still run the tourism and hunting operations. Meanwhile, those allocated ‘partnerships’ who were from the local area – including community leaders and traditional authorities – have abandoned wildlife in favour of cattle ranching, rather undermining the vision of a ‘wildlife-based’ land reform. Again the limits of technocratic state power, and even centrally driven patronage, are illustrated, with local compromises emerging from local politics predominating.

PEOPLE IN PARKS: LAND CLAIMS IN THE CONSERVATION ESTATE

In December 2002, the GLTP gained presidential blessing.²⁷ The park was to stretch from the Kruger Park in South Africa, to southern Mozambique, and to the lowveld of Zimbabwe, incorporating Gonarezhou National Park and the network of private conservancies (see above) (Wels, 2003). While making concessions to community-level benefits, most advocates emphasized the features of ‘ecological integrity’, ‘connectivity’ and ‘conservation value’ (Wolmer, 2003), linked to a neo-liberal vision of nature, one that could be exploited to pay for its upkeep through a range of enterprises (Brockington and Duffy, 2010; Büscher, 2010).

Gonarezhou National Park is thus the centrepiece of Zimbabwe’s contribution to the ambitious transfrontier park. But it too has been under threat from land invasions. In May 2000, Headman Chitsa, together with local Shangaan war veteran leader Comrade Phikilele, supported by the

local ZANU-PF MP, led an invasion of a portion of the national park adjoining Sengwe communal area. Around 750 households were established and fields were cleared in an area that had earlier been a veterinary corridor, part of a major tsetse control programme (Mombeshora and Le Bel, 2009; Wolmer *et al.*, 2004). The area quickly became a thriving agricultural community, with sorghum grown in large quantities, attracting contract growing arrangements with Delta Breweries. The government came and assisted pegging out plots, drilled boreholes, and supplied teachers to the pole-and-mud schools built by the community.

The Minister of Environment, the parks authority, and the conservation lobby were furious, arguing that it was a blatant violation of the sanctity of the parks estate and that the Chitsa people should be evicted. A Cabinet agreement was secured, and officials were instructed to evict the families (*The Herald*, 2006).²⁸ But of course this was not so easy. As in the other cases, complex local politics intervened.

The Chitsa people had long associations with these areas, and a traumatic history of displacement. They had originally come from Mozambique and had settled in the late nineteenth century at the confluence of the Save and Runde rivers, only to be moved as farms, parks, and veterinary corridors were carved out of their territory. During the liberation war, they were moved again, to protected villages to allow the control of the local population by the Rhodesian army. This landscape was one where their ancestors lived, where the graves were sited, where Shangaan circumcision and initiation ceremonies were practised, and where the spirits lived. Within the new settlement there were reputedly three different spirit mediums, each with powerful arguments about how the spirits owned the land. The spirits, as guardians of the land on behalf of the ancestors, got intensely involved in the land dispute through their mediums, and in one instance through the possession of an elephant (Chaumba *et al.*, 2003a). These were powerful, symbolic stories asserting authority over the land and its use. The Chitsa people did not subscribe to a commercial wildlife vision of the future. For them, wildlife was a pest, or a source of meat. Instead, they wanted to grow sorghum and herd cattle – and for this the Gonarezhou was the perfect spot. 'If the colonial government could rob us of our land through an Act ... why can't they amend that Act so that we can go back to our original homes? We are not saying we want to take the whole of Gonarezhou, just the 15 km strip!' argued Comrade Phikilele.²⁹

Since 2000, there have been numerous attempts to have them evicted. When these did not work, more consultative approaches were initiated. For

example, the Chitsa Task Force was established in 2006. Chaired by the Provincial Administrator, Felix Chikovo, it involved representatives from the local community, government officials, and NGOs, as well as advisers on social and environmental issues from the BioHub network (Chitsa Taskforce Minutes, 2006). The minutes make interesting reading, for they portray a process where people simply talked past each other, despite the rhetoric of participation and consultation. The visions were so different that compromise was simply not possible. For example, the government officials came up with a series of alternative resettlement plans, whereby the Chitsa people were to be offered land in a number of different sites, some with irrigation infrastructure. But Headman Chitsa countered, arguing that this would split 'his people' and he would no longer be able to operate as a traditional leader. The options were all rejected, and indeed proved inappropriate as the officials later found out that far from being empty, these alternative locations were already full of other 'illegal' settlers. Repeatedly, the representatives of the Chitsa community focused on their desire for restitution of the land of their ancestors, allowing access to grave and initiation sites. This was part of an assertion of Shangaan identity, rooted in histories and memories of a people who had been pushed around by both colonial and post-colonial rulers. Neither the technocrats nor the politicians got it. The technocrats kept repeating their arguments that they would be better off elsewhere and everyone would win with the new land-use plan, while the national politicians from outside the Shangaan areas argued that land reform was for the nation, part of a national liberation struggle, and not for particular ethnic groups.

The Chitsa dispute in turn played into long-running struggles for power between different traditional authorities. Chief Tsovani was recognized as the overarching chief, a position disputed strongly by Headman Chitsa, who claimed by right he too was a chief. His lineage had been pushed aside in a colonial period reorganization of chiefs, and had carried the resentment ever since. Yet, at great length, he and his followers offered detailed arguments about how he was of equal status in the family tree (Mombeshora and Le Bel, 2009). This is a familiar pattern from the colonial era to the present (Holleman, 1969), accentuated by land reform as potential territories expand (Fontein, 2009; Mujere, 2011). But Headman Chitsa was up against a rival who had found his way into the favours of the ZANU-PF elite in the province. Reportedly, Chief Tsovani – in addition to the normal benefits – lived in a house upgraded with electricity provision, and had been offered a 'partnership' in the Save Valley Conservancy (see above). Allied to the provincial governors, he played an important brokering role in the area – supporting the Uswaushava people, backing the

indigenization of the conservancies, but agreeing to the eviction of the Chitsa people.

However, the Chitsa people were not without allies. They lobbied hard, and made representations to the President in Harare. They had the backing of local MPs and war veterans, and, given that this was an important ZANU-PF heartland, they could not be ignored completely. While publicly condemning the invasion, parks officials accepted that there was dispute over the status of the area, agreeing that this had indeed been a veterinary corridor. It had been created to reduce tsetse infestation in 1962, at the request of white cattle ranchers in the area who saw the game areas as a threat to their industry.³⁰ It was the principle of the invasion rather than the particular conservation value of the area that was at stake.

As the dispute rumbled on, more meetings, consultations, surveys, and reviews were undertaken, and no resolution could be found. The intransigence of the Chitsa people meant that the political consensus in Masvingo, if not in Harare, was that an eviction would be impossible. The civil servants caught in the middle said they were just implementing policy. They had to implement Cabinet policy, but they also had to take account of local conditions. It was another stalemate. An alternative had to be found. In 2011 a deal was proposed. This involved a face-saving formula whereby the parks authority finally publicly admitted that the area concerned was not part of the official park designation. The Chitsa people could therefore stay in the former veterinary corridor, but a new fence line would be established and heavily defended, and so the boundary of the parks estate would not be undermined. The Chitsa people were no longer allowed to poach or graze in the park, and all cattle straying beyond the line would be impounded or shot.³¹ Substantial investments in the park would continue, linked to the transfrontier park – and a US\$13m grant was secured from the Frankfurt Zoological Society to enhance anti-poaching capacity, and keep people out (*Times Live*, 2011a). A wilderness vision was sustained, while the Chitsa people won their battle to keep their land and grow sorghum and herd cattle.

Although the conservation and business plan for the lowveld did include local people, it failed to do so on their terms. The compromise that emerged in 2011 showed how local cultural and political arguments about land were important, despite the influence of a powerful, well-funded conservation lobby. Persistent resistance by local people, allied to local politicians, paid off. Again, central state power, even when linked to powerful external conservation and business interests, has its limits in the lowveld. But it remains unclear how long this truce will hold, because it

represents an embarrassing barrier to the expansion of conservation-related business in the lowveld (McDermott Hughes, 2001), and the transfrontier park has powerful backers, from the President to well-connected conservationists.

THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF LAND IN THE LOWVELD

Commercial interests in wildlife, tourism, hunting, sugar, and biofuels mean access to land and other resources – notably water, but also access to infrastructure and markets – is highly contested in the lowveld. Diverse investors are interested in a range of enterprises – from large-scale multinational companies interested in sugar production, to local white ranchers with links to the hunting and tourism industries, to well-connected entrepreneurs with money to spare, to the political and military elite with commercial ambitions, to illegal poaching syndicates. It is a very diverse group of elite players. They are set against diverse local actors interested in making a living from the land, and gaining the fruits of land reform. Most local people are interested in farming cotton, sorghum, maize, and livestock on their own land. Local people are of course not homogeneous, either: different interests are involved, with complex affiliations between ordinary farmers, war veterans, village heads, chiefs, spirit mediums, local MPs, party factions, and others.

With such diverse interests playing out in different ways across the cases, it should be no surprise that such struggles over land are complex and fast-moving. People can appear on different sides at different times for different issues, depending on strategic and tactical manoeuvres. The fault lines of local politics are not set, but open to continuous negotiation and change. It is not a simple story, and the political, economic, and livelihood implications are difficult to unravel. Winners and losers emerge through a complex, unfolding process, in which the end result is hard to predict.

In each of the cases described above, resistance from below has featured strongly. This has taken many forms – from overt protest to active alliance building and lobbying, to foot-dragging and non-compliance, the ‘weapons of the weak’ (Scott, 1985). During the land invasions, war veterans helped organize others to invade land, which they regarded as rightfully theirs. They were supported by some elements of ZANU-PF and some local politicians and chiefs, but such support was not guaranteed. Arguments about identity, belonging, memory, history, and the importance of the ancestors and their spirits featured strongly. The seemingly all-

powerful technocratic, business-oriented, or political framings of land use offered by the elites have clashed with alternative perspectives, rooted in culture and history. Yet these more local framings have enormous power, with significant political purchase in local settings, and so represent an important focus for mobilization (Fontein, 2006).

As people invaded the land – whether the land was designated for sugar production, wildlife business in the conservancies, or conservation in the national park – arguments around restitution of ancestral lands, as well as the livelihood demands of farming, were deployed. Since these invasions were not retrospectively sanctioned by the state as in the other ‘fast-track’ land reform areas, the assumption was that people would be evicted. Everyone thought that elite interests – of business and conservation, well supported by the central state – would prevail. But this, perhaps surprisingly, was not to be. Of course, evicting such numbers of people would have been a political and logistical nightmare – some 6,000 households in Nuanetsi, over 750 in Gonarezhou National Park and around 1,000 in the conservancies, perhaps 50,000 people in all. Such evictions would be political suicide for any local politician, and most bureaucrats quietly acknowledged, with some relief, that evictions, though formally on the cards, were exceptionally unlikely. So, eventually, and seemingly against the odds, the people of Uswashava and Chitsa managed to extract a compromise, and the land that they had been claiming was formally allocated. The settlers in Chiredzi River Conservancy are still in the midst of their struggle, but are seemingly staying put.

Taken together, these cases reveal the often ambiguous nature of the Zimbabwean state in this marginal area. Allied with capitalist interests at one time, but with particular constituencies of local people at others, state authorities have wavered. As the case studies show, local state authorities and politicians may have a very different stance to their notional masters at the centre. Local politics is important. Such players, whether ZANU-PF MPs or ministry bureaucrats, have adopted hard-line interventionist positions and populist concessions at different times. The seemingly endless cycle of elections (or at least the prospect of them) affects this, with different political factions positioning themselves accordingly. Bureaucrats are left in the middle, obliged to implement government policy, but not being totally sure what this is at any particular moment. Moreover, political groupings, notably ZANU-PF, are far from united on such issues. Cabinet decisions made with presidential approval may be quickly overturned, or at least judiciously reinterpreted, when they hit these local political complexities. Ministers’ orders to field-level bureaucrats may be avoided, diverted, or

recast. Within the province different ZANU-PF party factions are in outright conflict; sometimes, it seems, more embroiled with each other than with the opposition. Local political figures – from war veterans on the farms to local MPs and chiefs up to the provincial governor – carefully position themselves in this *mêlée*. The more effective political encounters by local people have exploited this dynamic very effectively, seeking alliances strategically and tactically, as the case studies have shown.

A perspective from the lowveld – at the margins of state power – helps qualify some of the Harare-centric analysis of Zimbabwean politics. While top-down imposition, sometimes supported by state-mediated violence, is a frequent pattern elsewhere (Sachikonye, 2011) it is not universally so. ZANU-PF is far from a unified force, especially in Masvingo. War veterans, chiefs, and bureaucrats cannot always be relied upon to toe the party line. Subversion, reinterpretation, and challenge are the order of the day. This offers greater agency in the face of state power for local players, when local political manoeuvres are effective.

Who will win out is difficult to tell, but the way interests consolidate will have a big impact. In contrast to the ‘fast-track’ land reform areas elsewhere in the province, a different political dynamic is observed in the lowveld. While, in the ‘fast-track’ areas, the *jambanja* phase was characterized as disorderly and chaotic, a sense of control emerged relatively quickly, as plans were imposed and resettlements formalized. Here a dominant group of A1 farmers, many ‘accumulating from below’, has an increasing influence on economic activity and politics (Scoones, 2010). By contrast, in large areas of the lowveld such formalization has not been evident, and people remained with the status of ‘squatter’ for over a decade (and many still do). In the lowveld, much confusion over rights and claims persists, as the case studies show. This has resulted in opportunities for others to impose their interests, grabbing land or enforcing external plans. The situation has been in great flux, and remains so.

Local people have had some victories in their struggles. But are these indicators for the future, or is it more likely that elite pacts will form – excluding local alternatives, allowing elite business or conservation interests to prevail? Certainly incongruous alliances are emerging between white hunters and tourism operators and political and military elites in the conservancies, for example. Can such powerful blocs be used to push out local interests and quash any further resistance? Or will such elite alliances be too difficult to form – for moral, ethical, cultural, and political reasons? Of course in Zimbabwe’s dynamic political context, people move in and out of favour very quickly as the political winds shift, which is why there is a

sense of desperation, as people try and stake claims when the going is good. Yet, as we have seen, elite alliances are not stable or uniform. Diverse local people, allied to local political and traditional leaders, now organised, emboldened and realizing that they can win, have been overt, and at least partially successful, in their challenges to often divided elite authority. It remains to be seen if new land invasions will be organised, based on new attempts to assert an alternative, popular vision of landscape and livelihoods.

Across the three cases, an elite capture of land has been attempted and has been consistently resisted by local people, organised in complex alliances with local politicians and traditional leaders. In these borderland areas there are clear limits observed to the power and influence of elite actors – whether ZANU-PF politicians from Harare, ministry bureaucrats, business people, or conservation NGOs, even the President himself. A particular local politics, involving shifting alliances, acts to disrupt or divert stated intentions. The case studies thus offer some indications as to what possible scenarios may unfold, and how these may be quite different to elsewhere in the country. Those who win out in these land struggles will control significant areas, and with them significant economic (and so political) resources: it will be these people who will control the future of the lowveld. Resistance may yet succeed, and elite pacts may fall apart, but only time will tell if an alternative to large-scale elite capture will emerge based on local livelihoods and farming.

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NOTES

- ¹ Figures from 2009, show A1 (small-scale farming) schemes took up 1,195,564 hectares (21.1 percent of provincial land area), while A2 (medium-scale commercial) schemes took up 371,520 hectares (6.5 percent of area). See Scoones *et al.* 2010.
- ² See for example Sachikonye, 2011; Raftopoulos, 2010.
- ³ Although it included some Mauritian sugar outgrowers on the estates.
- ⁴ Also see Wolmer, 2007.
- ⁵ See Chauma, *et al.* 2003b; Wolmer, 2007; Wolmer *et al.*, 2004; Mavedzenge *et al.*, 2008; and Scoones *et al.*, 2010.
- ⁶ See *ZimOnline*, 2007; *Zimbabwe Times*, 2009).
- ⁷ Channel 4, *Dispatches*, 'Bankrolling Mugabe', broadcast 22 July 2009, <<http://www.channel4.com/programmes/dispatches/episode-guide/series-32/episode-1>> (20 June 2012).
- ⁸ 'Offer letters' are permits to occupy land issued by the Ministry of Lands.
- ⁹ According to local veterinarians who were hired in by these ranchers, there were around 6,000 cattle being grazed on the ranch.
- ¹⁰ *New Zimbabwe*, 'Biti queries Green Fuel's land deals', 21 May 2012, <www.zimbabwesituation.com/may22_2012.html#Z11> (6 July 2012); *Zimbabwe Standard*, 'Govt mulls new plan to rescue ethanol project', 3 March 2012, <www.thestandard.co.zw/business/34109-govt-mulls-new-plan-to-rescue-ethanol-project.html> (6 July 2012); *Radio VOP Zimbabwe*, 'Chisumbanje villagers threaten to destroy ethanol project', 11 October 2011, <www.radiovop.com/index.php/national-news/7257-chisumbanje-villagers-threaten-to-destroy-ethanol-project.html> (6 July 2012).
- ¹¹ Interview, war veteran, Uswaushava, Zimbabwe, 1 December 2010.
- ¹² Interview, farmer, Uswaushava, Zimbabwe, 3 October 2011.
- ¹³ Interview, government official, Chiredzi, Zimbabwe, 4 October 2011.
- ¹⁴ Interview, farmer, Uswaushava, Zimbabwe, 23 October 2009.

- ¹⁵ Interview, Councillor, Uswaushava, Zimbabwe, 3 October 2011.
- ¹⁶ Interview, farmer, Uswasushava, Zimbabwe, 3 October 2011.
- ¹⁷ Nearby, Mkwesine, Mukwazi, Mukazi, Angus, and Chigwete were all reported as 'no-go' areas due to invasions: see *Zimbabwe* 2002.
- ¹⁸ This success mainly came in relation to high-end hunting safaris; wider eco-tourism, however, failed to take off, although the transfrontier park held out prospects.
- ¹⁹ Groups involved included IUCN and WWF, the Centre for Applied Social Sciences and the Institute for Environmental Studies from the University of Zimbabwe, Bio-Hub (supported by CIRAD in France), AHEAD (Animal and Human Health for Environment and Development), and NGOs, including SAFIRE and CESVI.
- ²⁰ Interview, Agritex, Chiredzi, Zimbabwe, 3 October 2011.
- ²¹ SW Africa Radio, 'Wildlife sector under threat as gov adopts new land "reform" policy', 12 October 2009, <<http://allafrica.com/stories/200910121368.html>> (28 January 2012).
- ²² Although the names varied in different reports, they included Governor Maluleke, Major General Engelbert Rugeje, the Chief of Staff of the Zimbabwe National Army, and Ailess Baloyi, a Zanu-PF MP. See *The Zimbabwean*, 2009 and *Financial Gazette*, 2011.
- ²³ See <<http://www.ndunasafarilodge.com/index.html>> (20 June 2012).
- ²⁴ See *Times Live*, 2011.
- ²⁵ SW Africa Radio, 'ZANU PF linked to Zim poaching syndicate', 4 May 2011, <<http://allafrica.com/stories/201105041092.html>> SW Africa Radio, 'Transfrontier conservancy hit by rampant poaching', 11 July 2011, <<http://allafrica.com/stories/201107120592.html>> (20 June 2012).
- ²⁶ Interview, government official, Chiredzi, 3 October 2011.
- ²⁷ See <www.peaceparks.org/story.php?pid=1005&mid=1050> (25 January 2012).
- ²⁸ Radio VOP Zimbabwe 'Zimbabwe villagers refuse to give way to regional game park', 2 December 2010 <www.radiovop.com/index.php/national-news/3216-zimbabwe-villagers-refuse-to-give-way-to-regional-game-park.html> (20 June 2012).
- ²⁹ Interview, Comrade C. Phikilele, Mupinga School, 16 October 2009.
- ³⁰ There has been a long history of land designation changes in this area. In 1935, the south of Ndanga District was proclaimed a game reserve, but it was deproclaimed when a tsetse fly control hunting programme was initiated in 1940. In 1950 the area was again designated, only to be deproclaimed once more for tsetse fly control operations in the early 1960s. As we have seen, in 1962 the Chitsa people were evicted and resettled in Sangwe area. During the liberation war, they were moved again to 'protected villages'. In 1975 Gonarezhou National Park was gazetted and this former tsetse corridor or 'State Land' was controversially incorporated into it; see Wolmer *et al.*, 'Wildlife management and land reform'.
- ³¹ Interview, National Parks and Wildlife Management Authority official, Masvingo, 4 October 2011.

People and Places

9

LABOUR AFTER LAND REFORM: THE PRECARIOUS LIVELIHOODS OF FORMER FARMWORKERS IN ZIMBABWE

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INTRODUCTION

The policy discourse on farm labour in southern Africa, and in Zimbabwe in particular, has not caught up with the times. Framed as it is by a focus on full-time wage labour and employment rights,¹ it often does not grasp the new realities of former farmworkers living on farms, particularly following the ruptures of land reform.

This article seeks to explore the differentiated livelihoods of former farmworkers based on research in one area of northern Zimbabwe, where tobacco production is central to the post-land reform agrarian landscape. Land reform has dramatically reshaped the relationships between land and commercial production, as well as patterns of social reproduction, gender and class relations, and with this, labour. This has major implications for how we understand 'labour' in the new rural context, and what types of service and policy support are required. Our aim is not to compare

conditions before and after land reform, but to explore the changes that have occurred to livelihoods in the period following major agrarian restructuring. In the post-Mugabe era, with prospects for increased international engagement, it is essential to ensure that the dynamics of rural livelihoods — and particularly those of former labourers on now-redistributed large-scale farms — are understood.

A focus on labour and employment has returned to discussions in development studies after a long hiatus (Chhachhi, 2014), but there remains much debate as to how the category 'labour', particularly in rural settings, is understood (Harris-White, 2003; Oya and Pontara, 2015). Understanding rural labour is especially challenging where wage labour is combined with diverse livelihoods, with multiple identities and class positions, seen by some as a new 'precariat' (Standing, 2014), the core of an increasingly 'informal' economy (Ferguson, 2015), in which 'surplus' populations, formerly part of the wage-earning classes, must seek out new livelihoods, part of Marx's 'reserve army of labour' (Li, 2009, 2011). This informalization of labour — from fixed wage work to diverse livelihoods — is seen in both rural and urban settings, and has a long history in Zimbabwe (Phimister and Pilosof, 2017). There are multiple trajectories of change, with some benefiting from new opportunities through flexible livelihoods, while others suffer from a lack of the security offered by regular wage employment (Ferguson and Li, 2018). In periods of major transition — such as following land reform — changes in the labour regime and the consequences of informalization are therefore central to any investigation.

For Bernstein (2006, 2010), the contemporary agrarian question may be seen in terms of labour, as 'fragmented classes of labour' seek out livelihoods in the context of a globalized, neoliberal economy, which is unable to provide a living wage. Bernstein states:

Classes of labour in global capitalism, and especially in the 'South', pursue their reproduction, that is, through insecure and oppressive — and in many places increasingly scarce — wage employment, often combined with a range of likewise precarious small-scale farming and insecure 'informal sector' ('survival') activity, subject to its own forms of differentiation and oppression along intersecting lines of class, gender, generation, caste, and ethnicity. In short, most have to pursue their means of livelihood/reproduction across different sites of the social division of labour: urban and rural, agricultural and non-agricultural wage employment and self-employment. (Bernstein, 2006: 455, italics in original)

Livelihoods therefore 'defy inherited assumptions of fixed (and uniform)

notions of “worker”, “peasant”, “trader”, “urban”, “rural”, “employed” and “self-employed” (Bernstein, 2007: 7). Within this complex constellation of livelihood activities, diverse forms of petty commodity production are central. In the context of changing labour regimes in agriculture, therefore, it is crucial to understand how different ‘classes of labour’ interact, alongside the processes of differentiation that unfold.

A frequently observed trend has been one from quasi-feudal paternalism, linked to highly controlled wage employment, to less permanent salaried work, except in management positions, and a greater reliance on casual, temporary work. This is often linked to agribusiness restructuring, as corporate actors seek to link production to contracting arrangements without large core estates and workforces (Gibbon, 2011; Gibbon and Riisgaard, 2014). Understanding these new labour regimes is important in grasping changing agrarian dynamics in Africa. In the former settler economies of southern Africa, what new labour regimes can be expected when large-scale agriculture is restructured, either through redistributive reform or the pressures of globalization? When large-scale, capitalist commercial farms, reliant on extensive wage employment, are subdivided, what happens to the labour force? How are former farmworkers incorporated into new agrarian structures, and on what terms?

Responding to these broad questions, this article provides empirical insights from Zimbabwe into what former agricultural wage labourers are doing 18 years after the major land reform of 2000. It makes the case that the category ‘farmworker’, central to the existing discourse and almost all research and policy analysis, is no longer relevant. Indeed, those who were formerly farmworkers — both women and men — on white-owned, large-scale commercial farms are pursuing a whole range of livelihood activities, including farming, off-farm employment, natural resource extraction, as well as selling labour to new settlers on small-scale farms.

This article draws on a study that investigated a sample of 100 former farmworker households, resident in compounds on three former large-scale farms in the high-potential Mvurwi area, plus 23 smallholder ‘A1’ settler households (of 220 now with plots on these farms) who were formerly farmworkers.² Based on detailed survey work of both compound dwellers and A1 households (focusing on the 23 who were formerly farmworkers), the article examines emerging patterns of social differentiation and class formation, identifying different ‘classes of labour’. Through a series of biographies, these new patterns of livelihood are

contrasted with former wage employment on large-scale farms. While shifts have occurred, and new forms of differentiation have emerged, our data are unable to say definitively whether these former farmworkers are better or worse off today. What is certain is that livelihoods have changed, and different vulnerabilities must be confronted.

The article focuses on a tobacco-growing area, where considerable skilled labour is required. Each of the former large-scale farms grew tobacco, as well as some maize, soybeans, horticulture and fruit crops. Some livestock were also kept. On the new resettlement farms a mixed farming system is evident, with tobacco the dominant commercial crop, continuing to generate significant labour demand (Scoones et al., 2018). Many former farmworkers who continue to live on the farms are vulnerable, subject to precarious livelihoods, poor working conditions and limited access to assets. But by lumping everyone together into a single category and failing to understand emergent livelihood, gender and class dynamics, and the changing nature of 'work', current analyses and policy recommendations are found wanting.

Instead, this article suggests that we need to understand agrarian change together with shifts in labour regimes, class positions and livelihood strategies. To link the land question with the labour question (cf. Li, 2011), we therefore need to understand how processes of social differentiation and accumulation are constituted together with transitions in the agrarian economy, generating new classes of labour, often fractured, diverse, mobile and fragile (Bernstein, 2006). This points to an analysis with major policy implications for Zimbabwe and other regions, particularly in southern Africa, where a transition from settler farm economies, centred on large-scale commercial farms, is occurring.

We start with a brief overview of farm labour in Zimbabwe, before turning to explore the situation post-land reform in the Mvurwi area. The following sections present data on livelihoods, including five cases illustrative of four different types of livelihood. We conclude with a discussion of the implications for understanding former farmworker livelihoods after land reform.

FARM LABOUR IN ZIMBABWE

During the colonial era, expanding commercial agriculture, controlled by European settlers, required increasing amounts of labour (Arrighi, 1970). This was recruited from across Zimbabwe, and indeed the region. During

the Rhodesian Federation era, labourers came from Malawi and Zambia, and many also came from Mozambique, especially during the long civil war there. Crops such as tobacco, which became dominant on the Highveld, required considerable labour for production and processing, and farmers built large compounds to accommodate workers and their families (von Blankenburg, 1994). Overall, the conditions were notoriously poor, with low wages, inadequate accommodation and limited services (Loewenson, 1992). A form of 'domestic government' (Rutherford, 2001) was instituted: a system based on racialized paternalism and control, and often harsh discipline. Workers knew little else beyond the farms, and there were restrictions on off-farm work, and even small-scale gardening. Many 'foreigners' recruited from other countries did not have any citizenship rights, and often lost contact with their wider family. Workers were almost wholly dependent on the farmer, and the particular farm regime (Gibbon et al., 2014).

By the mid-1960s, 206,781 permanent workers, mostly men, were employed in commercial agriculture in Zimbabwe, up from 130,636 in 1945 (Dunlop, 1971: 19). Other workers, often women, were hired in for shorter periods for seasonal piecework (Mosley, 1983). A significant proportion of this labour force was on large estates, notably the sugar estates in the Lowveld. Within the commercial farms, labour was concentrated in the high-potential regions, and particularly on the increasingly profitable tobacco farms (Rubert, 1998). Many permanent workers gained significant skills in field agronomy, equipment repairs, agricultural processing and more, and those promoted to farm management roles were vital in the operations of large, commercial business operations.

Following Independence in 1980, the commercial farming sector and the regulatory and policy environment changed. With the reduction in subsidies for white commercial agriculture, and an increasingly competitive global market for agricultural commodities, farms had to specialize and upgrade in order to engage with global value chains, whether around tobacco, horticulture, citrus or beef. With markets opening up following the end of a sanctions regime, there were growing sanitary and phytosanitary requirements for export to markets in Europe and the USA, where preferential trade options were created. The new government also imposed a set of labour regulations, requiring minimum wages to be paid, along with basic conditions of housing and welfare provision — although such regulations were often not enforced. These changes in the operating environment resulted in a greater professionalization of labour arrangements, combined with a growth in the proportion of temporary,

casual labour. Sometimes living on the edge of farms in informal compounds or in nearby communal areas, such farmworkers, often highly impoverished migrants, combined temporary wage work with other livelihood activities. On the farms, a more hierarchical, permanent workforce emerged, with grades and roles more clearly defined.

Meanwhile, in this period, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and farmworkers' labour unions³ campaigned for improved labour rights and service provision, while welfare organizations, sometimes involving farmers' wives, provided support (Hartnack, 2016). In particular, the HIV/AIDS epidemic caused significant ill-health and mortality among farmworkers, resulting in a growing population of children living on the farms without parents, and in need of welfare support (Sachikonye, 2003).

By the late 1990s, there were estimated to be around 150,000 permanent workers on commercial farms, including estates,⁴ and the commercial agricultural sector employed around 200,000 additional workers on temporary contracts (Chambati, 2007, 2011; Scoones et al., 2010: 127). By this time, several generations of families had lived on the farms, often moving from farm to farm depending on the availability of employment. While conditions had improved to some degree, options for leaving farm employment were restricted, and the paternalistic dependence on the farm owner persisted.

This all changed in 2000, with the acceleration of land invasions across the country, and the initiation of the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP), presaging the emergence of a new labour regime discussed below. Following the loss of the constitutional referendum in 2000, ZANU-PF, the ruling party since Independence, felt under threat from a buoyant urban-based opposition, led by the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). President Mugabe put his full weight behind the land invasions, and mobilized party cadres, security forces and other arms of the state to support a radical land reform. In this early period, no one quite knew what was going to happen, and certainly those in power had little control of the situation. The period of *jambanja* — the unruly politics of land invasions — resulted in around 8 million hectares (ha) of former white commercial farm land being expropriated (Moyo, 2011). What happened on the ground varied from farm to farm. In some cases, confrontations were violent; in other cases occupations were peaceful, seen more as protest demonstrations. In some cases, farmworkers resident on the farms were chased away or attacked, sometimes violently; in others, farmworkers, with deep knowledge of the farms, joined the invasions, helping to peg out new plots and settlements (Scoones et al., 2010). Farmworkers, with nowhere

else to go, often showed strong allegiance to the farm owners, and in many cases were restricted from engaging with land invaders. Seen as supporters of the opposition and backed by whites, farmworkers were often cast as the enemy in the heightened political rhetoric of this period (Rutherford, 2017).

The proportion of new settlers on what came to be A1 (smallholder) resettlement farms who were former farmworkers, ranged from 2 to 15 per cent, according to different surveys from across the country (see Matondi, 2012; Moyo et al., 2009; Scoones et al., 2010). However, many more were displaced, either in situ, still living in the compounds but no longer working, or to other places, usually communal areas where people had relatives (Magaramombe, 2010; Sachikonye, 2003). Those who came to work on the resettlement farms on a temporary basis no longer had formal salaried jobs, and had to negotiate new arrangements with the land reform settlers.

Figures are hard to come by, and much disputed, but after land reform in 2000, around 70,000 farmworker households continued to have employment on remaining farms and estates, about 25,000 were displaced in situ, remaining on the farms but initially without work, and approximately 45,000 households were forced to move (Chambati, 2007). This study focuses on the in situ displaced population in three farms. Of those who migrated away, most returned to or established homes in nearby communal areas, while others sought employment in nearby towns, notably Harare. Some attempted to return to their countries of origin, connecting with relatives from Malawi, Mozambique or Zambia, while others simply moved to other farms in search of work from the new settlers. As described below, the mobility of farmworker populations is notable, with significant turnover in residents of compounds occurring since the land reform.

The land reform of 2000 resulted in a massive change in agrarian structure. The FTLRP allocated over 4,500 large-scale farms to new farmers, making up around 20 per cent of the total land area of the country, according to (admittedly rough) official figures. This represented over 145,000 new farm households in A1 (smallholder) schemes, with arable allocations of 5–6 ha, and around 16,500 further households occupying larger, medium-scale A2 farms (Rukuni et al., 2009), although there are many additional informal allocations and subdivisions not accounted for in these figures. Around 3.4 million ha of large-scale commercial farming remains, much of it in large estates. Permanently employed farmworkers lost out significantly from this reform, and issues of rights, welfare and deepening poverty of these populations have been repeatedly raised (Pilossof, 2018; Sachikonye, 2003), even as they inserted

themselves into the new agrarian economy (Chambati, 2017).

There are important parallels, as well as contrasts, with elsewhere in southern Africa. In South Africa and Namibia, particularly, there have been shifts from a paternalistic system (van Onselen, 1997) to greater professionalization of workforces, and to a pattern of informalization and casualization on large-scale commercial farms (Du Toit and Ally, 2003; Werner et al., 2001), with major implications for gender rights and welfare (Barrientos and Kritzing, 2004). Intense pressure on capitalist agriculture from globalization combines with a wider informalization of the economy and the changing nature of 'work' (Ferguson, 2015). Notionally progressive legislation to improve wages and worker rights, such as requirements for minimum wages, has often acted to accelerate informalization, as employers attempt to evade regulations. In South Africa, for example, there has been a significant decline in formal, permanent employment in large-scale agriculture in the last decade (Sender, 2016; Visser and Ferrer, 2015).

Unlike in Zimbabwe, land reform in South Africa or Namibia has not yet resulted in a significant restructuring of land use and rural economies (McCusker et al., 2016; Ntsebeza and Hall, 2007; Werner, 2015). Tenants on farms subject to land reform notionally have greater rights through labour tenancy legislation, although in practice many former wage workers remain on farms with limited livelihood options. Indeed, around 3 million people were estimated to be living on farms in the early 2000s in South Africa, particularly in Limpopo province (Hall et al., 2013: 53), including large numbers of migrants seeking employment, especially from Zimbabwe (Addison, 2014; Bolt, 2012).

As large-scale capitalist agriculture transforms, a decline in the core, permanent labour force is seen, alongside a growth in informal, casual, temporary work, where 'workers' must combine wage employment with other livelihoods, including agriculture. This is a phenomenon across southern Africa, and indeed more broadly, as globalization restructures large-scale commercial agriculture. In Zimbabwe, large-scale agriculture has been fundamentally changed through land reform, with significant redistribution of land to smallholders. A key question, then, is: what happens to labour when major redistributive land reform overturns a system of formerly settler capitalist large-scale agriculture? This is of direct interest to understanding Zimbabwe's agrarian transition, but is also of relevance as other former settler economies in the region contemplate redistributive land reforms.

By focusing on labour in Zimbabwe's agrarian transition, we ask what new relationships are struck, how this affects livelihoods and patterns of social differentiation, accumulation and class formation, and with what implications for gender relations? Most commentaries on Zimbabwe's land reform follow a narrative that highlights the initial patterns of displacement and dispossession of farmworkers (Sachikonye, 2003). Such processes are central to the story, but these commentaries often do not ask what happened next. How did farm labour — formerly wage workers on large-scale commercial farms — engage with the new agrarian structure? What new livelihoods have emerged since? What new labour regime has evolved, and how does this transform our understanding of agricultural work and employment?

LABOUR AFTER LAND REFORM: THE EXPERIENCE OF MVURWI AREA

Our study site is in Mvurwi area, in Mazowe district, Mashonaland Central province, a high-potential area 100 km to the north of the capital Harare. The study site was chosen to represent an area with a long tradition of labour-intensive agricultural production, mostly focused on tobacco.⁵ This allowed us to explore the transition from compound-based labour supply on large farms in an area where labour demand has persisted after land reform in 2000, as smallholder farmers have taken over the land. This contrasts with other areas, such as dryland Masvingo where, prior to land reform, relatively few farm labourers were employed for ranching enterprises, and labour compounds were not a feature of labour management.⁶ In Masvingo, following land reform, smallholder mixed crop and livestock production on these farms has boosted demand for labour, but this has had to be recruited elsewhere in the absence of resident former farmworkers (Scoones et al., 2010). The Mvurwi setting also contrasts with the large estates, such as those dedicated to sugar production in the Lowveld, where the production system remained intact following land reform, and with it labour management, even if on smaller, subdivided plots (Scoones et al., 2017). Thus, the Mvurwi area offers a useful insight into a productive, commercially-oriented system, where demand for labour has continued following land reform.

In our study site, pre-reform, the owners ran the three farms as family businesses, and all employed considerable numbers of people in three farmworker compounds. All farms had stores run by the farm, which

offered basic supplies and a system of credit linked to wages. The farms had their own characteristics, largely reflecting the attitudes of the farm owner to both farming and labour. These ranged from a very strict, draconian regime on one, to more liberal attitudes on the other two. At land reform in 2000, these farms were initially occupied by a range of people from nearby communal areas, as well as Mvurwi town, some 20 km away. In one farm, the farm owner prevented workers joining the invasions and locked them in. Antagonism towards him resulted in him being evicted at an early stage. On the other two farms, farm owners negotiated arrangements with new settlers initially, and only later abandoned their farms. Today, the compounds house 370 families, representing around 1,790 people, based on a household size of 4.85 in our sample. There are now two primary and two secondary schools serving the area, and a clinic is under construction. Previously there were only two primary schools, established by a group of commercial farmers, and health services were only available at Mvurwi town.⁷

Of the 220 A1 settler households on the three farms in our sample, 23 households are headed by former farmworkers or their sons, representing 10.5 per cent of plots. Eight of these former farmworkers gained land during the invasion process. They were able to make social and political connections and joined the occupations, receiving plots along with others. Others have received plots since then, having become engaged in local politics from a compound base. Two sons of former farmworkers are in this category, gaining land during 2010–12. While the standard allocation of arable land for new settlers was 6 ha, it is notable that former farmworkers received lower amounts (averaging 3.5 ha), reflecting their status and limited negotiating capacities in the complex local politics of land allocation.

Around half of those sampled who were resident in the three farm compounds formerly worked on these farms. The other half had moved, having been displaced from farmworker jobs elsewhere, mostly from farms now owned by medium-scale A2 resettlement farmers nearby (37 per cent), where the new owners dismissed workers and replaced or downsized their workforce. The remaining 13 per cent had been following an itinerant farmworker lifestyle before, moving between farms, taking up temporary piecework jobs. Of those who had been working on farms before land reform, 56 per cent of household heads (66 per cent men, 34 per cent women in our sample) were 'general hands', 17 per cent were skilled workers (including clerks, mechanics, drivers, graders, fencers and builders), 11 per cent were domestic workers (housekeepers, cooks and garden boys),

9 per cent were in managerial jobs (farm manger, foreman) and 7 per cent were involved in security as guards. Immediately before land reform, 87 per cent of household heads were living in the province where the study site farms were located, while the remainder had moved from other provinces (5 per cent from Mashonaland West, 4 per cent from Harare, 3 per cent from Masvingo/Midlands) to join relatives. Only 15 per cent of those living in the compounds identified themselves as coming from other countries, with Malawi and Mozambique being the most common, followed by Zambia.

When asked how their livelihood situation had changed since land reform, 58 per cent of the sampled compound dwellers said that it had improved, while 42 per cent said it had remained the same or deteriorated. As discussed further below, a key differentiating factor was access to land. Not surprisingly, all those who gained A1 resettlement plots thought that their lives had improved, while those who gained a hectare plot also had a positive view. Many others argued that their material conditions were not necessarily better, but 'freedom' from the constraints of fixed employment had benefits. Contrary to the standard narratives about former farmworkers, which emphasize displacement and destitution, a much more variegated picture emerges, with patterns of differentiation having important implications.

COMPLEX LIVELIHOODS

Across our sample, we identified four different types of livelihood, informed by a combination of our survey data and qualitative interviews. These are primarily differentiated by land access, which in turn affects engagement with farm labour (as employers or labourers), as well as involvement in other livelihood activities. First, there are those who were allocated plots and are now A1 settlers, but were formerly farmworkers (or their sons); second, there are those living in the compounds with plots of more than 1 ha, including rented-in land;⁸ third, there are those with plots/gardens of up to 1 ha; and finally, there are those without land at all (or just small gardens by their houses), who are highly reliant on labouring and other livelihood activities. These varied combinations of land access and labour practices make up diverse livelihoods suggesting very different experiences of former farmworkers, which we explore below.

Demand for former farmworkers' labour and skills remains high. Alongside maize, the dominant crop on these new resettlement farms is

Virginia tobacco, which requires significant labour input as well as particular skills, such as curing, sorting and grading. Household members across our compound-dweller sample (N = 100) were hired to work on 13 different farms (A1 and A2 farms), including the three A1 settlement schemes where they were resident. Our survey of A1 settler households across the three schemes (N = 220, including N = 23 former farmworkers) showed that, on average hired, each household hired 1.92 men and 1.86 women from the compounds and 0.49 men and 0.35 women from outside the compounds (mostly from other A1 settler households) for temporary piecework, averaging 143.5 days per year per hired person. In addition, they hired on average 0.52 men and 0.27 women as permanent, resident workers. Some permanent workers had previously been compound dwellers and had moved to their employers' farms, but most were relatives of the A1 farmers from nearby communal areas. Overall, the demand for

Table 9.1: Wage labour – contrasts among former farmworkers

	A1 farmers, who were former farmworkers (N=23)	Compound dwellers with 1 ha or more of land (N=26)	Compound dwellers with land areas less than 1 ha (N=52)	Compound dwellers with only small home gardens (N=22)
Percentage of households with full-time employed members	9%	8%	15%	14%
Percentage of households receiving regular remittances	9%	23%	8%	18%
Percentage of households with permanent employees	4.3%	0%	0%	0%
Percentage of households hiring in temporary labour	57%	38%	10%	0%
Percentage of households hiring out temporary labour	30%	46%	60%	77%

employment is high, but is mostly seasonal and task-specific, usually associated with tobacco production.

As Table 9.1 shows, those with less access to land sell more labour. On average male compound dwellers worked 119 days per year, while women worked 163 days per year. Average pay levels were US\$ 3 per day, for a six-hour day, although this varied, depending on the task and the farmer, with women often being paid less. As Table 9.1 shows, those with land are more likely to hire in labour, although only those with A1 plots had any permanent workers. No one from our compound sample households was employed permanently on resettlement farms. In terms of other sources of income from employment, relatively few household members had permanent jobs elsewhere (these included guards, drivers, housekeepers, maids), but the proportion is higher among those with less land. Receipt of remittances (from both household members and others) varied, with no clear pattern across groups.

Thus, major differences are seen across our sample, linking agrarian questions of land and labour. Those with more land hire in labour, while those with less land hire out, although many households show a mixed pattern, with some household members selling labour at certain times of year, while others may hire in for particular tasks. However, selling labour is not sufficient to survive for any group, and other livelihood options must be sought. While farm work is important, no group can be defined exclusively as 'farmworkers'. While the labour market, driven in particular by tobacco, is important, and seasonal demand high, there is clearly 'surplus' labour in this restructured agrarian economy, resulting in a diversification of strategies for survival. How then do former farmworkers make a living beyond selling labour? As our data have shown, access to land is crucial, and own-account farming is an increasingly important livelihood strategy for former farmworkers.

Before land reform, farming was mostly not possible for those living in the compounds. The white farmers on these three farms sometimes offered 'lines' within their fields as an alternative to rations, but farmworkers were not allowed independent incomes (see case studies, below). Today, access to land is vital. While some were able to gain A1 plots, and others were able to get 1 ha allocations, some have had to extend gardens and rent in land. The informal land rental market is important, and often mutually beneficial. For A1 settlers with spare land, they are able to hook former farmworker tenants into labour relations on their farms (often including a range of land for labour exchange arrangements); this means that often highly skilled workers are on hand, and not hired by others at

crucial times.

Table 9.2 shows how land holding, including rentals, varies, and results in widely differing levels of farm production. In our sample, those 23 households who managed to get A1 plots are doing relatively well. The skills learned on the commercial farms are paying off. Even though they have much lower land areas than others in the A1 settlements (3.5 ha compared to an average of 5.6 ha), they have reasonable production and on average cultivated 2.4 ha in 2014. This resulted in a surplus of maize being sold, and tobacco being marketed. Over the five seasons, 2010–2014, they produced on average 1,741 kg maize, and sold 935 kg each year. Tobacco production averaged 676 kg over these five seasons, rising from 401 kg in 2010 to 1,031 kg in 2014.⁹

Of those living in the compounds there are some who are more akin to poorer A1 settlers, or those in the communal areas, who have on average 1.5 ha, renting in a further 0.3 ha. They produce about three-quarters of annual family food requirements (estimated to be 1 tonne) from maize, while also producing and selling tobacco. Then there are those with less

Table 9.2 Land, livestock and farm production.

	A1 farmers, who were former farmworkers	Compound dwellers with 1 ha or more of land	Compound dwellers with land areas less than 1 ha	Compound dwellers with only small home gardens
Land owned and rented (ha)	3.5	1.5, plus 0.3 rental	0.4, plus 0.3 rental	A few square metres, plus 0.2 ha rental
Percentage of households with gardens	87%	88%	87%	59%
Maize (kg in 2014)	1,488	735	418	66
Tobacco (kg in 2014)	1,031	470	232	27
Cattle (number)	2.1	3.0	1.2	0.1
Goat (number)	1.5	1.3	1.0	0.3

than 1 ha of land, although they also rent in land. This group produced on average 418 kg in 2014, less than half of estimated household consumption requirements, although income is supplemented by gardening, especially by women. Finally, there are those with very small plots or just gardens. Here agricultural production is minimal, with limited food provisioning from maize production, and negligible tobacco production.

In addition to selling labour and small-scale agriculture/gardening, compound dwellers have to seek other livelihood activities. Table 9.3 shows the array of income-earning activities pursued during 2014–15, and the proportion of households in our four livelihood categories involved in each. These activities are differentiated by gender, with vegetable sales being

Table 9.3: Income-earning activities (percentage of households), and gendered involvement.

Other income earning activities	A1 farmers, who were former farmworkers (N = 23)	Compound dwellers with 1 ha or more of land (N = 26)	Compound dwellers with land areas less than 1 ha (N = 52)	Compound dwellers with only small home gardens (N = 22)	Gendered involvement
Vegetable sales	61	31	38	27	F
Brick making/thatching	35	50	27	18	M
Building/carpentry	13	35	21	0	M
Fishing	30	31	19	5	M
Trading	30	23	12	18	F
Poultry sales	26	23	13	0	F/M
Tailoring	13	15	8	0	M
Pottery/basket making	9	12	4	5	F/M
Goat sales	9	4	6	5	M/F
Wood carving	9	4	4	0	M
Cattle sales	13	0	2	0	M

most important for women, while carpentry, building, brick making and fishing are important for men. Poultry sales are important for both men and women. These activities make up a significant proportion of total household income, especially for those with no or limited land. Such income sources are especially important for women and, as an alternative to seasonal wage labour, such off-season activities are important in smoothing income through the year.

These survey data show the differentiated patterns of livelihood activity of former farmworkers. However, understanding how wage work, farm production and other livelihood activities interact over time, and within a household across axes of age and gender, requires turning to more qualitative sources. We undertook detailed biographical interviews with a random sample of 24 former farmworker households (interviewing 13 men and 11 women overall), including three who gained land in the A1 settlements.¹⁰ Below we offer five illustrative cases that provide insights into how livelihoods — as well as identities and identifications — have changed following land reform.

MAKING A LIVING ON THE FARMS: CASE STUDIES

Case 1 (A1 plot holder, female): 'We were the lucky ones'

I am 68 years old and originally come from Mozambique. I came to Forrester Estate in 1979 with my husband who was a tractor driver. I have had seven children, and one daughter lives with me as she is a single mother. I also have the kids of two of my sons, as they have died. My eldest son has a house in the compound but farms with me. I came to this farm in 1987 when my first husband died. I married a farmworker here, although he later died. I worked as a general hand on this farm up to land reform, when I joined the invasions. Before there were deductions for food rations, pensions and hospital bills from our meagre pay. The farm owner did not allow us to have beds, bicycles or even watches. He was always afraid that farmworkers would have stolen from him. Thanks to the farm invasions, I now have a farm of nearly 5 ha. We were the lucky ones. I grow maize on my plot, and can get up to 100 bags each year, which I sell [our surveys show she produced on average 3.2 tonnes of maize in the seasons between 2010 and 2014, and sold on average 1.8 tonnes]. I also have a garden, where I grow tomatoes, leafy vegetables, onions and sweet potatoes, and I sell at the roadside market. I am a farmer now! Before I had nothing, but now I have built a nice home, and bought things for it. I also have a cow,

which I bought in 2014, and four goats; all bought from my harvests. We now have the freedom to buy what we want, especially livestock.

Case 2 (1 ha plot holder, male): 'Relations are better now'

I was born in 1969 in Muzarabani, was married in 1993 and I now have four kids. My parents worked on the farms, creating the steam for the boilers for tobacco curing. I started working after Form 1, as an assistant spanner boy at Concession, and went to work on tobacco farms in Centenary. In 1995, I was promoted to be a foreman, and later went on a course on curing, planting and reaping at Blackfordby. I came here in 1997, as my boss was friends with the former owner here. He was a tough guy. You couldn't buy personal property. I had a small radio only. I would buy goats and sell for school fees; other money was sent to my parents, now retired in Muzarabani communal area. I tried to keep broilers, but was taken to the farmer's own court. He needed people to be dependent. You had to buy at his shop, and couldn't go to Mvurwi town. I got a 1 ha plot in 2002. Because farmworkers were prevented by the white farmer from the card-sorting exercise for allocation of land,¹¹ 27 of us came together and went to the village heads, party officials and the Ministry of Lands. In the end, we were given land set aside for 'growth'. We don't have 'offer letters',¹² so we can't get any other support. In fact, we don't have any help at all from the government, as there's still suspicion of us in the compound. During the elections of 2008 it got really bad, and we were thrown out. We camped on the roadside for three days, until the MP and other officials intervened. We came back and relations are better now. I also have been renting land. One of my relatives has a big field in the A1 settlement. She is a war veteran and was married to my late brother, and I rent a plot to grow maize from her. In exchange, I help them out and do the grading and curing of their tobacco. My son, my wife and I all do piecework. We've got a garden (about 30 × 40 m), and grow potatoes for sale in Mvurwi, and at the homestead we grow bananas and sweet potatoes. I first planted tobacco in 2006. Since 2011 I have got 20 bales each year, with 25 bales in 2016, the highest ever. I am now an employer myself: I employ workers on piecework from the compounds. After harvest I buy inputs in Harare, bulk buying. After land reform, I have bought other goods. We now have a 21-inch TV, a sofa, two bicycles, a kitchen unit, a wardrobe and a big radio. I built the [tobacco curing] barn myself, making the bricks. I also have two cows and three goats, and I hire the Brazilian tractor for ploughing.

Case 3 (1 ha plot holder, male): 'Life is better now if you have land'

I was born in 1963 on a farm in Concession. Our family originated from

Mozambique; my parents came as labourers. We moved to many farms over the years, and came here in 1981. Of my siblings, one of my brothers is also here, and another works on a farm near Harare doing brick moulding. My two sisters live in Epworth. At first I was a general labourer. I got married in 1984, and it was around that time that I got promoted to deputy foreman on the ranching operation. I have five kids: four boys and one girl. My firstborn is working and assisting me. My secondborn is assisting teaching here on the farm paid by the Salvation Army; the others are still at school. I have a 1 ha plot and a garden allocated by the Committee of Seven and sabhuku [headman] in 2008 after the conflicts. At land reform, we were prevented from getting land. We concentrated on our jobs. We didn't know if the land reform would happen for long. Now we know it's a reality, but we missed out. Before the farmer would parcel out 'lines' in different fields for farm workers. This was an alternative to rations, and only maize was allowed. You could get a tonne out of your allocation if you were lucky. The farmer here wanted everyone to go to primary school. Four white farmers built the school for farmworkers, and school fees were deducted from wages. We couldn't buy much from our wages. It was a struggle. We didn't buy livestock, as we had nowhere to keep them. We were allowed to buy TVs, radios, bicycles. But the farmer didn't want noise, so radios had to be quiet! We had enough to survive, just hand-to-mouth. On my 1 ha plot, I generally plant tobacco and maize. I managed to buy a truck in 2014 from 16 bales of tobacco from $\frac{3}{4}$ ha. I have five cattle, an ox cart and an ox-drawn plough. I also managed to buy a bed. I have to pay school fees too. I use the truck to transport tobacco to the floors, and others pay. From 2013, I am no longer going for maricho (piecework). Those with 1 ha plots end up being the employers here. Otherwise, if you don't have land it's all maricho. Family members help in my field, and they get a share. I hire labourers from the compound, and they are paid US\$ 3–4 per day. My son also now has a 1 ha plot, given out by the A2 farmer [medium-scale resettlement farm] who lives in the old farm house. There is no payment, but if the A2 farmer asks for some help, we go. It's all about good relations in the area. Life is better now if you have land, even though it is small.

Case 4 (only garden, female): 'There is more freedom but it's a tough life'

I was born in 1977 and went to school up to Grade 7, but I didn't proceed to secondary, as I had no birth certificate. I was the first born of a family of four. We lived on different farms on Forrester Estate. My father was a cook who moved from place to place, working for the same white man who was a cattle manager. My mother was both a general labourer and a housegirl.

My father started out as a worker, then became foreman, then houseboy then cook. My grandparents were farmworkers too, working near Concession, and were originally from Mozambique. We moved to this farm in 1992 when my father's boss moved. I have never married, but I have two boys and a girl, and live with my parents. We have never had any money. The pay was always poor. The white farm owner here was harsh. If you bought a bicycle or TV he wanted to know where it came from. There was a mindset that workers would always steal. Even if we had extra money, we would not buy things, as the farmer would be suspicious. Here you were not allowed to farm anything. No gardens even. In one year only he gave three 'lines' for all the workers, but that was it. We have been helped by my brothers. Two were kombi drivers in Banket, and my parents helped them get licences. They helped with the education of my kids, and fund my son at UZ [the University of Zimbabwe], where he's doing a law degree. Education is the most important thing, and our family is so proud of my son. He will be different to us. Today it's difficult to raise money — it's only maricho. Despite being old, my father and mother even go. We have a very small garden, where we grow vegetables and a bit of maize. We do have one cow which gives us milk. We don't have any other land. Those with connections got 1 ha plots, but otherwise farmworkers were prevented from getting resettlement land. The compound is home now. We have nowhere to go. This is where we live, however difficult. In the past you had a salary. You knew it would come. If the boss had relatives visiting, my father would get extra. Now you don't know where money will come from. But at least we will not be asked where we got the money to buy things. We now have a TV, sofa and kitchen unit. Each child has a bed. We also have solar. There is more freedom, but it's a tough life.

Case 5 (only garden, female): 'There's no-one to plan for you'

I was born in Forrester Estate in 1967. My father worked there on irrigation, opening water to the canal. My mother worked as a general worker. Later, when at school, my mother became sick so I left school. I looked after the other children, as I was the first born. I was married in 1980. I went with my husband to Mozambique in 1992, but returned here in 2009 as we divorced. We have a garden for growing tomatoes and vegetables. We go and sell by the roadside to raise cash for school fees. It's about an acre. I work with one of my sons in the garden, and do not hire labour. We do maricho ourselves. One son is here, but the others are in Mozambique, but I don't get any income from them. In the past when working for whites, we had very small gardens near the house only. Now we can grow more. My livelihood is better now, as I have the freedom to do

gardening, and sell without asking anyone for permission. You can plan to do what you want: there's no one to plan for you. Before you were told what to do. Now time is your own. You have to plan: if you work the land you will be OK; if you are lazy and don't bother, you will starve.

Discussion

Across these cases, a recurrent theme is the sense of new freedoms, but also extreme challenges and precarious livelihoods, linked to new vulnerabilities and structural insecurities in an uncertain labour market. Reflections on the past focus on control, ordering and disciplining, and the 'domestic government' of the farm, but also stability and the certainty of a wage, even though that wage was often so low it was impossible to accumulate. Beyond these qualitative reflections, our data do not explore shifts in material conditions over time, nor changes in patterns of vulnerability. What is clear is that former farmworkers are pursuing very different livelihoods today compared to the waged employment of before, and this generates contrasting vulnerabilities and forms of precarity.

As the testimonies show, former farm owners were very different in their approach, although all expected farmworkers to be dependent and subservient, without independent income sources. Today, access to land is seen by all as crucial, given the lack of secure employment opportunities. In all cases this is combined with other livelihood activities. Now people identify themselves as farmers, employers as well as workers. Expectations of the next generation being different are also emphasized.

Access to land, as the key axis of difference, is heavily influenced by politics and patronage, with those gaining A1 or 1 ha plots doing so through their connections. This is highly gendered, with independent women, as in the last two cases, losing out. Involvement in other livelihood activities beyond farming and wage labour is also highly differentiated, with better-paying skilled trades, such as building and carpentry, being in high demand in the new resettlements (and mostly involving men), whilst other activities, such as vegetable selling and trading, are central to women's livelihoods, alongside casual farm labour. Different people weigh up the pros and cons of change in different ways. Gaining access to land, even if a very small plot, is seen as crucial, but this is only available to some, and highly dependent on social-political relations and connections. Very often for compound dwellers without 'offer letters', security of tenure is uncertain, and continued access is dependent on local patronage relations.

The biographies also highlight the multi-generational experience of farm work, and the continuous mobility of moving from farm to farm in

search of work. Several have family connections with Mozambique or Malawi, but often a few generations removed. Home has become the farms, although some have continued communal area connections in Zimbabwe. Conflict with the A1 settlers is common, over wages and labour conditions, as well as access to land. But new accommodations are being reached, as land is rented and skills hired as diverse former farmworkers become incorporated in the new agrarian setting.

Above all, the cases highlight the complex livelihoods of former farmworkers, representing a classic picture of 'fragmented classes of labour' in an agrarian setting. A singular category of 'farmworker' reliant on wage employment is clearly insufficient. A diversification and fragmentation of livelihoods creates opportunities for some, but challenges for others. A process of differentiation is occurring among the former farmworkers: some have access to land, some are new employers of others living in the compounds, while others are engaged in wider livelihood activities beyond the farm. Class, gender and age dynamics therefore intersect in the process of creating a new labour regime in these land reform areas.

PATTERNS OF DIFFERENTIATION: A NEW LABOUR REGIME?

Table 9.4 provides a summary of the contrasts across the sample in relation to key indicators of social differentiation, including agricultural sales, wage income from casual farm work, and changing asset ownership and accumulation. The contrasts are stark. This is no 'amorphous peasantry' (Hill, 1968) or uniform, rural (semi-)proletariat; instead, different 'classes of labour' link land-based petty commodity production with self-employment and selling wage labour. The process of differentiation is a dynamic one. At land reform, all these households were working on large-scale farms as wage labourers. As Table 9.4 shows, all have accumulated assets since then. As the interviewees repeatedly asserted, gaining access to land is crucial, but this, as we have seen, is influenced by political processes, and is highly gendered. Opportunities for off-farm work, and the terms of incorporation into the new labour economy, are similarly differentiated.

Earlier explorations of social differentiation and class formation in rural Zimbabwe (Cousins et al., 1992) identified a number of classes among communal area small-scale farmers in the decade following Independence. A similar classification emerged from a study of smallholder A1

resettlement farmers in Masvingo province in the 2000s (Scoones et al., 2012). These studies distinguish 'petty commodity producers' from 'worker peasants', the 'semi-peasantry' and the 'rural petit bourgeoisie'. All were associated with diverse livelihood strategies, combining on- and off-farm work, with some employing wage labour. Expanded reproduction through 'accumulation from below' (cf. Neocosmos, 1993) was achievable for some, reinforcing a process of social differentiation, but simple class assignments were impossible and, with processes of differentiation continuous, the categories were always mobile. In such settings, labour regimes are complex, with farm labour supplied from different households across classes, often with age- and gender-specific roles. Petty commodity producers, for example, combine family, collective and hired labour, while a rural petit bourgeoisie engages in sustained capitalist accumulation, extracting surplus from wage labour. This is a pattern seen in complex, and poorly understood, rural labour markets elsewhere (Oya and Pontara, 2015; Worby, 1995).

Reflecting on our livelihoods analysis, those who were allocated A1 plots are clearly doing the best. As a result of farm production, they are hiring labour, accumulating cattle, building homes and buying other goods, with 48 per cent having ploughs and 39 per cent having ox-carts. Three had bought cars, and on average 0.6 bicycles had been purchased by these households in the last five years. In sum, this group are similar to other 'petty commodity producers' in the wider resettlement areas, many of whom are 'accumulating from below', combining own production and labour hiring (Cousins, 2010).

Those who gained access to 1 ha plots after the land reform are also selling surplus production, and they also hire in labour to support their farming operations, mostly from the compounds. Their reliance on selling their own labour is relatively limited, although at the peak of the farming, curing or grading seasons, some family members may be hired. Many men in this group had higher grade jobs before, and may be sought out for advice. Their status in the former farm hierarchy often meant better education and connections locally, and this has benefited them in gaining access to land through local negotiations. Given the gendered access to such patronage relations, there are no female-headed households in this group. Through farm work in particular, these households have started accumulating and are investing in cattle, especially, and also a whole range of other goods, including solar panels, water pumps, bicycles and cars. Women in these households often have their own plots, and are also accumulating independently. Like those allocated larger A1 plots, this

group can also be seen as 'petty commodity producers', accumulating from below, but combining this with more wage work, which is usually seasonal or skill-specific.

Table 9.4: Investment and Accumulation

	A1 farmers, who were former farmworkers	Compound dwellers with 1 ha or more of land	Compound dwellers with land areas less than 1 ha	Compound dwellers with only small home gardens
Maize sales (kg in 2014, when 1 tonne was US\$ 400)	504	137	24	0
Tobacco sales (kg in 2014, when 1 kg was US\$ 3 on average)	1,031	470	232	27
Average wage income, based on days worked at US\$ 3.5/day	ND	US\$117	US\$104	US\$273
Cattle owned now/at time of resettlement	2.1/ND	3.0/0.8	1.2/0.3	0.1/0.2
Cattle purchased in last 5 years	0.7	0.3	0.2	0.0
Bicycles owned now/at resettlement	1.3/ND	0.7/0.5	0.3/0.1	0.4/0.0
Solar panels purchased in last 5 years	0.9	1.0	0.8	0.4
Mobile phones purchased in last 5 years	2.8	2.1	1.6	1.2

Note: ND=no data.

Those with some, but limited, landholdings are more reliant on labouring and other off-farm livelihood activities, with women in particular being involved in vegetable sales. Many men in these households are engaged in trades, very often ones learnt previously as farmworkers, including building, carpentry and so on. They are now servicing the A1 areas where there is significant demand for building work, as people have established and improved their homes and built tobacco curing barns following land reform. Now they operate as independent, self-employed workers, setting their own terms in a context where demand is high, resulting in often quite well-remunerated but irregular employment. This is a complex grouping in class terms, with some who could be characterized as semi-proletarian 'worker-peasants', while others are more like the petty commodity producers described above. Selling labour — either as wage work on other farms or through informal labour markets for trades and services — is much more significant for this group. Although they are the most significant providers of farm labour in the area, however, this is far from stable, but is located in an informal, precarious exchange economy.

Finally, there are those who have only very small home gardens, although some are renting in land, and one household sells tobacco. Nearly half are female-headed households, including widows, divorcees and unmarried women. These households are reliant on selling labour to land reform farmers and other compound dwellers with plots, especially picking and sorting tobacco. They can be seen as 'worker-peasants' or part of a marginalized 'semi-peasantry'.

Labour organization may involve farmers driving round with a pick-up and recruiting on the day, or may be mediated by a local broker (often a compound member) who is in mobile phone connection with a number of farmers, both A1 and A2, and who directs people to work openings, again by mobile phone. Such labour hiring is an option for both men and women, but is dominated by men, especially if the hiring is to more distant farms. Being especially reliant on selling labour for sustaining livelihoods is reflective of the pattern of casualization and feminization of the new informal labour regime. No longer under the control of a paternalistic farm owner, they must operate in a volatile market, at the mercy of brokers and other intermediaries. Within a household, managing income flows is often highly contested, with different people gaining wage income at different times. Separation, divorce and other forms of family conflict are, unsurprisingly, common under these conditions.

Overall, we can see diverse livelihoods being pursued by former

farmworkers; some are accumulating, notably those with access to land, but others are not. A process of social differentiation, inflected in particular by gender differences, is evident, with a pattern of class formation emerging among this group of former workers, heavily influenced by the politics of the new agrarian setting. The label 'farmworker' is clearly insufficient, as people's livelihood practices and identities, previously so wrapped up in the paternalistic relations of power on a particular farm, have been disrupted and refashioned following land reform.

As farm labour is reincorporated into new agrarian relations, inevitably new identities and identifications emerge. As the biographical interviews show, long family histories of farm work condition outlooks, perceptions and skills, and so affect who does what now. Equally, the contested politics of land reform influences how former farmworkers are seen by different actors. The discursive shadows cast by being a former farmworker are long, making it difficult to shed such identities completely (Hartnack, 2017). But, as the case studies show, former farmworkers — highly significant in numerical terms in such areas as Mvurwi — are carving out new identities, associated with new livelihoods and relationships, moving beyond the social and political characterizations of the past. With relatively few having directly benefited from the land reform, others are now creating new opportunities, combining farm production with wage work and off-farm trades and business activities, and inserting themselves into the new agrarian economy.

These new 'fragmented classes of labour' are subject to different vulnerabilities and multiple challenges.¹³ This is not to say that conditions are worse than before, as wage labour on large-scale commercial farms was often oppressive, with limited opportunities for accumulation, as our biographies show. Indeed, many former farmworkers describe how the situation has improved, particularly for those with access to land. However, challenges remain, and for many, livelihoods are harsh and precarious. Many such challenges emerge from the social-political position of former farmworkers in an informal economy, where patterns of 'social regulation', affected by gender, age and ethnicity (cf. Harriss-White, 2003; also Meagher, 1995), influence who gains what. Land access in the new resettlement areas is certainly limited, and political gatekeeping and patronage networks mean that not everyone benefits. Allocations of land since the land reform within the three farms we have studied have depended on complex negotiations between those in the compounds and local political leaders.

Many A1 settlers are suspicious of those in the compounds. Cheats,

thieves, foreigners, MDC supporters and worse are the descriptors often used. This antagonism is not universal, however, as the post-2000 settlers are well aware that they need the labour and skills of those living there for their tobacco production. Good relations in the end are necessary, and accommodations have to be found. Brokering by local politicians and traditional leaders resulted in the concessions of the 1 ha plots (see above); and land rental deals with nearby A2 farms to avoid antagonism have also occurred, as illustrated by the cases above. Compound leaders, usually with connections to the ruling party, ZANU-PF, have been able to create opportunities, but only for some. Usually it is the older, male, better-educated, previously higher-grade employees who have benefited, while the youth, single women and others with fewer connections have not, as the case studies show.

The four types of livelihood highlighted above are of course not fixed, but they do suggest an emerging pattern of class formation, with some petty commodity producers accumulating 'from below'; other 'worker-peasants' combining income-earning options; and others part of a more informalized group of semi-proletarianized footloose labour, taking up temporary work, and combining this with a whole range of other livelihood activities. The old labour regime, of wage work under the paternalistic system of farm-based 'domestic government', has gone. In its place is a much more fragmented livelihood pattern, based on a diversity of often unstable sources of income, although for some this provides an opportunity for accumulation which was not possible before. Yet, overall, just over half of our sample regard life today as an improvement. As one commented: 'Life in the past was very hard. It's definitely an improvement today. I didn't even have bicycle then, no cattle. Now I farm a bit, and have both'.¹⁴

CONCLUSIONS

Land, livelihoods and labour regimes are changing in the old, large-scale commercial farming areas of Zimbabwe, where land use and ownership have been radically transformed by land reform. Over time, there have been major shifts in social and class positions: from subservient, almost feudal, paternalistic arrangements under a white farm owner, to a more classic proletarian, wage-earning workforce under capitalist agriculture, regulated by a bureaucratic state. Today, following land reform, there are

many more small-scale farms operating in the same areas, and a much more fluid, informal and unregulated arrangement, whereby temporary wage work combines with self-employment and petty commodity production, based on limited, but varied, ownership of land.

Among former farmworkers various outcomes are observed, characterized by four different types of livelihood, which can be seen as diverse 'classes of labour' given the combination of farm production with a range of informal, often precarious, labouring activities. This new labour regime is shaping the new agrarian landscape. This is now more typical of non-settler economies elsewhere in Africa. These 'fragmented classes of labour' are the result of processes of social differentiation, as well as local politics and patronage. Such new livelihoods create greater freedom and independence for former farmworkers, while simultaneously resulting in different forms of vulnerability and insecurity.

The nature of 'work' and 'employment', as well as 'modes of belonging' and definitions of 'citizenship' (Rutherford, 2008) have also fundamentally changed and with them the wider 'terrain of politics' (cf. Li, 2011; Rutherford, 2017) within which relationships between land and labour are negotiated. In the post-land reform setting, a simple label of 'farmworker' is insufficient, as diverse classes of labour exist side-by-side, influenced by a process of social differentiation, driven by the social and political conditions of the new agrarian setting. Central to this process of social differentiation is access to land, which in turn has been heavily influenced by local politics and patronage relations, since former farmworkers were often seen as 'enemies' of land reform, with many not initially benefiting from it. Inserting themselves into a significantly altered agrarian structure, and seeking out livelihoods in order to survive, has not been easy, and some have done better than others. For some, trajectories of accumulation are observed, as agricultural production and marketing is combined with off-farm work; for others reliance on casual, informal work is the dominant livelihood strategy for survival under precarious conditions. Beyond the material consequences of these changes, as represented by patterns of asset ownership, investment and accumulation, there are other factors that emerge in people's accounts. Autonomy, independence and freedom are frequently highlighted in former farmworkers' testimonies, all seen as highly positive, even if material conditions are harsh.

Today, identities are not fashioned by the association with a farm and its particular owner, but in relation to the realities of securing a livelihood. While conflicts exist between new post-reform settlers and those living in

the compounds, there are also emergent solidarities, and relationships of support and reliance. As new settlers seek to increase tobacco production, for example, they need the skills of former farmworkers, as well as their labour. And, as former farmworkers begin to farm, even on small plots, they face many of the same challenges as their resettlement farmer counterparts, including lack of state support, inadequate markets and exploitative contracting deals with tobacco firms.

Whilst for some, notably the labour unions, there is a continued emphasis on 'farmworker' wages and rights, those who used to be farmworkers themselves have had, by necessity, to get on with life in the 18 years since land reform. A lack of focus on what has happened in this period means that there has been little informed debate about what frameworks are required to support this large population. As international aid donors, NGOs and others re-engage with Zimbabwe in the post-Mugabe era, new thinking based on emergent realities on the ground is needed, rather than assuming that the old category of 'farmworker' as waged employee is still relevant.

Tobacco production, now the mainstay of Zimbabwe's fragile agricultural economy, is highly reliant on labour, yet this must be secured under a very different labour regime to what went before. Some important new questions arise. What labour rights do those living in the farm labour compounds have? What is the future of the former labour compounds in the new resettlements, where significant populations live? What other livelihood support is required, including access to land, to sustain the livelihoods of former farmworkers, now increasingly integrated in a new agrarian structure? Will, in the longer term, a more formalized, wage work regime become reinstated, or will an informal wage economy combined with small-scale agriculture, involving diverse classes of labour, persist?

These are important questions, currently barely being discussed. In the unhelpfully polarized debate around Zimbabwe's agrarian future, farmworkers are frequently seen only as victims of an unjust reform,¹⁵ rather than being appreciated as a significant rural population integrating in a new agrarian landscape, whose livelihood needs — contextualized by history and politics — must be taken seriously. As in South Africa, where a large, informal workforce supports agriculture, but often with people living off-farm and in informal settlements, the prospects for coordinated policy action or collective response seem remote (Visser and Ferrer, 2015). Yet, as in the case of the De Doorns strike in the Western Cape, effective mobilizations can occur (Wilderman, 2015). Forms of organization have to move beyond a focus solely on wage and labour issues to wider livelihood

and welfare concerns.

Across southern Africa, and beyond, agricultural labour regimes are changing from more formal, regulated systems centred on wage work, with clear conditions of employment, to more informal systems, where 'work', as paid employment, is only one element of a range of livelihood activities, part of a complex bricolage of opportunities put together often under very difficult conditions (Du Toit, 2004). This poorly understood reality is increasingly common, a consequence of wider processes of change under deregulation and neoliberal globalization (Ferguson and Li, 2018). The reconfiguration of labour regimes, away from a clearly exploitative dependence on a commercial farmer, towards a more flexible, informal arrangement, does not mean that patterns of dependency and patronage disappear, of course, as new social relations emerge between workers, brokers and new farmers, inflected by class, gender and age, affecting who gains what and how.

The question of wage labour, combined with self-employment and farm work, in agrarian change processes is frequently poorly understood, and informed by inadequate statistics (Oya, 2013). Yet the emergence of fragmented classes of labour, centred on diverse livelihoods, is a common phenomenon the world over (Bernstein, 2006), reconfiguring our understandings of labour and work in developmental processes (Chhachhi, 2014; Ferguson, 2015). This article has offered an insight into one setting, where radical land reform has accelerated this process of informalization, changing farm labour and employment patterns dramatically. By understanding how former wage-earning farmworkers adapted to this change and became incorporated in the new agrarian economy, important insights are gained into the changing pattern of agrarian labour regimes, with relevance far beyond Zimbabwe.

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NOTES

- ¹ Soon after land reform, attention focused on farmworker displacement and human rights questions (FCTZ, 2002; HRW, 2002). More recently, the General Agricultural and Plantation Workers Union of Zimbabwe has concentrated lobbying efforts on securing an increase in the minimum farmworker wage, a move criticized by the Progressive Agriculture and Allied Industries Workers' Union of Zimbabwe, who argue that farm work represents 'modern day slavery' (see, for example, Chakanya, 2016; *Daily News*, 2017; *The Standard*, 2017). With offers of compensation to former white land owners, representatives of former farmworkers argue that no compensation should be paid until outstanding wage payments and retrenchment packages are settled (*Daily News*, 2018). Little of this debate recognizes the diverse, informal livelihoods currently being pursued by former farmworkers, which are the subject of this article.
- ² The Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) that unfolded from 2000 in Zimbabwe had two types of allocation: A1 smallholder farms, either as villagized arrangements or with self-contained plots; and A2 medium-scale farms, with sizes dependent on agro-ecological region (for more detail, see Scoones *et al.*, 2010).
- ³ In addition to the two unions (the General Agricultural and Plantation Workers Union of Zimbabwe and the Progressive Agriculture and Allied Industries Workers' Union of Zimbabwe), other NGOs involved in farmworker welfare and rights in the pre-land reform era included the Farm Community Trust of Zimbabwe, the Farm Health Worker Programme, the Farm Orphan Support Trust, the Farmworkers Action Trust, Kunzwana Women's Association, and others (Hartnack, 2016). Since land reform, in part due to the drying up of donor funds with the imposition of 'sanctions', such NGOs have extended their activities to broader development programmes, often outside the contested former large-scale farms.
- ⁴ Estates include the large agribusiness and forestry operations in the Lowveld and Eastern Highlands, for example, and are distinct from often formerly white-owned, family-run large-scale commercial farm businesses.

- ⁵ After land reform, tobacco production slumped to a low of 55,500 kg in 2006, but increased to 216,000 kg in 2014, reaching pre-reform levels. Estimated production in 2017 was 185,600 kg. In 2015, 26 per cent of production was from A1 farmers, where a national average production of 1,880 kg per registered A1 seller was recorded (see the website of the Tobacco Industry and Marketing Board: <http://www.timb.co.zw/index.php>, accessed 12 August 2017). Such production is supported through contract agreements with a range of companies (Scoones et al., 2017). Since 2000, national maize production has fluctuated significantly, largely dependent on rainfall, with only 512,000 tonnes produced in the drought of 2016, but 2.15 million tonnes produced with good rainfall in 2017, and 742,000 tonnes in 2015 according to the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (www.fao.org/giews/countrybrief/country.jsp?code=ZWE, accessed 12 August 2017). According to the ZimVac national food security assessment, average maize production in Mashonaland Central was 517.5 kg per household in the 2016–17 season, but only 136.2 kg in 2015–16 (ZimVAC, 2017: 65). Other crops have fared differently, depending on production requirements, market demand and financing. For example, high-value export horticulture and citrus, once a significant feature of the Mvurwi area, has declined, but other, more locally focused horticulture and fruit crop value chains have emerged instead (Sukume et al., 2015).
- ⁶ In dryland ranching operations, around one worker was employed per 1,000 ha or 100 head of cattle (Clarke, 1977; see discussion in Scoones et al., 2010: 128).
- ⁷ Since 2000, there have been some attempts by the state to develop infrastructure in the new resettlement areas. The secondary schools have been established in former farm buildings, with teachers provided by the Ministry of Education. However, the level of provision is limited and many complain of the lack of state investment in land reform areas. International donors, and NGOs reliant on them for project funds, have largely not funded work in these 'contested areas', although this may change with the new government established in late 2017 following the resignation of Robert Mugabe as president.
- ⁸ On two of our study farms, negotiations with the District Administrator and the Ministry of Lands resulted in 1 ha plots being allocated within the A1 resettlement area. This arose out of a major conflict between compound dwellers and settlers around the 2008 election, but was resolved through the concession of allocating land to around 30 households in each farm.
- ⁹ However, average production of maize and tobacco over the period was 3,789 kg and 967 kg for other A1 farmers, reflecting their larger farm sizes.
- ¹⁰ Interviews were undertaken on the three A1 resettlement schemes in Mvurwi area between November 2015 and February 2017. Interviewees were usually the 'household head', the main resident adult, either male or female, in charge of the household, although the biographies focused on the whole family's history.
- ¹¹ Whereby lists of names were drawn from a hat by local officials or war veterans after land occupations.
- ¹² 'Permits to occupy' issued by the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture and Rural Resettlement.
- ¹³ Our survey of compound-based households identified the lack of land (24 per cent) and employment (23 per cent) as the major challenges faced and, related to these, the lack of farm inputs (18 per cent) and shortage of cash (15 per cent). For some, food insecurity was prioritized (14 per cent), emerging from lack of land or jobs, and for others the lack of schools (4 per cent) and housing (1 per cent) was highlighted, related to the limited government support they received.
- ¹⁴ Source: Interview, farm compound, April 2016.
- ¹⁵ See, for example, the campaign film, *House of Justice* (<https://vimeo.com/24309617>), featuring the head of the General Agricultural and Plantation Workers Union of Zimbabwe, Gertrude Hambira; also various reports by the Justice for Agriculture Group (see, e.g. *The Zimbabwean*, 2008).

10

YOUNG PEOPLE AND LAND IN ZIMBABWE: LIVELIHOOD CHALLENGES AFTER LAND REFORM

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INTRODUCTION

Zimbabwe's land reform in 2000 resulted in an unprecedented restructuring of the agrarian system, with a massive transfer of land to a mix of smallholder and medium-scale farmers.¹ The next generation, the sons and daughters of the original beneficiaries, are now growing up. This article explores the challenges faced by young people following land reform. Many policy debates identify 'youth' as either as a potentially socially disruptive threat or as entrepreneurial initiators of a new economy. Here we explore the reality on the ground in two sites in Zimbabwe. We ask, what is young people's connection to the land, and how are they benefiting, or not? What are the challenges of social reproduction and opportunities for accumulation of this post-land reform generation? The objective of this article is therefore to explore and identify how young people responded to the changes in agrarian structure following land reform and the precariousness that arose from a crisis economy that emerged in the nearly two decades since.

We explore these themes in two smallholder A1 resettlement sites in Zimbabwe – Hariana farm, Mvurwi, a high-potential tobacco-farming area to the north of the capital, Harare, and Wonedzo area (Wares and Extension farms) in Masvingo district, further south, where dryland crop farming with some irrigated horticulture is important. In each of these sites, long-term research has tracked what has happened to livelihoods of those who gained land following land reform, and investigated their livelihood activities, forms of accumulation, and successes and failures (Scoones et al. 2010, 2018a, 2018b; Scoones 2015, 2016). Nearly a generation on, the question now arises: what has happened to the children of these land reform beneficiaries?

This article focuses on the cohort of children from our original sample aged between 20 and 31 in 2016, and so aged between 4 and 15 at land reform. Through a combination of survey data (N = 183, across the two sites, representing all living children in this age group²) and a selection of in-depth biographies tracing life courses (N = 31, representing a random sample of the full cohort), we examine how both men and women are engaging with land and agriculture, as well as other livelihood options, including migration. By contrasting the sites, we see differences influenced by agroecology, commitment to education and access to technology, and by a range of social and cultural factors. All affect the transition to adulthood and the possibilities of social reproduction and accumulation by this generation. We focus in particular on the role of land and how it is understood, accessed and controlled. Across genders and generations, the shifting meanings of land and rural life are traced, revealing the changing social dynamics of agrarian change. In conclusion, we reflect on Zimbabwe's land reform not just as a transfer of land assets, but as a more fundamental reconfiguration of social, cultural and economic relationships and opportunities across generations.

ZIMBABWE'S LAND REFORM: PROSPECTS FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

There has been much discussion about 'youth', land and agriculture in Zimbabwe, as elsewhere across Africa. Definitions of 'youth' or 'young people' vary enormously. In Zimbabwe, the Constitution offers an age range from 15 to 35. But this stage in life is best looked at relationally; it is frequently a difficult transition between childhood and adulthood, often with defining social, cultural and livelihood characteristics (e.g. Jeffrey and

McDowell 2004; Comaroff and Comaroff 2005; Honwana and De Boeck 2005; Herrera 2006; Cole and Durham 2008; Jeffrey 2010a, 2010b; White 2011; Honwana 2012).

In African policy circles various narratives focusing on youth and agriculture compete for attention (Anyidoho et al. 2012; te Lintelo 2012). International and regional policy commentary³ reflects local media and policy discussion,⁴ offering both positive and negative narratives about the role of youth. For some, youth are seen as a threat to stability: unemployed, footloose and prone to disruptive, political activism. As a result, young people may be cast as dangerous and in need of controlling. Often seen as uninterested in the 'burdens' of farming, they are sometimes castigated as not following their parents' examples, abandoning rural culture and failing to feed the nation. Sometimes, land shortages are seen as a problem, with the young creating upheaval as land is demanded unless alternative employment is found.

Contrasting narratives present young people in a more positive light. Educated, entrepreneurial and able to make use of new technologies, young people are seen as potentially at the forefront of new developments in agriculture and associated value chains. Working with new crops or in processing and marketing, they are seen as generating new commercial opportunities, putting farming, and rural agri-food systems more generally, more firmly on a business footing. Linking to off-farm work, the emphasis on young people as entrepreneurs, able to generate jobs in a neoliberal marketplace, is often highlighted as part of a positive, opportunity-oriented narrative.

However, these policy framings create a rather narrow debate, focused on individuals as entrepreneurs or the rather vague social category of 'youth', either as opportunity or threat. Such discussions fail to locate the analysis in a bigger picture of economic and demographic agrarian transition, and so understanding young people in context (Sumberg et al. 2012; White 2012). Here inter-generational shifts in land access, conflicts over interpretations of 'tradition', the role of patriarchal institutions, the influence of conflict and war, changing patterns of mobility and new forms of digital communication and economic exchange are all raised as important themes in critical studies of young people in rural Africa (e.g. Durham 2000; Peters 2004; Honwana and De Boeck 2005; Peters and Richards 2011; Porter et al. 2017) and more broadly (Ibrahim and Hutton 2014).

A particular feature of changing transitions to adulthood is the notion of 'waithood', explored extensively in the Middle East (Dhillon and Yousef

2009; Singerman 2011; Honwana 2014; McEvoy-Levy 2014) and India (Jeffrey 2010a), but identified more broadly, including across Africa (Mains 2011; Sommers 2012). The notion of 'waithood' suggests that young people are increasingly finding it difficult to establish independent livelihoods and are 'stuck', just 'passing time', often bored, frustrated and undervalued, with identities as 'drop-outs' and 'failures' undermining self-esteem. And a period of 'waithood' in turn challenges the conventional assumptions about the material base and temporal trajectories for independent social reproduction and accumulation (Jeffrey 2010a; White 2011).

Very often a negative discourse emerges, projecting visions of 'wasted lives' (Bauman 2004), with youth disengaged from the global economy due to the ravages of neoliberalism, aimlessly 'loitering' and 'waiting for the future' (Bayart 2007), just about surviving and always suffering (Chabal 2013). Yet these 'spatial and temporal anxieties', 'disruptions' and 'disjunctures' (Jeffrey 2010b, 466) also offer new possibilities for reconfigured cultural practices and economic opportunity, even if in precarious circumstances.

Challenges to 'hegemonic temporalities' of transition (Ibid., 468), where the assumption is that growing up is a linear transition from childhood to having a job, getting married, making a home, are increasingly common in the restructured sites of work and employment (Li and Ferguson 2018) of 'wageless life' (Denning 2010). In such settings, new skills and relationships are developed, requiring entrepreneurial improvisation to create a livelihood (Young, Kumar, and Jeffrey 2017). In such settings 'work' (rather than employment) is managed as part of everyday lives, reconfiguring social reproduction across sites, from home to field to work place to family and community (Bakker 2007).

As we discuss below, these themes of radically shifting experiences of young people, with profound implications for livelihoods, resonate strongly with the Zimbabwe situation. The process of transition to adulthood has changed significantly in Zimbabwe in the past few decades. In the past, as part of a classic southern African spatial and temporal pattern of circular migration (Potts 2010), a young man would leave home seeking work in the mines, on farms or in businesses in town. This would often occur after marriage following the establishment of an independent home. Male migrants would send remittances home to their wives/parents and build up assets, notably cattle. They would visit home a few times a year and leave the rest of their family at the rural home to farm. Later they would return home, following a period of stable employment, and retire and live from farming. Some women would follow the same route, joining their husbands

with or without children at certain points, or engaging in migration independently; although patrilocal marriage arrangements and a highly gendered labour economy would restrict options, and women would move on marriage to their husband's home, often remaining in the rural communal area, committing to farming (Gaidzanwa 1995).

Today, things are very different. Patterns of migration have changed, both in terms of destination and who goes where. Men and women migrate, but often only to temporary, more fragile employment, with just a few gaining access to stable jobs, often abroad. This is highly dependent on education, and so the resources of parents, with family origins having a big impact on social mobility. Otherwise, the local economy, at least since the late 1990s, has been highly precarious, offering only short-term, informal work. The so-called *kukiya-kiya* economy (Jones 2010) involves trading, panning, vending and overall dealing and hustling (Chagonda 2016). This is the new form of jobless work of the informal economy (cf. Denning 2010; Ferguson 2015; Li and Ferguson 2018), with multiple, fractured classes of labour (Bernstein 2006). Such work is for survival: it generates vulnerability and precarity, and so often little opportunity for accumulation. The hybrid, informal economy is important for young people, but should not be romanticised (Meagher 2012; Dolan and Rajak 2016). In the last 20 years in Zimbabwe, and particularly recently when the formal economy has suffered recurrent crisis, such informal work is an important alternative to farming and land-based livelihoods.

Those who gained land during the land reform from 2000, particularly in the smallholder A1 schemes, have benefited significantly, as 'accumulation from below' for many has resulted in improved livelihoods and cycles of farm-based investment (Moyo, Chambati, and Murisa 2009; Scoones et al. 2010). This investment and accumulation has benefited others, including workers employed by the new farm owners, while displacing others (Chambati 2011; Scoones et al. 2018b); relatives who have come to live in the new farms (Scoones et al. 2010); and some women who have gained land in their own right (although they represent only around 15% of new land owners) (Mutopo 2011; Matondi 2012; Chiweshe, Chakona, and Helliker 2015). This article asks: what about the next generation who were too young to receive land during the land reform period?

WHAT ARE THE CHILDREN OF LAND REFORM BENEFICIARIES DOING NOW?

As Table 10.1 shows, slightly over half of the cohort aged between 20 and 31 in 2016 are living at home, mostly with parents, although some have independent homes. Others are living elsewhere in Zimbabwe. Most women in this category are married and living with their husbands; most men are in towns trying to find jobs in the informal economy, often working for a few months, coming home, then returning. There are very few in stable employment or training in Zimbabwe. From Wondedzo some have left the country, mostly to South Africa,⁵ where they are working; again in often temporary jobs on farms or in towns. Unlike in the past, this involves both men and women. By contrast, migration outside Zimbabwe from Mvurwi is minimal, and limited to men.⁶

In answer to the question of what individuals were doing now, the primary activities are listed in Table 10.2. Many identify themselves as being 'at home', and helping parents or farming on their own. Very few are employed 'in a job' in Zimbabwe or abroad. For women, the most common job is domestic work, while for men it is more varied; but in our sample mostly low-paid, manual jobs (including being a security guard, driver, mechanic etc.). More are 'self-employed', often important as a secondary activity to farming or 'hanging around' at home. This is characterised as informal, temporary, low paid and insufficient to sustain a livelihood. Some will leave home to do this, but many try their luck at a diversity of activities in the area, ranging from piecework labouring, to building, carpentry and welding, to gold panning, to vending and trading. Such work is reliant on earning money from the established land reform farmers from the previous generation who have land, and cash from agricultural production to buy services, build homes and hire labour.

We also asked those in our sample what was the main challenge they faced. Answers to an open-ended question were then categorised into six challenges (Table 10.3). The lack of jobs and finance is the dominant theme, especially for men. The absence of any job or other source of finance restricts access to inputs for agriculture or other businesses, and so is linked to the second highest identified challenge, focused on financing and inputs. Educational access and quality, and failure in exams were repeatedly mentioned, particularly by women (19%), as passing 'O-levels' was seen as a route to a better life. Despite many emphasising the importance of farming as a source of livelihood (and particularly irrigated agriculture), it was perhaps surprising that land and water access was

highlighted as the primary challenge by only 9%. Some, however, highlighted a linked challenge – drought and climate change, and the consequences for household food security (7%). As people move between work and home, often failing to get a job that sustains them for long, or in the period when young people are retaking school subjects, stresses at home take their toll. Marrying into homes where the husband does not have a separate residence can also result in tensions and conflicts, as reported by many women. Combined with other illnesses, deaths and other personal issues, these less tangible, but nevertheless very real, emotional experiences and health issues were identified as the major challenge by 14%.

How, then, do different activities interact and combine over time during a young person's life course? In the next section, we explore this through a selection of case studies.

DIVERSE LIFE COURSES: DIFFICULT CHOICES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

To get a sense of how livelihoods are composed, we must look over time, and get a picture of emerging life courses (cf. Locke and te Lintelo 2012). Across the 31 detailed life history interviews we undertook there is a huge range of experience. From our qualitative analysis across the life history interviews, we drew out five major themes: mobility; precarious employment, off-farm work and remittances; the importance of education; waiting at home and engaging in projects; and access to land through marriage. Below we illustrate these themes with excerpts from interviews from both Mvurwi and Wondedzo.

MOBILE LIVES

The experience of navigating the informal economy away from home involves a lot of movement for young people. A young man from Wondedzo recounted his story:

I was born in 1985 in Charumbira communal lands before we moved into Wares farm in 2002. I failed to get all the needed 'O-levels', so I left home for Harare to look for a job. Sometimes I got a job just for a short time – welding, construction and so on – but most of the time I was not employed, just staying with relatives. Today I have no fixed job, and I am always

looking. Jobs are so scarce. Life after school is so painful if you are in a big city like Harare where industries are not functioning. I always think of getting back to school, but there is a challenge of school fees. I am thinking of coming home to till the land, but without irrigation I am not interested in farming.

The experience is similar for women, as one informant from Mvurwi explained:

After my father died in 2010, when I was in Form 1, life became tough. My mother had to sell cattle for paying school fees, and still I didn't manage to pass my 'O-levels'. I then married and moved to my husband's home near here. But we argued a lot, and I returned home after a year and a half. I had to find employment, and luckily I got a job as a domestic worker. I then returned home, but later took another job as a shopkeeper in Guruve. It did not last long as the owner harassed me. I got home and had to look after my mother who was not well. We decided to open a small shop, and sold an animal to raise funds. I became the shopkeeper. I am dating a guy and we are planning to marry. Now my mother has given us a piece of land, and we can irrigate some tobacco and onions.

As these and other cases show, there is much moving back and forth from rural homes to places of work, often with very short-term contracts, coming back to help parents on farms in between. People move between trading, migrating for farm work (sometimes to South Africa), small-scale mining, short-term jobs in urban areas and so on. This requires ingenuity, persistence and hard work. Women are heavily involved in cross-border trading, particularly from Wondedzo, and this can mean many weeks camping out, and on the road. The transition following school has not been easy. Temporary opportunities in spatially dispersed locations characterise young people's experiences, radically disrupting the linear, predictable patterns of the past.

PRECARIOUS EMPLOYMENT

Mobile lives and precarious employment in the informal *kukiya-kiya* economy are harsh, sometimes dangerous, and never offering much more than survival incomes. This is very far from the old migrant labour economy of the past. Zimbabwe's economy has gone through recurrent crises over the full lifetimes of our cohort, involving the collapse of the formal economy, mass retrenchments from both private and public sectors, and

periods of hyperinflation. Without stability and 'proper' jobs, this is stressful, risky and challenging. While many improvise and cope, others note the impacts on mental health, self-respect and dignity, resulting in drug and alcohol abuse for some. A male informant from Wondedzo explained his situation:

I was born at Mushagashe in 1989, and did primary school here. In 2004, I slipped out of the country to South Africa as an illegal immigrant. I had no documents. I evaded the police and border control as I went through the notorious Limpopo river. We were five, and fortunately we all survived the jaws of the crocodiles in the river. I stayed in South Africa for six months, and did piecemeal work on the farms. Hunger was a menace as I survived on handouts from fellow Zimbabweans who were employed. I then decided to go back to Zimbabwe and I helped my parents for two years doing all the farming activities. Thereafter I again tried my luck to find a job. I went to Chiadzwa diamond mine in Manicaland and later Shurugwi to do gold panning. I also worked in Nema mine near Bulawayo. This involved processing mine dumps, but there were disputes and the place was closed down. In many ways, life was rosy as I could manage to buy what I wanted. However, I encountered a lot of fighting with fellow gold panners. The police troubled us, always locking us up. I was later engaged in some vices that were against my religion like beer drinking.

The precarious livelihoods and risky lifestyles of life on the move, seeking out opportunities for survival, convinced many, like this informant, to return 'home' and try their luck at farming, making use of their parents' fields or acquiring small irrigated plots informally.

THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION

Education is seen as key to leaving home and getting more secure employment. In many respects this echoes the post-Independence trajectory of those in the previous generation when education was a route to a job. In our sample, 73% of women and 83% of men had continued to Form 4 (secondary school). Many do multiple re-takes of 'O-levels' in the (usually vain) hope of a result that will secure them a job, and 13% of women and 4% of men identified education as their current primary activity across the sample. A focus on education was more evident in Wondedzo, where mission education and long-term patterns of migration, including abroad, have influenced views. By contrast, in the tobacco-growing area of Mvurwi, men in particular can pick up work on the tobacco farms, or may

engage in small-scale tobacco production without the expectation of a salaried job. In Mvurwi, early marriage is common for women, seen as route to a securing a livelihood and access to land from a husband's family. The commitment to education is costly, however, as illustrated in the testimony of a young woman from Wondedzo:

I was born in 1995 at Morgenster Mission Hospital, when my parents were staying in near Nemanwa Growth Point. My father was allocated a piece of land in Wondedzo Extension. I had to restart Grade 1 all the way to Grade 7 at Wondedzo primary school. Later, I did up to Form 4, but I did not pass first time. This year I am again attempting more subjects. My wish is to enrol at a teachers' training college. Meanwhile I assist my parents on the farm. I never thought that when one is at school life is so rosy. Staying at home while others are at work or school is so boring. You become loaded with all the house chores, but getting a job is very difficult when you do not have qualifications.

WAITING AT HOME, ENGAGING IN PROJECTS

As already noted, the theme of waiting, being in limbo, hoping for something better is a recurrent theme in many of the interviews. But, while the frustrations and anxieties are real, this is not a desperate, hopeless situation. Entrepreneurial activity is common as people seek out 'piecework' and create 'projects', and generate improvised livelihood opportunities, despite the challenges. For example, a young woman from Wondedzo described her situation thus:

I was born in Zaka district in 1989. My parents got land here in 2000, and I was enrolled at Wondedzo to finish my primary and complete my secondary education to Form 4. In 2014, I came out with only three 'O-levels'. Now I am helping my parents to till the land and do some household chores. I also do part-time jobs like moulding cement bricks with one of my neighbours. Life after school is tough. After leaving school my parents are no longer paying attention to my needs as they are looking for those children behind me. They are also saying that I should work for my supplementary subject fees, so I have to run around looking for piecework.

In order to survive, those in this period of 'waithood' engage in informal employment and sometimes develop small entrepreneurial projects. Getting some money, even from very short-term employment, may be a starting point for a larger project. Our life history case studies show a huge array of examples of such projects, including running a shop, doing local

hairdressing, operating a grinding mill, starting a broiler project, brick moulding and selling, and vending of everything from clothes to mobile phone cards to vegetables. A young man, also from Wondedzo, explained his experiences:

I was born in 1991 and grew up in Masvingo town where I stayed with grandmother as my mother had passed away. My father had acquired land in Wondedzo in 2000, so I opted to leave urban life for farming. In 2003 my father sadly passed away. I am one of seven boys in a polygamous marriage, and conflicts started to develop amongst us over the inheritance of the land and cattle. I did broiler keeping with my brother, but it didn't work out. We had a few hundred birds, but the project failed. I am committed to farming at this place, and want to start more projects. I wish to drill a borehole at the plot, ensuring crop production all year round. I also want to be the biggest poultry producer in the province. But I need cash from work, and need to be allocated my own piece of land.

Married couples may combine options, with remittance income supporting on- and off-farm activities:

I am a farmer as well as business woman running a shop at Wondedzo Business Centre. Together with my husband, who is working in South Africa, we managed to invest and build our own shop. I am the manager and the operator of the shop, and I go there to supply the shop. My husband's mother is sick, and we cultivate the land together. Dryland farming though is failing to pay back investments. In the future I want to be a large-scale commercial farmer if I could get a bigger piece of land. I also want to drill a borehole for irrigation at the farm.

With limited options off-farm, access to land (and water) is central, as many of our cases show. Given the precarity of work and the lack of returns to education, land-based livelihoods are seen as crucial. Spreading activities across occasional piecemeal and projects, usually involving irrigated agriculture, is common, both for young men and women. In Wondedzo, dryland maize growing is combined with a more secure focus on small-scale horticulture, while in Mvurwi, tobacco, even on very small plots, is seen as a route to raising cash income. Access to land is gained via a number of routes. Most rely on land allocated by parents/in-laws, while some use land illegally along riverbanks and by dams. Gaining access to land and starting agriculture production, notably small-scale irrigation, was a repeated aspiration across our informants, both men and women.

MARRYING INTO A RESETTLEMENT HOUSEHOLD

For women, one route to gaining access to land is through marriage. Overall, 61% of women and 54% men in the cohort are married. Women tend to get married earlier (average age 18.7 years, compared with men at 23.4 years in Wondedzo).⁷ Men delay marriage in order to try to find jobs to establish themselves, and only later come home. However, in our sample, only 29% are both married and farming independently with an established home. This proportion is highest in Mvurwi and lowest among men in Wondedzo (15%). Compared with earlier generations this is a relatively low proportion, showing how many are struggling to become independent, existing in an intermediate state between dependent childhood and independent adulthood.

A number of female informants explained how life had improved once they had gained land through a new husband's parents. A young woman from Wondedzo explained her story, typical of many others:

I was born in Zaka district in 1996. I am the first born in family of two girls. I grew up under the care of different relatives, as my parents passed away in 2001 and 2002. I had mostly been staying with my grandmother. I used to assist her in farming and all other household chores. I also did manual work in the neighbourhood in order to feed my grandmother and myself. I never enjoyed my life then; it was hard. In 2012 I got married here in Wares farm when I was only just 17. We are staying with my husband's mother. In 2015, we got a portion of my in-laws' field, about 1.5 ha. Here there are better crop yields compared to Zaka. I also am involved in a women's coop garden project. I am a mother of one boy. My husband is here too, and he concentrates on farming, although does some occasional gold panning in the dry season. We look forward to having our own land in the future, and to be good farmers.

Such arrangements, as the following informant from Mvurwi explained, do not always work out, but land may be sought elsewhere; in this case on the wife's parents' resettlement farm:

I met my husband in 2009, and married the following year. I joined my husband at Pembi Falls farm. It was tough staying with my in-laws. Sometimes I was denied food, and my freedom was limited. In 2012, I decided to go back to my parents' house, but at first my husband refused to come too. Later he came, and we built a home on my parents' land. I started a poultry project, with 200 birds. We managed to buy inputs and then had a very good tobacco crop. We then increased the number of birds,

and my husband could pay lobola (bridewealth) to my parents.

GENERATIONAL DYNAMICS, LAND AND AGRARIAN CHANGE

What, then, are the prospects for young people in a changing agrarian economy following land reform? What are the constraints on social reproduction and accumulation, and how is the transition to adulthood being navigated by this post-land reform generation?

A number of patterns emerge from the data. The notion of 'waithood' – an uncertain intermediate period, sometimes lasting for years – is key. This may involve precarious employment in different places, as well as helping out at parents' homes. Locations change during this period, but usually, following a period trying to make a living in the informal economy, many men return to their rural resettlement homes, especially after getting married and having children. With some exceptions, women move to their husband's home area on marriage. As many interviewees explained, it is easier to make a go of it at home, with the support of family, especially when there are children to look after. 'Waiting' affects reproductive careers too. On average, first children are born at the age of 19.8 among women and 23.2 among men,⁸ and 39% of individuals in the sample are yet to have children.

With work in the wider economy risky, challenging and precarious, carving out options at home is a choice made by many. This is the only site where opportunities for accumulation exist (through land-based activities, sometimes linked to off-farm income-generating 'projects') and where social reproduction is possible, with the support of local networks and kin. As the case studies highlight, when people establish families, priorities change. The informal economy is difficult to navigate with a family involved, so, for those with children, 'farming' as a primary occupation approximately doubles, while being 'self-employed' nearly triples (mostly complemented with farming at home). At the same time, overseas work declines for this group. A male informant from Wondedzo explained how, after a period of highly precarious employment in South Africa and in mines across Zimbabwe, he came home:

Having realised the disaster ahead in my life [working in South Africa], I decided to go back home to do farming. In 2010 I got married and am now blessed with two children. I am now a full-time farmer doing market gardening alongside my father. I started with 0.1 ha, given by a relative,

and I worked together with my father, in 2015 one ha was allocated by the village head, and I have a 5.5 HP pump, and can work independently. I grow cabbages, tomatoes and green mealies all year round and sell in Masvingo. I hire a motor car from one of the local farmers. I also have one hectare dryland plot, given by my father in 2011. I saw the possibilities of farming in South Africa [when employed as a farmworker]. There's plenty of land, good soils and water here, but when you don't irrigate, the crops get burned and fail.

Contrary to many mainstream policy narratives and public commentary, farming as a livelihood is therefore important for young people in Zimbabwe. Forty-seven per cent of women in the cohort were farming (usually with parents, until they married and often moved) and 59% of men were farming, nearly all with allocations in parents' plots. Land allocations usually move from sharing with parents to the allocation of 1–1.5 ha plot within the parents' (sometimes grandparents') A1 farm (a few inheriting the whole farm on the death of parents or grandparents). Informal markets in land are also common, with a few buying or renting land. Inheritance of land results in the sharing among brothers (and sometimes daughters); rarely is land handed only to the eldest son as is 'custom', and a wider subdivision and sharing is seen.

With relatively large amounts of land in the post-land reform resettlement areas, those who benefited were often asked by other poorer relatives from the communal areas to take on children. This 'magnet effect', seen both in the 1980s resettlements and in the post-2000 setting (Deininger, Hoogeveen, and Kinsey 2004; Scoones et al. 2010, 72), has resulted in both the supply of labour, but also a demand for land. The result is lots of subdivision across these A1 farms as the next generation makes claims, especially as many of those who acquired the land in 2000 are now passing on. The implications for land ownership and livelihoods of the next generation are only just now becoming apparent.

Our data therefore highlight fundamental challenges of both social reproduction and accumulation, constraining livelihood options and life courses. In the context of a crisis economy, there are few options for stable employment, and agricultural production is limited by access to land and finance. Even with a good education, as so many strive for, opportunities are limited. Land-based, agricultural livelihoods are an important alternative, where some opportunities for accumulation do exist. This requires entrepreneurship, improvisation and the deployment of new skills for production and marketing.

In the past, the route to becoming established as an independent adult

was often marriage and getting a piece of land. Men would be allocated plots by a local traditional leader, while women would marry and move to their husband's area, farming on the plot. Today, the certainty of marriage or gaining land is not there. Many must just wait, existing in limbo, living with parents. They may invest effort in developing a 'project' on their parents' farm, doing piecework locally or migrating elsewhere in search of often very temporary jobs.

The stress of 'waithood' – not getting a job, not having land, not being able to set up an independent home, not being able to afford to marry (for men) or being pushed into early marriage (for women) – is a common theme across the cohort case studies. For many this is a challenge to self-esteem, to identity and personhood. Without recognition according to the norms of society (and the elder generation), a feeling of failure, generating stress, is apparent. Young men in particular frequently reflected, with a sense of shame, on their drink and drug habits.

In this setting, support networks become important and, beyond immediate family and kin networks, the new evangelical churches are especially significant. Embedded social relations therefore become key, not only for gaining access to assets (notably land), but also for moving on via marriage, as well as providing a sense of safety and support, improving wellbeing. But such networks are fragile too; not everyone is born into a family that can offer such help, and dependency on the older generation comes with its own costs.

Also, the emerging 'communities' in the resettlement areas are often riven with conflicts, as people come from different places and the sense of kin-based solidarity found in the communal areas is not found (Murisa 2009). Those born in the resettlement areas, or who moved there when very young, do not have associations with the places that their parents call 'home' in the communal areas. These new areas are 'home' for them, and often are quite challenging places in terms of community cohesion.

Many of today's youth are part of what Bernstein (2006) refers to as the 'fragmented classes of labour', making a living on the margins and across a wide diversity of livelihoods. Such livelihoods present real challenges for basic social reproduction. These are often not conditions that allow for an easy bringing-up of a family. Stability in relationships is threatened, and children are often looked after by parents or other relatives in rural areas, as the domestic care economy is restructured. It is no surprise that many of our informants argued that it was better to return home and farm, even if this meant just getting a small plot on their parents' farm. This was seen by many as the best route to a better life.

The main focus is starting an irrigation project, for maize and vegetables, combined with a tobacco plot for those in Mvurwi, and perhaps a poultry project. Across the 31 in-depth interviews, we saw a range of engagements with agriculture, across the value chain, sometimes involving intensive production, but also running livestock projects, selling inputs at an agro-dealer shop, providing marketing services and so on. Thus from small beginnings, usually with reliance on land from parents, young people can begin to accumulate, establishing homes and families from a rural, agrarian base, although this is far from easy.

Getting land independently, though, is more of a challenge. The resettlement areas are 'full', and getting new, larger plots requires close connections and reliance on patronage from local leaders, party officials and others. Most therefore rely on their parents' land, clearing new areas, extending plots illegally into grazing land, or intensifying through digging wells, creating irrigation dams or buying pumps. Land inheritance in the resettlement areas is contested. Very often the expectation is that multiple sons, sometimes daughters, will inherit, causing family wrangles. As parents pass on, the next generation must enter caring relationships for surviving relatives living on the farm, adding further burdens to a stressed domestic economy.

The imagined futures of young people – becoming a professional, getting a formal-sector job or getting land for agriculture⁹ – are realised by few (around 15% have formal 'jobs' either in Zimbabwe or South Africa, with significantly more from Wondedzo). In part this is because the age group of our cohort has lived through the worst economic crisis in living

Table 10.1: Location of sons and daughters of land reform beneficiaries aged 21-30 in 2016.

	Mvurwi		Wondenzo		Overall
	Women (N=31) %	Men (N=30) %	Women (N=57) %	Men (N=65) %	Women/men (N=183) %
At home	68	80	53	46	57
Elsewhere in Zimbabwe	32	17	33	34	31
Outside Zimbabwe	0	3	14	20	12

memory, when the formal economy collapsed, the state ran out of resources and the options for waged employment shrank to almost zero during periods of hyperinflation and cash shortages.

While Zimbabwe’s economic crisis has had an extreme character, jobless growth, declining opportunities for employment by the state and austerity economics are features in richer, more stable economies too. Thus, even migration abroad to South Africa or the UK, for example, is no longer an option, despite it previously being a notable feature of life trajectories for many, especially from the late 1990s and early 2000s (Crush and Tevera 2010). For this generation, educated in the last 20 years, the premium of the post-Independence Zimbabwean education also no longer exists. While many scraped a few ‘O-levels’, the competition elsewhere is today much more intense, combined with the closing of borders and xenophobia elsewhere, including in South Africa.

Table 10.2: What are the next generation doing (main activity)?

Activity	Mvurwi		Wondenzo		Overall %
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	
At home, unemployed, helping parents	68	50	35	32	42
Employed in a formal job	13	10	7	15	11
Employed overseas in a job	0	0	9	14	8
Self-employed, piecework	7	30	4	18	14
Farming independently	7	3	33	17	18
In education	7	7	12	3	7

Table 10.3: What is the main challenge being faced?

Challenge	Mvurwi		Wondedzo		Overall %
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	
Lack of jobs	16	23	23	43	29
Cash/finance for inputs etc.	52	43	14	18	27
Family tensions/disputes, illness	19	10	14	14	14
Education quality/failure	6	7	26	11	14
Land/water access	3	13	9	9	9
Food insecurity/drought/ climate change	3	3	12	6	7

CONCLUSION

Our results show, across both sites, how opportunities for young people following land reform are severely constrained. The precariousness of work, the challenges of schooling and getting qualifications, family disputes and illnesses, the lack of land, the poor productivity of dryland farming and the difficulties of establishing businesses without capital are all recurrent themes. While a few have found their way into reasonably remunerated jobs, the routes to accumulation, and getting established as independent adults, are limited for others, with very small-scale irrigated farming seemingly by the far the best option.

Our findings show how a simple focus on 'youth' as a category is insufficient, as life chances are wrapped up in wider social, economic and political change. Land reform has restructured access to land and other resources, but also relationships across generations, and now some of these tensions are playing out. Contradicting some of the more pessimistic narratives around the role of young people in African agriculture, we find that opportunities for accumulation and securing social reproduction lie in small-scale, intensive farming, usually combined with other 'projects' and off-farm work. This requires skill, improvisation and entrepreneurship. However, for both men and women, such opportunities allow a move away from the uncertainties and anxieties of 'waithood'.

The context of Zimbabwe's economic crisis clearly influences these patterns, but it also highlights the need to go beyond the standard support mechanisms for young people, focused, for example, on training and skills transfer to get employment in assumed job markets or small-scale enterprise development to create businesses for a stable, growing economic setting. Policy thinking instead needs to take account of the wider context of economic transformation that has occurred in many economies, as the formal 'job' disappears, combined with a reflection on the implications of processes of agrarian transition. This means attending to issues of next-generation land access, land subdivision, agricultural investment and rural financing. These are all themes ignored by existing policy efforts, which assume a past that no longer exists. Policy support must also take more account of the very real stresses of life for young people today. Through our interviews, we sensed a loss of identity, confidence and esteem among many we talked to, with stress-related illness and destructive behaviours emerging, all affecting wellbeing.

The land reform of 2000 offered opportunities for many. A genuine, if as yet not fully realised, rural transformation is underway, especially in the A1 resettlement areas, as production increases, and investment and accumulation possibilities emerge. But how far will this be shared? Was this just a one-off redistribution, where limits to accumulation for the next generation are imposed, as land access becomes constrained and a sluggish rural economy fails to generate jobs outside agriculture to absorb the next generation? Taking a cross-generational perspective on land reform is essential, we argue; rather than looking at a single moment of land transfer, the processes of longer-term agrarian transformation, affecting genders and generations differentially, have to be brought into view if some of the aspirations of young people are to be realised.

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NOTES

- ¹ Zimbabwe's land reform from 2000 involved the transfer of around 8 million hectares, previously occupied by about 4500 largely white-owned farms, initially to approximately 146,000 smallholder farms (designated A1) and around 16,000 medium-scale farms (designated A2) (Scoones et al. 2010); although the total allocations have increased since, as earlier informal allocations have been approved and others have been added. For ongoing analysis and comment on Zimbabwe's land reform, including from these sites, see www.zimbabweland.wordpress.com
- ² A total of four individuals had died since birth.
- ³ See for example: AFDB (2016); Ascitti, Pont, and Sumberg (2016); AGRA (2015); FAO et al. (2014); Filmer and Fox (2014); AUC and UNECA (2013); Brooks, Zorya, and Gautam (2013); World Bank (2006) and many others for recent policy commentaries.
- ⁴ For example, for negative media narratives, see 'Zanu-PF youths threaten land demo', *Newsday*, April 5, 2016, <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2016/04/05/zanu-pf-youths-threaten-land-demo/>; 'Zim youths unemployed due to decreased capacity utilisation', *Newsday*, April 18, 2016, <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2016/04/18/zim-youths-unemployed-due-decreased-capacity-utilisation/>; 'Poverty, disasters forcing youths into prostitution and violent behaviours', *Newsday*, October 26, 2014, <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2014/10/26/poverty-disasters-forcing-youths-prostitution-violent-behaviours/>, and, for more positive ones, 'Embracing entrepreneurship to unleash Africa's economic growth', *Newsday*, April 18, 2017, <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2017/04/18/embracing-entrepreneurship-unleash-africas-economic-growth/>; 'Govt to promote indigenous foods', *The Herald*, December 13, 2016, <http://www.herald.co.zw/govt-to-promote-indigenous-foods/> (all accessed October 8, 2018).
- ⁵ Twenty are in South Africa, while three are in Botswana.
- ⁶ One to Mozambique and one to South Africa.

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- ⁷ While we do not have data for age at first marriage for Mvurwi, many commented on early marriage among women as a response to family debt created by a poor tobacco harvest and high costs of contracting, with *lobola* (bride price) payments being used to offset debt repayment. The national and provincial data from the 2015 Zimbabwe Demographic and Health Surveys show comparable patterns, with women (aged 20–35) in rural areas marrying at 18.8 years (median) and men (age 25–54) at 24.8 years (median). Median figures for Masvingo Province were women marrying at 19.8 years and men at 25.7 years, while in Mashonaland Central, women married at 18.4 years and men at 24.6 years (ZIMSTATS and ICF International 2016, 70).
- ⁸ Median age at first birth for rural women is 19.6, and is slightly lower in Mashonaland Central (19.4) and higher in Masvingo (20.6), and increases with levels of education and wealth (ZIMSTATS and ICF International 2016, 92).
- ⁹ See the discussion of the Q-sort analysis undertaken with Francis Rwozvi here:<https://zimbabweland.wordpress.com/2017/11/06/what-next-for-young-people-in-land-reform-areas/>(accessed October 8, 2018).

SMALL TOWNS AND LAND REFORM IN ZIMBABWE

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INTRODUCTION

Following the major land reform in Zimbabwe from 2000, the rural landscape has been transformed (Moyo 2011; Scoones et al. 2010). With a reconfigured agrarian structure the relationships with urban areas have changed too. For three contrasting settings across Zimbabwe, this article asks what difference has land reform made for small towns situated in areas dominated by a restructured agricultural economy?

The literature on small towns and rural–urban linkages in Africa has not addressed the context of land reform. Most discussions point to evolutionary changes as agricultural areas prosper and markets expand, small towns grow with linkages forged through markets, transport and labour exchange generating multiplier effects through a non-farm rural economy (Christiaensen et al. 2013). This is often framed in terms of a ‘structural transformation’ whereby low productivity agriculture is replaced by increasingly industrialised economies (McMillan and Heady 2014), with a concomitant process of deagrariansation (Bryceson 1996) and growth in urban areas through migration (De Brauw et al. 2014).

Others focus on the spatial relations involved, with the growth of small towns being vital in wider economic change (Dorosh and Thurlow 2013; Pedersen 1997; Simon 1992; Baker 1990; Hardoy and Satterthwaite 1988).

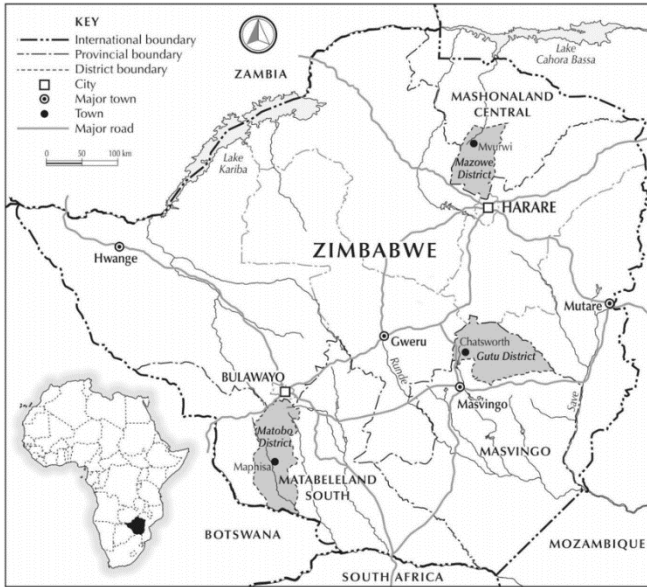
This might involve significant infrastructure investment to encourage agriculture-linked industrial activity creating 'growth poles' (Picard et al. 2017), 'corridors' (Chome et al. 2020) and 'nodes' of economic activity (Hinderink and Titus 1988). As rural-urban commerce grows, the importance of supply chains, transport networks, processing facilities and connections to retail outlets are emphasised. Value thus is added to agricultural production in local and regional economies (Berdegué and Proctor 2015; Nel 2005; Rondinelli 1988), although depending on the agricultural value chain, the implications for small towns may differ (Lazaro et al. 2019).

Many have commented on the importance of multi-location and multi-activity households, as people within a household take on different roles on- and off-farm (Steel et al. 2019). This may have a gendered and generational dynamic, with women and younger people engaging in trading and new businesses (Agergaard et al. 2019; Tacoli and Agergaard 2017; Tacoli and Mabala 2010). A movement of people between rural and urban homes, with income-earning activity spread across sites is common (Ingelaere et al. 2017), linked to longer-term patterns of circular migration (Potts 2010).

The changing relationship between the countryside and towns, especially small towns embedded in rural landscapes, often provokes new patterns of accumulation and so processes implications for food security and poverty reduction (Djurfeldt 2015). Some are able to make the most of new market linkages and business opportunities combining increasingly commercialised agricultural production with off-farm income earning, while others cannot (Haggblade et al. 2007). Spatially reconfigured economic activity and associated patterns of class formation, with people straddling urban and rural spaces, is also frequently related to shifts in political relations, prompted through decentralisation policies, for example, or emerging as a result of the role of business elites in small towns linked to rural areas (Owusu 2013; Vincent 1974). Changing relationships between the state and local political authority raises important questions of governance in small towns as new interest groups and power dynamics emerge (Satterthwaite and Tacoli 2003).

Responding to these debates, the article examines three Zimbabwean small towns, each located in areas that have undergone major changes due to land reform since 2000 (Fig. 1). The land reform saw around 9.3 million ha of formerly large-scale commercial farms redistributed to two major resettlement types: A1 (smallholder farms, 145775 farms over 5.8 million ha) and A2 (medium-scale farms, 22896 farms over 3.5 million ha) (Moyo

Figure 11.1: Small towns and land reform in Zimbabwe.



2011, p. 498). This upset the former dualistic agrarian structure, with large-scale, largely white-owned commercial farms separated from communal areas, where the majority of farmers live. Today there is a more variegated land-use, with smallholder areas (A1 resettlements and communal area farms), medium-scale (A2) farms and remaining large-scale farms and estates sitting alongside each other. The relationships with towns have changed too, with the colonial separation between ‘white’ towns linked to large-scale farming and mining areas and ‘African’ towns and ‘growth points’ serving communal areas being disturbed. Depending on the focus of post-land reform agriculture and its spatial configuration, the impacts on small towns differ, but, as our cases show, an intensification of local economic activity—much of it informal and linked to agricultural production—has dramatically changed the linkages within local economies, and so small towns. The article argues therefore that taking small towns, as linked to wider and now transformed rural areas, seriously is essential if the wider economic benefits of land reform are to be realised.

The article is organised as follows. The next section briefly discusses small towns and urban development in Zimbabwe, locating this in the wider literature on small towns and rural–urban linkages introduced above. Next,

the case study areas and the methodology employed is introduced. The results follow in the next section, looking at changes between 2000 and 2020. Four key themes are then drawn out, before the conclusion, which argues for a reframing of the policy debate to focus on the territorial connections around small towns emerging after land reform.

SMALL TOWNS IN ZIMBABWE: A BRIEF OVERVIEW

Much of the literature on urban settings in Zimbabwe focuses on cities and large towns (e.g. Mbiba 2017; Potts and Mutambirwa 1990), emphasising *inter alia* the role of urban informality (Kamete 2020), the importance of party politics (McGregor and Chatiza 2019; Muchadenyika 2015), the imposition of planning regulations (Vambe 2008) and the livelihoods of workers (Mupedziswa and Gumbo 2001). Many of these themes apply to small towns, but in different ways because of the close connections with the agricultural hinterland.

Where do small towns sit within debates about urban development in Zimbabwe? At Independence in 1980, the new government set about investing in new infrastructure aimed at redressing the imbalances of the colonial past. The 1982 Transitional Development Plan argued for the need to investment in rural service centres: “the intention is to bring the rural population into close contact with services and markets, thus forging linkages with the national economy and stimulating the development of local markets with regional specialisations and a multitude of informal employment opportunities” (GoZ 1982). A hierarchy of urban areas was proposed—consolidated villages, business centres, rural service centres, district service centres, growth points, towns and cities (Mutizwa-Mangiza and Helmsing 1991; Wekwete 1990).

However, in the context of a highly uneven economy, with spatially concentrated, racially defined populations, simply investing in infrastructure and services was not enough. From the colonial period, there were the mining towns, estate towns, white farming towns and TILCOR (Tribal Trust Land Development Corporation) growth points; all had to be incorporated into the post-Independence investment strategy. New district centres and growth points suffered many problems. They were not necessarily integrated into local economies, and without fundamental land reform the dualistic pattern of economic development continued. Some prospered—such as Gokwe thanks to the cotton boom or Murewa due horticultural marketing to Harare—but many remained more in planners’

imaginations than in reality (Wekwete 1988). The lesson of course was clear. For a small town to grow, the agricultural economy around it had to be vibrant and this could not be conjured up by grand plans. It is the wider structural constraints that hold economies back; and in Zimbabwe of course this was substantially to do with access to productive land for the majority.

With some important exceptions (see Andersson 2002; Kamete 1998; Pedersen 1992), however, small towns have not featured significantly in the literature on Zimbabwe. Census data, which defines urban areas as anywhere with a population above 2500 and a majority of non-farm livelihoods, can obscure understanding, as migration between multiple homes is central to mobile, multi-locational livelihoods, with both rural and urban components (Potts 2000a, 1995).

Circular migration between an urban workplace and a rural home was established in the colonial era, as land policies squeezed rural production and forced people (usually younger men) to move in search of work in the large-scale farms, the mines or the growing industrial centres (Arrighi 1970). This pattern has persisted, but as both national and regional economies have changed so have migration patterns (Potts 2000b). Today, however, migration patterns are different, with less predictable movements, especially as the Zimbabwean economy has contracted over the last decades (Crush and Frayne 2010).

Employment in towns and cities is currently limited, particularly for low-skilled jobs, and people have had to seek options further afield. Transnational migration to the UK, US or elsewhere is possible for some (Pasura 2013). Others must face the hazards of illegal migration and casual temporary employment in South Africa; for example in the farms in Limpopo province (Rutherford 2010). With the decline in the formal economy, the pattern of male-dominated migration has shifted, with women increasingly taking up short-term migration for trading (Mutopo 2010). With the arrival of the COVID-19, migration patterns have shifted yet again, making reliance on local forms of income earning even more important.¹

The extensive literature on migration in southern Africa, and in Zimbabwe in particular, tends to focus on long-distance migration, but frequently ignores shorter movements from rural areas to small towns, even daily commuting. These movements are becoming more important as wider employment opportunities decline and border restrictions intensify. With the growth of agricultural opportunities for some as a result of land reform, there has been a growth in local economic linkages and employment, and a spatial reorganisation of the countryside (Sukume et al.

2015).

Following land reform in 2000, therefore, there were major changes in the rural economy and with these there have been coincident big changes in urban centres—very often small towns—near the new land reform resettlements. To date, this has gone largely un-researched and unnoticed. This article begins to fill this gap.

STUDY AREA AND METHODS

To explore these themes, we have explored changes in three small towns near our rural study areas, where we have been examining changes in livelihoods since 2000 among both smallholder (A1) and medium-scale (A2) resettlement farmers (cf. Scoones et al. 2010) (Fig. 1). Like others researching Zimbabwe's land reform, our attention has not focussed significantly on the wider implications for rural–urban linkages and the changes in small towns near land reform areas.

Our study looked at three such towns. First, Mvurwi in Mazowe district, Mashonaland Central province is around 100 km to the north of the capital Harare. This is the only case that is formally designated a 'town' (since 2014) due to its growth in population. Mvurwi was a former service centre for large-scale white farming, as well as being a major farm labour settlement for white commercial farming. Following land reform, it is now at the centre of a booming smallholder-led tobacco growing area. Second is Chatsworth in Gutu district in Masvingo province further south. Chatsworth was once a railway siding, and now is designated as a 'growth point'. It was in the centre of mostly cattle ranches, but is now surrounded by land reform areas producing maize and vegetables, and is becoming an important marketing and transport hub. Third is Maphisa in Matobo district in Matabeleland South province. Maphisa was formerly a TILCOR growth point, and is again in the centre of a reconfigured rural area, including land reform resettlements and a parastatal farm, now supported through a Joint Venture investment.

Our research involved interviews with residents of all three towns in 2015–16 and 2019, combined with discussions with rural residents in our long-term rural research sites in adjacent land reform areas from 2006 in Masvingo province, 2012 in Mashonaland Central and 2016 in Matabeleland South.² For our urban-focussed research, in total we undertook around 50 interviews across the three sites.

Our aim was to get an overview of the business activities, residence

patterns and connections to rural areas from 2000, as well as profiles of investment and accumulation of small town residents. Interviews were complemented with an enterprise survey in each town, enumerating the businesses in operation in three periods. We also compiled data available in local council and government department offices, and referred to statistical data from censuses and other surveys. For insights into longer-term histories, we undertook biographical interviews with long-term residents and consulted archives and past studies to understand the origins and evolution of each settlement.

SMALL TOWNS IN ZIMBABWE AFTER LAND REFORM

Table 11.1 offers an overview of the changes across a selection of indicators for the three towns, based primarily on our enterprise surveys. The data show significant growth in activity since 2000, but variations since.

In order to interpret these changes, we have to combine these data with more qualitative insights, as well as data from the nearby rural areas. The following sections introduce each of the small towns in turn.

MVURWI: FROM FARMWORKER SETTLEMENT TO BOOMING BUSINESS CENTRE

On the back of the tobacco boom, Mvurwi town in Mazowe district is a hive of activity, with many new businesses and much new building. Mvurwi (formerly Umvukwes) was formally established after World War II and became an important service centre for white large-scale commercial farmers, as well as a dormitory town for farm workers, including migrants from nearby countries (Scoones et al. 2020).

Before land reform, the central business district of Mvurwi was dominated by farm suppliers, while commercial banks provided credit and tractor hire agencies serviced large-scale farms nearby. Mvurwi commercial farmers enjoyed their leisure time at a country club, built in 1946. Mvurwi has long been a centre for government offices, but the presence of the state has expanded since land reform, with new staff hired. As the town has expanded, more schools have been built and medical facilities expanded.

Since land reform, the agricultural economy of Mvurwi has changed massively. Money from tobacco produced in particular by A1 and A2 farmers has been the driver of Mvurwi's growth, but in the past, profits were shared among relatively few large-scale white commercial farmers.

While workers rented accommodation and would buy basic provisions, they had little disposable income. This all changed following 2000, and particularly after 2009 when the local currency was abandoned due to hyperinflation and the US dollar was adopted. This spurred the expansion of tobacco growing in the area. In our study sites during 2016–17, A1 smallholder farming households generated US\$4596 gross income from tobacco and US\$2040 from maize on average, while medium-scale A2 farms generated US\$60149 and US\$30459 gross income from tobacco and maize, respectively.³ Farm profits are in turn being reinvested in farms, but also in the town.

Since land reform, there has been a building boom. The town council has allocated many new stands in both high and medium-density areas. Although there have been delays in the provision of basic services (electricity, sewage etc.), these areas have become prime investment sites for farmers, and the town population has expanded rapidly. Our surveys show that 16% of A1 smallholder farmers have invested in building in town since land reform and are receiving rental income.⁴ The massive building projects on-going have generated employment for a range of people including for builders, welders, hardware store owners, brick moulders, sawmill operators and transporters (Table 11.1). The value of urban land for housing in the town has also attracted corrupt practices, with local politicians becoming involved in selling plots.

Following land reform, a number of businesses focussed on supporting large-scale commercial farming closed as the economy restructured. Yet a multiplicity of enterprises have opened, with expansion reflecting the shift to small- and medium-scale farming in the surrounding areas. For example, stock-feed and day-old chick suppliers have prospered. Butcheries expanded from three to 14 by 2016, with employment growing from six to 30, although several subsequently closed due to electricity shortages. Equally, bars and bottle stores are increasing to service the growing population. General ‘tuck shops’ selling mainly clothes and items from clothing, cell phones, electrical gadgets, to kitchenware have expanded, with about 120 stalls now operating. Currency exchange, eco-cash transfer and mobile phone credit sales have expanded massively too.

Most new businesses are run by locals, very often family members of land reform farmers. Young people and women in particular are important traders. From our surveys in the surrounding A1 resettlement areas, 29% of households are involved in informal trading, while 41% sell vegetables and 23% sell broiler chickens, often in Mvurwi town.⁵ The new, usually temporary, residents of town joined others, including Chinese migrants

who have also set up shops and employ locals in their stores. As well as formal businesses, registered with the town council, there have also been a massive shift to the informal economy supporting diverse livelihoods in town.

Such businesses operate at different scales and often interact. For example, informal traders may buy from the Indian-origin-owned wholesale store. Products are then sold on in a range of grocery stores, which have increased six-fold since land reform. MN, a 35-year-old female vendor operating at the open market, explained:

"I buy and sell various farm produce, but my main business is buying and selling sweet potatoes. I buy sweet potatoes from farms and hire scotch carts to bring the produce to the tar road. I manage to buy and sell 36 buckets at US\$5 each per week. The business has helped me buy a residential stand and pay school fees".⁶

Farmers, very often women, from the surrounding areas bring in produce to the town markets, including masau berries, indigenous/broiler chickens, cucumbers, tomatoes, rape, covo (kale), water melons, cabbages, onions, carrots, green mealies, apples and bananas. Some of these are sold on to food outlets, which have expanded massively since 2000 (Table 11.1). Mrs G explained how her restaurant is the basis for accumulation:

"I buy Irish potatoes from local farmers which I process into chips served with chicken. I employ a driver who earns US\$300 per month as well as six other permanent workers. I have built a crèche, a boarding house for school kids and have plans to build a primary school. I own two private cars and a house in Mvurwi's low density suburb. I also bought three residential stands".⁷

Transport business is key for linking farmers to town. As in other sectors, it is increasingly farmers who are investing in assets such as cars and small trucks to transport goods and people. Among our sample of A1 farmers nearby, 20% had bought a car and 18% a truck, while among A2 farmers 41% had cars and 15% had trucks.⁸ Unlike in the period before land reform, the economy is increasingly localised, with benefits being generated in small towns like Mvurwi.

CHATSWORTH: FROM RAILWAY SIDING TO GROWING SMALL TOWN

Before land reform, Chatsworth was a cattle loading siding run by Zimbabwe National Railways (ZNR). Surrounded by around a hundred large-

scale farms, mostly owned by 'whites', it was at the centre of the ranching business. Cattle were loaded onto trucks and taken to the Cold Storage Commission abattoir in Masvingo. Some owned multiple farms over thousands of hectares and managed many thousands of beef cattle. Today, with the exception of one remaining large ranch, all the other farms have been resettled, with a mix of smallholder (A1) and medium-scale (A2) farms.⁹ This has transformed rural production and livelihoods, but it has also transformed Chatsworth.

Before Independence in 1980, Chatsworth was a small outpost with a scattering of shops, some railway employees and a whites-only primary school. There were few businesses, and racial differences were stark. FV recalls: "Greeks and Indians owned the shops in Chatsworth. There was a colour bar. Shops had two entrances: one for blacks and another for whites. Even at the Post Office there were two entrances".¹⁰

Chatsworth became more established after 1980. Government offices were set up, and the school grew and allowed all races. But the growth of state presence did not change much in terms of business opportunity. However, after land reform Chatsworth has grown very fast as a rural business and service centre. From a small settlement with 50 location and 50 railway stands, which were home to about 500 people in 2000, residential stands have increased massively and others await servicing (Table 11.1).

In the past, the railway dominated the town. But by 2019, ZNR employed just two workers in Chatsworth. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the train still ran (erratically) and became an important transport route for women vegetable traders from the areas going to Masvingo to the 'kutrain' market by the railway tracks. According to Ward councillor, BB:

"Traders board the train to Masvingo town and sell tomatoes, vegetables, green mealies and grain bought at cheaper prices from surrounding land reform farms. They have established relations with farmers sourcing agricultural produce for resale and consumption".¹¹

In our surveys in two nearby A1 resettlement areas, we found that 30% of households earn income from selling vegetables and 10% from selling chickens. Several had also invested in stands and buildings in Chatsworth town since land reform. Indeed, many of the new homes in Chatsworth have been built by those combining trading with agricultural production. Some rent out spare rooms at their Chatsworth residences to tenants who include civil servants. Some female farmer vendors have become part of a new local business elite and invested in transport businesses, owning cars,

minibuses and small trucks, while others rent shops.¹² Civil servants—the formally employed class—do not have houses, as they do not have disposable income to buy stands, and must rent from the new landlords.

Business activity has increased in Chatsworth since land reform. Today farmers on nearby resettled farms and their workers visit Chatsworth each day. In the past, Chatsworth had no supermarket, but today there is one, along with a number of grocery stores, butchers and agro-dealers, each employing people. There are also a number smaller ‘tuck shops’, selling groceries and take-away food, and making a decent profit despite Council fees. By 2019, with the decline in the economy, these businesses had contracted, and with COVID-19 during 2020, some had closed. Hardware stores selling ploughs, harrows and cultivators were faring better. A worker at one of the stores commented:

*“Business is good. We are selling most building materials to increasing number of people constructing homes in Chatsworth. Resettled farmers are also our clients. The expense of buying from afar forces them to buy from us”.*¹³

In addition to the formal stores, there is now an open market selling vegetables. It is operated by local women, based in resettlement areas. One explained: “We order cheaper vegetables from the resettlement farmers for resale but they follow us here and compete with us for customers selling door-to-door to Chatsworth residents and schools”.¹⁴ With the contraction of the economy and the high costs of operating formally, there has been a shift to more informal trading in Chatsworth, with farmers coming and selling without a market stand. Opportunities in Chatsworth are highly seasonal, with major prayer meetings being an important source of business. Store-owner, Mrs C explained:

*“Many churches are active here. The international centre of the AFM (Apostolic Faith Mission) is located here. AFM holds an annual prayer meeting attended by thousands of worshipers from all over the world. There are other numerous churches: Roman Catholic, Dutch Reformed, Zion and others. This creates a big demand for accommodation, but also other business”.*¹⁵

As a small town between Masvingo and Gutu-Mpandawanda, both much larger settlements, businesses in Chatsworth must compete. Ease of transport benefits many but not local businesses. In addition to the train to Masvingo, in 2019, there were multiple minibuses, making access to other towns very easy prior to the COVID-19 movement restrictions.

Chatsworth today—now formally designated a ‘growth point’—is very

different to the railway siding supporting the livestock industry of a few large-scale, white-owned farms of the pre-land reform era. As a small urban centre it must compete with larger, more established towns and margins on businesses are small, but in the periods since 2000 when the economy was more stable, there has been significant investment driven by agricultural producers and traders.

MAPHISA: IN THE SHADOW OF AN ESTATE

Maphisa (formerly Antelope) was established as a town in the 1970s as part of TILCOR's attempt to create 'African towns in African areas'. Mrs N, who was born nearby, explained:

"Maphisa was a forest, a grazing area for livestock. There was an aerodrome for white farmers. A white man called Fish was sent to address the local community to justify building a township. He explained that Antelope dam and irrigation were going to create jobs and benefit communities, who would in turn invest at the township and grow rich! The chiefs and local leadership present at the meeting agreed and Maphisa was established".¹⁶

Post Independence these early 'growth points' were incorporated into the wider spatial planning approach. The huge estate was taken over by ARDA (the Agriculture and Rural Development Authority), and for several decades Maphisa became intimately linked to the success of the nearby estate, which employed up to 8000 people at the height of the 1990s cotton boom. ARDA also began to build infrastructure in Maphisa in the mid-1980s, including housing for workers and some general dealer shops. The government also established administrative offices for various government departments at the time, and built the Hlalanikuhle high-density location.

Maphisa was surrounded by large-scale commercial ranches, supplying beef to abattoirs in Bulawayo, and many farms also had commercial gold mines on them. The impact of this largely white-owned farming-mining economy on Maphisa was limited, however, as economic linkages were not local. This all changed with land reform, with most farms taken over. In the new resettlements, investment has increased, although mostly from cattle sales rather than crop production. According to 2017–18 surveys,¹⁷ 70% of medium-scale A2/3-Tier farmers had sold cattle in the previous year, while 28% of A1 farmers had done so. Investments in cars/trucks were significant across the samples, with 72% and 22% of A2/3-Tier and A1 farmers owning cars. Investments in rental accommodation, including in Maphisa, also increased, with 18% and 15% of households involved in A2/3-Tier and A1

areas, respectively.

While land reform areas grew, from 2000 the fortunes of the estate declined, with many laid off. The estate outgrowers (132 families) carried on making use of canal irrigation, but got little support from the estate. The estate's decline though had a negative effect, as revenues gained from labourers working on the estate vanished. In 2015, a new investment partnership was agreed,¹⁸ but this new highly mechanised operation has not created the level of employment seen before.

With new people on the land, Maphisa has changed from an estate-linked enclave town to one serving the wider area, with a whole range of new businesses established. As Table 11.1 shows, there has been considerable growth in the numbers of shops and other businesses in Maphisa since 2000. There are now more people living in the town, and investing in property. Mr T, a local businessman and long-term resident, as well as A2 land reform beneficiary with a 350 hectare farm, explained the impacts of land reform on business:

"Land reform opened up more grazing land and opportunities for livestock marketing. I have 80 cattle, mostly Simenthal crosses. I get around US\$800 per beast in Bulawayo. I have just too many goats at the farm! Prices are good: I can get US\$50 per goat. The new cattle business is helping Maphisa to grow. For example, hides and skins are available for establishing a tannery industry. Also, there are plenty of mopane worms (Gonimbrasia belina) in the farms. Value addition and packaging could be done here".¹⁹

Mr N was also born in the area, and has owned shops in Maphisa over many years. He commented on his business: "We sell products to civil servants, ARDA employees, irrigation outgrowers, miners, communal and resettlement farmers and in transit customers. Up to 200 customers cross our doors per day".²⁰ Others rent shops from the council or richer property owners and link to the wider cattle business on the new land reform farms. Mr M explains:

"I buy cattle for US\$400–500 on the hoof after bargaining with the seller. I take the beasts to Maphisa council slaughter facilities. I buy 2–3 beasts per week and sell meat to customers at US\$5 per kg. My food outlet business is a strategy to increase turn-over of meat sales from the butchery. My wife supervises the business while I run around looking for slaughter stock. I also have an A1 land reform farm with 30 cattle, and these support my business".²¹

As in the other small towns, the growth of informal trading in Maphisa has been huge. Mrs N is a trader selling vegetables. These were originally

supplied by the ARDA estate, but now resettlement farmers supply them: “We use cell phones to communicate and they bring the produce here. Although we have a farm nearby, proceeds from the market have been critical in keeping the home in town going—purchasing food and groceries, paying school fees and council rates”.²²

Changes in the mining economy have also affected Maphisa. Before, mining was formal and relatively large scale, largely run through the Falcon Gold Company, with worker compounds built on the large-scale farms and with little contact with the wider area. Today this has changed dramatically, with many new mining operations in the area. Mr T, a bar owner, commented: “There are now well over 100 black miners with licences here. Night life is alive due to gold miners”.²³ Each small mine operation employs around 30 people, all purchasing goods and services in Maphisa.

From an enclave town, linked to an estate, created through colonial, racially based planning, Maphisa has transformed into a business hub linked to local economic activity in both agriculture and mining. The estate remains important, and especially since the injection of new investment, but the town has a more diversified base today. Like the other small towns profiled earlier, Maphisa illustrates the opportunities, but also challenges, of small towns in a restructured economy following land reform.

BIG CHANGES IN SMALL TOWNS: FOUR THEMES

Looking across the three cases and the changes observed since land reform in 2000, what have been the major themes emerging? In important respects, the experiences of the three small towns have been different over the past 20 years. Mvurwi’s growth has been driven by the tobacco boom following land reform, while Chatsworth has benefited from the growth of maize and vegetable production, but also the presence of popular churches in the area. Maphisa has grown thanks to the cattle and mining economy, which is now more locally rooted involving many land reform farmers. In all cases, these new economic activities have resulted in important changes in these small towns, although the precise dynamics depends on demographic patterns, the nature of the linked agricultural value chains and the availability of and access to alternative markets. Transformations of rural–urban linkages are therefore highly contingent and context-dependent (Lazaro et al. 2019). In this section, we highlight four cross-cutting themes that characterise the new dynamics of small towns in Zimbabwe’s post-land reform setting across the cases.

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

The expansion of small- and medium-scale agriculture since land reform has resulted in income from agricultural surpluses being circulated locally. This includes cash from sales of tobacco (Mvurwi), maize/horticulture (Chatsworth) and livestock (Maphisa). In Maphisa, in particular, this agricultural income is complemented by money from small-scale gold mining. This is generating demand for services, as well as opportunities for the sale of produce. Compared to the pre-land reform situation, there are many more businesses of all types in all three towns (Table 11.1). While some large businesses have closed operations as they were geared towards a different agrarian setting, those that have replaced them are a mix of formal, registered businesses (paying rates and other taxes) and a host of informal businesses. In the past two decades, in part because of the sustained economic crisis that the country has faced, the economy as a whole has informalised. Street vendors, sellers of phone credit, mobile repair operations, transporters and so many more have set up business.

Past patterns of migration—to a stable job in town or in the mines or on the farms—rarely occur today as such jobs no longer exist, and people have to make do in the informal/shadow economy locally. Many of these small businesses are generating employment for others, and so have multiplier effects across the local economy. Across our three cases since land reform, there are five times as many hardware stores, four times as many grocery stores and food outlets, three times as many butcheries and double the number of bottle stores and bars. And there are also new outside investors, including ‘black’ capital, as well as Indian, Chinese and other investors, not seen in these towns before. The number of informal vendors has expanded the most, with on average five times as many as before land reform.

According to our studies in all sites, it is the A1 smallholder resettlements that are in particular driving this local economic dynamism. In aggregate, they both produce the most surplus, distributed across many households, and they also require significant locally sourced inputs—fertilisers, seeds, equipment—and services—notably transport—as part of vibrant farming enterprises. Inputs are supplied in town at agro-dealers and small informal sellers, and in all our case studies, transport has become a vital business linking the town with the wider agricultural hinterland.

DEMOGRAPHY AND DIFFERENCE: NEW PEOPLE IN TOWN

The population size and composition of the small towns we studied have

changed hugely since land reform. In the past such towns provided accommodation and services (groceries, bars etc.) for workers on the nearby farms and estates (notably Mvurwi and Maphisa) and also provided local input supplies and financial services for the large-scale farmers; although many white commercial farmers sourced more cheaply from further afield. There were government officials posted in all these towns, and there were schools and clinics to support the local population. They were by-and-large small, sleepy locations, with limited activity and few people, organised in the colonial style between high, medium and low-density suburbs, with the latter inhabited by whites, government officials and new black elites.

In the last 20 years, populations have more than tripled; and this is just the permanent population, and not those who commute back and forth from the rural areas. Today there are new people in town. In Mvurwi in particular, former workers in commercial farms no longer have jobs on farms and have had to seek alternatives. Some have left, but many have stayed and become engaged in supporting new forms of local agriculture and become involved in town-based business activities (Scoones et al. 2019a). Women and young people are especially important players in the new informal economy of these small towns. Women, for example, may be married to a man who received land through the land reform and will assist at the family farm, but also will be involved in trading businesses in town. Young people are often without land, missing out on land reform in 2000, but may live at home with their parents and run a business in the nearby town (Scoones et al. 2019b).

Moving small distances, seasonally or daily, is the new pattern, with multi-locational households and multiplex livelihoods the norm. The informal activities that dominate are fragile, informal and risky, but offer a livelihood, and when employing one or two others, can generate in total considerable economic activity. Others have moved to town more permanently, and invested in building houses on newly acquired stands, although usually still retaining a rural base. Government officials may not earn sufficient salary to build, but are the new tenants, while farmers, traders and local elites, with access to patronage funds, are the landlords.

RURAL–URBAN SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS AND NETWORKS

Land reform has created new rural–urban connections. In the past, the rural town was quite disconnected from the large-scale commercial farming operation, beyond being the source of labour and providing some inputs

and services. Today such small towns are intimately linked in a much tighter, more integrated local economy. There are relations from rural to urban (marketing of produce, movement of people) and from urban to rural (supplies of labour, inputs, services and provision of transport).

These linkages are fostered through social relationships, which have to be invested in. Agricultural production, marketing and processing are always embedded in such social relationships and networks. Making sure that a vending business in town thrives requires the vendor to have good relationships with suppliers in the nearby resettlement areas, with transporters to ferry goods to town, with council officials who collect rates and inspect premises and with the police, who invariably are looking for a bribe. Investing in connections and building networks is essential; sometimes through payment, often through building personal relationships through kin, friends and others.

Gaining access to land for a stand in town to build a house may equally require investment in relations, and sometimes all sorts of payments. While the level of politically motivated corruption seen in small, rural towns is not the extent seen in larger towns and cities, it still exists, as the scandal in Mvurwi showed. Surviving in town means playing the game, paying the bribes, dodging the police and sometimes pretending to be a committed party follower.

For many, life in small towns is precarious and risky. With money to be made, there are those ready to exploit and harass informal traders.²⁴ Having a rural home nearby to return to is important, and today the rural areas surrounding these towns are now full of farms and people. Keeping close to 'home'—even if you do not have land—remains crucial, and the ability to be mobile and opportunistic is vital in the face of economic uncertainty, especially for young people.

PLANNING, POLITICS AND GOVERNANCE

There has been a massive expansion of housing in all three towns (Table 11.1). With the continuity of urban planning regulations from the colonial era, they are still organised into a hierarchy of settlement density, but the occupation of each is less racialised today. Many investors, especially in the fast-expanding high-density suburbs, are land reform farmers and traders in agricultural commodities. Those able to generate surplus from land reform areas are the new landlords, very often with teachers, nurses and other civil servants being the tenants. Patterns of accumulation have shifted, as those with access to land invest in real estate and urban

businesses from the profits of farming.

While there has been a building boom across the sites, generating opportunities for brick-makers, hardware suppliers, transporters and builders, the wider public infrastructure of all three small towns is in a poor state. The state has not invested significantly in basic maintenance and expansion of roads, sewage systems or electricity supply in these fast-expanding towns. Even though strict planning restrictions are imposed on new buildings, often involving multiple inspections, the basic provision of services is seriously lacking. The failure of the state (local and national) to provide for basic services and infrastructure in rural and urban areas is a source of deep resentment, especially when high-profile expenditures and rampant corruption are highlighted.²⁵ In some cases people have had to invest themselves, for example, improving road access to new homes in town or regrading rural roads to ensure transport plies the route to town.²⁶

Perceptions of state neglect feed into a new politics in these areas, where new elites—now prosperous business people and property owners in town, but with links to rural areas via resettlement farms—articulate discontent. They may in turn get co-opted by the ruling party through various deals or may take up opposition politics, with all its attendant dangers. Whatever the outcome, the political dynamics of these areas have shifted dramatically. No longer are such towns the extension of the surrounding white farms, but they are part of a much more contested political milieu driven by new patterns of accumulation and class relations generated by land reform. With a differentiated population of farmers across communal area, A1 and A2 farms, it is those who are 'accumulating from below' particularly as a result of land reform that are profiting from new urban connections. This includes especially better-off male A1 farmers, but also women and young people who engage in trade and town-based businesses.

The standard approach to urban administration and governance therefore makes little sense, as people straddle urban and rural areas. Yet local government in Zimbabwe has no capacity to support the new array of demands on services, infrastructure and planning support across town and countryside. The growth of the informal economy, outside state planning controls and local taxation systems, equally makes conventional mechanisms of urban planning and administration ineffective. With new interest groups and associated power relations, the politics of the urban-rural nexus after land reform has become highly contested, with a new rural-urban politics emerging (Scoones 2015). How this translates into reformed administrative and governance arrangements for small towns and

associated rural areas remains a major challenge in Zimbabwe, as elsewhere (Satterthwaite and Tacoli 2003). There is, as a result, an urgent need to revive local government's technical and revenue-raising capacities, alongside reinforcing lines of accountability both with local citizens and the central state for a new post-land reform setting.

CONCLUSION: RETHINKING RURAL–URBAN RELATIONS AFTER LAND REFORM

The role of urban areas in Zimbabwe's restructured agrarian landscape after land reform has changed. In the past, rural small towns were often situated within large-scale commercial farming areas, where economic linkages were limited. They were dormitory towns for workers and sites for providing limited services.

Today, small towns in rural areas are much more intimately connected to the wider agrarian economy, with more regular movements, closer linkages and tighter social and economic networks binding rural and urban spaces. With greater opportunities for more people to produce agricultural surpluses following land reform—particularly in the smallholder A1 land reform sites—this has meant a rapid growth in economic linkages between rural and urban economies through marketing, labour exchange, service provision and transport.

In the past, the popular imaginary of 'town' was somewhere distant, where (mostly) men sought salaried employment as part of circular migration. Now, 'town' is closer—physically and psychologically—to rural homes, where men, but also importantly women and young people, can seek off-farm incomes. With lower transport costs driving down local prices, people shuttle between houses in town and on the farms and families are split and mobile; seasonally, but also daily, as there are always full vehicles coming to and from the resettlement farms.

With changing patterns of accumulation, driven in particular by agriculture (and also small-scale mining in Maphisa), there are new patterns of investment and business activity in these small towns. Much business has direct links to agriculture: from local marketing of produce to selling on to restaurants and food sellers to input supplies to equipment sales to financing and transport. Farmers with surplus also need services and consumption goods, and the grocery stores, tailors, hairdressers, bars and restaurants are full, particularly in marketing season. The rise in real estate development and investment among farmers has been an important

phenomenon in all sites, but especially in Mvurwi and Chatsworth where surpluses from tobacco and horticulture sales have been invested in bricks and mortar, with many moving into rental businesses to complement farm income.

These opportunities are only available to some of course, but the accumulators include women and young people who have profited from small town-based businesses. However, with the economic decline in Zimbabwe—especially in the mid-2000s and since around 2016, when inflation combined with currency collapse—many businesses have suffered. Indeed, between our enterprise surveys in 2016 and 2019 we saw significant closures of formal businesses, but also an expansion of more informal arrangements. In 2020, with the COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions on opening hours and movement between areas, many businesses closed. While a vibrant local economy linking rural and urban areas and centred on small towns is possible, it is not guaranteed and is highly dependent on the wider macro-economic and political situation.

The new economic configuration emerging following land reform requires rethinking standard planning approaches, which see urban and rural areas as separate. Thinking in terms of local economic development (Nel 2005), and facilitating linkages and multipliers between rural and urban economies (Tacoli 2002) as part of a 'territorial' approach (Losch 2016), is essential. As a result, new development priorities emerge. For example, feeder roads to rural areas become important, as does the provision of low-cost and safe market stands and temporary accommodation for mobile traders and business people. Focussing on the changing demographic of urban populations is significant too, with the need to provide safety and security for young and female mobile populations, who are essential to the urban economy often without permanent homes in town. This suggests a recasting of debates about 'structural transformation', with a focus on territorial connections across rural and urban spaces (Losch et al. 2012).

As our studies across Zimbabwe have shown, land reform has not only reshaped the agricultural economy, but resulted in major changes in rural small towns. Without much government support, people have refashioned urban and rural spaces and the relationships between them in ways that neither the planning textbooks nor census data reveal. Over the last twenty years, such changes cannot be described in terms of a simple dynamic of African urbanisation (Pieterse and Parnell 2014) (although towns have certainly expanded); nor in terms of processes of 'deagrarianisation' (Bryceson 1996) (although some farmers have certainly

Table 11.1: Small town profile, 2000-19.

	Mvurwi			Chatsworth			Maphisa		
	2000	2016	2019	2000	2016	2019	2000	2016	2019
Population (approx.)	8100	10500	11000	4500	8380	8500	5400	5500	6000
High-density stands	200	1700	1800	100	300	1580	223	1118	1118
Grocery stores/ supermarkets	11	33	63	4	13	21	6	10	12
Market vendors	20	70	120	0	12	12	9	18	45
Butcheries	3	14	8	2	4	3	4	8	8
Hardware stores	4	4	5	1	2	1	1	5	7
Carpentry/ welding	5	13	13	1	6	4	2	3	8
Tailors	4	8	8	0	1	2	4	5	3
Food outlets/ restaurants	6	20	20	0	2	4	2	5	6
Bars/bottle stores	9	11	10	3	6	5	6	10	8
Hair salons	0	4	4	0	1	3	1	2	4
Hotels/guest houses	2	4	4	0	0	1	3	2	2
Petrol stations	2	6	3	1	1	1	1	2	2
Minibuses/ taxis operating	2	35	46	0	15	30	0	30	25

diversified to non-farm income sources); nor as an outcome of a gradual process of transformation to an urban-industrial economy (McMillan and Headey 2014), as the land reform represented a sudden, radical rupture.

This study therefore complements the now extensive work on livelihoods and rural–urban linkages, adding the implications of land reform to understanding rural–urban dynamics, and especially emphasising the importance of a networked, interlinked local economy, connecting rural and urban spaces through highly contingent and context-specific social, economic and political relationships (Agergaard et al. 2019). A focus on actors, agency and relationships—inflected by social difference—is highlighted that goes beyond simply a structural description of linkages to understanding why and how these are constructed.

Zimbabwe’s land reform has certainly afforded the opportunity for some to accumulate and invest, although not everyone. Others without land can prosper through the income-earning opportunities in urban areas generated by a renewed local agriculture. The result is a variegated pattern in the small town economy that requires a focus on class, gender, age and other dimensions of social difference, in turn with important implications for both rural and urban politics.

In terms of research and development priorities, this post-land reform rural-urban configuration means going beyond a separated town and countryside focus to a wider spatial, territorial perspective, looking at sites of accumulation across rural and urban spaces, and the connections between them, focussing on how social and political relations and governance arrangements are able to support these. Small towns in this sense offer a window onto a new set of economic, social and political relations at the heart of Zimbabwe’s new agrarian landscape, and must be central to territorially focussed, regionally connected local economic development efforts into the future.

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NOTES

- ¹ <https://zimbabweland.wordpress.com/2020/09/27/know-your-epidemic-reflections-from-zimbabwe/>.
- ² Our A1 sample included 220 households near Mvurwi (Hariana/Ruia); 31 households (Clare/Lonely) near Chatsworth and 67 households near Maphisa (Vimbi/Luna). Our A2 samples (also 3-Tier in Matobo) were 39, 51 and 50 in Mvurwi, Gutu and Matobo.
- ³ Source, APRA survey, 2016–17.
- ⁴ Mvurwi 2014 survey ($N=220$).
- ⁵ APRA 2018–19 survey.
- ⁶ Interview Ruia Farm, November 2015.
- ⁷ Interview Mvurwi, November 2015.
- ⁸ A1 data from APRA survey; A2 data from Shonhe et al. (2020).
- ⁹ From our surveys in 2018, on average A1 farms were sold 0.45 tonnes of maize (at US\$390 per tonne), while A2 farms sold 3.7 tonnes, and 63% of A2 farmers and 27% of A1 farmers sold cattle (at around US\$500 per beast) (see <https://zimbabweland.wordpress.com/2020/05/11/zimbabwes-land-reform-areas-twenty-years-on-1-introducing-a-short-blog-series/> and Shonhe et al. 2020).
- ¹⁰ Interview, Chatsworth, October 2015.
- ¹¹ Interview, Chatsworth, October 2015.
- ¹² In our nearby A1 sample, 37% of households owned cars by 2019, while among A2 farmers 45% owned cars and 35% owned small trucks (see <https://zimbabweland.wordpress.com/2020/05/11/zimbabwes-land-reform-areas-twenty-years-on-1-introducing-a-short-blog-series/>).
- ¹³ Interview, Chatsworth, November 2015.
- ¹⁴ Interview, Chatsworth, December 2019.
- ¹⁵ Interview, Chatsworth, December 2015.
- ¹⁶ Interview, Maphisa, May 2016.
- ¹⁷ Tapiwa Chatikobo, pers. comm. (August 2020).

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- ¹⁸ See: <https://zimbabweland.wordpress.com/2016/10/31/are-joint-ventures-with-parastatals-the-route-to-reviving-large-scale-commercial-agriculture-in-zimbabwe/>.
- ¹⁹ Interview, Maphisa, May 2016.
- ²⁰ Interview, Maphisa, May 2016.
- ²¹ Interview, Maphisa, May 2016.
- ²² Interview, Maphisa, May 2016.
- ²³ Interview, Maphisa, May 2016.
- ²⁴ See: <https://africanarguments.org/2020/03/27/surviving-covid-19-fragility-resilience-and-inequality-in-zimbabwe/>.
- ²⁵ See: <https://nehandaradio.com/2020/07/15/vp-mohadi-commissions-us18-million-bridge-size-and-amount-causes-outrage/>.
- ²⁶ See: <https://zimbabweland.wordpress.com/2015/02/16/regalvanising-the-state-from-below-how-a-road-got-regraded/>.

Production and Markets

12

THE DYNAMICS OF REAL MARKETS: CATTLE IN SOUTHERN ZIMBABWE FOLLOWING LAND REFORM

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INTRODUCTION

The last few years have seen major changes in the agrarian economy in Zimbabwe. A combination of extensive land redistribution and severe macro-economic instability has resulted in significant shifts in agricultural production and the functioning of markets. The impacts of these changes have been highly differentiated, both across commodities and in different parts of the country. For the longer term, the consequences of the recent dramatic changes will have major ramifications for the way in which future development interventions are conceived. This article focuses on cattle — and particularly the beef commodity chain — and the southern province of Masvingo, a region which before 2000 had substantial areas under large-scale commercial ranching. The article is based on fieldwork carried out between 2005 and 2007, and aims to go behind the headlines to explore what has really been happening on the ground. The focus is on how markets work in practice, given the new agrarian relations and the highly volatile, hyperinflationary economy. Through a detailed qualitative

examination of the emerging structure and functioning of the cattle commodity chain, the article asks: what are its characteristics, and how do these compare with what existed before? By identifying the new players in the market — from producers to traders to processors to retailers to consumers — the article examines the evolving economic, social and political relations.

Our major focus is on production and market relationships and how these are shaped by social and political processes. The emphasis here is on 'real markets' (see, for example, de Alcantara, 1993; Platteau, 1994) and the wider 'real economy' (de Soto, 1989; Little, 2003; MacGaffey, 1991; Mkandawire, 1986)¹ within which markets are embedded. A central argument is that in many contexts — in Africa and beyond — the 'second economy', often characterized by illegality and a redefined relationship between the economy and the state, is often more important than the formal, official economy (MacGaffey, 1991). Without attention to the dynamics of the real economy we cannot understand how often vibrant economic activity, supporting numerous livelihoods, continues. This approach focuses on how markets work in practice and the social and political relationships that make them tick. As Berry (1989) highlights, it is processes of investment in institutions and the social relations of exchange that help us understand complex production and market processes in Africa. As others have emphasized, central to this is the functioning of patronage networks based on kinship, religion or political affiliation (for example, Bayart et al., 1999; Ellis, 1996). As MacGaffey (1991: 1) argues, such a perspective 'poses a challenge to many economic assumptions and has profound implications for policy formulation'. In many respects, a real economy and markets analysis contrasts with more structural and economic analyses of supply, commodity or value chains (such as Gereffi and Korzeniewicz, 1994), pushing us to consider issues of social difference in the construction of markets — race, gender, ethnic identity and political affiliation, for example — in addition to the more standard metrics associated with inputs, outputs, returns and rents. This article argues that such an understanding of social and political embeddedness of markets and the wider economy is central to understanding current, and indeed future, dynamics in the Zimbabwean context.

The new agrarian conditions in Zimbabwe created by the post-2000 land reform have stimulated important new relations, opening opportunities for some, closing options for others. This study is not an attempt to evaluate the success or otherwise of this land reform, but to identify current patterns and dynamics and future challenges. An understanding of how

markets function in practice, we argue, is particularly important for economies where formal and informal processes run side-by-side, and where the informal dimensions are taking on increasing importance in the overall picture. Zimbabwe is of course a good case study in this regard,² and one that allows us to explore how a change from a formalized, linear marketing system, organised around a relatively narrow group of players, can change to one that has a different, and potentially wider, scope and reach.

This study is based on a series of village surveys and focused interviews carried out across four research clusters in Masvingo province, involving a total of seventeen sites in the communal lands (small-scale farming areas), new resettlements (both semi-commercial [A2] and small-scale [A1]), as well as the few large-scale commercial farms remaining. The clusters are located along a north–south agroecological transect, moving from relatively high potential areas (Chatsworth and Masvingo) to lower potential areas (Ngundu and Chikombedzi), with the aim of capturing the full variety of circumstances in the province. In addition to the rural-based research, the study also involved carrying out interviews in towns and business centres across the province (including Chatsworth, Gutu, Masvingo, Ngundu, Mwenezi and Chiredzi).

The following sections explore in turn the characteristics of the new cattle commodity chains in the province, the politics and social relations associated with the real economy in the post-land reform period, and the implications this has for future development pathways. Through the lens of this empirical material, the article further asks: what are some of the essential elements of such markets in a highly dynamic and volatile economic setting?

CHANGING CONTEXTS FOR CATTLE MARKETING IN ZIMBABWE?

Understanding the dynamics of real markets requires close attention to contexts. Reflecting on changes over time, four broad periods can be identified, each with different configurations of market relations, but also, significantly, different political contexts. These have affected both the broad policy narratives around livestock production and marketing, and the structures influencing market access and governance.

The first period started in the first decades of the colonial era. Zimbabwe (then southern Rhodesia) was seen as classic ranching country,

and much effort was invested in building up a commercial livestock sector among recently arrived colonists (cf. Phimister, 1978; Samusuwo, 2003). During this period a dualistic production system emerged, separating white-owned beef ranching from black-owned livestock in the 'reserves'. These were two very different systems of production, with different breeds, stocking rates, range management approaches and uses for cattle. State support was, however, focused on the commercial beef sector, particularly with the establishment of the Cold Storage Commission (CSC) in 1937. The CSC became a virtual monopoly player in beef marketing, both for domestic and export markets (Mlambo, 1996). By fixing prices, stipulating grading systems and overseeing marketing, it had a huge influence in structuring the commodity chain for the best part of fifty years. A particular model of beef production thus came to dominate thinking about livestock management (Scoones and Wilson, 1988).³ It was highly technocratic, based on a restricted model of beef ranching, and supported by a tightly regulated marketing system dominated by a few players, notably the state-controlled CSC. It relied on the separation of the communal system, characterized by informal marketing, with entry into the formal market system allowed on specified terms, subject to strict veterinary regimes and regulated markets.

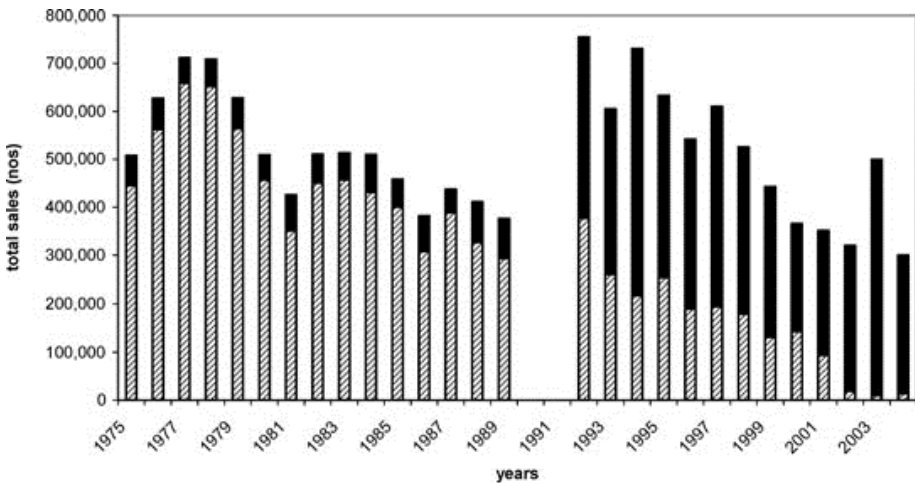
Following Independence in 1980 this pattern persisted more or less intact. Despite the political transition to majority rule there remained a focus on high-quality beef for export from the still largely white-owned, large-scale commercial farm sector, and a concentration of marketing activity around the CSC; the whole sector continued to be backed by strong state support. In 1987, for example, 90 per cent of all formal sales went through the CSC, including all exported meat (Cousins, 1990). The pattern was strongly reinforced from 1985 when Zimbabwe gained access to the lucrative European market through a trade agreement which allowed for the export of boneless beef under a generous reduced tariff, preferential access and quota arrangement.⁴ Following the 1985 agreement, Zimbabwe's annual quota generated around US\$ 50 million of much-needed foreign exchange each year. From this period, beef exports grew, peaking at 14,503 tonnes in 1993.

While the basic parameters of the beef production and marketing system remained, processes of economic liberalization from the early 1990s heralded the beginnings of a new phase. The Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) from 1991 encouraged the opening up of the marketing system to a range of private players, as well as a partial privatization of the CSC (now the Cold Storage Company). The CSC's share

of throughput declined from around 90 per cent at Independence to around 80 per cent by 1990 and around 40 per cent by 1995 (see Figure 12.1). At the same time the commercial herd contracted, down from a pre-Independence peak of around 3 million to around 2 million in the mid-1980s and about 1 million by the mid-1990s, following the devastating impact of the 1991–92 drought. However, by 1999 the commercial herd had recovered, with numbers reaching around 1.7 million by 1999 (see Figure 12.2). The basic support infrastructure for the commercial beef sector was still in place, enhanced by the continued generous incentives provided by the European trade agreement.

Across these two phases — from the early colonial period to the late 1990s — the technocratic model of a commercial, large-scale and export-oriented beef sector, with a dominant role for a state-led marketing body, persisted. Both the state-led and subsequent liberalized economy phase created a production and marketing elite, forging a close relationship between markets and the state. This reinforced a pattern of dualism, with the large-scale commercial sector continuing largely unaffected, despite occasional outbursts of political rhetoric. For the privileged few in the commercial beef industry able to cash in on the lucrative export trade, the

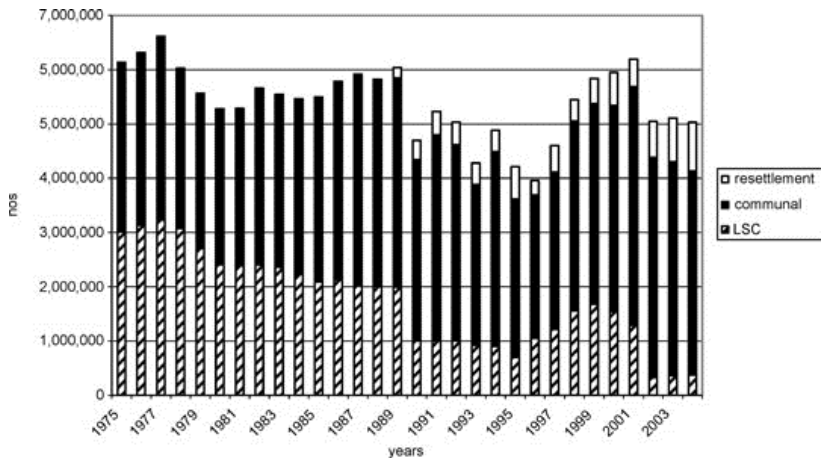
Figure 12.1: Total cattle sales, 1975-2004:



Key: shaded = CSC sales; black = private sales

Source: Data from Department of Veterinary Services.

Figure 12.2: Cattle populations, 1875-2004.



Key: shaded = commercial farms; black = communal areas; white = resettlement areas

Source: Data from Department of Veterinary Services.

1990s in particular was a boom period: there was a guaranteed export market offering good prices, export facilities were of high quality and well regulated, and disease control was effective and consistent.⁵ Indeed, it is this scenario, where the formal system dominated, which is often remembered today by those in the industry as the normative ideal, and indeed underpins many contemporary policy recommendations for rehabilitating the beef industry in the post-land reform period.⁶

But the economic and political sustainability of such a system was coming under threat. The CSC continued to lose vast amounts of money, with the government bailing them out at regular intervals.⁷ This fragile status quo all changed with the land invasions and subsequent land reform beginning in 2000 (Hammar et al., 2003; Moyo, 2004; Moyo and Yeros, 2005). This coincided with a major collapse in the formal economy, with spiralling inflation and sequential massive devaluations of the currency, creating a huge parallel, second economy (Bond, 2007; Brett, 2005; Clemens and Moss, 2005; Coorey et al., 2007; Davies, 2005.)

Although interpretations of causes and consequences vary dramatically, the basic contrasts with earlier phases could not be more stark. In 2005–06 the large-scale commercial herd stood at under 350,000, and deliveries to the CSC had collapsed almost completely, with only 5 per cent of formal sales going through the CSC in 2003. At the same time, the formal economy

of Zimbabwe was in melt-down. By mid-2008, year-on-year inflation was estimated to be over a million per cent, and, according to the International Monetary Fund, the formal economy had shrunk by over 30 per cent between 1999 and 2007.⁸ All economic indicators were down; the gap between the official and parallel exchange rates continued to increase; official unemployment was estimated at 90 per cent; and pay rates in many jobs were insufficient to make a living.

However, this did not mean that nothing was happening. On the contrary, the new phase following 2000 became dominated by informal, sometimes illegal, market interactions, involving many more, and very different, actors, connected through diverse and complex interactions. This recast the racial, economic, social and political relationships making up markets, reconfiguring the relationship between the state and these emergent informal market systems. A radically new commodity chain emerged, with around 90 per cent of cattle being small-scale (communal and A1/old resettlement) and the CSC becoming a minor player, but with a range of speculators, middlemen and private abattoirs appearing.

Elements of this change had already occurred. For example, the growth of private abattoirs and local butchery slaughter, following the liberalization of meat markets after structural adjustment, had encouraged a country-wide trade in meat, often contravening veterinary regulations. High premiums were paid within the export zone, creating a demand pull and a big incentive to break the rules. With government capacity to enforce such regulations severely hampered by reductions in budgets during the 1990s, an outbreak of foot-and-mouth (FMD) or some other disease in the export zone was simply waiting to happen. But these changes have accelerated since 2000. There has been a massive escalation in disease outbreaks, in part triggered by the breakdown in movement control accompanying the farm occupations, and leading to a ban on Zimbabwean beef exports. Although by 2007, the situation had improved and large-scale movements between areas had decreased, sporadic secondary FMD outbreaks were still being recorded, and the prospects of Zimbabwe regaining its export status looked bleak.⁹ Thus, in addition to a new production and marketing system, a whole new disease epidemiology now existed, one that, in contrast to the neat dualistic system that existed before, was increasingly difficult to manage through the approaches used in the past.

In the period since 2000 there have therefore been some dramatic shifts in both the context for and functioning of cattle commodity chains in Zimbabwe. Although some changes have been ongoing for a time — such

as the decline in the commercial herd and the reduced role of the CSC — others have been more sudden — notably the dramatic shift in epidemic disease dynamics. In addition, the hyperinflationary economic context has resulted in the emergence of an array of smaller enterprises and the explosion of the informal economy, putting some of the main market players, both in the processing and retail domains, into decline. There has thus been a major transition from a highly concentrated and regulated commodity chain dominated by a few players to a huge diversity of actors at all levels. This has been accompanied by a decline in state control and management of the market system, and a growth in independent, increasingly informal, sometimes illegal, economic activity and entrepreneurialism. The result is a massively more diversified and complex marketing system — some would say ‘haphazard’, ‘disorganised’ and ‘chaotic’¹⁰ — populated by more actors with more relationships.

Not surprisingly, such a radically new configuration of economic relations was not to everyone’s liking, and during 2007 there was a significant backlash. Although framed in terms of the need to control informality and illegality, with the deployment of familiar technocratic arguments, a wider political rationale must also be sought. With the economy increasingly out of control, and threatening the stability of the state and the political power of the ruling party, increasingly desperate measures were being taken, directed by the state security forces. Thus in mid-2007, the government announced the institution of price controls on beef, and the closing of private abattoirs, with the requirement that all meat had to be marketed through the CSC.¹¹ This was implemented in a draconian and inconsistent manner, with party youth, together with the police and sometimes army, mobilized to enforce the new regulations. This of course opened up huge opportunities for corruption and patronage, as well as driving the market underground. The price control measures resulted in beef disappearing from the butchers and shops; informal estimates suggested that overall production and supply remained at similar levels, but the meat was moving through new channels and at premium prices.¹²

This fourth phase, in which a political-security driven reinstatement of a technocratic order was attempted, remains formally in place, although in practice it is the informal, second economy that dominates. The next sections now turn to a more detailed examination of this commodity chain, looking at changes in production and markets, and the embedded nature of new political and social relations created by a combination of the land reform process and wider economic change. After assessing these

dynamics, the future challenges for development, as well as the opportunities for moving beyond the formal, dualistic system, are explored in the conclusion.

BEYOND DUALISM: CHANGES IN PRODUCTION SYSTEMS

As Figure 12.2 showed, the vast majority of cattle today are part of small-scale, mixed-farming systems in the communal and resettlement areas. The new resettlements, acquired as part of the 'fast-track' resettlement programme, already have significant cattle holdings. In surveys carried out across the Masvingo study sites during 2005, holdings on resettlements were higher than in the communal areas (averaging 5.4 per household compared to 4.1) (Mavedzenge et al., 2006). In the new resettlements, the pattern of ownership resembles that in the communal areas, with a few larger owners, and a longer tail of those with small herd sizes (in the range of 1–38). On average, 49 per cent of households owned cattle in the communal and resettlement areas (with a range of between 33 per cent and 73 per cent across sites). Cattle were owned by men and women, although women tended to concentrate on small-stock, and most decisions over cattle production were taken by men.

However, between 1999 and 2004, only 4.5 per cent of the total herd was sold. The average number sold was 2.5, but there was large variation, with thirty households selling no cattle, and the overall median being one. A few households, notably the large cattle owners in the Chikombedzi cluster, sold regularly, with the maximum being thirty head of cattle over the six year period. Annual sales rates ranged from 6 per cent of the total herd (in 2001) to less than 1 per cent (in 1999, 2000, 2002 and 2003). Informants suggested that sales were few, especially in resettlement areas, as they were trying to build up herds. Many observed that selling, unless under duress, was not advisable as it would undermine their ability to plough and cut into their savings. For most, sales were seen as a route to raising cash. In a series of fifteen group ranking exercises carried out in all sites during 2005–06, the reason for livestock sales identified 'household needs' (mostly groceries) as the most common. This was followed by (in rank order) school fees, bridewealth, the purchase of breeding animals, agricultural inputs and wages for agricultural work (Mavedzenge et al., 2006).

Cattle were sold to a variety of sources, mostly local, according to the group ranking exercises. Local beef committees (co-operative buying

Table 12.1: Relative importance of different market option over time.

		1982-84	1991-92	1997-98	2005-06
Ngundu cluster	CSC/Livestock Development Trust	*****	****	**	*
	Private buyers	***	****	*****	*****
	Butchers	*	*	*	****
	Local sales	*	*	**	*
Chikombedzi cluster	CSC direct slaughter	*	**	**	*
	Private buyers	-	-	**	*****
	Butcher	-	*	*	*
	Locals (<i>majonijon</i>)	***	*****	*	***
	Local sales (<i>showini</i>)	*****	*	****	-

Source: Matrix ranking exercises — first three periods from field study carried out in 1998 (see Scoones et al., 2001: 42) and 2005–06 from follow-up fieldwork.

groups of teachers, extension workers, police etc.) dominated, followed closely by sales to speculators and intermediaries at private sales. In some places, missions and schools provided a regular market for meat purchases. In other areas, butchers were close by and did not usually require movement permits to send individual animals for pole slaughter. Long-term connections between butchers, storeowners and particular cattle keepers meant that tight vertical marketing linkages existed in some cases. Otherwise people sold or exchanged to other local farmers, although such sales were very limited. Table 12.1 shows the relative importance of different market options over time. In contrast to the pattern experienced a decade ago, people commented on the decline in formal auction sales, and complained that, while improving sales opportunities and ease of sale, private sales or door-to-door selling gave lower prices, and opened up opportunities for stock theft.

Large-scale commercial ranches now make up only 7 per cent of the

total land area in the province, with a total of 1.2 million hectares having been transferred to around 20,000 households in the new resettlements.¹³ Those former (white) commercial farmers who are still engaging in the ranching business are deploying a variety of strategies. According to interviews, lease grazing across Masvingo province has taken place on the massive Nuanetsi ranch owned by the Development Trust of Zimbabwe, both on CSC ranches and in the new resettlement areas. One rancher reputedly had cattle on eleven separate farms, selling on to a variety of buyers, abattoirs and butchers. Others are engaged in exchange arrangements providing services (water pumps, veterinary drugs, transport or fuel) in return for access to paddocks on their (or others') former ranches. Others are operating as 'speculators' — buying cattle in new resettlement areas, taking them to a holding area or direct to slaughter once they are sufficient in number for a lorry load, or exchanging heifers for communal/resettlement area oxen for fattening and sale. In other words, the former large-scale commercial ranchers have had to integrate rapidly into a new system, operating often for the first time alongside smaller players, and usually without the back-up of large landholdings as security.

The old dualistic system may have all but disappeared, but what has replaced it? As discussed, today there is a predominance of small herd sizes, a herd structure focused on females and herd growth, a reliance on births for building herds, a very limited number of cattle purchases due to economic constraints, and, in the main, the absence of stratified or specialized beef-focused production systems. While the remnants of the former commercial ranching system operate through lease grazing and barter arrangements in a number of places, these are relatively limited and under threat. Some new semi-commercial resettlement farmers (designated A2) have plans for establishing beef herds, but on relatively small holdings averaging 250 hectares, and with limited capital and business financing, this is not proving easy.

UNDERSTANDING REAL MARKETS: ACTORS, RELATIONSHIPS AND POLITICS

So how are these new production systems, and the reconfiguration of the formerly dualistic structure in the cattle industry, affecting patterns of marketing, and the social and political relationships these engender?

These new production and market systems must operate outside the

formal system, often engaging in the parallel economy, sometimes involving smuggling and illegal cross-border trade, and always on the margins of what is regarded as 'official' (although this changes regularly). In the hyperinflationary setting of Zimbabwe, there are considerable risks and uncertainties at play; the transaction costs of dealing with multiple players are high, and confronting uncertainty and illegality always stressful. Thus there are both benefits and costs, winners and losers in the new setting, and any assessment of future prospects must take a broad view. The following sections aim to do just that.

The interviews below offers a profile of seven actors in the new commodity chain, based on 2005–06 interviews. These range from small-scale speculators (case 1), through intermediary buyers working for a range of abattoirs/butchers on a commission basis (case 2), a large-scale buyer engaged in heifer exchanges, linked to a well-established ranching operation elsewhere (case 3), a new A2 farmer with a butchery business and store in Ngundu rural service centre (case 4), a buyer in Masvingo town who supplies his own restaurant and other butchers (case 5), Masvingo-based abattoir owners with an outreach buying team, linked to rurally-based intermediaries (case 6), to, finally, a rancher/speculator/cattle dealer of long standing from the lowveld who currently leases grazing and formerly had ranching land (case 7).

None of these case studies is in any way 'typical'. What is striking is that there is an enormous array of different arrangements, depending on highly particular local circumstances. What is equally striking is the dynamism and entrepreneurial inventiveness of this market. This is a challenging time to be engaged in any business, given high inflation, expensive credit and uncertainties on all fronts. But different people have carved out new market niches, with great energy and ingenuity. Not all will survive in such businesses, and one characteristic critical for survival is to keep changing and manoeuvring as the external economic environment shifts. But this diversity of players and the dynamism of their activities is a far cry from the very formalized, organised marketing chains of the past. The CSC, formal auctions, and large-scale purchasers from the commercial sector are either absent or operating in radically new ways. Today, more people are making a living from the marketing of cattle, even if for each this is not much, and not without difficulty. These 'new' entrants of course include many of the older players in the system, but in new roles. For example, the white-owned, ranching-abattoir chain which dominated the meat trade in Masvingo for the past decades can no longer operate as it did. It has had to change, even if reluctantly. Former ranchers, now without land, must run

their remaining animals on different patches of leased grazing and have had to diversify their activities to include a greater engagement in communal area and resettlement marketing, often through new intermediaries. Space has opened up for new entrepreneurs too, now able to engage in business and trade in new ways, although with small turnovers and limited profits. Overall, it is a much more complicated commodity chain, based on different principles, relationships and politics.

REAL MARKET CASE STUDIES

Case One:

In 2002, R., who lives in a Mwenezi District township, sold his car. He was able to buy two beasts which he drove to the nearby hotel where the owner was collecting together animals for transporting to an abattoir in Masvingo. From the profits R., together with two friends, began to build up the business. Today they transport around three truck loads of twenty-five animals to the abattoir per month. They hire a truck from a former white commercial farmer and purchase animals from all over the area. When possible they also buy from official auctions organised occasionally by the council. Animals are fattened on a holding ground hired from the council with purchased feed supplements as there is no grazing. A recent initiative has been to buy up heifers from commercial farms near Masvingo. These are transferred to Mwenezi and exchanged for oxen from the communal and resettlement areas. They have received no loan finance for their business.

Case Two:

M. learnt about the cattle buying business from another trader. In mid-2005 he was buying cattle from communal and resettlement areas across Chivi, Mwenezi and Chiredzi Districts. He registers with the local veterinary officer and pays a visit to the local councillor in the area where he intends to buy cattle. A month before buying he visits the dip attendant in the area to spread the word of impending purchases. As an agent to a number of buyers, M. can choose between them on the basis of the prices they offer and the reliability they show. He is currently working with a buyer from a Masvingo abattoir. The departure of large-scale commercial farmers has seen a proliferation in the number of private buyers, and the flow of animals through more diverse routes. As an agent, this variety also means that fees are kept reasonably competitive. Different buyers pay fees differently: some pay per kg of live mass purchased, while some pay a fixed amount per beast.

Case Three:

H. is a former white commercial farmer, and has been operating as a cattle buyer for more than twenty years. He is well known across the region, and regularly attended sales in communal areas, buying up cattle for transport to farms for fattening and onward sale. In the late 1980s, H. made use of his capacity to breed substantial numbers of heifers on his farm (and purchase more from his large-scale commercial farm neighbours near Gweru) to establish a system of heifer exchange with the communal areas. Another commercial rancher observed '[our] main money-spinner is [in 1999] buying communal area cattle, fattening on the commercial farms and selling on at the commercial farm sales for higher prices. You can more than double prices at commercial auction. With a fat steer from an African area — you wouldn't notice the difference [in quality]'.¹⁴ One or two heifers were offered in exchange for oxen or non-reproductive cows, depending on their size. This was taken up by communal area farmers with great enthusiasm, especially following the 1991–92 drought, as a means of restocking without loan finance which at that time was very restricted. The result has been a significant influx of exotic heifers into the communal herd — mostly Brahman and Sussex — which formed a significant base for herd growth in the past decade. In the last few years, following the land reform and the resulting lack of supply of heifers for sale, H. and others have reverted to simply buying, moving animals to holding farms and leased grazing.

Case Four:

S. opened his butcher's business in 2001, at a time when there were only two other butchers in Ngundu township (there are now nine). It was good business and was an ideal complement to his store which had run next door for many years. He also had applied for an A2 plot in Mwenezi district as part of the land reform programme, and was allocated a plot in Mateke hills. When the butchery opened he sourced his animals from a nearby new resettlement area. When demand was up, he would slaughter three or four beasts a week. He had no problem with getting animals — there is always someone in the area wanting to sell. He has attended a couple of auctions over the last four years, but tends to go alone with his own pick-up. In 2002 he purchased thirty heifers from a ranch in Chiredzi district; they were left at the new resettlement area on a loan arrangement, looked after by three boys. For a period, these animals were used to supply the butcher's business. They were later transferred to his new farm in 2003 (over 150 km away). This was too far to bring for slaughter in Ngundu, so he has since relied on his old network of contacts in the new resettlement area for supplies of slaughter animals.

Case Five:

R. owns a fast-food cafe in Masvingo. He has been in the beef ' marketing business for two years, having been on the look out for new business opportunities. He owns his own lorry and sources cattle from communal areas and resettlement areas which he provides wholesale to butchers and supermarkets. He attends public auctions where, by his own admission, buyers collaborate beforehand to decide on a strategy and prices, and also negotiates private sales. In line with the formal regulations, he is accompanied by a policeman and a vet to the point of sale where clearance forms are signed by the buyer, seller, kraal head and village witness, police and vet. Most of his competitors sell direct to abattoirs rather than selling on to retailers. He has recently received an A2 farm in Mwenezi and plans to ranch his own cattle there.

Case Six:

C. is an established Masvingo abattoir owner. When the commercial herd was still intact they would sometimes book 500–1000 head at a time. C. will collect free if there are more than thirty-five. However, the growing trend now is for 'walk-ins' of three or four animals. Increasingly, the former ranchers who supplied their own stock to C. are operating a network of speculators — organizing sales from the settlers on their properties or in communal areas and booking them in. Bookings were full in 2005 given the drought conditions. C. has five buyers who attend auctions and arrange private sales. These include the manager's two sons. He envisages in the future having up to twenty buyers arranging animal sales, putting them on holding grounds and then taking lorry loads to the abattoir.

Case Seven:

V. operates as a livestock speculator from a ranch in the Mateke Hills. In the 1990s he was buying goats for export to Mauritius, and providing exotic goats for local farmers to fatten. He used to be able to buy four or five animals at a time with ease, but now he finds it harder to buy in larger numbers, attributing this to the fact that speculation is becoming a lot more competitive, with more people approaching headmen to secure preferential access. He has a reputation in communal areas as a 'good buyer', but buys on account. He no longer attends fixed auction days but advertises through word of mouth and with flyers the days that he will be buying in an area.

Source: Interviews in Masvingo province, 2005-06.

RISKY BUSINESS: COPING WITH HYPERINFLATION

With such a large array of actors in the market, running on often small turnovers and low margins, the risks for any player are great. No longer are large tracts of land available for fattening up cheap animals bought from the communal areas. With land occupation and reform there has been great insecurity and much cattle theft. Guaranteed prices and markets no longer exist, and, with hyperinflation, any price regulation is meaningless. Inflationary pressures have also meant that capital is scarce and expensive, and borrowing is extremely risky. So any large-scale operation relying on anything but immediate cash transfer and expenditure is likely to falter. Those able to operate must speculate on prices and inflationary movements of different goods, and try and transfer cash in local currency into a useable asset as quickly as possible. This is possible for the smaller operators who are making small profits to fund day-to-day needs, but it is not the basis for longer-term investment and business development.

Offsetting risks is therefore all important. This requires careful financial manoeuvring and hedging, including complex strategies of diversification, with multiple eggs in multiple baskets, and livestock trading/speculation as part of a portfolio of livelihood activities. Risk-spreading and avoidance also requires tapping into and developing social networks that allow things to run smoothly, reducing the sometimes hideous transaction costs of operating in such a complex, highly inflationary economy, where uncertainties prevail at every turn.

The lack of formal credit is a constraint mentioned by many informants. Outside the often well-connected semi-commercial resettlement farmers in the A2 sites, no case was reported of formal loans being accessed for the purchase of livestock. While some were aware of initiatives from newspaper reports, none had approached the banks or other loan agencies, and all dismissed these options. A trader from Mwenezi district commented: 'We have no finance for our business. These loans are only for the big people. You need a shop, a car or something. What about the small guy? We get nothing'.¹⁵ An A1 settler from the Ngundu cluster was told by the bank he approached: 'Giving loans to dryland farmers is like tying your money to the leg of a wild buck — you are assured that you will never recover it'.¹⁶ Transport is another major problem. A hike in fuel prices or reliance on the black market can mean a profitable venture is turned into a loss-making nightmare at a stroke. There is thus a greater move towards localization of commodity networks, with supply and demand being more closely linked. Transporting animals from communal areas in trucks for

fattening on a ranch in another province is no longer feasible, and animals must either be moved directly to slaughter in large enough numbers to make it economically viable, or sold locally to butchers, dealers and others. The growth in local butchers is phenomenal and reflects this dynamic (see below).

This growth of local-level economic activity means that supply and demand have to be more closely matched. There is no way a 'super' grade animal is going to be sold at premium prices in rural townships. Thus the demand for higher quality animals has all but disappeared. While the CSC and the urban abattoirs will source such animals and sell on to retailers, this is no longer the dominant component of the commodity chain. With exports very limited, the market was being flooded with high grade meat in 2005–06, far exceeding demand. The surplus was either sold at a loss or disposed of in other ways; the CSC, for example, used it in rations for the army.

In this new market it is only the flexible, fleet-footed operators who succeed. The cumbersome, bureaucratic and highly capitalized CSC looks even more of an anachronism. There is little likelihood of the huge investments made in the infrastructure of the old-style meat industry making any return in the near future. The Masvingo abattoir, for example, is operating at around 10 per cent of capacity.¹⁷ Some radical re-thinking is clearly necessary, as alternative pathways for production and marketing emerge.

ILLEGAL TRADE: SMUGGLING, RUSTLING AND INFORMAL EXCHANGE

One such pathway is based on illegal trade. Although it has always existed in some form, it is perhaps more important now than ever. Rustling and livestock theft have long been part of the livestock economy in Zimbabwe, especially near the border areas. Increasing levels of border control, including fencing and manned border posts, restricted this to some extent, but there were always regular police reports of thefts and rumours of well-organised rustling groups operating, particularly in the lowveld areas. However, the period from 2000 has seen an explosion of such illegal trade. For some, the illegal acquisition of cattle from the large-scale ranches was part-and-parcel of the land invasion process. Termed 'confiscation' by those who benefited, the so-called *jambanja* period saw the boundaries between legality and illegality become extremely blurred, and political justifications

were often used (Chaumba et al., 2003). No-one knows the number of animals that transferred hands without payment during this period.

At the same time, there was also an increase in illegal movement of animals across borders: a considerable number of animals were apparently moved to Mozambique by ranch owners and farmers removed from their land by invaders. Again the evidence is anecdotal and figures are difficult to estimate, but certainly not all the animals removed from the commercial herd were 'confiscated' locally or disposed of through formal sale or slaughter within Zimbabwe. The confusion and lawlessness of this period provided an opportunity for criminal elements to steal animals and move them across borders illegally. Often working in gangs, Mozambicans cooperated with locals to steal animals both from the ranches and from the communal areas, often in large numbers, particularly in the Chikomedzi cluster.

This sort of rustling declined during 2005–06, following the intensification of local concern and police activity after a particularly gruesome attack.¹⁸ However, an ongoing cross-border trade of cattle and goats persists between Zimbabwe and Mozambique. This now involves well-organised traders who purchase animals in large numbers and trek them illegally across the border for transport by rail to Maputo, and across the border into South Africa for sale in local townships. This is a highly lucrative trade operated in the now valuable Mozambican currency, *metacais*.

Demand for foreign currency also drives other forms of exchange, including a thriving biltong (dried meat — both beef and wild game) trade from the Chikomedzi cluster to South Africa. In contrast to the cross-border live animal trade to Mozambique, which is run by men, this is largely operated by women. Women come from the border town of Beitbridge and transport sacks of biltong illegally across the border for sale to wholesale and retail outlets in South Africa.

These new cross-border relationships and exchanges are in part driven by the Zimbabwean economic crisis, but they also are possible because of new sources of production. Wildlife harvesting in the resettlement areas of Mateke Hills, for example, has increased significantly as more people now have access to this resource. In addition to new gender dynamics in production and trade, cross-border interactions require other relationships to be built. In the case of the live animal trade this has involved Zimbabweans and Mozambicans (often both Shangaan speaking) cooperating in new business ventures, while for the risky cross-border movement to South Africa, good relationships with intermediaries allow

safe passage and successful trade.

RETAIL REVOLUTION

Further up the commodity chain, the retail sector within Zimbabwe has had to respond to these new dynamics. Different outlets exist in a highly differentiated market, ranging from large chain supermarkets, to butchers which source their own slaughter animals to butchers linked to farms, to the informal sales in the rural areas, to so-called beef committees, or indeed unregulated sales of meat at a village level. With a significant increase in the number of players, there is also more competition among retail outlets, wholesalers and processing abattoirs. When the market was dominated by the CSC, the number of retail outlets was limited; the new situation has led to massive growth in this sector. The number of butchers in Masvingo and Ngundu, for example, has increased five-fold in the past decade, while the number of abattoirs has doubled.

A total of thirty-one butchers were surveyed during 2005–06 in the provincial capital, Masvingo, with most being in the 'township' area (twenty) and the rest in 'town' (eleven). Town butchers are dominated by supermarkets, five of which have butchers. These include local supermarkets established by Masvingo-based businessmen, as well as well-known national chains. With the exception of one supermarket at the township bus rank, the remaining nineteen butchers outside the central urban area are small in scale. There is one 'chain', with three outlets run by one family business, and all the rest are businesses owned by individuals (Mavedzenge et al., 2006).

In terms of throughput, the five supermarkets were averaging 5.5 carcasses per week, the four larger butchers averaged 8.5 carcasses per week, and the remaining thirteen averaged 3.2 carcasses per week. Thus in 2005–06 around ninety carcasses were sold through butchers' outlets in Masvingo each week, 70 per cent of which were traded through independent butchers and 30 per cent through supermarkets. Of the thirty-one butchers surveyed, nine sourced meat wholesale from abattoirs. In the past, CSC was the favoured supplier as it offered graded and CSC roller-marked meat. However, supplies have been poor since 2000, and some have turned to other sources, notably Triangle and Chimombe Ventures. Others still rely on the CSC arguing that it can deliver the type of quality required in terms of grading, hygiene and refrigeration. The rest source their own animals directly from nearby rural areas, or at least in part from their own

often newly-acquired farms. Sourcing in small quantities is increasingly costly due to rapidly escalating transport hire costs, fuel shortages and the requirements of both the veterinary department (for movement control) and the police (stock theft unit) to accompany and register any local sale. Some have abandoned local sourcing and accept the higher prices in wholesale markets at the local abattoirs. Larger outlets, including Tsungai supermarket and the Rashai Foroma chain, source from wholesale markets, as well as direct sourcing for slaughter at local abattoirs, and, in the case of Foroma, from their own farm too.

In 2005–06 all butchers had relationships with local abattoirs. There were five beef abattoirs in Masvingo urban/peri-urban area, including three large A-B grade abattoirs (CSC, Carswell and Montana) and two smaller outfits (Kismet and Tafira). Different butchers had different relationships with the abattoirs. While all agreed that the quality of service is high at CSC, many smaller businesses complained of the costs, and the fact that the CSC takes away tallow. Montana buys, slaughters, processes and transports directly to Harare and so is not so involved in the local trade. Carswell, on the other hand, was seen by many as a good alternative to CSC, offering good service at reasonable prices. Others preferred the cheaper out-of-town services of Kismet and Tafira abattoirs.

There is also a local market for meat in rural areas. Local sales of cattle for beef tend to be often deceased or sick/wounded animals. As a new entrant to the cattle buying business in Chikombedzi put it: 'We are willing to buy moving bones not fat animals. We want to buy cattle that are beyond recovery — no matter how thin. Diseased cattle will not discourage us'.¹⁹ Cattle sales in the rural areas continue to be opportunistic, usually the result of distress, although hyperinflation has reduced wage levels and suppressed demand.

Land reform has had a number of specific impacts on the retail sector. New social and economic relationships are emerging, particularly between groups of producers in the communal and resettlement areas and butchers in the urban areas. Such connections are increasingly by-passing the formal routes of supply through buyers to large abattoirs and supermarkets. As one informant put it: 'the old white businesses are having to rethink fast — they used to only work with their [white] friends, now they have to come right out to the communal areas'.²⁰ The shift to a wider range of smaller retail outlets, located in townships and rural business centres rather than the towns, is generating a range of new business opportunities, and allowing diversification beyond a previously very narrow base. In parallel, a form of vertical integration is emerging, as new owners of resettlement

plots link production and fattening enterprises to butcher/restaurant businesses in urban areas. With the majority of supply now comprising low grade animals from the rural areas, the meat market has shifted and is now more in line with demand. This means that the high-end abattoir facility constructed by the CSC in Masvingo is now massively underutilized. It was designed for a through-put of 500 animals per day, but in 2005–06 less than twenty per day were being slaughtered, 70 per cent of which were customer service slaughters for individuals and butchers, and the remaining 30 per cent were CSC's own animals, either from remaining CSC ranches or from animals bought in the rural areas by CSC's two remaining buyers.²¹

With such a diversity of players operating in the new beef commodity chain, social relationships are critical. Whether this involves connections with the police and veterinary officer to get approval for the movement of animals to a butcher, or with a network of speculators and buyers in the rural areas, or access to land for holding or fattening animals for slaughter, each requires the nurturing and maintenance of relationships. The new 'real economy' of the beef commodity chain in Masvingo is, as a result, not straightforward. Informal, illegal and relationship-based transactions require much investment, and good connections. These work for some, but not for others. And when the state and security services intervene, as happened during the attempt at price control during 2007, this dynamic becomes even more complex.

BACKLASH: REASSERTING CONTROL

In mid-2007 the government withdrew licences for all private abattoirs in the country, and issued a price schedule for the sale of beef. The usual technocratic arguments about health and safety, as well as the need to reassert economic order in the formal economy, were deployed. But as with many things in the febrile, paranoid context of Zimbabwe at the time, there were other factors in the mix. The need to assert control in the context of forthcoming elections was uppermost in the minds of the political elite. Alongside this, the fast disappearing formal economy offered decreasing opportunities for political patronage and rent seeking. With politically-motivated directives being increasingly implemented through the security services, the beef price control and abattoir licensing regulations came under the control of state security forces.

The new entrepreneurialism unleashed by the potent combination of radical land reform and the collapse of the formal economy had begun,

many commentators agreed, to challenge the power and authority of the central state, and with this the long-held technocratic ideals of how a 'proper' economy, and associated beef production and market system, should function. Despite the radical rhetoric about overturning colonial inequalities, a deep-seated conservatism prevailed in many quarters. With many in the political and security elite, as well as businessmen allied to the ruling party, seeing the post-2000 period as an opportunity for rapid accumulation and new forms of patronage, amidst the apparent chaos of land reform and economic collapse, the reassertion of a technocratic order, but with new actors in charge, was highly convenient both politically and economically. Despite its disastrous economic record over many decades, it was the state-controlled CSC that became the centre-piece of the state's attempt to reassert control. As a symbolic representation of state influence and an icon — even if mythical — of a past age when commercial beef production produced great national riches, the CSC was once again catapulted to the centre of the state's ambitions, with an edict that all beef sales must go through the company.

During much of the latter part of 2007 there were attempts to implement this policy. Licences were withdrawn from abattoirs, and many closed. The CSC's throughput increased somewhat, but not substantially. Youth brigades,²² authorized by the party and supported by the security services, went from butcher to butcher, shop to shop, checking on prices and arbitrarily fining or arresting those who contravened the regulations. Of course with real prices increasing at an exponential rate due to inflation the price controls were meaningless before they were published, and no-one could afford to sell beef through regular channels. The black market increased further, and the opportunities for middlemen, speculators and dealers exploded — from those with good political connections and protection to those operating illegally at the margins (*makorokozo*).

The unevenness and arbitrariness of the implementation was soon apparent, with some abattoirs targeted (particularly the white-owned operations in Masvingo), while others were allowed to continue. The price control policy quickly descended into chaos, with the security services closing businesses, extracting bribes and imposing fines, while the beef market moved underground, with even less health and safety control. There were desperate attempts to reverse the political decisions by the relevant technical agencies and ministries, but to no avail. While the commodity chain discussed in earlier parts of this article began to re-emerge towards the end of 2007 and into 2008, with the re-licensing of some private abattoirs and a diversion of security force attention to other

issues, as the elections came closer, there were inevitably increased costs, as more people had to be paid off, or contingency plans had to be put in place in the event of an arbitrary clamp-down by avaricious security personnel or political officials. Overall this period saw heightened uncertainty, with the threats and opportunities for extraction from newly empowered state security officials and party-sanctioned youth adding to the already severe travails of the economic situation.

CONCLUSION

This article has offered an overview of the changing nature of the beef production and marketing system in Masvingo province, Zimbabwe. A series of overlapping phases was identified, starting with the technocratic, elite model based on a dualistic system that persisted from the colonial era to the 1990s. There were some changes, although only marginal, as a result of economic liberalization and structural adjustment in the 1990s, but the system was only confronted fundamentally by the combined effects of radical land reform and economic collapse from 2000 onwards. This released a new form of entrepreneurialism and a radical reconfiguring of the commodity chain, involving many new players and relationships. This in turn was challenged in 2007 by the well-connected political-business-security elite which tried, ultimately unsuccessfully, to reverse some of the changes that had occurred since 2000, attempting to re-establish technocratic order and control, but with new masters

These different phases, and the associated shifts in the beef production and marketing system, have resulted in some major changes in the way markets and the wider economy must be understood. They have highlighted, for example, the changing relationship between the economy and state power and authority. In addition, they have highlighted how the emergence of a second economy blurs the boundaries between the formal and informal, the legal and illegal, leading to fundamental changes in the social and political relationships of market actors. What MacGaffey (1991: 10) argues for Zaire in the 1980s has many echoes for Zimbabwe today:

Government intervention does not create informal practices but changes the context in which they take place and their legal definition. The margin between the legal and the illegal, the legitimate and illegitimate is often shadowy. Ultimately it is the responsibility of the state to define legitimate economic activity... The state, however, operates to further the interests of the dominant class. Through the second economy, the citizenry may... also

express resistance to the state.

In Zimbabwe significant opportunities have opened up as a result of the emergent second economy, particularly in contrast to the highly restricted dualistic and racialized economic structure that preceded it. But there are also evident costs and challenges: not everyone has had the opportunity to benefit. With new land for many and growing cattle populations on the new resettlements, access has widened, but this has not been universal. The patterns of cattle ownership in the new resettlements show a highly uneven distribution, with only some able to sell cattle, particularly following the droughts of the early 2000s, and as a result of the increasingly troubled economic situation. Especially following the politically-motivated clampdown of 2007, access has been further constrained, depending increasingly on political patronage relations.

A bigger question is posed as a result of this assessment: are we seeing a sustained transition, a fundamental reconfiguration of production and markets, or a passing phase, after which a new technocratic order will be imposed, controlled by a new set of elite players? As our study has shown, all parts of the commodity chain have changed dramatically, from production to processing to retailing. This has fundamentally reshaped the relationship between the state and market actors, and — despite a fairly draconian backlash in 2007 — the new dynamic unleashed from 2000 has been difficult to suppress. The real markets that underpin these new economic arrangements re-fuelled by very different relationships, based on new connections and associations. Those who once dominated are adapting to new circumstances in order to survive, but this is not easy. Historic costs, inappropriate infrastructure and poor relationships, sometimes based on long-term racial hostility or indifference, are making adjustment to the new realities an uphill struggle. What should we make of this emerging scenario? What future challenges are likely to arise? Clearly it is too early to be definitive. In Zimbabwe things remain in flux. The continued uncertainties over land ownership and tenure security, for example, pose problems for diverse producers across the study sites. The current levels of macro-economic instability, and particularly the recent pattern of hyperinflation, have added to these problems.

Contrary to some of the more pessimistic proclamations on the current situation, it is not true that there are no markets today — there are just very new markets and commodity chains, associated with different players, new sources of supply and different patterns of demand. Even when uncertainties over land and the economy decline, it seems likely that these will remain. The old dualistic system, the inheritance of the colonial era

sustained more or less intact for twenty years following Independence, has almost certainly gone for good. This is not to say that a more diversified set of production systems will not emerge, along with some re-establishment of larger scale commercial beef production. But most production systems will be rooted in mixed farming, with cattle as an important input to agricultural production. This is a far cry from the beef model so often seen as the ideal in the past (and indeed in some quarters even today).

The beef model of the past was based on the assumption that separation of production systems and specialization in different products was the route to progress. This created a dualism, an artificial, and ultimately politically untenable, distinction between 'communal' (read African, backward, subsistence, mixed farming) and 'commercial' (read European, modern, forward-looking, export-oriented) systems of production. The separation in production systems — spatially, economically, technically, socially, politically and racially — was replicated through the commodity chain, with separate investment and support for each. For many, both pre- and post-Independence, the beef model, associated with the 'commercial' production system, was seen as necessarily superior, and therefore worthy of continued and substantial support. This separation of production systems — large-scale commercial/freehold and small-scale/communal — and the associated bifurcation of commodity chains entrenched social, economic, political and racial divides. There were very different relations in each system, associated with unhealthy animosities and unacceptable inefficiencies. In the end this was not sustainable. It had not been economically viable for some time, but it was its political unsustainability that was ultimately its undoing. The pressure for land reform was irresistible by 2000, and the events of that period set in train a long-overdue process of land redistribution.

The new market configurations that have emerged since 2000 are based on very different social and political relations. The white rancher-speculator-abattoir owner/operator chain had developed over fifty years, with strong business, friendship and kin relations forming the basis of the network, reinforced by a tight, rather insular social milieu centred on the sports and social clubs of regional towns such as Masvingo. Recent events have shattered this social and economic world, often with traumatic consequences. While in the past white businesses interacted with African producers and labourers largely on their own terms, this is no longer possible. Both the political and economic conditions have changed so radically that the functioning of the old, inward-looking social basis of business and trade is no longer feasible. Instead, new relations have to be

brokered, with new entrants coming into these networks, and, indeed, wholly new networks being formed.

There has of course been an emerging black business and political elite which has been involved in the livestock trade for some time, mostly around transport and butchery operations. However, land reform and the associated political and economic shifts, have profound implications. New alliances have to be formed, and they have to make political sense, often at a very local level. Those who formerly dominated the beef trade have responded in different ways. Some have given up; others have retreated into smaller operations with old networks; while others have begun to negotiate relations which accommodate new political and economic realities. Little is known about these new networks and many remain clandestine and informal, but they suggest some important new social, political and racial contours of the business environment for cattle marketing in Masvingo province, and beyond.

Given the volatility and uncertainty associated with the current economic environment, such new business and trading relationships must operate under incredibly difficult circumstances, at whatever stage in the commodity chain. Some form of economic stability is clearly essential. Time will tell which operations survive and which fail. But, while there will inevitably be a shakeout, the end result will not look like the centralized, integrated commodity chain of the past, dominated by a few (mostly white) players. With more actors and more interactions come shifting benefits and costs. Today, more people interact in the commodity chain; with this greater number of intermediaries come the risks of rising transaction costs, inefficiency and capture by sectional interests. The positive side of the story, however, highlights the dynamic, entrepreneurial activity that has emerged across the commodity chain. The new focus on local production and sale reduces transport costs and adds value locally, but makes oversight and regulation very difficult. With the loss of the major high-value export markets, the total value of output has declined, even if the benefits are more evenly distributed than before. In recent years total cattle sales have declined, although not by as much as suggested by the formal statistics because of the boom in informal marketing. But there are questions of future supply: with few farmers having enough animals to sell regularly, the market is going to be reliant on a limited, but steady flow of relatively low-grade animals sold by farmers who keep them largely for other purposes and dispose of them only when necessary.

Overall, therefore, the existing infrastructure (including large abattoirs, fencing, and feedlots) and the associated policy frameworks (for disease

control, market regulation, credit and financing) no longer seems appropriate. In the post-land reform era in Zimbabwe, some fundamental rethinking of the overall framework for livestock production and marketing is needed. This requires, first and foremost, understanding the new relationships and interactions of the 'real markets' existing on the ground, and finding ways to make them more effective and efficient. This not only means addressing the urgent economic challenges of viability and returns at different stages of the commodity chain, but also focusing on the social and political underpinnings of such markets under transition. Returning to an anachronistic heritage from a bygone era and trying to recreate the dualistic patterns of the past probably did not make economic and political sense before the land reform; it certainly makes no sense now.

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NOTES

- ¹ Many different terms are used to describe the array of economic activity beyond that which is normally recognized and measured, including: informal, non-formal, real, second or hidden. All have different nuances, some referring to a more economic understanding, and some more political and social. This article follows the terminology used by MacGaffey (1991), giving greater attention to the socio-political dimensions.
- ² As a country regarded until recently as one with a strong and growing formal economy, this dramatic change is even more spectacular. It contrasts to the 'classic' case studies in Africa such as Democratic Republic of Congo (MacGaffey, 1991), Liberia (Ellis, 1996) or Somalia (Little, 2003), or elsewhere such as in the former Soviet Union (Burawoy and Verdery, 1999).
- ³ A good example was the Godlonton Commission on 'Native Production and Trade' of 1944.
- ⁴ The ACP–EU Partnership is also known as the Cotonou Agreement and succeeded the Lome Convention.
- ⁵ Interview, Cattle Producers Association, Commercial Farmers Union, Harare (15 November 2005).

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- ⁶ The October 2004 National Livestock Policy Document, for example, recommends the reinvigoration of the CSC and 'enhancement' of beef exports.
- ⁷ See, for example: 'Banks pounce on CSC', *Financial Gazette* 22 May 2003; 'Troubled CSC headed for collapse', *Financial Gazette* 5 February 2004; 'US 23.7 mln foreign debt weighs down CSC', *Financial Gazette* 15 July 2004; 'CSC Revival Attempts a Waste of Funds', *AllAfrica.com*, 12 January 2007. Of course, the financial woes of the CSC are not just a recent phenomenon (Cross, 1971).
- ⁸ Official inflation rates as reported by the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe increased from 133 per cent in January 2005, to 613 per cent in January 2006, and to 8,000 per cent in September 2007, although official figures have been somewhat intermittent and inaccurate (see www.rbz.co.zw/about/inflation.asp, accessed 5 February 2008). By 2008 inflation accelerated even further, see 'Zimbabwe inflation now over 1 million percent', *Associated Press*, 21 May 2008.
- ⁹ See 'Plans to resume EU beef exports are shelved', *FMD News*, 7 March 2007, fmdnews@ucdavis.edu (accessed 5 February 2008).
- ¹⁰ Quotes from participants at the Discussion Workshop 'Changes in the Livestock Sector Following Land Reform in Zimbabwe: The Case of Masvingo Province', *Chevron Hotel, Masvingo* (24 May 2006), www.ids.ac.uk/UserFiles/File/knots_team/Masvingo_workshop_report.pdf (accessed 5 February 2008).
- ¹¹ See 'Price controls devastating rural economy', *IRIN News*, 24 July 2007, www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?ReportId=73391 and 'Price cuts — CSC abattoirs empty again', *Financial Gazette*, 6 December 2007, <http://allafrica.com/stories/200712060810.html> (accessed 5 February 2008).
- ¹² Interview, Livestock Meat and Advisory Council, Harare (19 November 2007).
- ¹³ Provincial Department of Lands, Masvingo, November 2007.
- ¹⁴ Interview, Rancher, Mwenezi (12 August 1999).
- ¹⁵ Interview, Lundi Bridge (21 November 2005).
- ¹⁶ Interview, A1 Fair Range (11 December 2005).
- ¹⁷ Interview, CSC abattoir (23 May 2006).
- ¹⁸ See 'Suspected Chikomedzi Rustlers, Murderers Nabbed in Mozambique' *The Herald* 22 November 2005.
- ¹⁹ Interview, Chikomedzi (7 May 2005).
- ²⁰ Interview, Masvingo (20 November 2006).
- ²¹ Interview, CSC, Masvingo (25 October 2005).
- ²² These groups were constituted as part of the National Youth Service by the party stalwart the late Border Gezi. Also known as 'green bombers' after the colour of their uniform, these youth militia have become notorious enforcers of party discipline and state authority.

13

TOBACCO, CONTRACT FARMING, AND AGRARIAN CHANGE IN ZIMBABWE

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INTRODUCTION

Tobacco production has become central to patterns of accumulation by small-scale farmers in some new land reform areas in Zimbabwe, particularly in the wetter Highveld areas. This has occurred through engagement with agribusiness, including through contracting arrangements, as well as direct sales to companies and auction floors. The tobacco industry has been transformed following the radical land reform in 2000, with production now taking place among a far wider group of often small-scale farmers, resulting in new relations between farmers, labour, agribusiness capital, and the state. This paper examines the implications of this transformation, and asks who wins and who loses from this major reconfiguration of the agrarian landscape. Understanding these patterns of agrarian change, and the accommodations as well as conflicts with diverse forms of capital in the context of tobacco production, sheds important light on the post-land reform agrarian setting, offering hints of longer-term dynamics of social differentiation and class formation, as well as linkages between farming, capital, and the state in Zimbabwe.

More generally, the case offers an insight into agrarian transition following land redistribution, highlighting different paths of accumulation and differentiation. In his review of particular national and historical paths of agrarian transition, Byres (1991, 1996) argues that agrarian transitions to capitalism from below are possible if the state and an organised peasantry can challenge the power of capitalist, landlord classes. In South Africa, Neocosmos (1993) argued that a democratic state could facilitate “accumulation from below”, and others have made the case that this is occurring on the margins, although without significant support (Cousins, 2013). Mamdani (1987) explores paths of accumulation in Uganda, contrasting accumulation from below with accumulation from above. He shows that there is no clear separation between different paths of accumulation; indeed, the role of the state, including bureaucrats and political patronage networks, may be significant in influencing change, as well as on-farm production.

What role does contract farming and alliances with capital play in agrarian transitions? Contracting has been hailed as a “win-win” solution for small-scale farming in Africa (Glover, 1984; Kirsten & Sartorius, 2002; World Bank, 2007). Providing credit, inputs, extension support, and guaranteed markets, contracting arrangements with agribusiness companies potentially address many of the constraints of smallholder operations, offering opportunities for the emergence of petty commodity production and a dynamic of accumulation from below. As Oya (2012) points out, much of the literature on contract farming has focused on operational and business issues, and the particular design and consequences of contracts, often framed by the concerns of new institutional economics. There has been less analysis on the implications of new relations created by contract farming in outgrower arrangements, and the adoption of contracted crops more broadly, for patterns of agrarian transition. This paper builds on earlier work compiled by Little and Watts (1994) that emphasized the political economy of contract farming, and its diversity. Numerous case studies of contract farming across Africa have explored the consequences for smallholders—including, for example, in Kenya (Ochieng, 2010), Senegal (Maertens & Swinnen, 2009), and Ghana/Cote d’Ivoire (Daddieh, 1994). There is a huge diversity, dependent on the type of crop and its market destination, the structure of ownership and the relationship to buyers, the form of contracts, the extent of competition in the market, and the scale of operation (Oya, 2012). A key question is whether contract farming is a major driver of differentiation, and so offers a distinct route to accumulation and transition to rural capitalism, as

suggested by de Janvry (1981) for Latin America, or whether contract farming largely benefits existing elites, while smallholders continue to struggle, as shown by White (1997) in Indonesia.

In Zimbabwe, contract farming has been promoted by the state and a wide range of agencies, and was the basis of a highly successful expansion of smallholder cotton farming from the 1980s, until price crashes and widespread side-selling in a privatized market undermined confidence (Poulton & Hanyani-Mlambo, 2009). Contracting of outgrowers, in a very different setting, is also central to the major sugar operations in Zimbabwe's south-east Lowveld, again highlighting differential patterns of accumulation by sugar producers on relatively small plots (Mlambo & Pangeti, 1996). With a few exceptions (e.g. Jackson & Cheater, 1994; Scoones, Mavedzenge, & Murimbarimba, 2016), studies of contract farming in Zimbabwe have not taken a wider agrarian political economy view. While the importance of tobacco production, and the role of contract farming, in the post-land reform era since 2000 has often been commented on (Moyo, 2014), a wider assessment of the implications of this phenomenon for interpreting the political economy of land reform outcomes has not been attempted. In Zimbabwe, multiple interpretations of post-land reform agrarian dynamics are evident. Moyo and Yeros (2005) argue that a revolutionary transformation occurred, led by a mobilized peasantry, although Moyo and Chambati (2013) also point to the importance of alliances with the state and across classes. Scoones (2015) highlights a contested process of both accumulation from above and below, and argues that this is playing out in different ways in different parts of the country. This paper explores this dynamic in one area in the Highveld, where land reform has been extensive, and where tobacco has come to dominate smallholder production.

Zimbabwe's controversial land reform of 2000 transferred over 10 million hectares of land to around 146,000 smallholder farm families (in so-called A1 resettlement areas) and 23,000 medium-scale farms (A2 resettlements) (Moyo, 2011, p. 146). It was an unprecedented shift in agrarian structure from one characterized by a dualistic system of around one million "communal" small-scale peasant farms and around 6,000 large-scale commercial farms. About 2,000 of these large-scale farms grew tobacco and supplied the majority of the tobacco to the auction floors. Before 2000, tobacco production was around 200 million kilograms per annum, but this dropped dramatically after land reform, as these farms were taken over through sometimes violent invasions. From a low point of

48.7 million kilograms in 2008, tobacco production has rebounded dramatically, with 216 million kilograms selling at an average price of US\$3.17 being recorded in 2014 (TIMB, 2014). Zimbabwe is the fifth-largest producer of flue-cured Virginia tobacco in the world after China, Brazil, India, and the United States (USA), and the largest producer in Africa. Tobacco contributed about 11% to total gross domestic product (GDP) in 2014, valued at US\$685 million, with 106,456 registered growers, and almost 86,975 delivering to markets (TIMB, 2014), with around a third from Mashonaland Central Province (BDO, 2015). Most tobacco is produced by small- and medium-scale farmers, including many in the post-2000 resettlement areas. The new settlers on small-scale A1 farmers who are the focus of this paper have taken over the old large farm infrastructure, and employ workers still living in farm “compounds”. These highly labour-intensive operations of small-scale, non-mechanized, flue-cured Virginia tobacco production are dependent on this workforce. Small-scale resettled farmers have managed to increase production dramatically, although questions of quality have emerged, as buyers have become more discerning.¹

This rebound has been facilitated by the presence of a wide range of contracting companies, including new entrants. The Chinese company Tian Ze, part of the state-owned China Tobacco Company, has been especially important (Lixia, Zhao, Mukwereza, & Xiaoyun, 2015). After 2000, a space opened up when Western nations imposed sanctions, and Chinese companies took advantage of this, gearing their businesses towards the new post-land reform context, with contracting arrangements across resettlement areas. Since then, many more players have entered the market, and other long-established players have re-engaged. The Tobacco Industry Marketing Board (TIMB) notes that there were 16 companies operating in the Zimbabwean market in 2015 (TIMB, 2015, p. iv). China dominates the global market for tobacco, with 44% of total global tobacco consumption of all types occurring in China (TMA, 2015, p. 51). China has been the largest export destination for Zimbabwe’s tobacco at 43% in 2013, although declining to 35% in 2014 (TIMB, 2014). Tobacco producers globally are concerned that WHO health warnings and consumer shifts to e-cigarettes, will reduce demand in China, as has happened elsewhere (TMA, 2015). For now, however, demand remains strong, although there has been an observed shift in buying trends. Until a few years ago, Chinese buyers were accepting large volumes of lower-quality tobacco for their local manufacturing, but today the demand is only for the highest quality,

resulting in disappointing prices for many in 2015, although plans to establish a Chinese-owned cigarette factory in Zimbabwe may result in a shift in demand for different grades.²

Based on a study carried out in Mvurwi area, Mazowe district, Mashonaland Central province between 2013 and 2015, this paper seeks an understanding of the way in which tobacco production generates opportunities for “accumulation from below” by certain groups of farmers, asking who wins and who loses from the major reconfiguration of the agrarian landscape due to land reform. The implications of the resulting social differentiation are explored, highlighting a differentiated process of accumulation, with diverse engagements with farm labour and capital through hiring, contracting, and marketing arrangements. The paper thus contributes to the wider debate around agrarian transition, and the particular role of contract farming. Focusing on emerging patterns of social differentiation, the mediating role of state actors and agribusinesses is also touched on. We focus on small-scale A1 farmers, some of whom are engaging in contract farming, and explore the contrasting fortunes of the compound-based farmworkers living in the same area.

UNDERSTANDING AGRARIAN CHANGE IN ZIMBABWE’S LAND REFORM AREAS

Our studies are centred on three A1 resettlement areas near Mvurwi town in Mazowe district, occupied by a total of 220 households, each with their own homesteads and plots. Originally, the area was made up of three large-scale farms. These were invaded in 2000, expelling the white landowners. A core group settled at that time and their land was later pegged as part of “fast-track” land reform. Others have settled since, as in recent years more households have been given land, often illegally or for informal payment, along the edges of the formal allocations. Alongside the resettlement families, there are 370 farmworker families living in this area in four worker compounds. At land reform some remained in the compounds, while others gained access to new land alongside other settlers. In our study area, half the compound residents are original workers from the three large-scale farms, while the rest were displaced from 25 other farms from Mazowe district and beyond, where new owners of medium-scale A2 land reform farms expelled former workers, as they restructured their operations. “Farmworkers”, as described in this paper, represent households resident in the compounds; some work for new

resettled farmers, while others have other livelihood occupations, with all having some access to small plots of land near the compounds.

During 2013–2015, we undertook a detailed study of agriculture and broader livelihoods of both new A1 settlers (sample, N = 220 households, the full population) and former farmworkers living in compounds (N = 100, a random sample of the 370 households), based on a household survey. Qualitative studies were also carried out, including informal interviews, participatory farm mapping, individual and household biographies, and participant observation, particularly around tobacco farming and marketing. We also traced the flow of tobacco from the farms to the markets, via contractors or other routes, and spent time on the auction floors in Harare talking to key actors. Our more qualitative work explored, for example, the role of the state and agribusinesses in mediating access to resources linked to tobacco production, and so influencing processes of accumulation and agrarian change.

We undertook “success ranking” exercises with small groups of A1 farmers, involving both men and women. The group was asked to rank all A1 households according to their definitions of “success”. During the discussions, we settled on three groups that allowed us to stratify the sample, and differentiate the households according to local criteria. The criteria that informants used were asset ownership and accumulation (notably cattle, but also cars and other vehicles were mentioned), educational levels, access to off-farm income (including remittances and local businesses, including cattle sales, house rentals, and transport), labour hiring levels, and maize sales, and tobacco income. The “success ranks” are thus a composite rank based on local perceptions. The ranks were in turn related to data collected during the surveys (see the tables below), which confirmed the relationship between the composite ranks and key indicators of production, asset ownership, social and educational status, and investment. As in other studies in Zimbabwe and elsewhere (Mushongah & Scoones, 2012; Scoones, 1995), the ranks, validated in this way, therefore proved a useful basis for subsequent stratification of the sample, and exploration of patterns of social differentiation.

In 2014, 71% of A1 farmers and 35% of “farmworkers” were engaged in tobacco production, producing on average 1,750 kilograms and 704 kilograms, respectively. We were interested in exploring how tobacco production, and particularly contracting arrangements, linked to wider patterns of social differentiation and local perceptions of “success”. In exploring “accumulation from below”, we are unable to document changes over time, but instead offer a picture of social differentiation based on a

“snapshot” (although with data on cropping over 5 years) at a period 10–15 years following land reform. This, however, does offer some indications of the dynamic, relational process of class formation, including the relationships among households and with labour, and the patterns of ongoing investment.³

In the final section of the paper, we offer a tentative typology of emerging groups, based on the analysis of the existing data. These overlap with the local definition of “success groups”, but not completely so, and are suggestive of processes of class formation in the area. In this typology, we take processes of accumulation suggested by our analysis as our starting point, emphasizing those that are driving observed patterns of social differentiation and putative class formation in the area. This remains speculative, but helps us point to some of the potential dynamics of agrarian change following land reform, especially those resulting from the widespread adoption of tobacco growing and the role of agribusiness contracting in this. This helps us move from a static assessment to a more tentative but dynamic analysis, in turn posing questions about the longer-term processes at play. This has implications for policy, as well as further research, as we describe in the conclusion.

MVURWI AND THE TOBACCO BOOM

Mvurwi is a small town around 100 km to the north of Harare. Before land reform it was a sleepy, rather run-down service centre for large-scale farming in the district, with input suppliers, transporters, and others working for large-scale commercial operations, which were mostly owned and run by whites.⁴ Black workers from these farms would come and buy goods in the limited number of shops, and relax in the bars and food outlets. Fifteen years after land reform, the town has been transformed. It is a buzzing centre, with a growing population, and vibrant markets supplying the large numbers of farmers who have moved on to the surrounding farms. They require some similar services, but also others, and many are investing in the town’s businesses and real estate. The town also has several tobacco-contracting firms based there, including Mashonaland Tobacco Company and Zimbabwe Leaf Tobacco, where they have agents, depots, and collection centres. The total flows of income from tobacco sales in 2013 and 2014 across all producers in Mazowe district were US\$52 million and US\$56 million, based on 14.4 million kilograms and 16.7 million kilograms of production (TIMB, 2013, 2014).

Before land reform, tobacco was an important crop on the large-scale farms. In 1996–1997, for example, 107 large-scale farms grew flue-cured tobacco on 8,157 hectares in Mazowe district, producing 18,782 tonnes. This represented 39% of farms growing crops in the area, and 17.3% of the cropped area. The Mvurwi Intensive Conservation Area contained 64 of these farms, where 84% of farms grew tobacco (alongside maize and other crops), on average producing 216 tonnes per farm on a total of 6,085 hectares (Sukume, Mavedzenge, Murimbarimba, & Scoones, 2015, pp. 12–13). While tobacco growing was important to the income flows on these farms, its coverage was modest, representing only 2.3% of the total area of large-scale farmland, as 86.4% of the land area was not cultivated at that time, being largely allocated to beef production for the then lucrative European export market. Tobacco did not dominate the farm landscape and the local economy in the same way as it does today. Large volumes from each farm were transported directly from the farm’s curing barns to the auction floors. But today everyone is selling smaller amounts, and there is a demand for transport and other support.

There are now 16 contracting companies operating nationally (TIMB, 2015).⁵ These include new locally-run companies (Boost Africa, Chidziva Tobacco Processors, Curverid Tobacco, Gold Leaf Services, and Leaf Trade Company), larger, new entrants linked to international players, including Tribac (a subsidiary of Japan Tobacco, working with locally owned agent, Shasha Tobacco), Tian Ze (China Tobacco), and Midriver Enterprises (a Chinese company), as well as more established players (such as Northern Tobacco, linked to British American Tobacco) and Mashonaland Tobacco Company (a subsidiary of the US company, Alliance One International), Intercontinental Leaf Tobacco, TSL Classic Leaf, and Zimbabwe Leaf Tobacco (ZLT). ZLT is the most common contract in the Mvurwi area. It was established in 1956, operates under ZimLeaf Holdings, and is now a subsidiary of the US company Universal Leaf Tobacco, the largest tobacco trading company in the world, with interests in the Harare-based tobacco processing company, Casalee.

Agribusiness capital in the area thus takes on many forms, with firms of different origins, and with different motivations, business models, and ownership structures. It is a highly competitive business context, but one that has become prone to market abuse through side-selling, price setting at floors, and inappropriate grading in recent years. All growers must be registered by the TIMB and have grower numbers, but there are also non-producers who use these numbers to trade in tobacco. While this is illegal,

close regulation by the TIMB is impossible, and companies must rely on their own agents, debt collectors, and close links with state enforcement agencies to ensure that contracts are honoured.

With the collapse of the formal economy during the 2000s, until stabilization in 2009 through the abandonment of the local currency and the adoption of the US dollar, the state did not have much involvement in this emerging dynamic between new farmers and contracting firms and private auction floors. The massively increased number of producers, contractors, and buyers meant that the TIMB was very stretched. Meanwhile, the Tobacco Research Board continued some research, including on curing techniques, but with limited funding, until close relationships were developed with China Tobacco in the late 2000s.⁶ Beyond these agencies, the state has been largely absent in the post-land reform period, and without resources and capacity it could not do much. State functionaries—whether agricultural extension workers or the police—are, however, involved in tobacco value chains, through helping to establish and negotiate contracts or enforce them. This often occurs through direct links with companies rather than as part of mandated work, and may at times involve additional payments and incentives. The state, together with agribusiness, is therefore important in mediating access to contracts, and so has an influence on the outcomes. However, as we show below, regulations controlling contracts are often not followed, and farmers have diverse ways of gaining access to markets.

PATTERNS OF SOCIAL DIFFERENTIATION

Tables 13.1-5 offer an overview of the sample, across the A1 and compound-based farmworker households, differentiating “success groups” in the A1 farms. Data were collected at a household level, although many activities are differentiated by gender and age within households. Eighteen per cent of the A1 households and 34% of farmworker households were defined as “female headed”, where a husband had passed away, or where the home had been established by a woman independently.⁷ Our focus in this section is on the patterns of difference among A1 farmers and the contrasts with farmworkers.

Table 13.1 offers a basic profile of household heads, including educational achievement and age, as well as origins, while Table 13.2 presents production and sales data for maize and tobacco for 2014, alongside data on landholdings and use. Table 13.3 focuses on off-farm

Table 13.1: Household social profiles and backgrounds of A1 (across success groups, SG, where SG1 is the most “successful”) and farmworkers (FW) (averages)

	A1 (N = 220)			Farmworker (N = 100)
	SG1 (N = 48)	SG2 (N = 99)	SG3 (N = 73)	
Educational level of household head (% above form 2)	54	51	58	19
Age of household head (% above 50 years)	42	48	33	40
Previously rural farmer (%)	27	46	30	0
Previously in town (%)	32	33	34	0
Previously civil servant (%)	15	9	18	0
Previously security services (%)	17	10	7	0
Previously farmworker (%)	9	11	11	100
Of the above, war veteran (%)	21	11	12	0

Source: Mvurwi household survey, 2014.

income earning, including remittances, and Table 13.4 provides data on asset ownership.

In terms of educational achievement, A1 household heads are broadly similar across “success groups”, with younger SG3 households having a slightly higher level. Farmworker household heads, by contrast, have had much less formal education. Around 60% of A1 households came from nearby rural areas at land reform (mostly the Chiweshe communal area) or had previously been resident in towns, including Mvurwi, Mazowe, and

Harare, often with a communal area home too. Previous (and some current) jobs included various civil servants (including teachers, agricultural extension workers, etc.) and security services (including current and former members of the police, the army, and the Central Intelligence Organisation). Such occupations were most evident among SG1 households. Former farmworkers living in the compounds came from ten different farms, with only half from the A1 survey farms, suggesting a considerable turnover and movement of compound residents since land reform. Thirteen per cent were of non-Zimbabwean origin, with most from Mozambique and Malawi, and a few from Zambia. “War veterans” (a wide term including former liberation war fighters and others) were prominent among SG1 A1 farm household heads, and absent among the farmworker population.

Land allocations were similar across A1 success groups, reflecting the standardized allocation under “fast-track” land reform. Cultivated land in A1 farms was higher for SG1 and SG2 households and lower for SG3 households, due to lack of equipment and labour for clearing and cultivating. Compound-based farmworkers all had small plots, some allocated by the former farmer, some carved out more recently. But these were very small, averaging only 0.6 hectares. In the A1 areas in 2014, maize production and sales were highest among SG1 farmers and lowest among SG2 farmers. Involvement in tobacco production differs across success groups, with 78% of SG2 farmers producing tobacco in 2014 (averaging 1,877 kilograms), while 65% and 66% of SG 1 and 3 households produced tobacco (averaging 2,071 and 1,339 kilograms). Farmworkers produced very little tobacco by comparison (overall average 246 kilograms, although 704 kilograms among the 35% who produced it). However, maize production averaged 40% of total family needs in 2014, estimated at 1,000 kilograms per annum, for a family of six.⁸

In terms of other income-earning options, remittance income from children or husbands (mostly from South Africa) was relatively limited for A1 farmers, with on-farm production dominating. The former farmworkers also received some remittances from children or other family members working in Harare or abroad. For A1 SG1/SG2 households, house rental, cattle sales, and transport businesses were important sources of off-farm income, while for SG3 and farmworker households, the portfolio of off-farm activities was similar, including temporary piece work, vegetable sales, building/carpentry, fishing, and woodcarving.

The patterns of agricultural production and income earning are

Table 13.4: Asset ownership (average numbers, or percentage of households owning)

	A1-SG1	A1-SG2	A1-SG3	FW
Cattle ownership (numbers)	9.8	6.9	4.7	0.5
Goat ownership (numbers)	2.9	1.9	1.6	0.9
Car/truck ownership (%)	47.9	23.2	30.1	2
Bicycle ownership (%)	58	60	59	35
Tractor ownership (%)	16.7	4.0	0.0	0
Plough ownership (%)	81	77	67	2
Cultivator ownership (%)	50	35	26	0
Ox cart ownership (%)	67	60	45	0
Brick house, with asbestos or zinc roof (%)	77	71	51	0

reflected in asset ownership. With the exception of bicycle ownership, which is similar across success groups, all other asset indicators are lower among SG3 households compared to SG1, with SG2 being intermediate.

Across these data, we see a pattern of differentiation within and between groups, but also some convergences; for example, between poorer A1 SG3 households and farmworkers. This pattern of social differentiation is driven by a range of factors, but agricultural production is central. This is complemented by off-farm income, but this is relatively limited, and remittances, unlike in some other areas in Zimbabwe, are relatively insignificant. Tobacco production is central to this story. Those able to afford inputs, gain access to contracts, and grow sufficient maize to cover food needs can profit significantly from tobacco. Tobacco production across all A1 farmers and all farmworkers is significantly correlated with cattle ownership, for example.⁹ Table 13.5 shows the pattern of asset purchase in the period from 2009 (and the dollarization of the economy).

The data show some important patterns of accumulation, focused on agricultural production (including cattle, ploughs, cultivators, ox carts, and water pumps, for example). This was especially among SG2 and SG3 households. Many richer A1 households had acquired such items in previous years, and had now switched to other investments, including buying high-cost items such as cars, trucks, and minibuses and real estate in nearby

Table 13.5: Assets purchased in the past five years (2009–2014; numbers purchased or percentage of households purchasing)

	A1-SG1	A1-SG2	A1-SG3	FW
Cattle purchased (numbers)	1.2	0.9	2.1	0.2
Cars purchased (%)	27	19	21	0
Bicycles purchased (%)	25	35	44	23
Tractors purchased (%)	8	2	0	0
Cell phones purchased in past 5 years (numbers)	3.4	3.2	3.8	1.6
Solar panels purchased (numbers)	1.1	1.1	0.9	0.8
Water pumps purchased (%)	0.25	0.52	0.34	0.2
Ploughs purchased (%)	23	24	30	0
Cultivators purchased (%)	6	21	16	0
Ox carts purchased (%)	17	19	21	0

towns, having exhausted immediate investment opportunities locally. Investments in more rural homes, including in improved building quality, was evident, as was a continued focus on accumulation of cattle. Almost all households, including compound-based farmworkers, had invested in what are now regarded as “basic” requirements, including cell phones and solar panels. Here, we have focused on new investments, and not sales, depreciation, and indebtedness. Credit is limited, with only 4.5% of A1 households receiving agricultural loans, while the 19% of households that were contracted by tobacco companies had costs removed from sales. Sales of assets were concentrated among cattle owners, with 32% of A1 households selling an animal during 2014, mostly to pay for school fees or funerals. Sales of other assets were minimal; no vehicles or farm equipment were sold, for example. While some basic investments in farm equipment and other basic goods can be seen as necessary for simple reproduction of

*Table 13.2: Average landholdings and agricultural production across all households**

	A1-SG1	A1-SG2	A1-SG3	FW
Land area allocated (hectares)	5.4	5.6	5.6	0.6
Land area cultivated (hectares)	3.6	3.7	2.4	0.6
Maize production (kilograms), 2014	4,805	2,931	2,232	419
Maize sales (kilograms), 2014	3,279	1,384	973	0
Tobacco production (kilograms), 2014	1,338	1,460	880	246

** land areas were derived from surveys undertaken during land allocation and consultation of maps. Estimates of maize production and sales—measured in 50 kilogram bags and 10 kilogram buckets—were derived from recall each year soon after the harvest season. All tobacco is sold, and totals were based on recall.*

Table 13.3: Other sources of earned income (percentage of households involved)

	A1-SG1	A1-SG2	A1-SG3	FW
Remittance income	13	17	16	15
House rental	23	13	16	0
Cattle sales	33	39	22	1
Transport business	19	10	10	0
Local piece work	8	8	14	44
Vegetable sales	27	52	49	34
Building, thatching, and carpentry	12	24	32	54
Fishing	8	11	22	19
Woodcarving	0	6	8	3

a rural farm household, much of this investment links to patterns of expanded reproduction, and so becomes a process of accumulation that drives social differentiation. The move to off-farm investments, and other businesses that can capitalize on the rural economy (such as minibuses and tractors for hire), is indicative of such processes. This process of accumulation from below—derived from own-production agriculture, notably tobacco—is occurring across groups. Tobacco output is significantly correlated with cattle purchases, for example, among all A1 and farmworker households.¹⁰ Accumulation of assets is, however, concentrated among SG1 and SG2 households given greater tobacco output; while asset-poor SG3 and former farmworker households are investing, accumulation is less, highlighting an emerging pattern of differentiation among households in the area, driven in large part by tobacco production.

This section therefore has highlighted the dimensions of the current pattern of social differentiation across “success groups” and between A1 farmers and compound-based farmworkers. It has also shown how this is related to agricultural production, notably of tobacco. Patterns of accumulation, through investment in a range of items that contribute to both simple and expanded reproduction, are also different across groups, and again are related to tobacco production. In the following sections, we go beyond the demonstration of patterns of differentiation to explore the underlying relationships and processes, and ask whether contract farming is a significant driver of social differentiation in the area.

CONTRACT FARMING

How farmers relate to agribusinesses is a key dimension of tobacco farming. This may be through taking up contracts with companies, selling directly on auction floors, or selling to buyers indirectly. Given the pattern of differentiation we have seen, and the importance of tobacco production as an explanatory variable, what difference do such farmer-agribusiness relationships make; and, in particular, what difference does contract farming make?

Across our A1 sample, 19% of households were involved in a formal tobacco contract with a company in 2013–2014 (down on previous years, due to disputes with the contracting companies),¹¹ while none of the former farmworkers were. Contracted growers represented 25% of SG1 households, 22% of SG2 households, and 11% of SG3 households in 2014,

highlighting that contracting is less likely for poorer A1 households. On average, A1 farmers who were being contracted in 2014 produced 2,718 kilograms of tobacco, while those growing but not being contracted produced 1,417 kilograms. Of those being contracted, 29% were SG1, 52% were SG2, and 19% were SG3 households. However, those who were not formally contracted very often sold to contracting companies, and all those who were contracted were also involved in direct sales outside contracts. The market is thus highly complex, and is made more so by the illegal, covert arrangements linked to side-selling to middle men, price setting at auction floors, and grading decisions by buyers. Today, having the right connections, and access to cash, makes a difference in markets, and those without can lose out significantly.¹² Here, we see the intersection of processes of accumulation from above and below, in ways that are conditioned by local political contexts.

In 2014, there were four companies contracting in our study sites, namely ZLT (52% of contracts with A1 farmers); Chidziwa (29%), Boost Africa (17%), and TRIBAC/Shasha (2%). In 2014, ZLT was preferred by the majority, although by 2015, due to default rates being high, many had shifted to Boost Africa. The company provides inputs to the farm, including fertilizers, chemicals, and coal for curing. Some contractors provide an additional cash amount for the payment of hired labour. Transport to the Harare floors is also provided for a fee of US\$10 per bale. A reforestation levy, and an obligation to develop on-farm woodlots, is also applied, as the environmental costs of flue-curing are significant and local sources of woodfuel are declining. As Little and Watts (1994) describe, “living under contract” has many pressures: there are new risks, as well as new opportunities.

To apply for a contract with ZLT, for example, A1 farmers need to, at least formally, produce proof of landownership in the form of an “Offer Letter” or an affidavit; have proof of registration as a tobacco grower; show a production history based on TIMB records; show a letter of recommendation from a local extension worker; have access to own curing facilities in the form of a five-tier barn with a V-slot furnace or the new Rocket Barn; and have access to adequate draft power. In addition, the applicant has to be a member of a peer group of between five and 11 growers, to aid in input deliveries as well as agronomic support by Mvurwi-based support staff. This excludes particularly poorer farmers and farmworkers, although some in both groups have managed to gain contracts, as negotiations are flexible, while those with contracts do not always fully comply. Contracts are usually for one hectare of tobacco

Table 13.6: Profiles of contracting and non-contracting A1 households, all growing tobacco

	Contracting (N = 42)	Not contracting (N = 178)
Allocated land (hectares)	5.5	5.5
Cultivated land (hectares), 2014	3.1	3.2
Permanent workers employed (numbers)	0.8	0.8
Temporary workers employed (numbers)	4.1	4.5
"Offer Letter" (%)	93	85
Tobacco barn (%)	78	48
Older than 50 (%)	54	38
Education more than Form 2 (%)	46	55
"Master Farmer" qualification (%)	24	13
Tobacco fertilizer acquired (%)	98	57
Agricultural credit acquired (%)	15	2

production, limiting the amount of inputs that can be secured. Again, some have managed to negotiate coverage of larger amounts, while others spread their inputs thinly over larger areas, undermining leaf quality in the process. Table 13.6 offers a profile of contracting and non-contracting farmers in our A1 sample, showing that across a range of criteria the groups are similar, with the exception of the presence of a tobacco barn on the farm (a notional criterion for the contract), the proportion receiving fertilizer (the result of the contract), and the proportion with a farming qualification (possibly a proxy for links with state agricultural extension agents who often help to set up contracting arrangements).¹³

Farmers get into contracting arrangements for different reasons. There are broadly three groups among the A1 farmers. First, there are those who do not meet the criteria and cannot get a contract even if they would like one; usually those who are poorer and without the resources to commit, or with insecure tenure, having only arrived recently, mostly in the SG3 group

and all farmworkers. Second, there are those who market directly to auction floors and organize all their own transport, inputs, and other services. These are generally richer SG1 A1 farmers, who may have been contracted in previous years, but have chosen to sell independently, and who have the resources such as their own truck to transport tobacco to Harare. Third, there are those who are keen to up-scale their tobacco production and are prepared to take the risk of entering a contracting arrangement and meeting the criteria, as in the case of many SG2 A1 farmers.

In Table 13.7, we present data on asset ownership and investment, selecting from the criteria presented earlier in Tables 13.4 and 13.5. Here, we see some more significant differences, with those contracting having higher asset ownership levels (except for cars) and showing greater levels of investment (except for cell phones). While in part this is explained by the entry barriers to contracting, which may exclude poorer households, taking only SG2 households the contrasts are even greater, with contracted

Table 13.7: Asset ownership and investment patterns among contracted and non-contracted A1 households

	Contracted	Not contracted
Cattle owned (numbers)	9.4	6.1
Cattle purchased in past 5 years (numbers)	1.6	1.3
Tractor owned (%)	11	4
Ox cart owned (%)	89	47
Cars owned (%)	28	31
Cell phones purchased in the past 5 years (numbers)	3.3	3.5
Solar panels purchased in the past 5 years (numbers)	1.2	0.9
Water pumps purchased in the past 5 years (numbers)	0.7	0.3

households, for example, both owning (10 versus six) and purchasing (1.2 versus 0.8) more cattle. Gaining access to a contract is an important route to accumulation for SG2 households that do not have the resources to sell independently.

How does tobacco production have an impact on the growing of other crops, notably the core staple, maize? This is important, as changing patterns of cash crop production can affect food security, and so the opportunities for basic reproduction, as well as wider accumulation. Figure 13.1 shows the pattern of maize and tobacco production and sale between the 2010 and 2014 season for contracted and non-contracted households.

There has been a decline in average maize production across households over this period. While this in part reflects rainfall patterns, the decline is sharper for contracted households. Tobacco production has increased across both groups of households, but the increases have been more dramatic for the contracting group, given access to fertilizer and other inputs. In terms of crop mixes, contracted households have shown a greater switch to tobacco, while non-contracted households have a smaller, if growing, proportion of tobacco on their farms. Other crops grown by both groups (in rank order) include sweet potato, Irish potato, groundnuts, sugar beans, soya, and sunflowers. These are grown in small amounts, and the levels of production are broadly comparable between contracted and non-contracted groups.

Across all A1 households, on average more than a tonne of maize was produced in each season for which we have data; a total sufficient for household self-provisioning. In addition, on average 2.8 tonnes of maize were sold (see Table 13.2). Over the five seasons studied, those contracted retained proportionally more maize in three years, and notably more in the two most recent years. Tobacco income is therefore a supplement to food production, especially for richer households, even if less maize is being grown than in the past. Despite declines, this is sufficient for local food security, with significant quantities retained and surpluses regularly sold. This is the case on average even for poorer SG3 A1 farmers, who produced, for example, 2.2 tonnes of maize, and sold 419 kilograms of maize and 880 kilograms of tobacco in the 2014 season. By contrast, compound-based farmworker households, while almost producing sufficient maize for self-provisioning in 2014 on average (973 kilograms), sold no maize and only 246 kilograms of tobacco on average. For these households, other off-farm work, notably piece-work labour, is important, establishing a class-based dependency relationship between new farmers and farmworkers still

resident in the compounds, a theme to which we now turn.

FARMERS AND WORKERS: NEW RELATIONSHIPS

Previous sections have shown how tobacco production is a key driver in a process of social differentiation occurring in the study area. This is in turn affected by access to contracts, which allow especially SG2 farmers to accumulate. This is predominantly a process of accumulation from below, although mediated by relations with the state and agribusiness. SG1 and SG2 households in particular are engaging in a process of expanded reproduction and accumulation, including investing in off-farm assets and income-earning opportunities. SG3 households, while still benefiting from tobacco production, are less successful accumulators, and while relatively richer, are similar in important respects to the compound-based farmworkers. As we discuss further below, this emerging pattern of differentiation is generating nascent rural classes, ranging from an emergent rural bourgeoisie to petty commodity producers (SG1 and SG2) to those who must rely on a wider array of livelihood sources, including selling labour. This relationship between successful farm-based accumulation and labour is an important one, and we must ask whether the success of some groups is on the back of the exploitation of others.

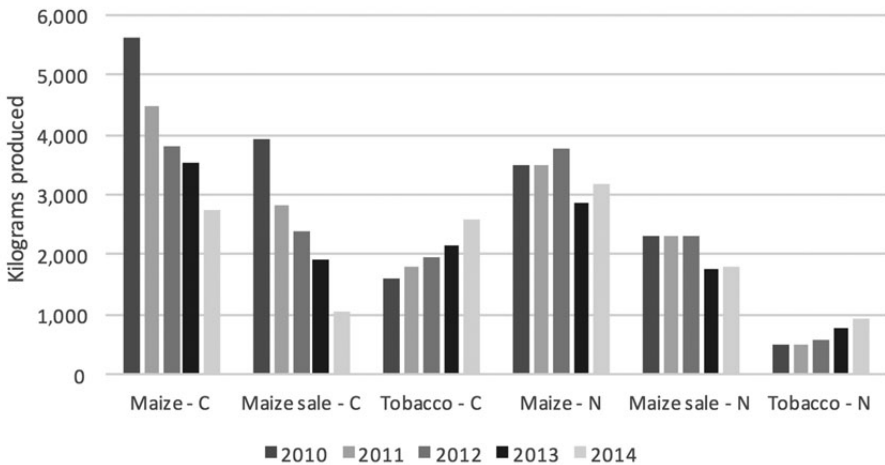
As shown in Table 13.8, the patterns of labour use by those A1 households being contracted and those not are not dramatically different. All have some permanent labour, and hire some temporary male and female labour both from the compounds and the local area. However, how these different groups engage with the tobacco economy is different, and has an influence on class relations and patterns of accumulation. SG1 households hire more labour, both permanent and temporary, while SG2 households hire fewer workers and SG3 households hire the least. Temporary hired labour is mostly from the compounds, with a relatively even balance of men and women, while labour hired from other A1 (mostly SG3) farms (about 15–20% of the total temporary labour force) shows a slight bias towards men. Temporary labour is very task specific, and may involve (for tobacco production) hiring for planting, weeding, fertilizing, harvesting, curing, sorting, baling, transporting, and so on. Many tasks require substantial skill—including, for example, curing, and grading leaf. Here, the former farmworkers living in the compounds have been crucial, although resettled farmers are fast developing skills themselves. In order to gain premium prices and not have tobacco rejected or graded as low

quality, considerable skill has to be applied. Most new A1 and A2 farmers had no prior skill in tobacco production, so this has had to be learned—

Table 13.8. Structure of the A1 farm workforce by success group (SG)

		SG1	SG2	SG3
Permanent workers	Male	0.6	0.5	0.4
	Female	0.4	0.2	0.1
	Total	1.0	0.7	0.5
Temporary workers	Male compound	2.2	2.2	1.4
	Female compound	2.6	1.9	1.3
	Male local	0.6	0.5	0.4
	Female local	0.4	0.3	0.4
	Total	5.8	4.9	3.5

Figure 13.1: The production/sale of maize and tobacco (kilograms) by A1 contracted and non-contracted households in the 2010–2014 seasons.



C, contracted households in 2014; N, non-contracted households in 2014; total sample, 220 households

Source: A1 field survey.

mostly from workers.

How former farmworkers have been incorporated into the new agrarian system has been the subject of much debate in Zimbabwe (Hartnack, 2009; Magaramombe, 2010; Moyo, Rutherford, & Amanor-Wilks, 2000). The simple narrative that workers were displaced (often in situ) and that they remain unemployed is not supported by the evidence (Chambati, 2011). As time has passed, there have had to be some accommodations, which differ across farms. There are at least four livelihood trajectories observed among our sample of compound-based workers.

First, are those who have managed to secure plots on the new resettlement farms. Given the antagonism that often occurred between land invaders and resident farmworkers, the proportion in our sample is surprisingly high. 8.6 per cent of A1 farmers defined their previous occupation as farmworker (Table 13.1), although not necessarily from the same farm. A number joined invasions on other farms, to avoid recrimination from their former employer. This group, partly because of their considerable skill in tobacco production, can be found across all “success groups”.

Second, there are those who have gained permanent employment on the new farms. These are often the more skilled workers (former managers and others), and they are very often men. Others have gained permanent employment, as new farmers hired in from the compounds in preference to taking on the extra responsibilities and liabilities of hiring relatives, and this includes women employed as maids and so on.

Third, there are those who take up temporary work on the surrounding farms. From the data from our A1 sample, this is a considerable number (Table 13.8, representing 1,019 temporary hirings by the 220 A1 households).¹⁴ However, the pay is low and the work is not permanent, so they have to seek other livelihoods too. Compound-based farmworkers are engaged in a range of activities, including food crop production on small plots where, in 2014, 420 kilograms of maize was produced on average, contributing substantially to household food needs. They also grow tobacco and sell on to traders or join with other A1 farmers in marketing to auction floors. While production is small due to the limited areas (averaging 246 kilograms in 2014), it does provide a cash income, often complemented by the growing of food, and other off-farm jobs.

Fourth, there are those who are really struggling without employment, and must eke out a living in very harsh circumstances. Some can return to communal areas, but many have no communal home, having been migrant

labourers from Malawi, Mozambique, or elsewhere, often several generations ago. Some are involved in a range of often illegal activities, including gold panning, hunting, sex work, and so on. This includes younger people living in the compounds. Land reform happened 15 years ago, and those who were just very small children at that time are now young adults, often living in extended households with their parents. They do not have the premium skills of their parents, having never worked as farmworkers themselves, but they are trying to establish their own independent livelihoods, and must combine a range of activities to make ends meet.

In other words, just as “farmers” are not a uniform group, so “farmworkers” are also highly differentiated, occupying a range of shifting class positions, and relating to the tobacco economy in different ways, with differences depending on ethnicity (and migration origin, often several generations before), gender, and age. The category “farmworker” is often a misnomer. This is not a classic rural proletariat, as new livelihoods have emerged following land reform; instead, this group represents, in many respects, a version of those who are diversifying and struggling in the A1 areas, but in this case under different, often more precarious, circumstances. With small plots allocated, and others leased or informally/illegally occupied, and with substantial skills in tobacco production, many are accumulating in agriculture in their own right, usually combined with selling labour and off-farm work.

With access today to the same educational institutions as others,¹⁵ some in the younger generation have been able to improve their lot substantially. In our sample, there are cases of farmworkers’ children being lawyers, teachers, or businesspeople, and others sending remittances home to the farm compound. The old “domestic government” of the pre-land reform farm, with its restricted practices and limited horizons and opportunities, has gone. This has been replaced by a much more dynamic context. While very often precarious, it also offers opportunities. How this unusual relationship between former farmworkers and smallholder producers with allocated farms will evolve remains uncertain. Certainly the A1 farmers, especially those with larger areas under tobacco (notably SG1 and SG2 households), are heavily reliant on farm labour, as growing flue-cured Virginia tobacco is a skilled and labour-intensive undertaking. Conflicts between A1 farmers as employers and workers exist, but currently labour supply is sufficient to satisfy demand. As former farmworkers seek out alternative livelihoods, including farming, they become more similar to the asset-poor SG3 households, who equally sell labour to richer tobacco-growing farmers in the area.

TOBACCO AND PATTERNS OF AGRARIAN CHANGE

As we have shown, in the Mvurwi area, tobacco has become an important source of accumulation, but tobacco production and contracting has to be understood in the context of the wider agricultural economy, and its complementarity with the production of other crops, livestock, and off-farm income earning. Accumulation occurs in different ways, with important implications for class relations (particularly, as discussed above, with labour) and wider agrarian transition. Here, we try to make sense of the wider dynamics at play that underlie the snapshot patterns highlighted by the data, and identify four contrasting groups, suggestive of different emerging agrarian classes. This allows us in turn to characterize the relationship between tobacco production, contracting, differentiation, and accumulation, suggesting hints of the longer-term agrarian dynamics at play.

How are these processes highlighted at the level of an individual household? The C family is typical of a contracted household, but one complementing contracted production with direct sales to auction floors (for more details, see Sukume et al., 2015). They occupied the land in 2001, as part of a land invasion. They began planting tobacco in 2003, with a contract from Shasha Tobacco for one hectare of production. They later switched to ZLT, and since 2009 have added more land under tobacco. In the 2013–2015 seasons, they added two hectares to the contracted one hectare, producing 43, 57, and 32 bales, with prices averaging US\$3 per kilogram.¹⁶ Their non-contracted tobacco was sold at Boka Auction Floors and Tobacco Sales Floors in Harare. The contract arrangement involved support valued at US\$1,200, including ten 50 kilogram bags of fertilizer, four 50 kilogram bags of ammonium nitrate, seed, and agrochemicals. A US\$500 cash advance for the hire of tillage and labour was also supplied. They did not take up the option of coal at US\$230 per tonne, preferring instead to harvest wood from the nearby woodlot for “free”.

In addition to the contract-related inputs, they purchased fertilizer from Windmill in Harare, seed from Kutsanga outlet at Boka Auction Floors, and agrochemicals in Mvurwi. In addition to family labour, Mr C hired one permanent worker (at US\$40 per month, plus accommodation and food, and a small plot). This worker spent around 22 person-days in the 2012–2013 season on tobacco-related activities, complementing around 462 person-days of family labour spent on tobacco. He also hired seven skilled temporary workers from the nearby compound over the equivalent of 225

days at US\$4 per day for tobacco-related work, as a vital addition to the tobacco workforce.¹⁷ This is now the only source of labour, as the permanent worker, a former farmworker on the farm, has now left. Mr C explained how the worker had become interested in tobacco production on his small plot, and did not want wage work. He now rents land from others in the area, seeking out his own path of accumulation independently and without selling labour. Prior to 2009, Mr C hired tractors from government schemes (the District Development Fund and a nearby communal area irrigation scheme) for early tillage, and relied on bulk transport with a group for auction sales. Since then, he has hired locally, as many people have bought tractors and trucks, offering a cheaper and more flexible option, and from 2013 he has used his own tractor, purchased from tobacco sales proceeds.

In the 2012–2013 season, the net income from tobacco was estimated at US\$6,938 through a simple farm budget model (Sukume et al., 2015, p. 50).¹⁸ This was supplemented by sales of maize (five tonnes, US\$1,400), sugar beans (one tonne, US\$1,200), and sweet potatoes (40 buckets, US\$200). Tobacco sales have allowed various purchases, including a car and diesel pump in 2010, a tractor in 2012 (reconditioned during 2014), and a motorcycle in 2014. The family have also purchased cattle, as well as making regular expenditures on school fees, house improvements, and groceries. The garden that developed following the purchase of the pump is now producing large volumes of cucurbits, tomatoes, and cabbages for sale, and is managed by Mrs C. The tobacco business, combined with maize, has resulted in significant boosts in income for the family, and demonstrates a pattern of accumulation from below. Mr C comments, “We came with nothing, but now we are living well!”.¹⁹

This is just one case, illustrating how tobacco income—through tobacco contracting as well as direct sales—can boost incomes and drive accumulation. But how does this case compare with others, and how can we understand this dynamic of production and accumulation in the wider agrarian setting? Below, we outline a simple typology emphasizing the underlying processes generating differential accumulation and class formation (intersecting with age and gender) as a result of tobacco production in Mvurwi area.

THE ACCUMULATORS

This group—classified by local informants as SG1—consists of those with sufficient resources to grow tobacco and sell it on their own. In the recent

past, they may have had contracting relationships with companies, but many have found it possible to operate independently because of sufficient resources accumulated, although 25% retain contracts on small areas. Tobacco income has been invested in tractors and transport vehicles, allowing households to cultivate effectively and transport tobacco to the auction floors. SG1 farmers balance tobacco farming with commercial maize farming, so they spread their risk in terms of agriculture. Many also have other businesses, including tractor hire and transport, but also house rental, as some have invested in real estate in Mvurwi, Mazowe, and Harare from tobacco proceeds. This group is generally older, male, more educated, and sometimes with jobs in town, or at least pensions and other resources—sometimes remittances from children abroad—to draw on, which helps the path of accumulation. This group hires permanent labour, and also uses a temporary workforce hired from the locality as well as from the compounds. As the tobacco operation has become more sophisticated, some A1 farmers have farm managers, drawn from the skilled workforce who previously worked on the large-scale farms. Links to state officials, agribusinesses, and political networks become important for gaining access to some resources, notably fertilizer, and so accumulation from below combines with accumulation from above for this group.

THE ASPIRING ACCUMULATORS

This group is dominated by those in the SG2 category, and includes a number with formal contracting relationships with companies, such as the C family profiled above. They do not have enough resources to produce and sell independently, but are prepared to commit significant land areas to tobacco to fulfil contracts, and take on the associated risk. The contracts to which they commit require certain volumes and so they allocate at least one hectare of land to tobacco. Many also plant more, and spread the inputs from the contractors across a larger area. SG2 farmers produced the most tobacco of the A1 farmers in 2014 (Table 13.2). on larger areas. These farmers combine contracting with independent sales. However, fewer SG2 households have their own transport (23%, Table 13.4), and they must work as groups and hire transport to the tobacco floors, often from their SG1 neighbours. SG2 farmers generally have a larger proportion of their farms allocated to tobacco, and so less to other crops, including maize. However, on average, SG2 farmers manage to produce more than a tonne of maize per year (Table 13.2 for 2014), and so, even on smaller areas, have enough for self-provisioning, if lower sales levels. Many also complement tobacco

production with small-scale commercial horticulture, often run by women, and so have diverse sources of income. They hire labour, both locally and from the compounds, but have a smaller permanent workforce compared to the accumulator group. In terms of off-farm sources of income, this group combines traditional local occupations, such as building or brickmaking, with cattle sales, and some with small transport operations (Table 13.3). Off-farm work is less capitalized, and usually skill or craft based. Women are involved in vegetable growing, trading, and craft making. With fewer capital resources and less access to finance, a contracting relationship is often essential. However, while aspiring to greater things, this group is certainly accumulating from below, and shows a significant level of purchase of assets, including cattle, solar panels, and cell phones, as well as agricultural and other inputs.

THE PEASANT PRODUCERS

Not everyone is accumulating to the extent of these other groups, and for some a more classic peasant production system is evident. This group is typified by those classified by local informants in the top half of SG3. This does not mean “subsistence” production, as all are engaging in the market, but the production system features a dominance of own-family labour (although with some hiring in of temporary piece work), and production that is spread across a variety of crops, including tobacco. Most in this group will not be in a contracting relationship with a company. Instead, they sell tobacco independently, often as part of a group. Total production levels are significantly lower (Table 13.2), as well as the scale of inputs used. However, they would like to get a contract, and will approach contractors each year. There has been a large movement from this group to the other two accumulator groups in the past few years, as almost all A1 farmers, when they occupied the land from 2000, could be broadly classified in this group.²⁰

These categories are thus far from static, and the drive to accumulate, with contracting seen as an important route to this end, is ever present, both in people’s own commentaries as well as in observed practices. Everyone can see success around them, and tobacco is the symbol of this, although some are having their doubts about its sustainability and diversifying into other high-value crops. The “peasant producer” group thus has a more diversified cropping base, but they do sell maize and other crops (including soy beans, groundnuts, sugar beans, and so on), as part of a wider portfolio of livelihood activities. Off-farm income is derived from,

inter alia, trading, local building work, vegetable sales, and craft work (Table 13.3).

THE DIVERSIFIERS AND STRUGGLERS

There are a number of SG3 households that are not producing in the way the peasant producers manage, and are clearly struggling. This group does not engage in cropping for sale (or if so very little, and not usually tobacco, but mostly maize) and often produces insufficient maize for self-provisioning. Such farmers have to diversify income-earning activities, often with a clear gendered division of labour, across activities including building, carpentry, thatching, fishing, and some craft making (for men) and vegetable sales, trading, pottery, and basket making (for women). They rarely hire labour, and will often be the ones labouring for others, as temporary labourers on nearby farms, often competing with the more skilled labourers from the compounds, whose livelihood activities are very similar (see above). Some members of this group have given up and left the new resettlements over time, returning to the communal areas, where there is more social support, or to towns, to take up low-paid employment. This group has a mix of ages, but some are young families, finding it tough to get going, and without a network of support from others in the more elite groups. Unlike in the communal areas, the kin-based village groupings that provide support—for ploughing, inputs, and so on—are currently less evident in the new resettlements. Most arrived independently during the land occupations, or with friends and neighbours, bound by a desire to acquire land. A more individualized pattern of production has emerged; this benefits the accumulators, but sometimes leaves those struggling behind. Church groups and other forms of affiliation do exist, and serve some functions of social support, but do not replicate the “traditional” social relations of production in the communal areas; although as resettlement communities are established, cross-generational, kin-based grouping are emerging over time.

These categorizations, of course, miss the differential trajectories of accumulation within households, across genders and generations. As noted above, this is an important dynamic, with some youth failing to make it and often remaining within increasingly large accumulator households as dependents, even after marriage. Some women may be tobacco farmers in their own right, but tobacco accumulation is predominantly a male phenomenon, with men often taking on the tobacco business, and associated investments from the proceeds. For example, very few women

own tractors or trucks, or have bought cattle or invested in real estate in their own right as a result of the tobacco boom. Women may well benefit, through improved living conditions, investments in education, and funds for their own business, but the marital contract within households becomes key in negotiating access to these resources (O’Laughlin, 1998). This paper has not covered the gendered dimensions of the tobacco boom, and this deserves further study.

Clearly, there are many overlaps between the categories suggested here; there is much fluidity, with mobility up and down over time. Intersecting differences cutting across class, gender, age, and other dimensions makes neat categorizations difficult (Bernstein, 1996, 2010). Here, we are interested not just in static patterns, but also dynamic processes in relation to patterns of reproduction and accumulation. The categories suggested above have resonance with earlier classifications. For example, with reference to the 1980s, Cousins, Weiner, and Amin (1992) offered a class-based categorization of communal area farmers. They identified an emergent rural bourgeoisie (similar to the accumulators identified here), petty commodity producers (comparable to the aspiring accumulators and some peasant producers), and worker-peasants (cutting across groups, as on- and off-farm work is combined with production). Our “diversifiers and strugglers” are equally similar to what Bernstein (2010) refers to as “classes of labour”, engaged in a diversity of activities beyond agricultural production.

CONCLUSION

Following land reform, tobacco production has transformed agrarian relations in the Mvurwi area in Zimbabwe. A pattern of differentiation is observed, with contrasting patterns of accumulation occurring across smallholder A1 farmers. This has been influenced by engagements with agribusiness capital, including through contract farming, but also through direct sales to contracting companies and auction sales on the floors. The role of farm labour is central, given the labour intensity of flue-cured tobacco production. New relationships are emerging among A1 farmers, and between A1 farmers and compound-based farmworkers. The state has facilitated the emergence of new contracting relationships with agribusiness, including the Chinese, from the early 2000s, and these have influenced opportunities for accumulation, suggesting an interaction of processes of accumulation from above and below. Access to contracts and

negotiations over floor prices and grading are influenced by access to money and connections, which can facilitate deals.

The case of tobacco farming in Mvurwi thus provides a particular insight into the dynamics of agrarian change in a post-land reform setting, and how different rural classes—of both producers and labourers and combinations of the two—negotiate their roles in a fast-growing commercial sector, based on an export cash crop. A differentiated view of all categories—“farmer”, “agribusiness”, and “labour”—is needed to get a sense of these complex dynamics. Among A1 farmers, we identify four groups, each accumulating from below through tobacco production, but involving different relationships and processes. Contracting is important for some, especially for those unable to operate independently, and who are able to negotiate contracts successfully. In this case, however, this is neither a distinct path of accumulation nor one only available to elites. Many farmers combine contracting with independent sales, while others without contracts sell tobacco via intermediaries. Evidence of extended reproduction and accumulation of a significant group of A1 farmers (SG1 and SG2 households make up 67% of the sample, for example) is seen from the purchase of farm assets, including the building of homes, purchase of rental properties, and the buying of cattle, tractors, cars, carts, and items such as cell phones and solar panels. Other “peasant producers” who are not accumulating significantly at present are aiming to, and tobacco production, and in turn contracting support, is seen as a route to achieving this. However, around 17% of our A1 sample (representing half of the SG3 group) is struggling, and must combine a rather more limited commitment to tobacco with other agriculture and off-farm activities, including selling labour.²¹ This is similar to the patterns seen among compound-based farmworkers, who themselves are increasingly differentiated, with diverse livelihood strategies.

Tobacco production is clearly central to this story of social differentiation, but must be balanced against production of food crops, notably maize. Those who contract grow more tobacco and less maize, for example, while most still produce sufficient maize for self-provisioning during the years studied. Off-farm income, and access to other sources of income, is also important for not in understanding who can accumulate, and who cannot, with off-farm jobs, and increasingly other local businesses, ranging from transport to house rental, having an impact on people’s ability to profit from tobacco or avoid contracting arrangements, and accumulate from tobacco independently. Off-farm opportunities are increased in

tobacco-growing areas, as there is greater demand for a range of services, and there are greater employment opportunities.

Relationships with labour are important too, with dependent relationships evolving. These are complex, and always under negotiation, and they differ farm by farm. However, overall, the reliance on farm labour—not just for labour power, but crucially for skill—of those who are accumulating is clear, and this inevitably results in tensions over working conditions, pay, and access to land for compound-based households.

What do these patterns tell us about likely longer-term patterns of agrarian change? The tobacco boom has provided a significant group of land reform beneficiaries the opportunity to accumulate. This has had spin-off effects in the rural economy—generating employment, and resulting in investments of different sorts and changes in the local economy as small towns like Mvurwi grow. It has also generated class-related conflicts and dependencies both in relation to compound-based farmworker households and with others in the A1 areas who are struggling to reproduce. The weak kin-based social relations within new resettlement communities limit the redistributive effects of a “traditional” moral economy, and mean that there are genuine losers, as well as winners, from the land reform.

There are inevitable limits to accumulation, set by environmental factors (and especially the supply of wood for curing), market conditions (and changes in the world market, health concerns, the demand for higher-quality leaf, and price shifts), social-political relations (and the ability to negotiate within markets), and limited land areas (today, more land is occupied and cultivated compared to the past, yet demand for land continues, from youth, former farmworkers, and others). In the A1 areas, successful households attract others, particularly from the communal areas, and household sizes expand as others are taken in.²² Surplus income can be invested in basic social reproduction—including maintaining rural homes, and investing in education, healthcare, marriage of children, and so on—as well as production—including livestock, farm equipment, inputs, transport, and so on—but again there are limits to the herd sizes and capital items and other inputs that can be bought. A key question will be where the next round of investment will end up. Here, the relationship between countryside and towns, especially small towns, becomes important, as accumulators build urban/peri-urban housing for rent and private schools as business ventures, and sink capital into other urban-based businesses, potentially a source of employment for the next generation. This is only beginning now, but the data show that this is a

trend to watch.

These economic transformations also feed into and are built upon social and political dynamics. Successful A1 farmers—very often well educated, and with links to urban areas—are important social and political actors, often seen as leaders in local political formations (mostly within the ruling party, ZANU–PF), but also in other groupings, such as churches and business associations. How alliances are struck with farmworkers—in all their forms—as well as those A1 farmers who are struggling will be significant, as new forms of agrarian politics emerge on the back of the tobacco boom.

This paper started with a question: who wins and who loses from the major reconfiguration of the agrarian landscape due to tobacco farming? Through a detailed analysis of patterns of social differentiation linked to highly varied class formations, we have shown how a focus on agrarian relations is key to understanding the patterns of agrarian change currently unfolding in the post–land reform agrarian setting in Zimbabwe. Tobacco and contracting relations with agribusiness are important factors, but a wider picture is needed of both on– and off–farm livelihoods in order to understand the emerging linkages between farming, capital, and the state in Zimbabwe’s resettlement areas.

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NOTES

- ¹ In 2015, total production was slightly down at 198.9 million kilograms, realizing an average price of US\$2.95 per kilogram. Registered growers declined to 97,635, of whom 75,392 delivered tobacco. A total of US\$586 million worth of tobacco was sold in the marketing year (TIMB, 2015, p. iv).
- ² Retrieved September 20, 2016 from <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2015/12/04/china-to-set-up-a-cigarette-plant-in-zim/>
- ³ The “success group” classification offers a basis for stratification, and for identifying some central elements of social differentiation when allied with the household survey data. Based on individual households and a single time point, however, it does not fully address processual and relational dimensions of change. But by looking comparatively across groups, as well as at processes of investment, accumulation, labour hiring, and so on, key drivers of social differentiation and class formation are nevertheless highlighted. These are explored further in our tentative typology at the end of the paper, which extends the success group classification to a more dynamic analysis centred on differential patterns of accumulation.
- ⁴ Retrieved September 20, 2016 from <https://zimbabweland.wordpress.com/2016/05/16/1654/>
- ⁵ From Zimtrade Company Profiles (<http://www.zimtrade.co.zw>) and company interviews, Harare.

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- ⁶ This has involved the re-equipping of laboratories, as well as exchange visits for staff. Fellowships have been offered to Tobacco Research Board staff, who have been seconded to Yunnan in China, the base for Tian Ze, to assist with building Chinese research capacity in tobacco production, based on Zimbabwean experience.
- ⁷ High rates of male mortality were noted in discussions, particularly due to HIV/AIDS. As mobile populations, farmworkers include a larger proportion of unmarried women with families compared to the A1 farms.
- ⁸ The average household size on our A1 sample was 6.1 persons, while for farmworker households it was 4.8.
- ⁹ Spearman's rank correlation at 5% significance.
- ¹⁰ Spearman's rank correlation at 5% significance.
- ¹¹ TIMB (2014) records higher levels of contracting, with an estimated 56% of growers contracted, representing 76% of output, but in December 2015, the Mvurwi TIMB office also noted a significant decline in grower registration.
- ¹² This was a recurrent theme of discussion with tobacco growers, extension workers, and others during interviews in November 2015 and April 2016, when everyone pointed to the decline in market probity in the past two seasons.
- ¹³ Those without tobacco curing barns on their farms share with neighbours or hire space for curing. Larger barns, originally used by the large-scale commercial farmers, are also used on a collective basis. Those without contracts must purchase fertilizer on the open market, as do many contracting farmers too.
- ¹⁴ Including local hires from A1 households, as well as local compounds and those from further afield.
- ¹⁵ In our study areas, primary and secondary schools have been established since land reform, often making use of old farm houses and buildings. In the past, farmworkers' children were educated on farms, often in very basic conditions, and rarely beyond primary level.
- ¹⁶ A bale of Virginia flue-cured tobacco averages 100 kilograms in Zimbabwe.
- ¹⁷ Person-days of work were estimated during in-depth interviews with farmers, differentiating between different tasks. A work day was calculated as 8 hours, and divisions of work between different tasks was based on recall (for the detailed results and methodology, see Sukume et al., 2015, p. 50). In Zimbabwe, around 500 person-days per hectare is expected for the production of tobacco; far higher than Brazil (149) or the USA (284), where mechanization has occurred (BDO, 2015, 34–35).
- ¹⁸ The simple enterprise budget was based on recall estimates of cash inflows and outflows for the tobacco enterprise (Sukume et al., 2015, p. 50). Inflows included tobacco sales and contract cash advances, while outflows included expenditure on contract inputs, fertilizers, agrochemicals, tillage, and labour (based on a work day and wage rate calculation—see above).
- ¹⁹ Interview, Mvurwi area, November 29, 2015.
- ²⁰ Discussions at success group ranking workshops, Mvurwi sites, 2013.
- ²¹ The extent of accumulation, driven by tobacco production, exceeds that found in the drier mixed farming areas of Masvingo (see Scoones et al., 2010, 2012).
- ²² In our sample, SG1 households have on average 6.3 resident members, while SG3 households have 5.3.

14

SUGAR, PEOPLE AND POLITICS IN ZIMBABWE'S LOWVELD

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INTRODUCTION

In 2000, as land invasions occurred around Zimbabwe, there were many calls for the sugar estates to be taken over. Indeed, there were a number of occupations of 'white' outgrower farms on the lowveld estates. This coincided with major strikes on the estates, and the burning of large areas of cane.¹ Yet high-level negotiations and political manoeuvring averted the wholesale takeover of the estates. Despite the rhetoric, the strategic importance of the sugar industry to the national economy was recognised and the state and the sugar companies brokered compromises. The result was the subdivision of former settler outgrower areas in Hippo Valley and Mkwazine estates and their transfer to now around 800 land reform beneficiaries who had applied through the A2 scheme, designed for medium-scale enterprises and suited to those with capital and expertise.² The sugar outgrower land reform represented nearly 16,000 ha, leaving about 30,000 ha as core estate land.

While there had been outgrowers linked to the estates, particularly Hippo Valley and Mkwazine, since the 1960s, this was on a different scale, and with a very different group of farmers. The outgrower-estate model is well established in sugar production, and offers a way of spreading risks

and gaining economies of scale. Being linked to a sugar mill is essential, and only large companies can invest in such infrastructure. In Zimbabwe, the hold of the sugar industry on national economic and political affairs has been the case from long before Independence. Setting up in remote areas, providing much-needed infrastructure and services, and employing many thousands of people has meant that the sugar industry has strong bargaining power. In the Zimbabwe Lowveld, for example, Tongaat Hulett supports 18 primary schools and four secondary schools, and it employs around 18,000 people, plus several thousand casual workers, across the two mills and estates. Meanwhile, the 870 outgrowers employ a further 7,000 people.³ For some, such arrangements are 'win-win' solutions, and are much promoted by those advocating for the role of large-scale capital in farming, while protecting livelihoods of smallholders (Glover, 1984; Kirsten and Sartorius, 2002). Yet there are many questions raised about the equity of such arrangements. Who takes the risk, who appropriates the profit and who ultimately benefits in such 'partnerships' (Oya, 2012; Smalley, 2013)? 'Living under contract' (Jackson and Cheater, 1994) forever tied to a single company that can exert oligopolistic 'market power' and is usually connected to high-level political circuits, can be highly exploitative. Yet, as other cases discussed in this special issue show, how the balance of power plays out in these arrangements is dependent on the context; and Zimbabwe's is very particular, given the impact of land reform and the social and political profile of the outgrowers.

The Zimbabwe case therefore offers interesting insights into estate-outgrower relations, as it emerged from a land reform, and a brokered deal between the state and a large-scale external investment. It demonstrates how negotiations with capital are not straightforward, and land reform dynamics influence the logics and imperatives of accumulation, both by large-scale capital and the land reform beneficiaries. For the new farmers, the land redistribution to these new outgrowers resulted in the gaining of access to high-value irrigated land, associated infrastructure and resident labour.

With the outgrowers not being classic 'peasant' farmers on small plots, as is the case in other smallholder land reform areas, but being richer, better educated, and more connected to political authority, the social, economic and political dynamic is different to other land reform areas in Zimbabwe, and indeed other sugar outgrower contexts in the region (see other papers in this special issue), resulting in a particular form of negotiation with sugar capital, as we explore.

Company officials, government extension agents and others were

sceptical that the new outgrowers would be able to supply sugar in amounts and at the quality required for the two mills at Triangle and Hippo Valley, and argued that the new settlers could not possibly achieve the results of previous white European and Mauritian outgrowers. Before land reform around 625,000 tonnes of raw cane was produced, with average yields approaching 100 tonnes per hectare. The mills' total capacity was 640,000 tonnes and the unrefined sugar was supplied to the local market, and to export, facilitated by generous export quotas under the EU Lomé Agreement with the African, Caribbean and Pacific group of countries. The mills have a refining capacity of 140,000 tonnes, and a power generation capacity of 53 MV. The sugar industry represented 1.4 per cent of national GDP, but a massive 95 per cent of Masvingo Province's accounted-for GDP. The sceptics argued that the new outgrowers were given portions of land that were 'unviable', and that commercial sugar growing could only occur on irrigated plots of more than 35 ha. Further, they argued that the land reform beneficiaries did not have the skills for the highly technical and demanding process of sugar production. And finally they suggested that a politically driven land reform process was inimical to economically successful production, and that the investors would flee, abandoning Zimbabwe for more stable contexts.

This paper is based on a detailed case study of 38 new outgrower farms linked to Hippo Valley estate in Masvingo Province in southern Zimbabwe over 12 years from 2002, combined with a wider analysis of the sugar sector in Zimbabwe. As explained below, although small our sample is broadly representative of the new outgrowers who gained sugar land as part of the land reform in 2000. The paper examines the particular politics of sugar in post-land reform Zimbabwe, investigating what happened, and whether the sceptical prognoses were borne out. Through this detailed case study analysis, we draw out the wider implications for the intersection of production, livelihoods and politics in the post-land reform sugar estates and their outgrower areas.

SUGAR DEALS

Questions have been raised about the potentials of lowveld sugar production since the first attempts were made by Murray MacDougall in 1937,⁴ when he planted 100 ha of cane thanks to water coming from the Jatala weir and tunnel system. In 1938 he established the Triangle company with the aim of expanding sugar production in the region. The sceptics were initially proved right, as the enterprise failed, and was taken over by

the Sugar Board in 1944. It was sold on to a group of Natal planters in 1954, but development was slow and expansion limited. However, in 1957, the business was sold to the Hulett company of South Africa, and the growth of sugar in the Lowveld took off. The previous year, local resident and MP Ray Stockhill established Hippo Valley, largely for citrus production. Later there was a switch to sugar, and a settlement scheme was established. Triangle maintained an estate model, and had only a few planters linked to it. In the 1970s the Mkwesine estate became a joint venture of Triangle and Hippo Valley, having been run earlier by the Sabi-Limpopo Authority, and was the only area where 'African' plots were allowed, with small 10 ha allocations occurring in the Chipiwa scheme.

Over time, a hugely successful industry was established, backed by massive state investment in water supply and irrigation, combined with company investment in the mills, the estate towns and wider infrastructure (Mlambo and Pangeti, 1996). The Zimbabwe sugar industry is regarded as one of the most efficient in the region – and indeed the world – and, given the increasingly intense competition from other players in the international market, notably Brazil, the low-cost, high-output operations in the Lowveld are highly valued (see Dubb *et al.*, 2017). The ownership of the estates and their mills has changed through the years, but this has been mostly foreign capital, supported by the Zimbabwean state – whether the rebel Rhodesian state of Ian Smith or the post-Independence state of Robert Mugabe. Today the dominant player is Tongaat Hulett, who bought out Anglo American's share in Hippo Valley in 2000, and is now a 51 per cent shareholder, and sole owner of Triangle. Over time, all political leaders have realised the crucial role the sugar industry had to play. The bizarre Murray MacDougall Museum on the hill above Triangle (Mac's Hill), where he and other sugar 'greats' of the Lowveld are buried and honoured, has a whole catalogue of photographs of important leaders visiting the estates, from British governors of Rhodesia to Smith and Mugabe, all offering the same support. For decades, sugar in the Lowveld has been deeply entwined with state-making, as the valuable resources of fertile soils, irrigation water and plentiful sunshine are transformed into sugar, and so money. The complex relationships between state and capital, and between different elite groups within and beyond the state, are all highlighted by the Lowveld sugar story over time (Fontein, 2015).

The gradual transformation of the dry landscape to the green chequered fields of irrigated sugar have been part of the folklore of the Lowveld, and particularly glorified in the hagiographies of its pioneers, from MacDougall to Hulett, Robertson and Goss. This was seen as a

monumental task of modernisation that 'tamed' the wilderness, and transformed it to a 'land of promise', the 'showpiece of Rhodesia', with the new settlers and the sugar companies providing 'catalysts of progress' (Wolmer, 2007), but with heavy investment by the state.

With this came a new aesthetic of development, as order was imposed on chaos, and the brown of the bush was transformed to the emerald green of the irrigated sugar. Civilisation was brought to the Lowveld, with its 'rectangular grid' (Robbins, 1994) of irrigated fields and neat estate townships. And of course, as the estates expanded and the mills increased their throughput, this provided much-needed revenue for the state, particularly in the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) era, when mineral revenues declined with the break-up of the Central African Federation. Of course in these epic stories of settler history, the way land was appropriated, labour exploited and environmental damage wreaked is not part of the picture. While many gained employment, resentments about exclusions and displacements persisted, especially among the local Shangaan community whose traditional burial sites were engulfed by the estates. As an ethnic group on the margins of the country and with few benefits from the state, both before and after Independence, these histories and memories have re-emerged in the recent period around land reform, and the contested rhetoric of 'indigenisation'.

Outgrowers have always been part of the Lowveld sugar story, but their role has frequently been controversial. As noted, the Natal planters who came in the 1950s were important, but their influence short-lived. In Hippo Valley, attempts to attract outgrowers in the 1950s and 60s got mired in a racialised controversy around who should be the legitimate beneficiaries to sugar land. Government officials backed the settlement of white, European World War II war veterans over Italians, South Africans and certainly Mauritian, whose racial identity was much debated (Fontein, 2015: 186-90). Later, black Africans were allocated plots in Chipiwa, but primarily as a concession to independence struggles emerging at the time. Thus, who has rights to sugar land has always been socially and politically constructed, just as it is today.

After Independence, the outgrowers on Hippo Valley continued on relatively large plots of between 100 and 200 ha, but all were white or Mauritian. They employed many thousands of workers largely from compounds based on their farms, and were closely integrated into the estate (Jackson and Cheater, 1994; Loewenson, 1992). They were skilled sugar producers, involved in tight, highly commercial operations. In the periods when sugar prices were high, and particularly in the post-

Independence period when EU support was available, these were lucrative farming operations, particularly when compared to their other commercial farming colleagues in the Lowveld who struggled through repeated droughts with beef ranching or game farming operations (Wolmer, 2007). Cheap water, supplied from government-built dams at Mutirikwi (formerly Kyle, opened in 1961) and Bangala (building started in 1963), and transported through rivers, canals and tunnels over many kilometres meant that sugar farming was massively supported by the state.

It is no surprise therefore that sugar plots, despite their distance from centres of population (Hippo Valley is 450 km from the capital Harare, and 200 km from Masvingo, the provincial capital), proved attractive during land reform. As the negotiations continued between company officials and the highest ranking politicians, a plan was drawn up for the 'A2' medium-scale commercial farm scheme to be part of the 'fast-track land reform'. A senior company official explained how, due to high demand, subdivisions ended up smaller than the 35 ha originally proposed. This involved a 'massive reorganisation' of the company's operations, and the company had to take on a 'midwife role' for the new outgrowers.⁵

The A2 application process involved – at least formally – potential beneficiaries submitting a business plan, and some evidence of their farming commitment, qualifications and levels of investment capital. For the sugar plots there was a particular rush from those in the know – in the land and agriculture ministries, and those who were managers in the estates. They met the criteria and were able to gain plots through the system. There were also some others (a small minority, but highly influential) who were able to jump the queue because of their links to the ruling party, the Zimbabwe African National Union (Patriotic Front) (ZANU[PF]), often also with strong security service–business connections. As discussed below, the district lands committee, under pressure from provincial party officials, notably the governor, allocated land to local Shangaan chiefs, in exchange for political commitment to the ruling party. These patronage connections were deployed to overturn the technocratic selection process, much to the frustration of Ministry of Lands and Agriculture officials who oversaw the formal process through the lands committee chaired by the District Administrator.⁶ In the early phases of settlement war veterans were heavily involved and were central to the composition of the lands committees. A few – usually serving security service officers – managed to get access to sugar land, but most focused on invasions elsewhere in the district, becoming key players in the new A1 schemes (Chaumba *et al.*, 2003).

The Hippo Valley mill takes 26 per cent of total cane delivered by outgrowers to cover the costs of milling. Outgrowers also must pay for irrigation water, transport and other support. Credit arrangements with the mill, operating through a farm-based billing system, also exist. Investment by the company in rehabilitation of the sugar areas through the Sustainable Rural Sugarcane Farming Community (SusCo) programme has encouraged extensive replanting of cane, and provided cheap credit. Yields on estate land are now increasing again, and were estimated to be on average 83 tonnes per ha in 2013–14, up from around 60 tonnes per ha at the lowest point in the 2000s (see USDA, 2014).

While farmers complain about the contract deal, arguing that ‘the estate are not fair; they rip us off, cheating on the price’,⁷ deliveries have increased. By 2012–13, some 852,000 tonnes of cane was being delivered to the mills, of a total throughput of 3.9 million tonnes. This was down from the 2002 peak when 4.6 million tonnes was delivered, which produced 580,000 tonnes of sugar, but up from the low of 290,000 tonnes of sugar in 2009, when production had declined due to economic conditions, and illegal exports of cane increased to 60–100,000 tonnes. This was a crisis period for the industry, a ‘near disaster’ as one senior company official put it.⁸ However, it also prompted a change of attitude to the new land reform outgrowers. From a period when they were seen as a threat, the company realised that without their cane, the business would collapse. This meant finally accepting the land reform, and investing in the production of outgrowers as a central part of the business model.

The new outgrowers are producing in the context of a fast-changing market. In 2012–13, over 200,000 tonnes of raw sugar was exported to the EU under preferential market arrangements. Duty-free and quota-free exports to the EU through the ‘Sugar Adaptation Strategy’ are expected to remain around this level until 2015, and afterwards may continue, subject to the ‘safeguard clause’ of the Economic Partnership Agreement with the EU.⁹ World market prices are very low due to high stocks and increased production in Brazil, India and elsewhere, so the EU market and the domestic market are crucial for economic viability. Sugar consumption in Zimbabwe is high and growing, but in 2013 substantial imports resulted in a flooding of the market, although this has now decreased due to import tariff restrictions. Ethanol production is seen as part of the market strategy for sugar firms, as cane sugar markets become increasingly saturated. While Triangle has a 40-million-litre ethanol production capacity, only around 26 million litres are being produced, which is mostly sold to the EU due to restrictions on domestic sales.¹⁰

Overall Tongaat Hulett makes considerable profit from its Zimbabwe operations (US\$30.6 million in 2014, down from US\$57.1 million in 2013).¹¹ Despite the uncertainties and sometimes difficult working conditions, constraints on water supply and competition on the domestic market due to imports, the company posted an increase in operating profit in 2014 of 11 per cent over all its activities in the region. Of its sugar businesses, 36 per cent of profit was from the Zimbabwe operations in 2014, down from 44 per cent in 2013. Outgrowers are crucial to this success. In 2013–14, over 1 million tonnes of cane was delivered from 870 outgrowers, contributing to US\$58 million of revenue.¹² In its annual report, the company waxes lyrical about its role as a good corporate citizen in Zimbabwe. It argues that ‘as the business continues to empower indigenous private farmers, it is positively impacting [sic] the communities that surround these cane growing operations’. Land reform beneficiaries who are outgrowers (‘private farmers’ in company code) are key to the operation, both economically and politically, and so the fortunes of land reform beneficiaries have become intimately bound up with the company’s operations.

OUTGROWER PRODUCTION AND LIVELIHOODS

How then did these new land reform beneficiaries fare 12 years on from the allocation of plots (mostly in 2002)? The story has inevitably been varied. Some failed almost completely, others have thrived, and there are many in between. Overall though, and to the surprise of many, the sceptics have been proven, so far at least, largely wrong.

Despite massive declines in output during Zimbabwe’s economic crisis in the 2000s, which resulted in drops in yield due to lack of fertiliser application, a failure to replant, and the diversion of production to illegal cross-border sales, the situation has massively improved since 2009 with the stabilisation of the currency and reinjection of funds, both from the company and from farmers themselves. While production is not up to previous levels, yield levels are improving, particularly in the outgrower areas.

Since 2002 we have been tracking 38 farms, recording production each year. Detailed surveys took place in 2008 and again in 2013 to look at wider livelihood issues. The sample focused on former outgrower farms around Hippo Valley that were subdivided. Average plot size was 24.3 ha (with a range from 9.8 to 58.1 ha),¹³ with on average 20.9 ha under sugar. Four had

centre pivot systems for irrigation and 13 had access to an original farmer's or manager's house. Farm labour compounds existed on these farms, where 128 male and 91 female permanent workers and their families were resident. Worker compounds were subdivided, and the new farmers took on the buildings and the responsibility for their residents, many of whom subsequently worked on the land reform plots (see below). Available data on farm sizes, sugar areas and irrigation equipment show that our sample is broadly representative of the wider pattern in the A2 outgrower areas.¹⁴

Two-thirds of the sample gained land through the formal process, and settled in 2002. Others came between 2004 and 2006, as land holdings were transferred when some abandoned plots at the peak of the economic crisis. Those arriving in 2002 inherited standing cane from the former farmers, and the original harvest still remains disputed.¹⁵ All have replaced the cane since, as part of a rotation. Originally, in all sample farms the former outgrower was allowed to keep a portion of land and their main dwelling. However, since then all have left or been evicted. A spate of politically motivated evictions occurred leading up to the 2008 elections when a number of new farmers to each of the sites arrived, all of whom were politically connected.

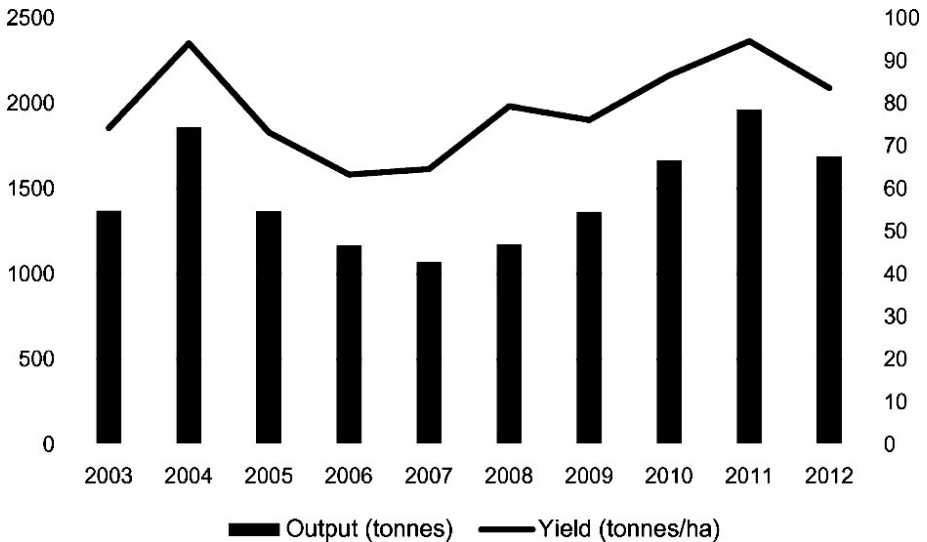
Who then are the new outgrowers? In our sample, the average age in 2008 was 53. They were all educated, at least to secondary school level, many at tertiary level. Fifty-three per cent had farming qualifications (Master Farmer certificates). In terms of occupations at settlement, 47 per cent were civil servants, 34 per cent were estate employees (mostly professional cadres), 8 per cent were business people, 3 per cent were politicians and 3 per cent were non-governmental organisation (NGO) workers. Overall 10 per cent were 'war veterans', all of whom were civil servants. In 2013, 39 per cent stayed at the plot, an increase from 2002 and 2008, and 29 per cent were employed elsewhere, a decline from earlier surveys. All landholders were men, although this proportion decreased over time as five men died and their wives inherited the land. This was not always recognised in the 'offer letter', the certificate of occupancy issued by the state to all beneficiaries.

Figure 14.1 provides some of the basic production data for this sample. This shows a significant dip from c.2004 to 2009, although to nowhere near as low as some have claimed. This is in part explained by the pattern of fertiliser use. During the whole period, fertilisers were applied below recommended levels,¹⁶ but this was particularly so at the height of the economic crisis in 2008–09 when average AN (ammonium nitrate) application was only 63 kg per ha, down from 350 kg per ha in 2003, while

SSP (single super phosphate) was 38 kg per ha, down from 185 kg per ha. By 2008 hyperinflation had hit 230 million per cent, and the formal cash economy was no longer functioning. This made sugar production and marketing impossible, and many abandoned their plots or cleared them for vegetable or maize production. Average yields were lowest in 2006–07 at 63–64 tonnes/ha, after 2009, the average climbed to 86 tonnes/ha, and across the period from 2003 yields averaged 79 tonnes/ha. With the stabilisation of the economy and a switch to a multi-currency environment that eliminated inflation, production recovered. The pattern shown for the sample farmers is reflected in the estate-level statistics, and the national picture.

Over the full period, yield levels averaged 79 tonnes per hectare, but since 2009 they have risen to 86 tonnes per ha. Indeed, in recent years, outgrower yields have exceeded those derived from estate land (average 83 tonnes per ha). The cane/sugar ratio index has also been high, averaging 11.7; again, a respectable level compared to the estate average of 8.0.¹⁷ While fertiliser applications have improved somewhat, they remain significantly below recommended levels. The increases in yields have occurred in part through major investment in replanting sugar areas, as

Figure 14.1: Average per farm cane output (tonnes) and sample farmers' yield levels (tonnes/ha).



Source: Field surveys.

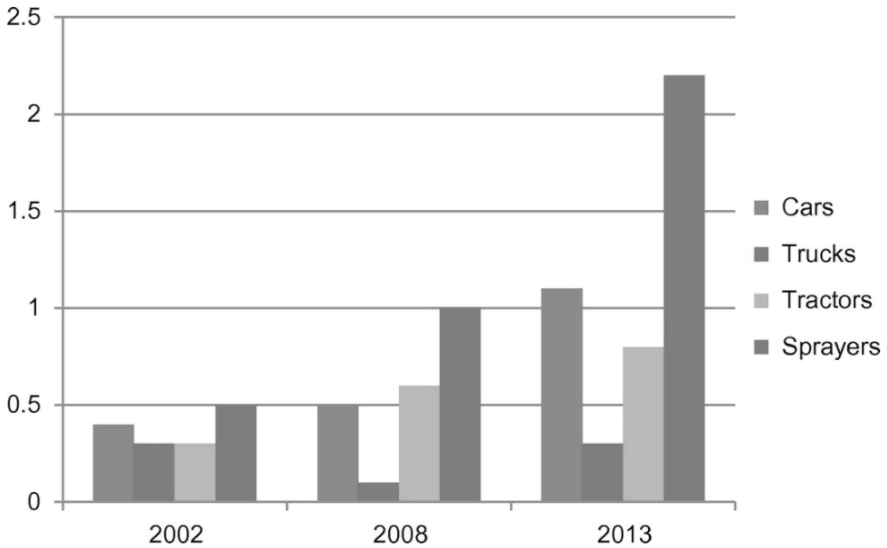
well as the ability to have focused labour-intensive management on small plots. Although costs are high and rising, making credit support essential, gross revenues have been strong. Over four years from 2009, these have averaged around US\$142,000 per household across the sample, resulting in an average of US\$42,000 net income once costs have been removed. As one Hippo Valley farmer commented: 'The sugar cane business pays far better than all jobs I have had. The challenge is cash flow, as you go for 12 months without being paid'.¹⁸

Replanting has occurred on all the sample plots. Eighty-seven per cent of sample farmers have been beneficiaries of the estate-led rehabilitation plan SusCo that is in part supported by the company and the BancABC, and in part by the EU through the Canelands Trust. Due to the 'restrictive measures' that were applied to the government of Zimbabwe by the EU, financing of sugar rehabilitation came through a convoluted route. European finance was not allowed to focus on so-called 'contested areas' (all 'fast-track' land reform areas), and was notionally at least targeted elsewhere (such as Chipiwa and Pezulu) or infrastructural development (such as the Mkwazine railway line), dam rehabilitation, or training and environmental conservation, pending a full land audit and resolution of compensation claims (Sierevogel *et al.*, 2007).

The company, however, is more concerned with overall production, and has invested in the SusCo plan that offers preferential credit and technical support to all outgrowers, including the A2 farmers, with the aim of increasing outgrower production to 1.4 million tonnes through the rehabilitation of 12,000 ha of land. Around US\$40 million of preferential credit has been offered through the BancABC to around 670 of 872 outgrowers. In addition, there are plans to increase land under sugar so that the mills run at full capacity, and 100,000 ha of expansion is targeted, to including outgrowers (Tongaat Hulett, 2014). The Canelands Trust, an organisational arrangement that involves all farming unions (including representatives of former outgrowers and the state),¹⁹ and the company provide oversight, with the Trust acting as a vehicle through which external donor funds from the EU can be channelled. Considerable resources are available under the Sugar Adaptation Strategy, with 31 million euros allocated.²⁰

As production has increased, so too has investment on the farms. Figure 14.2 compares the average per household ownership of a number of key assets for farming among our sample households in 2002, 2008 and 2013. Increases have occurred on all fronts. And some of these investments are not small. A second-hand 1.5 tonne truck and medium-horsepower tractor,

Figure 14.2: Per household ownership of farm assets over time.



for example, cost around US\$8,000 and US\$15,000 respectively.

Sugar farming is of course not the only livelihood activity of the new outgrowers. Particularly during the economic crisis in the mid-2000s, farmers had to diversify in order to survive. Many established vegetable and maize gardens on their plots and went into irrigated horticulture. In our sample around a quarter of farmers established such plots. This production has continued, as the income from horticulture smooths flows over the year. In 2013, 21 per cent were growing maize, 21 per cent leafy vegetables, 18 per cent tomatoes and 16 per cent beans. Also grown were bananas, cabbage, onions and wheat.

This is complemented by livestock production. Although there are no extensive grazing areas in the sugar farms, grazing by roadsides, around compounds and along waterways is possible; and water is never in short supply from the irrigation canals. Outgrowers brought with them a stable herd of cattle of around ten animals, while goat numbers have increased from on average four per household in 2002 to around 14 in 2013. Pig and sheep rearing remain specialist occupations for a few, but numbers are small.

Off-farm income earning remains important. When the economy was in dire straits, off-farm employment was important for nearly half the outgrowers. This has reduced since, although remittance flows from

relatives have picked up, as the cash economy has returned. Other income-earning activities are shown in Table 14.1.

Table 14.1: Income-earning activities by outgrowers (percentage of households).

Income-earning activities	2008	2013
Off-farm employment	46	21
Livestock sales	20	8
Remittances	6	45
Business	12	11
Crafts	0	5

NEW COMMUNITIES: FARMERS, LABOUR AND COMPOUNDS

In addition to the challenges of farm production, investment and wider livelihoods, one of the complexities faced following land reform was how to manage the reconfigured farm space, its infrastructure and the resident labour. On the former farms there was usually a farm house, possibly one for a manager, and a labour compound. In some farms there were also small stores or butcheries supplying groceries and meat to labourers in the vicinity. Some farms had additional irrigation equipment, including centre pivots, pumps and storage tanks. With land reform, how were these resources to be divided?

Each farm ended up with a different pattern, but to illustrate the issues, we focus on one farm in Hippo Valley. At land reform the original outgrower, a farmer of French origin, was allocated a portion of c.90 ha of the 215 ha of land along with five others, who got land in roughly equal proportions (20–30 ha). He retained his house, that for the farm manager and the butchery/store, along with his equipment. He also had a ranch plot elsewhere in Mwenezi run by his manager and a further farm in the Eastern Highlands. The farm compound, which consisted of 24 houses, was divided between all the farmers, and the group took on collective responsibility for

paying for the services and general upkeep.

The original French outgrower, however, largely abandoned his plot, keeping only a minimal presence. He concentrated his effort instead on his ranch, and eventually moved to the Eastern Highlands. The white farm manager also left, and is now working for a local businessman involved in transport. The original group of land reform beneficiaries who were allocated land in 2002 included two civil servants (from the Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Youth), a retired headmaster, and two estate workers (a supervisor and a member of the estate police).

In 2007 there were two new arrivals who took over the main farm house and the manager's house, evicting the former owners. One was a former local government employee and the other a member of the security services. These two got 45-ha plots, dividing the land of the white outgrower. They were also allocated a portion of the labour compound houses, and one took over the centre pivot. These were politically mediated acquisitions, and the new arrivals were regarded with some suspicion initially by the other farmers. One outgrower commented: 'We get along now, but we did not know who these people were when they arrived. We were fearful'.²¹ Four of settlers have moved into successful production, while one of the initial settlers and the two new arrivals only got going after 2009 with the stabilisation of the economy.

In the compound houses, some rooms are used for storage by the outgrowers, but many are used as accommodation for labourers. There are some areas for families, others for single men, and others left for seasonal labour who come for the cutting season. In total there can be up to 150 residents, including women and children, on the compound, although this varies seasonally. Given the location, there is a constant through-flow of visitors, relatives of the labourers from the communal lands, who come for fishing and sometimes illegal hunting. Around the compound there is space for gardening that families very often develop for vegetable growing. Many also keep chickens, and one keeps a large flock of ducks.

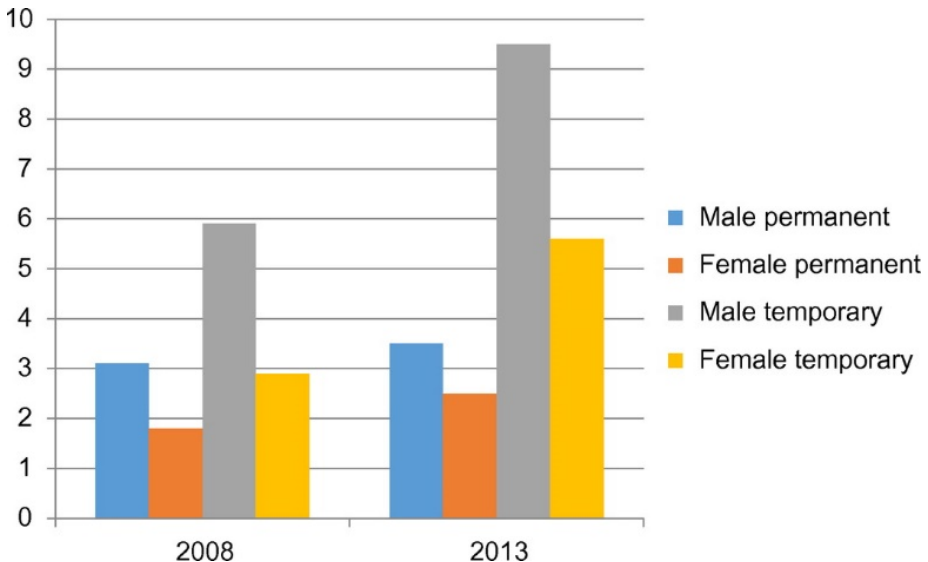
Issues of security, crime and occasional violence are ones that have to be dealt with in this new arrangement. In the early years this was a challenge. Large populations of single men, often on extremely poor or no pay, resulted in a rise in crime levels, as well as cases of sexual violence. Theft of cane from the outgrowers' fields was frequent, and a vigorous illegal trade in fresh cane developed. Disputes over pay, protests about the condition of housing and lack of services, and complaints about the safety of residents (given the large mobile populations) were frequent. At this time many of the new outgrowers were absent, and were unsure about the

future of the land reform. The economic crisis added additional burdens as sugar production became uneconomic, and farmers had to diversify. But as conditions normalised, and outgrowers became committed to their farms and sugar production, new forms of cooperative organisation have emerged to address the collective challenges of the new farm arrangements.

In 2009, a farm committee was established on the initiative of the A2 farmers. This involved workers and new outgrowers. The current chair is a supervisor on one of the farms. This initially dealt with pressing compound matters, and worked out systems for dealing with collective problems, such as paying service bills and so on. It also addressed security, and some farm security guards were employed who worked with the local police force. Later the committee has addressed production issues, including up- and downstream water management, organising collective transport arrangements so all farmers can get their cane to the mill on time, and so that one is not disadvantaged by others using the chains, tractors or trailers. Most of this is now organised among farm supervisors or managers who have now been employed by most farmers. One outgrower commented: 'We are organised now, even when the farm owners are away, issues can be dealt with. This is much better than before'.²²

These skilled supervisors have usually been drawn from the pool of labourers who had been left in the compounds. The expertise of workers

Figure 14.3: Changing levels of employment.



has, all farmers agree, been essential in the re-establishment of sugar production. A range of specialist skills, often seasonally required and differentiated by gender, is required. The amount of labour employed per farm has increased over time. Figure 14.3 compares the data for 2008 (at the peak of the economic crisis) with 2013.

Temporary labour has been especially in demand for a range of tasks including weeding, fertilisation and specialist jobs such as cutting. Temporary labour is recruited from the farm compound, but also from nearby estate compounds, as well as from communal areas further afield. Wage rates are fairly standard and comparable to other employment. In 2013 wages were on average US\$116 per month for male and female permanent workers, and for temporary workers, US\$7 per day for men and US\$4.4 for women on average across the sample, with some variations between tasks.

UNCERTAINTY, DISPUTE AND CONFLICT

As the new land reform farms have been established, production and investment increased, and labour and compounds became more organised, a more stable pattern has emerged. Day-to-day routines have been established, relationships forged between farmers, workers and the estate, and with the post-2009 stabilisation of the economy through 'dollarisation', a less volatile situation has emerged.²³ Travelling through the new outgrower areas there are now very few plots that are abandoned, and the multiple livelihoods associated with sugar production are thriving. Yet in this period, the institutional and organisational basis for sugar production has remained in the balance, creating uncertainty, dispute and conflict. Politics have intervened from all sides. In this section we examine a number of dimensions.

With land reform accepted as irreversible, and the sugar beneficiaries doing well, some Shangaans initiated new calls for redistribution. Restitution however has very explicitly never been part of Zimbabwe's land reform approach: all land is for all Zimbabweans, at least officially, and no particular ethnic group can make particular claims.²⁴ Thus the arguments of Shangaan leaders initially fell on deaf ears. Some Shangaan chiefs profited from close connections to ZANU(PF), and benefited from allocations of valuable housing in the sugar areas, in a battle dubbed the 'war of the houses'.²⁵ However the majority of Shangaan people were excluded, and this generated intense resentment. In mid-2014, there were high-profile

invasions of the sugar estates by angry villagers arguing that they had been issued 'offer letters' for land on the estates. Deals made during the previous year's elections had apparently not been honoured.²⁶ The group was arrested and charged with illegal entry, but behind-the-scenes negotiations between the state and the company resulted in promises of new land allocations for land reform. In November 2014, the Tongaat Hulett managing director in Zimbabwe, Sydney Mutsambiwa, was reported to have identified 6,000 ha of estate land for clearance for sugar, which was to be handed over to the state as part of the land reform programme, with local chiefs reportedly to be involved in the allocation of plots.²⁷

Shangaan claims are inevitably wrapped up in local political competition between different factions of the ruling party, and reflect the complex interweaving of patronage politics and ethnically based claim-making. During 2013, in the build-up to national elections, key political figures, including the then governor, the provincial party chairperson and several prospective local MPs proclaimed their support, arguing for an allocation of sugar land to Shangaan people.²⁸ This alliance however unravelled, as the group was accused of siding with the company, taking funds, and being associated with the former vice president, Joice Mujuru, who in December 2014 was expelled from the party for allegedly plotting against the president.²⁹ The vocal political support base for Shangaan restitution has since fallen apart. Patronage politics and the intense in-fighting within the ruling party have meant that at different times Shangaan identity has been hailed as a vote winner, but at other times association with the cause has become a liability. Tongaat Hulett has been accused of backing the 'wrong' side, and local government officials, security service personnel and technocrats have had to tread very carefully. The sugar lands are of course especially contested because of their value, nationally and for particular individuals, and for this reason political patronage relations are especially intense (Alexander and McGregor, 2013).

The 2008 elections, and to a lesser extent the 2013 elections, also saw evictions and takeovers of land held by white outgrowers on the larger farms still remaining in the sugar estates, as people used patronage connections to gain access to sugar land. This resulted in some high-profile court cases and battles with the authorities. In this period the established outgrowers resented outsiders being imposed, as many had established good relationships with the remaining whites, a number of whom were major figures with long-established reputations in the Lowveld community. For example, the Nesbitts, local businesspeople and sugar and crocodile farmers, had long-running battles with an assistant police commissioner

who demanded to take their land, despite support for the Nesbitts from local war veterans, the governor and others.³⁰ Thus the axes of such conflicts were not so obviously racially defined as before. Indeed, local police and other authorities – including the district land committee, Ministry of Lands and Agriculture officials and some local war veterans – often backed the ‘approved’ whites who had been allocated land under the A2 schemes against newcomers; even if they eventually had to relent under pressure from powerful politicians and party officials with provincial and national connections.

But beyond these political wrangles, perhaps the largest tension since land reform has been between the new outgrowers and the estate, particularly in the early years. Following the deal brokered during the land reform that largely protected the core estates, the company regarded the new outgrowers with open contempt. One farmer observed: ‘Their input prices are too high. They make deductions and don’t bother to inform us. This really cripples our operations. This has taught farmers a lesson. We are now organising ourselves to buy inputs in bulk, so we move away from dependence on the company’.³¹ Of course unfair treatment is the permanent complaint of all outgrowers everywhere when locked into a contract with a powerful company. But in this instance there do seem to be good grounds for complaint. Insiders suggested that the company expected the outgrowers to fail, and so did not support outgrowers at first.³²

This all changed during the economic crisis when the commercial operations in Zimbabwe were on the brink. Tongaat Hulett weathered the storm, and even increased its holding by taking on Anglo American’s stake in Hippo Valley, gambling on a longer-term, brighter future. In the post-crisis period, a recognition that the land reform was permanent took hold, and an accommodation with outgrowers was attempted. There were ongoing disputes about prices, grading and so on, but the commitment by the company to rehabilitation through the SusCo programme was witness to a change of tune, reflected equally if rather more tentatively with the EU’s stance.

The unions that formed after land reform to represent new outgrowers have been at the forefront of these disputes. Today, three sugar unions exist – the Zimbabwe Sugar Cane Development Association (ZSCDA), the Zimbabwe Commercial Sugar Cane Farmers Union (ZCSFU), and the Zimbabwe Cane Farmers Association (ZCFA). All are approved by the state, but none show any clear political affiliation. Two, the ZCFA and ZCSFU, are involved in the Canelands Trust and have received funding from the EU.

There has been much in-fighting within the unions, regular accusations of corruption and poor leadership and struggles for control. For example, discontent rose with the ZCSFU in the mid-2000s, as accusations of embezzlement flew around, and farmers argued that the union was not effectively representing their interests that the estate was getting a too good a deal, and they were unable to pay their workers (Scoones *et al.*, 2010). Soon after, new unions were established by disgruntled members. Nevertheless, on issues where the estate management has to be confronted, there is a solidarity, and an increasingly effective bargaining capacity. The estates need the outgrowers and vice versa. This is not the sort of benign mutuality depicted by some in the sugar industry, but a pragmatic deal based on convergent interests.

THE SUGAR INDUSTRY'S DELICATE POLITICAL BALANCING ACT

In many ways the Canelands Trust, discussed earlier, is the epitome of the delicate political brokerage that surrounds the Zimbabwe sugar industry. High-level political involvement is combined with representation from senior company management and multiple farmers' unions. While keeping an arm's length, the EU provides backing, but this is complemented by company funds. Despite the disputes, the bottom-line commitment to keeping the sugar industry going remains, and the mechanism has proved remarkably effective. The political-economic imaginary of sugar as a transformative project, firmly linked to state-making and political fortunes, is as alive today as it was in the early days. Elite alliances between the state, party, capital and outgrowers are essential, and these have to be nurtured carefully.

For decades the closely integrated Triangle, Hippo Valley and Mkwazine estates have had a monopoly on sugar (and ethanol) production. With increasingly joint ownership through consolidation and merger over time, this has become even more apparent. As discussed, this has been supported extensively by the state, through major infrastructural investment, and by the EU since Independence through guaranteeing markets and offering price support. But there are also new entrants who are upsetting the tidy arrangement, and generating new forms of sugar politics in the Lowveld.

Since 2000, the notorious entrepreneur Billy Rautenbach has proposed a number of major investment projects in the Lowveld, involving the

production of sugar cane largely for ethanol. These projects have had the backing from the highest political office, and have been regarded as strategic responses to perennial fuel shortages. There have been multiple disputes about the location of new cane plantations, but the first has developed in nearby Chisumbanje on a former state farm. A large state-of-the-art ethanol plant was built, and, after much political contestation, the government agreed to mandatory blending, making the operation viable after a faltering start. The project has encountered many obstacles, not least the objection of villagers living on the land to being displaced. Controversy has also engulfed the owner, given his political connections to ZANU(PF), his blacklisting by the EU and US,³³ and his pursuit by South African and Democratic Republic of Congo authorities on various charges. Rautenbach's original plans to expand sugar production on the Nuanetsi ranch now under control of the Development Trust of Zimbabwe (DTZ), and establish an ethanol plant were put on hold, as disputes erupted over the land (Scoones *et al.*, 2012), and delays in water provision from the long-delayed Tokwe Mukorsi Dam occurred. The dam was completed in 2013, and rapidly filled with the good rainfall. This is the first major infrastructural investment since the 1960s, and presents a major opportunity for sugar expansion on the existing estates and elsewhere. Indeed on the DTZ Nuanetsi ranch, 100,000 ha has been demarcated for sugar growing, but some of this has now been settled by people displaced from the dam catchment. All this has resulted in intense disputes between Rautenbach, the DTZ and the Masvingo ZANU(PF) provincial leadership.³⁴ The role of sugar in this local politics is ever present.

Thus in the Lowveld sugar areas, old conflicts – between estates and outgrowers, workers, farmers and mills, and between different companies – have re-emerged in new guises in the post-land reform era. There has however been strong continuity with earlier eras when the state provided the backing to commercial enterprise in the Lowveld. As we have shown, 'the state' and 'the party' are not monolithic, and different factions and groupings compete for power in a highly volatile context where alliances between the state, the party, and a business–military elite are important.³⁵ This presents challenges for local negotiations, as the complexion of politics and patronage (national and provincial) is always changing, making it difficult for local state officials – whether in local government, or technical ministries such as Lands or Agriculture – to manoeuvre, often not knowing which way the wind will blow. Political-economic settlements are thus always contingent, and always subject to change, just as has been the case in the past (Fontein, 2015: 288). Today debates about indigenisation,

restitution and resettlement colour the politics, and result in much rhetoric and frequent threats usually linked to the electoral cycle.³⁶ But in essence the story is the same as it always has been; one about how the state (in its variegated forms) makes deals with capital, and how farmers, and other local people, including workers, are incorporated, and on what terms.

CONCLUSION: ZIMBABWE'S SUGAR POLITICS

Zimbabwe's sugar politics since land reform – and indeed much earlier – involves a complex balance of competing forces. Large-scale international capital, seeing the opportunities for accumulation from the excellent climatic conditions and top-quality infrastructure and increasingly guaranteed supplies of irrigation water, has invested in the area over decades, despite the political and economic challenges. Tongaat Hulett sees Zimbabwe as central to its ability to make profit in the region, and so is prepared to weather the storms of economic and political crisis, and broker deals which are far from ideal. In its 2013 annual report the company comments: 'While the macro-economic environment in Zimbabwe has settled significantly, the political environment remains turbulent as many political factions continue to compete for ascendancy, which may impact operations'.³⁷

Politically and economically, sugar is vital for Zimbabwe. Together with tobacco, these export commodities create a particular dependency politics, are central to the imaginaries and processes of state-making, and so are deeply implicated in both national and local politics. Despite the high-sounding socialist-nationalist rhetoric of redistribution and indigenisation from party officials, there are limits. Sugar is less visible than tobacco, and requires a different form of production and processing chain that incorporates smallholders in different ways. The estate-outgrower model, with the linked mill, is really the only option, especially in irrigated systems. And this requires a large investment, with good market connections, and so a company like Tongaat Hulett. That the president and his allies prevented a more radical land reform of the estates in 2000, and continue to resist calls for indigenisation, is witness to the strategic importance of the industry, and the acceptance that alliances with capital are required, even as part of 'revolutionary' moments.

Of course the rhetoric remains at a high pitch, and is accelerated with threats at various points to gain political advantage, and to help position the state in bargaining, but so far at least this remains a war of words. This

may of course change, and the demand for a piece of the sugar riches is high. The politics that dominates Zimbabwe today means that deals have to be struck, especially with those who demand their share. This has seen the insertions of new people and the eviction of others, and a growing, if belated, demand from a vocal Shangaan constituency to play a part in the sugar success story.

The land reform in the sugar outgrower areas was not a 'land to the people' redistributive move to combat landlessness and poverty. This was part of an accommodation of a middle-class demand for land, creating a very particular type of outgrower arrangement, quite different to other sugar outgrower relationships in the region, and more widely in Africa.³⁸ The A2 beneficiaries are certainly not universally powerful and well connected, but the sugar allocations were definitely not addressing the poor, disadvantaged masses. Nationally, the land reform had to accommodate multiple class interests, and one was the middle-class aspiration for land, particularly in the context of declining living standards, wages and job opportunities in the post-structural adjustment period (Moyo, 2011; Moyo and Nyoni, 2013).

Land for such people, as we have seen, is part of a portfolio of interests including formal employment. Incorporating and enlisting civil servants, and the wider bureaucracy, was also an essential political strategy, as land reform required commitment, compliance and individual investment on a massive scale. Offering land as an alternative compensation to the absence of meaningful salaries was important, but it also brought a number of highly skilled technicians, managers and businesspeople into the sugar industry.

Despite the scepticism around sugar production potentials and skill levels voiced by the company, donors and others, this outgrower model of land reform has proven, against multiple odds, surprisingly successful. Industry officials now talk in glowing terms about the potentials of smallholders to produce. As our survey data has shown, the patterns are varied: some are achieving internationally competitive yield levels and outputs; they are investing in their farms, replanting cane and improving varieties; they look after their workers and pay them relatively well; and they are accumulating in ways that allow them to invest in other business, property and their families' education and well-being. These tend to be the resident farmers (or those who have employed a resident manager) and those with technical or business backgrounds. There are others, of course. Those who thought the rich pickings were easy were disappointed. Sugar production is hard work and requires a very careful business acumen and

savings ability, given the upfront costs and the seasonality of payment. Those who barged their way in through patronage connections often appropriating houses and equipment are among this group, as well as the absentee farmers who have insufficient capital and too little time to make a go of it. In our sample, this 'failing' group is a minority (currently only two or three individuals), and in aggregate terms is hitting overall performance only at the margins, particularly as new cane land comes into production.

The political moment for a thorough audit of such underperforming beneficiaries has yet to arrive, but in time there will be a shake-out, either through the application of performance requirements or more likely through market forces, as land lease fees and taxes are applied. Meanwhile, the opportunities for expanding the smallholder-based outgrower model may increase. This may be in the context of new initiatives (such as those of Billy Rautenbach), or through the release of further estate land, as the company realises that passing the costs and risks of production to outgrowers makes sound financial sense, and it can concentrate on where the real value addition occurs, which is in processing. The longer-term trajectories of change will be driven in part by economics – where profit can be derived will depend on prices, technology, production efficiencies and labour costs, and conditions for European market access (Dubb *et al.*, 2017) – but also, crucially, by ever-changing political conditions, where contingency, chance and the changing fortunes of political coalitions all play a role.

As we have shown, it is political-economic dynamics, rooted in often fragile, contingent elite alliances, that have driven the transformation of the sugar industry, and with it the agrarian landscape, in Zimbabwe since land reform, and that did so in the preceding years. As has been the case since 1937, when MacDougall first planted cane in the Lowveld, a contested political economy will continue to shape sugar, people and livelihoods over the next decades too.

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NOTES

- ¹ Since 2000, there have been significant labour disputes associated with burning of cane. Over the last years these have recurred (available at <http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/news/zimsit-m-tonga-at-strike-govt-moves-in-the-herald/>, *The Herald*, 19 December 2015, retrieved 29 April 2016). However, there were very limited numbers of 'land invasions' of the core estates until recently (see below).
- ² Zimbabwe's 'fast-track' land reform after 2000 had two 'models' (and many variations): the A1 smallholder model and the A2 medium commercial farm model (Scoones *et al.* 2010). Most A1 schemes emerged from processes of land invasion, while the A2 allocations were through formal (although widely abused) processes. The irrigated sugar plots, although small, fell under the A2 scheme.
- ³ Available at http://www.tonga-at.co.za/imc/annual_reports/ar_home.asp, retrieved 29 April 2016.
- ⁴ See 'Murray MacDougall and Story of Triangle' by C. Saunders (1977), Part 1, available at: <http://thestoryoftriangle.blogspot.co.uk/2010/11/part-1-story-of-mac.html> and Part 2, available at: <http://thestoryoftriangle.blogspot.co.uk/2010/11/part-2-triangle-after-macdougall.html>
- ⁵ Interview, Tongaat Hulett, Harare, 29 November 2013.
- ⁶ Interviews, Chiredzi District offices, 2–3 December 2013.
- ⁷ Interview, Hippo Valley Farm 2, 7 February 2014.
- ⁸ Interview, Tongaat Hulett, Harare, 29 November 2013.
- ⁹ The European Union has supplied very substantial grant funding channelled via the company and the Canelands Trust, as part of the 'adjustment measures'. This has directly supported the start-up of the A2 outgrowers. Available at https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sectors/food-and-agriculture/sustainable-agriculture-and-rural-development/amsp_en,
- ¹⁰ The Green Fuel project involves a joint venture with Agricultural and Rural Development Authority (ARDA) and Madcom rates for production of ethanol from the Chisumbanje plant. Compulsory mixing was agreed for Zimbabwe to create a ready market (available at http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/news/zimsit_ethanol-blending-cuts-fuel-import-bill-by-us20m-the-herald/, retrieved 29 April 2016). The high-level political connections between Billy Rautenbach and ZANU(PF) were assumed to have supported this arrangement. The Chisumbanje project has already received \$200m in the first phase (available at http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/news/zimsit_green-fuel-needs-2bn-to-complete-ethanol-plants/, retrieved 29 April 2016). See Mutopo and Chiweze 2014.
- ¹¹ Tongaat Hulett Annual Reports, http://www.tonga-at.co.za/imc/annual_reports/ar_home.asp, retrieved 29 April 2016.
- ¹² *Ibid.*
- ¹³ The average in our sample is identical to that for all A2 irrigated plots in Chiredzi District, although the wider population has a wider range, from 10 to 90 ha.
- ¹⁴ Discussion with Hippo Valley officials, November 2014.
- ¹⁵ See http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/old/may1a_2004.html, *Zimbabwe Independent*, May 2004
- ¹⁶ Per ha recommendations are 200 kg SSP (Single Super Phosphate), 500 kg AN (Ammonium Nitrate) and 200 kg potash. See Clowes and Breakwell 1998.
- ¹⁷ See <http://www.thefarmsite.com/reports/contents/ZimbabweSugar28April2014.pdf>, retrieved 29 April 2016.
- ¹⁸ Interview, Hippo Valley, 7 February 2014.

- ¹⁹ Until 2014, the Canelands Trust president was former vice president Joice Mujuru, but she was replaced by Shuvai Mahofa, following the purge of Mujuru's faction within ZANU(PF).
- ²⁰ See http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/zimbabwe/eu_zimbabwe/trade_relation/index_en.htm, and <http://www.herald.co.zw/%EF%99%8E31m-boost-for-sugarcane-farmers/>, *The Herald*, 2 June 2014
- ²¹ Interview, Hippo Valley, 4 December 2013.
- ²² Interview, Hippo Valley, 4 December 2013.
- ²³ Others have argued that this period – from the establishment of the Global Political Agreement and a coalition government between ZANU(PF) and the opposition Movement for Democratic Change – has seen a period of ‘formalisation’ of ZANU(PF) rule through party–business–military connections, see Raftopoulos 2013: 971-88. However, while this may be the backdrop, the impact of changing national politics on the day-to-day practice of sugar farming and local claims over land and resources was not visible, except at moments of political competition, usually around elections, when the power of such alliances were exerted (see below).
- ²⁴ While this is the official position, in practice ‘autochthonous’ claims have been importance since the colonial era. For example, early allocations in ‘African Purchase Areas’ were often linked to forms of restitution rather than the official rhetoric of providing land for an emergent farming class, see Shutt 1997.
- ²⁵ Interview, Masvingo, 7 December 2015.
- ²⁶ The Lowveld has traditionally shown strong support for ZANU(PF), but in 2013, the party was not leaving anything to chance. In the end, the results were: Chiredzi South: MDC-T 1,937, MDC 508 and ZANU(PF) 8,148; Chiredzi East: MDC 400, MDC-T 2,094 and ZANU(PF) 8,926, with comfortable victories being achieved. See <http://nehandaradio.com/2013/08/03/full-2013-zimbabwe-election-results/>
- ²⁷ See http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/news/zimsit_chaos-in-sugar-land-as-chiredzi-villagers-demand-farms/, SW Africa Radio, 22 May 2014, retrieved 29 April 2016; <http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/news/zimsit-m-villagers-target-tonga-at-hulett-the-herald/>, *The Herald*, 4 December 2014 retrieved 29 April 2016; <http://www.herald.co.zw/zim-to-impose-duty-on-sugar-imports/>, *The Herald*, 21 November 2014
- ²⁸ See http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/news/zimsit_zanu-pf-lures-chiefs-with-promise-of-sugar-cane-farms/, SW Africa Radio, 28 November 2013
- ²⁹ See <http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/news/zimsit-m-zanu-pf-masvingo-chair-booted-out-the-herald/>, *The Herald*, 31 October 2014, retrieved 29 April 2016; <http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/news/zimsit-m-war-vets-mps-fight-over-sugar-estate/>, *New Zimbabwe*, 16 December 2014
- ³⁰ See http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/mar20b_2008.html, Nehanda Radio, 20 March 2008, retrieved 29 April 2016; http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/apr8a_2009.html, *The Herald*, 8 April 2009, retrieved 29 April 2016; and http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/old/mar25_2010.html, Radio VOP, 25 March 2010
- ³¹ Interview, Hippo Valley, 7 February 2014.
- ³² Interview, Hippo Valley, 4 December 2013.
- ³³ These targeted sanctions however were removed by the EU in 2012 and the US in 2014.
- ³⁴ http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/news/zimsit_w_bhasikiti-rautenbach-cross-swords-the-zimbabwe-independent/, *Zimbabwe Independent*, 11 July 2014, retrieved 29 April 2016.
- ³⁵ See (Alexander and McGregor, 2013: 754) on how ‘patronage’ is constructed in Zimbabwe, and influenced by the strong legacies of a centralised state bureaucracy and narratives and practices of the liberation war in politics. For a wider treatment of ‘stateness’ and its complexities, see Hansen and Stepputat 2001.

³⁶ See http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/news/zimsit_sugar-plantations-to-be-seized-chikovo/, *The Zimbabwean*, 25 September 2013, retrieved 29 April 2016 or <http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/news/zimsit-m-zanu-pf-demands-30-million-from-hulett/>, *The Zimbabwean*, 19 February 2015.

³⁷ <http://www.hulett.co.za/au/introduction.asp>, p. 1.

³⁸ See other papers in this special issue, and C. Oya, 'Contract Farming in Sub-Saharan Africa'.

15

IRRIGATING ZIMBABWE AFTER LAND REFORM: THE POTENTIAL OF FARMER-LED SYSTEMS

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INTRODUCTION

Water control is often central to successful agriculture, but how should this be done, through what technologies, financing, institutions and governance regimes? The standard answer in Zimbabwe has been the construction of engineered irrigation schemes, yet this paper argues that farmer-led irrigation, with more flexible, adaptive socio-technical arrangements, is highly significant but much less recognised (cf. Woodhouse et al., 2017; Beekman et al., 2014; Nkoka et al., 2014; Bolding et al., 1996).

Following Woodhouse et al. (2017: 13), farmer-led irrigation development is seen as "a process where farmers assume a driving role in improving their water-use for agriculture by bringing about changes in knowledge production, technology use, investment patterns and market

linkages, and the governance of land and water". In other words, irrigation development is the process by which socio- technical assemblages are constructed, involving multiple components – water, land, labour, technology and markets. These are linked to social knowledge and skills, in order to improve water control and agricultural production. The form such assemblages take will depend on access to a range of material and other resources, and in any setting these conditions will vary by wealth, gender, age and other dimensions.

Different assemblages therefore emerge over time, depending on ecological, social and economic conditions, with resulting differentiation between irrigators. Some are able to invest and accumulate as a result of irrigated production, while others cannot expand or intensify production. Patterns of class formation emerge, linking farmer-led irrigation to dynamic processes of agrarian change (cf. Bernstein, 2010). Such processes are, this paper argues, quite different from those associated with standardised irrigation schemes or group gardens,¹ suggesting important implications for policy in the post-land reform setting.

Zimbabwe's land reform of 2000 resulted in the redistribution of around eight million hectares, previously occupied by around 4500 large-scale, white-owned commercial farms. This resulted initially in the establishment of approximately 146,000 smallholder farms (designated A1 schemes) and 16,000 medium-scale farms (designated A2) (Scoones et al., 2010),² although allocations have increased since, as earlier informal allocations have been approved. This radical reconfiguration of the agrarian structure has resulted in the need to re-establish agricultural production but at different scales and with different socio-technical arrangements compared to large-scale farming. Irrigation, particularly in dryland areas such as Masvingo, is essential.

Responding to this challenge, this paper reports on a study of farmer-led irrigation development in two sites in dryland Masvingo province, each on smallholder A1 resettlement areas established after 2000 as part of the land reform. The paper documents the extent of farmer-led irrigation – from rivers, streams, dams and wells – using a variety of technology combinations – including small-scale pumps, buckets and pipes – over a range of scales – from very small homestead gardens to larger collective and individual plots. Through 49 cases, we explore the socio-technologies assembled, the practices deployed and the production realised, and estimate the total area under irrigation. We also contrast the socio-technical assemblages and the area irrigated under farmer-led systems with two formal irrigation interventions in the same area.

Based on the case studies of farmer-led irrigation, we derive a simple typology – contrasting homestead, aspiring and commercial irrigators – and discuss the different ways in which water control technologies, land-use, market networks, labour and knowledge are combined. We also look at the implications for social differentiation, patterns of accumulation and longer-term agrarian change.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF IRRIGATION IN ZIMBABWE

The formal irrigation infrastructure of dams, canals, pipes and pumps has a long history in Zimbabwe. It was central to colonial support for agriculture. For example, in 1952 a major report on large-scale irrigation made the case for a substantial increase in investment in irrigation in Zimbabwe, then Rhodesia (Rukuni, 1988). The reason was growing concerns about national food security and the need to improve the production of land recently occupied by white settlers. From the early colonial period, the investment in dam building and irrigation infrastructure was impressive, but it was a particular style of water control, geared to a certain type of agriculture. It was a socio-technical assemblage that was fixed, standardised and controlled, reflecting a particular relationship of power between farmers, science and the state (Fontein, 2008).

One of the early investments was Kyle (now Mtirikwi) Dam in Masvingo province, completed in 1960, which linked to a major river and canal system providing water to the new sugar estates in the Lowveld. It was an impressive piece of engineering, reshaping the hydrology of the region. To rely on a large dam, with many kilometres of canal and carefully planned estates, was a style of ‘modern’ agriculture that impressed many, and was central to colonial state-building (Fontein, 2015). Today it is supplemented by other dams and canal systems, most recently through the creation of the Tokwe Mukosi Dam, also in Masvingo province.³

By Independence in 1980 Zimbabwe had about 150,000 hectares under ‘formal’ irrigation schemes (Rukuni, 1988; Manzungu, 1999). Large-scale, mostly white-owned commercial farms accounted for 68% of this, where government subsidies supported the massive expansion of small dams and irrigation areas. Another 27% was linked to commercial estates and outgrower areas, including those supporting sugar and citrus production in the Lowveld. Only 3.4% of the irrigated area was devoted to smallholder irrigation, however (Manzungu and van der Zaag, 1996). Indeed, at Independence, the distribution of water and irrigation capacity was even

more unequal than that of land.

A major effort was therefore expended in the years after Independence in expanding smallholder schemes in the communal areas. This took the form of the establishment of block schemes with 0.1 ha plots, managed centrally with state support, often with a Ministry of Agriculture extension officer stationed on the scheme, directing the planting of crops and allocation of water (Bolding, 2004). Within Masvingo province there are currently 60 schemes, averaging 54.6 ha (range 8-360 ha), making up just 0.08% of the total area. The history of such schemes dates back to the 1930s. Focused on providing an irrigated complement to dryland agriculture (Manzungu, 1999), they emphasised welfare support to impoverished populations, and there were real limits to accumulation (cf. Cousins, 2013 for South Africa). Many of these schemes failed: the result of a litany of problems common across Africa (Adams and Carter, 1987). These included institutional failures, such as sustaining group cohesion, the challenges of covering recurrent costs and the inappropriate imposition of particular cultivation regimes. Economic analyses for Zimbabwean schemes have shown that the government covered 100% of capital costs and 89% of recurrent costs, and when this support dried up the schemes often collapsed (Meinzen-Dick et al., 1994; Makadho et al., 2001).

Following the major land reform of 2000 investment in irrigation schemes again became a priority. On the former commercial farms a range of irrigation infrastructure existed that had to be rehabilitated and repurposed for smallholder use. A number of different approaches can be seen (Zawe, 2006), but the standard block scheme model was often evident in the A1 smallholder areas, involving an organised group of irrigators supplied with water pumped mostly from rivers and dams, and small plots distributed to individual irrigators. Various programmes have promoted irrigation as central to a new push to upgrade and commercialise agriculture. For example, from 2016 'command agriculture' became the flagship programme of the ZANU-PF government,⁴ including investment in irrigation facilities. Foreign donors, from the Brazilians to the Chinese, offered irrigation equipment, mostly suited to large-scale production. Today, as in the past, hydrological transformations and images of modernist progress are closely tied with a project of state-building and control (Fontein, 2008).

Irrigation infrastructure and technology are always social and political (Bolding et al., 1995). Visions of modernity and progress are often tied to ordered, large-scale, 'commercial' systems and too often ignore what is happening on the ground. With a different agrarian structure, with many

more smallholder farmers, past socio-technical assemblages suitable for large-scale commercial production usually no longer make sense, despite their advocacy as symbols of agricultural modernisation. A massive centre-pivot, for example, is not much use on a one or two hectare plot unless collective arrangements are made, and few new resettlement farmers can afford sophisticated computer- synchronised, satellite-linked drip irrigation systems either. Agrarian transformation also requires technological transformation and, despite their appeal, conventional, high-cost, large-scale systems are rarely appropriate.

While the dominant image of irrigation is of a formal, ordered, managed scheme, alternative systems of water control have a long history in Zimbabwe. For example, *dambo* (valley-bottom wetland) cultivation dominated the agriculture of the 19th century, as farmers farmed intensively in valley bottoms in the hilly areas, often hiding from raids (Scoones and Cousins, 1994). In the early colonial era missionaries encouraged irrigation at times of famine, and, from the late 1920s, government initiatives built on local systems, with support to small irrigated plots under farmer control (Rukuni, 1988).

What then are the contemporary versions of farmer-led irrigation? How are they fitting into the new agrarian system post-land reform? What socio-technical innovations and improvisations are evident? And how do processes of social differentiation in socio-technical choices and trajectories co-evolve, with what implications for agrarian dynamics?

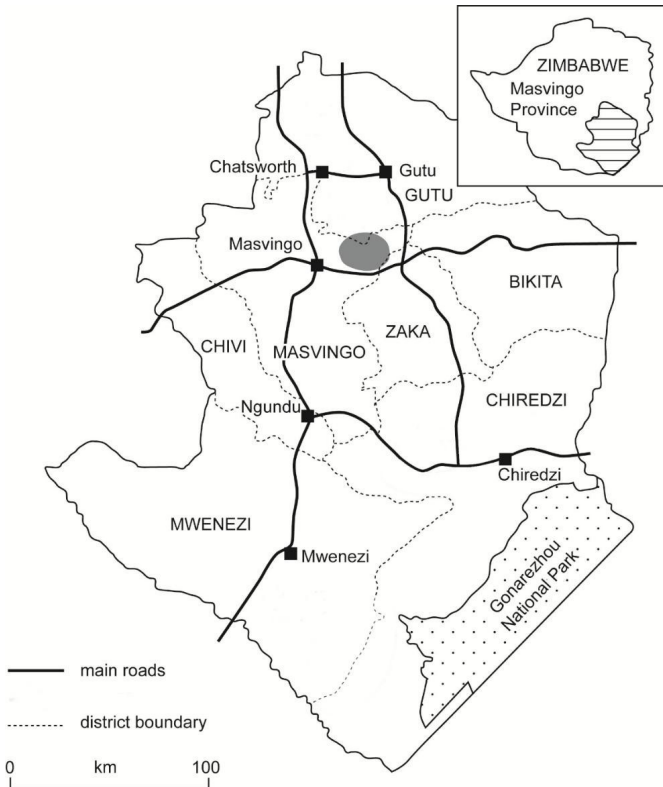
EXPLORING FARMER-LED IRRIGATION IN MASVINGO DISTRICT

In this study we examined farmer-led irrigation practices in two neighbouring land reform sites in Masvingo district, contrasting them with those observed in a rehabilitated formal scheme and a group garden in the same area (see Figure 15.1). The sites are on adjacent former large-scale commercial farms near the regional town of Masvingo in the southeast of the country. Both are A1 smallholder settlement schemes, one involving larger self-contained farms, including arable, grazing and housing in one area (a farm originally called Extension), and one a villagised scheme, where arable land is separated from communal grazing and village areas (a farm originally called Wares). In each site, resettlement farmers have initiated new, market-based horticultural enterprises to complement their dryland field crops and livestock production. In the same area such farmer-led

irrigation initiatives sit alongside a rehabilitated irrigation scheme and a new group garden.

This is a dryland region, where average rainfall was 662 mm in nearby Masvingo town between 2000-01 and 2016-17.⁵ The area is traversed by several small rivers and streams with irrigable areas along water courses, especially in Extension, as well as in sites where water can be extracted from wells and boreholes. In the past, former landowners largely ranched livestock, with very small irrigation plots near the farm compounds, but since then land-reform irrigation – and arable production generally – has expanded massively. Our sites are part of a long-term study of livelihoods after land reform established in the early 2000s (cf. Scoones et al., 2010; Scoones, 2013, 2018), and in this study we build on this long-term data to explore the explosion of interest in farmer-led irrigation that we have observed.

Figure 15.1: Location of study area.



The settlers in the new land reform areas mainly came from adjacent 'communal areas'. Compared to their neighbours, the settlers were a younger, more educated, better-linked and more entrepreneurial group of farmers (Scoones et al., 2010). Over the last 18 years patterns of success have been highly differentiated. Some failed on their new plots and subsequently left; others found it difficult to invest in the land due to lack of resources, illness or infirmity and so have not done well. But a significant group have been able to make use of the new land resources to produce, accumulate and invest (Scoones et al., 2012).

The two neighbouring study sites comprise 2,047 ha and are home to 147 households.⁶ Within both sites there is considerable differentiation across households, with some 'accumulating from below' (Neocosmos, 1993; Cousins, 2010), investing surpluses from agricultural production in new housing, other assets and agricultural inputs. Others are doing less well, simply surviving or, in some cases, leaving the area and abandoning farming. In class terms, those accumulating can be identified as 'petty commodity producers' (combining capital and labour to meet most of their simple reproduction needs from their own production) or even part of an emergent 'rural bourgeoisie' (extracting surplus from wage labour, achieving sustained capitalist accumulation). Others are a mix of 'worker-peasants' (representing a hybrid identity as wagedworkers and petty commodity producers) and 'semi-peasants' (the most impoverished group, including many women) (cf. Cousins et al., 1992). In the more asset- and income-poor site of Wares, around a quarter of all households are successfully accumulating from below; this proportion rose to around 40% in Extension (Scoones et al., 2010; Scoones 2018).

However, many have found that there are severe limits to accumulation from the main dryland crop- livestock systems that were established on settlement. As farms became established, many settlers, particularly those making surpluses from their dryland crop and livestock farming, looked to intensify, expanding and diversifying markets. Water control in such a dryland area was essential. One option was to sign up for formal irrigation schemes that were being rehabilitated in the mid-2000s (see below); the other was to invest independently in farmer-led irrigation systems.

In 2018 we documented all farmer-led irrigation activities in both sites (defined as any activity that involves the movement of water for agricultural purposes) – from small homestead plots irrigated by buckets or cans to larger areas where pumps and a more extensive piping system are used. Deep knowledge of the area, and assistance from local farmers, allowed for comprehensive coverage. As noted already, a total of 49 cases

were identified (15 in Wares and 35 in Extension), and a detailed case study of each was developed. These represented 14% of households in Wares, where a combination of a lack of water sources and fewer assets restricted irrigation opportunities, and 92% of households in Extension, where nearby rivers and a greater asset base allowed more households to invest in irrigation. An estimate of the total area of farmer-led irrigation was derived, which could be compared to the extent of irrigation in the formal scheme and group garden in the same area.

In our examination of farmer-led approaches we looked at a range of criteria, describing the diversity of water control approaches being pursued. Case studies of individual plots were combined with biographies of farmers, highlighting how investments and management practices have changed since 2000. The next section reports on these findings.

A TYPOLOGY OF FARMER-LED IRRIGATION

Farmer-led irrigation takes many forms in our study sites. These include different land tenure (individually held, communal), different water sources (dams, rivers, wells), different types of technology (pumps, buckets, canals, pipes), different social arrangements (collective/individual management, hired or family labour and contrasting gender roles), different markets (local informal sales, spot markets, direct sales to supermarkets/wholesalers, contract farming) and different institutions (state, community managed and unregulated use).

Across the 49 cases we identified three broad groups, where different combinations of resources, technologies, labour, market linkages and knowledges were combined in different socio-technical assemblages. We have labelled these homestead, aspiring and commercial irrigators. As we explain below, these categories each have particular class characteristics, with different opportunities for accumulation. They are not, however, fixed categories. Indeed, when we started working in this area after land reform there were no commercial irrigators and only a few aspiring irrigators. Those who have been able to invest in new forms of irrigation have accumulated resources from dryland farming and livestock production, often switching the focus of their efforts over time. Our typology focuses on the capacity to accumulate from different socio-technical assemblages, thus generating processes of social differentiation between farmers. Other studies from elsewhere in Africa offer typologies linked to business strategies (van den Pol, 2012) and market-based livelihoods (Hebbink et al.,

this Issue), each linked to diverse dynamics of agrarian change driven by farmer-led irrigation.

In 2018 there was a total of 41.3 ha of farmer-led irrigation (9.9 ha in Wares and 31.4 in Extension) in our study sites. Average irrigated plot sizes were higher in Extension (0.9 ha) than Wares (0.6 ha), but there was a wide range (0.01 to 5 ha). This represents 2.02% of the total land area. In 2011 we estimated that 42% of the land area was cultivated, meaning that current farmer-led irrigation covers 4.8% of arable area; although, as discussed further below, this is distributed extremely unevenly.

In terms of our typology, the commercial irrigators represent a class of petty commodity producers, able to invest and accumulate, hiring in labour. By contrast, those in the largest group – the aspiring irrigators – are managing to assemble some elements that would allow more sustained petty commodity production and commercialisation, often initiated through the purchase of a pump and some piping. However, they are not able to combine all elements, such as hiring labour or gaining access to more lucrative market networks, and are often reliant on off-farm work, as ‘worker-peasants’. Homestead irrigators, on the other hand, are unable to accumulate through irrigation given the small scale of operations and follow a more subsistence style of ‘semi-peasant’ production.

Table 15.1 offers data based on our studies contrasting the three groups in relation to sources of water, water extraction and distribution, cropping patterns, labour-hiring, product-processing and marketing. As the table shows, the homestead irrigators use small plots of land, drawing water from wells dug near the homestead using buckets. When land was allocated after land reform, no households had wells, and since then many have dug shallow, open wells for domestic water supply as well as small-scale irrigation. The volumes of production are small, and mostly for household consumption, with tomatoes and green vegetables dominating. Some vegetables, fresh or processed, are sold locally in small quantities to neighbours or occasionally itinerant traders. Many in this group want to expand. One has bought a Chinese-made mobile pump, which can now be purchased for as little as US\$250. However, a lack of access to suitable land and the amount of water available in shallow wells constrains upgrading. Many in this group are relatively poor, with limited income from either farm or off-farm sources. The lack of social or political connections also constrains access to new land. Women are especially significant producers in this group, as they combine irrigation with domestic work around the homestead. Virtually all production is based on family labour, with only a couple of households employing any labour, and then only on a very part-

time basis.

Three-quarters of the aspiring irrigators, by contrast, have purchased a pump. These are either mobile pumps for extracting water from dams or rivers or submersible pumps that can be used in a well. Most mobile pumps are powered by diesel or petrol engines, while submersible pumps also include solar- powered electric engines. However, these pumps are very often used in conjunction with well and bucket irrigation, which allows an expansion of the irrigated area (0.43 ha on average, range: 0.02 to 1). On these larger areas the focus can be expanded from tomatoes and green vegetables to other crops, including green maize. This group is the largest in our sample and demonstrates a hybrid socio-technical configuration, straddling the more subsistence-focused homestead assemblage and more commercial systems. Aspiring irrigators are most common in the Wares site, where access to rivers and streams is lower. This is not a stable assemblage, and many are attempting to expand production and commercialise further. They are purchasing new equipment and extending their market networks, with many taking produce to the nearby Masvingo market. However, lacking their own transport, or the means to hire it, many rely on traders coming to the area. This requires investment in networks of relationships with market intermediaries to assure reliable marketing and good prices. Their plans for expansion include getting access to land near the dams, rivers and streams of the area, but as later arrivals with fewer political connections compared to those in the commercial irrigator group, this is often difficult.

Other aspiring irrigators focus on sinking new, deeper wells to allow irrigation near homesteads and on dryland fields. This requires cash resources to hire a well-digging unit, and so surplus production from other areas of farming is essential, as is off-farm and remittance income. This group has a more diversified livelihood portfolio than either of the other two, with households combining on- and off- farm income. Irrigation is important in this mix but not necessarily the main emphasis. Both men and women are involved, often sharing roles within the irrigation plot, with women taking over if men are working away. Overall, this group is younger than the other groups and often in the process of establishing an independent home. Irrigable land may be borrowed from relatives within a process of land subdivision that has been underway since land reform. In this group 38% of households hire in labour and are on track to establish an irrigation-based form of petty commodity production. However, the remaining 62% are more oriented towards dryland farming, combined with various kinds of off- farm employment, and can be seen as 'worker-

peasants' pursuing a diversified livelihood.

Finally, the commercial irrigators, representing 27% of our sample, have focused on irrigated horticulture as the main focus of their agricultural activities, irrigating on average 2.36 ha of land (range: 1.1 to 5). Men are often in the lead in this group, and over two-thirds hire in labour for a variety of activities. These are established, older households often with good social, church-based and political connections in the community, allowing for preferential access to land and other resources. There is a clear gendered division of labour observable, with men focusing on irrigation and marketing, while women assist with particular production tasks and are involved in processing (usually drying vegetables for market sales). All commercial irrigator households have purchased equipment for water pumping and distribution, with most owning several pumps, sometimes including at least one with a large horsepower. Everyone has some piping, averaging 319 m in length. This group grows the largest number of crops, expanding beyond tomatoes, green vegetables and maize to high-value crops, such as cucumber, cabbage and onion.

A focus on commercial production means considerable investment in market networks, with around a quarter linked up to supermarkets through regular contracts. Regular marketing in Masvingo complements this, and a number still rely on itinerant traders. Most in this group have their own transport, usually an open truck, which helps with the regular and timely marketing of perishable products. This group is particularly evident in Extension, where land areas are larger in 'self-contained' plots. Others are negotiating with relatives and fellow church members for access to land and water. Those with the largest land area under irrigation have dug new, deep wells to accommodate powerful submersible pumps, allowing significant expansion of production. With the focus on commercial production, the socio-technical assemblage of the commercial irrigators has a particular land-water- technology-market configuration. It has to be flexible, as people shift their crop mix to respond to market demand, and for this reason having multiple water sources and different pumping systems, deploying labour flexibly across plots and through the seasons, is essential.

While highly differentiated across different types of irrigator, overall the volume of production from the 43.1 ha of farmer-led irrigation is significant, and is devoted to a range of vegetables, including tomato, cabbage, rape, *covo* (kale), maize and cucumber (in rank order),⁷ resulting in significant incomes, especially for the commercial irrigators (see below). The employment benefits are large, with seasonal employment provided

on 39% of irrigated plots. It is a highly dynamic system, with new socio-technical configurations being assembled all the time, as people attempt to expand production, especially when new, cheaper pumps become available.

SOCIO-TECHNICAL ASSEMBLAGES AND ACCUMULATION OPPORTUNITIES

Drawing on the typology laid out above, in this section we offer detailed case studies of the three irrigator types. These show how social and technological elements are combined, and how these configurations influence who is able to accumulate and who is not. The paper then moves on to a wider analysis of how socio-technical assemblages and processes of social differentiation and accumulation co-evolve.

THE HOMESTEAD IRRIGATORS

Across our two sites we undertook case studies of 12 homestead irrigators, mostly using water drawn from shallow wells and distributed by bucket or watering can (Table 15.1). The average area irrigated is only 0.03 ha. These plots are managed mostly by women, and are linked to household provisioning and local sales. The wells were dug largely to provide domestic drinking water. Some are covered but most are open, with depths of only a few metres. Tomatoes and green vegetables (kale and rape) are the most common crops, although a few also grow butternut, cucumbers and onions. Of these households, 58% dry their vegetables to allow year-round supplies to the home. The small gardens are fenced, usually with brushwood and grass, and the cultivation is carried out with family labour, usually women and children.

The total production does not allow a very significant income, but all those we talked to mentioned how important it was. CC from Wares noted, "my small garden is really important for providing for the family. I am a widow and have ten children. I irrigate using a bucket and grow tomatoes and green vegetables throughout the year". In discussions all 12 homestead irrigators stated that they would like to expand the area, and get a pump to do so, saying they would make use of the extra income to pay school fees, buy livestock and improve the home. VC from Extension comments:

We dug a deep well in 2003, which is protected with a brushwood fence. I am happy to say that I can supply enough vegetables for the family as well

as selling some to meet our daily needs, like sugar, salt, stationery for the children and grinding mill payments. I raise an average of US\$300 per year from the garden produce. But I dream of expanding the garden, if only I could get a permanent water supply from a drilled borehole.

These are highly flexible, small-scale systems, reliant on the hand application of water. This allows very focused watering regimes, which can be combined with various sorts of water harvesting, including the digging of pits, the creation of furrows and canals and the collection of rainwater from homestead roofs. At such a small scale and near the home such irrigation can be combined with other activities. Only one household occasionally hired in labour. While the intention to expand irrigation was frequently expressed, the opportunity for accumulation is currently constrained by a lack of surplus income to invest in equipment or well-digging. Lacking the social or political networks to gain access to land and water also limits opportunities.

THE ASPIRING IRRIGATORS

The purchase of low-cost pumps (either surface water or submersible) has been extensive across our study areas, and is a recent phenomenon thanks to the availability of cheap pumps on the market. In this group 46% have purchased a mobile pump and 29% a submersible pump, all in the past few years. Such pumps are proving incredibly flexible routes to scaling up production from very small, bucket-supplied plots. These are highly flexible socio-technical assemblages that can be adapted to very different plots, with different soil patches, topography and crop types. With the modular format they can be up-scaled by purchasing additional or bigger pumps, and more piping. Mobile pumps can also be taken home at night to avoid theft. With investment from surplus dryland agricultural or livestock production, or off-farm income sources, aspiring irrigators have expanded irrigated areas and thus the capacity to accumulate.

Gaining access to irrigable land with a reliable water resource is, however, a major challenge for many. Dryland fields rarely have a well nearby, and digging one can be prohibitively expensive if the water table is deep. Access to land near rivers is closely managed, and the communal 'grazing area' is regulated by the local leadership. They only allow cultivation in the grazing lands selectively, depending on local patronage arrangements. Some therefore seek alternative arrangements. BC, for example, has developed a joint venture with RM and his son TM. He uses 0.8 ha of their land in exchange for sharing his irrigation equipment (a 6.5

HP engine and 300 m of piping), which he had purchased through off-farm work. They irrigate from the river and he produces tomatoes, cabbage, maize, onions and green peppers. They dry vegetables for year-round sale and sell fresh vegetables at the township on the Masvingo-Mutare highway. Over the last few years he has purchased seven cattle from the proceeds but wants to invest in drilling a borehole on his farm in the future, with the aim of becoming an independent commercial irrigator.

With a variety of socio-technical configurations involving more and less land, equipment and labour input, this group is developing the potential for more sustained commercial production and accumulation through irrigation. Often with insufficient land, capital and equipment, this group depends on social relations, involving, for example, hiring and sharing land, water and equipment, as they assemble new socio-technical arrangements for successful irrigation. Combining this with other livelihood activities, including dryland farming, keeping livestock and off-farm work is essential but all aspire to a more sustained form of commercial irrigation.

THE COMMERCIAL IRRIGATORS

A total of 13 cases were involved in larger-scale commercial production on irrigated plots ranging from 1.1 to 5 ha. They had invested in their operations either from incremental upgrading from a smaller operation, typical of the aspiring irrigators, or through a major injection of funds from outside sources, including parental support. The commercial irrigators' infrastructure is more fixed, with large engines and powerful pumps. However, unlike formal irrigation schemes, pipes can be used flexibly for different patches of land and the mix of crops can be expanded and shifted in line with market demand.

For example, EM upgraded his operations incrementally. Initially working on a plot next to the dam near his homestead, established in 2006, he started out irrigating with buckets. As a member of the John Marange Apostolic Church, he has many wives, and a very large family supplying labour. This allowed the family's enterprise to expand. They sold vegetables in nearby Masvingo and gradually accumulated enough funds to buy a pump. Their first 5.5 HP was bought in 2010, and allowed the expansion of the plot, but the neighbours accused EM of finishing the water, so he negotiated 0.3 ha of land on the councillor's plot, which was by the river. Later he gained access to some state land nearby, expanding his plot by 1.5 ha by 2012. He started by hiring irrigation pipes but later bought some and became a full-time irrigator with labour from his growing family. The

veterinary department complained that he was using land near the dip, and another struggle with eviction commenced. Nevertheless, he continued and managed to secure contracts to sell with supermarkets and local buyers. He initially hired a neighbour's truck but later bought his own from sales proceeds.

The area by the river proved insecure, however, and in 2015 EM transferred his operation to his fields, having sunk two boreholes and installed two powerful pumps and two generators. The family is now able to irrigate five ha. The pumps allow a steady supply of water, and EM uses a complex network of pipes (300 m in all) to irrigate different patches of land. Given the fixed infrastructure, the system is less flexible than his former riverbank gardens, but he has scaled up production significantly and upgraded his equipment, reflecting a shift in focus in the style of his operation. He supplies dried cabbage and rape leaves to Zvishavane market, earning US\$400 in 2017, while his income from fresh produce, all now linked to contracts with supermarkets in Masvingo, amounts to over US\$30,000, covering expenses of around US\$12,000 that include fertiliser, chemicals, fuel and transport. His family supplies labour, with up to 20 people working in the field at any one time.

The PV family have similar ambitions. However, they were able to move rapidly to commercial irrigation thanks to outside investment. They began irrigating in 2014 with funds from both PV's and his wife's jobs, alongside the sale of cattle. He is a provincial manager of a government agency and she is a research agronomist. They invested in drilling a borehole and fitting a submersible pump (US\$15,000), buying storage tanks (20,000-litre capacity) and establishing a greenhouse (US\$2700). PV also bought piping for drip irrigation (US\$1500). He has three workers who were paid for 77 days in 2017. The family's income in 2017 was US\$4700, with US\$1200 in costs, including chemicals, fuel, transport and labour. Last season they grew maize, tomatoes and green beans. They are currently irrigating only 0.5 ha plus the greenhouse, which is 340 m². They are thinking of expanding the operation by hiring land elsewhere, probably in Chipinge where PV's wife works and the climate is ideal.

Irrigation on relatively small plots is also an option for young people who missed out on land allocations under the land reform. For example, AM is 25 years old and trained to be a physical education teacher. Unable to find a job, he decided to make use of his father's land. (His father is in the army and posted abroad.) AM sold two of his father's heifers and invested in fencing, pipes and pump equipment, costing US\$1550. He began irrigating 1.1 ha in 2017 and made US\$8700 from tomatoes and cabbages,

incurring US\$460 in expenses and US\$450 to hire a truck to transport products to Masvingo, where he sells to traders in the town market. Labour was supplied by the family. He hopes to expand in time and get contracts with supermarkets. He also wants to purchase a truck from his profits. Overall, AM regards vegetable production as far better than looking for a teaching job, where the pay is very poor.

SOCIO-TECHNICAL ASSEMBLAGES IN FARMER-LED IRRIGATION SYSTEMS

Across these groups, the farmer-led irrigation systems we observed involved principles of socio-technical design that emphasised an adaptable, flexible approach. Rather than a single, large pump, vulnerable to breakdown, the availability of cheap, Chinese-made pumps, ranging from 5.5 to over 10 HP can be used flexibly. Where surface water is available, extraction is easy; in other cases, wells have been dug and submersible pumps installed. These can be combined with hand-irrigation using buckets; and if they break down, they can either be replaced or repaired (a secondary market in pump repair has been quick to develop in local towns and villages). Different sources of energy can be used, with petrol, diesel and solar electric pumps all being used, combined with the extraction and distribution of water by hand. Of all cases, 67% make use of pipes, with an average of 243 m of piping. Combinations and connections allow irrigation that can be responsive to soil and crops in ways that standard canal irrigation cannot. In three cases drip irrigation is being used, focused on particular crops, and linked in one case to an investment in poly-tunnels and greenhouses.

The new, cheap, flexible technologies available to farmers today – only in the last 5-10 years at prices making such options genuinely affordable for the majority – have transformed opportunities. In many ways the new socio-technology of water control extends the principles that characterised Zimbabwe's famous Model B bush pump. As de Laet and Mol (2000: 226) described nearly 20 years ago, "in travelling to 'unpredictable' places, an object that isn't too rigorously bounded, that doesn't impose itself but tries to serve, that is adaptable, flexible and responsive – in short, a fluid object – may well prove to be stronger than one which is firm". It is this fluidity and flexibility, adapting to diverse circumstances and uncertainties, that farmer-led irrigation relies on. Notwithstanding its standard design the bush pump was reliable, repairable and able to function under harsh conditions.

As with the bush pump, farmer-led irrigation must be understood not just in relation to water delivery and efficiency but according to a host of other criteria. These may include the identity of the user, with, as we saw in the cases above, women and youth being able to use the technologies for their own projects. Another criterion might be the ability of the socio-technical system to persist, even in the face of challenges, through repair and improvised shifts in use, creating a robust and adaptable system of use.

These are socio-technical systems, where the technological objects (pumps, pipes, wells, buckets and so on) are intertwined with market networks and the social and political lives of people, from the remote Chinese pump manufacturer to the village repairer to the farmers, who shift the boundaries, reconfigure the elements of the network and make incremental shifts in relations as things change. Unlike in ordered, formal irrigation schemes, there is no "privileged structure of relations" (Law, 2002: 99) but instead a low-cost, fluid, parsimonious system that is adaptable and resilient. As with the bush pump, farmer-led systems create a wide, encompassing sociotechnical network from the farm to the village to the market to the nation (de Laet and Mol, 2000). This contrasts with formal systems that are more bounded by fixed technical infrastructure and more structured socio-technical networks.

In today's globalised world the new technological resources used by farmers in Masvingo rely less on locally produced technologies than, for example, the Zimbabwe bush pump does and more on China's cheap manufacturing capacities. However, their similarities sustain the principles of fluid, adaptable resilience. Improvisation is at the core, with the elements of pumps and pipes combined in ingenious ways. It is not a system of designed and directed control but one in which individual initiative and innovation are essential.

A shift towards such a flexible socio-technical assemblage, in the context of a more capitalised, market-driven, labour-employing form of 'petty commodity production', as seen among the commercial irrigators and aspired to by others, generates other pressures, however. A key part of the assemblage is, of course, land and water, and gaining access to such resources is not easy, as the case studies have shown, especially for late-comers. Access to land, particularly that near sources of water, is governed by the local leadership, including village heads, local councillors and ruling party officials. Gaining access to land and water is possible through rental and sharing arrangements, but these are also negotiated through social and political networks, requiring kinship, church membership and political connections.

As more and more people in the area want to irrigate, pressure on water resources intensifies. Whether this is surface water from dams, rivers and streams or groundwater extracted through wells and boreholes there are limits to overall use. While the Water Act is supposed to regulate access through a permit system, its application is fragmentary in the resettlement areas due to the lack of enforcement capacity (Mapedza et al., 2016; Manzungu and Derman, 2016). Multiple, individualised private operations are less easy to regulate than government-run schemes, and systems of co-management of common property resources have yet to emerge. As we discuss in the conclusion, this highlights the potential for longer-term problems as water use increases in dryland areas.

IRRIGATION OPPORTUNITIES AND AGRARIAN CHANGE

Our case studies have shown how different types of farmer-led irrigation offer different opportunities for accumulation. Commercial irrigators derive significant income from irrigation and are investing in intensification and expansion, while aspiring irrigators aim to follow suit. Homestead irrigators are, however, constrained by a lack of income and assets, although, as we have seen over the past decade, this may not be permanent. In the period following land reform, therefore, a process of social differentiation is occurring, linked to class formation and both age and gender differences. Differential irrigation opportunities, then, have major implications for agrarian change following land reform.

The three socio-technical assemblages identified above are associated with class, gender and generational dynamics, with commercialising irrigators becoming established petty commodity producers, hiring in labour and accumulating from below, and the irrigation business activities dominated by older men. At the other extreme, the homestead irrigators are largely women, who are unable to accumulate given the limited extent of the production. Very often selling labour to others – including to the commercial irrigators – they are more classic peasant producers and also part of an expanding rural proletariat. The aspiring irrigators are intermediate, with class characteristics of each of the other groups, yet with a more diversified livelihood strategy involving both off-farm work (and remittance income) and farm production. They can be identified as ‘worker-peasants’ with many, especially younger, households aspiring to be petty commodity producers but so far with limited accumulation achieved.

Farmer-led irrigation is thus generating a new pattern of social

difference in these areas, with class formation emerging from irrigation opportunities in ways that are linked to both gender and generation. How does this pattern compare with more formal systems in terms of the socio-technical characteristics and the implications for social differentiation, accumulation opportunity and agrarian change more broadly?

As noted earlier, within our study area there is one rehabilitated formal irrigation scheme and one group garden. The former is located in the Wares site, covering 12 ha and making use of some of the previous farm's infrastructure. The land was cleared between 2006 and 2008 and irrigation began in 2009 with support from the government's 'Maguta' programme that bought a pump and an engine. The scheme is divided into three blocks and the 85 members who initially signed up had to contribute 200 m of wire for fencing. The pump broke after only two seasons but was repaired for the 2014 season. Maize, wheat and beans were the main crops and were grown in rotation. Each member has 0.1-0.15 ha of land to irrigate. Groups irrigate at fixed times each week if there is electricity, and everyone contributes US\$1/month for electricity and US\$1/year for the land. Currently, the engine is not functioning and the number of irrigators has dropped significantly. The scheme relies on a single pump, a river water source that is unreliable due to siltation and an expensive but intermittent energy supply. The infrastructure is also in poor condition with collapsed canals and inadequate fencing. Irrigation is overseen by a strict regime, led by the local extension worker, so flexibility in the choice of crops and rotations is impossible.

The group garden was a local initiative facilitated by the extension worker. The group purchased a surface water pump to extract water from a nearby dam. The garden was established in 2005 with 30 members – 25 women and five men, each of whom was allocated eight 15 m x 2 m beds. Again, the garden is managed under strict rules, including the requirement that members enter only at stipulated times and irrigate on a rotational basis managed by the committee. Group cohesion has been the challenge, as people do not have the same motivation or vision. The original chair commented that she had abandoned the group and was now irrigating by herself, growing vegetables year-round on her individually held plot.

In both cases the extent of irrigation is way below potential. The formal scheme had produced effectively nothing in the last couple of years, while those producing on plots in both the scheme and garden suffered from intermittent water supplies. With everyone allocated similar-sized plots there is limited differentiation among irrigators. While some further from the pumped water supply suffer greater shortages no one is able to invest

or expand due to the constraints of the schemes. These are welfare initiatives aimed at complementing other livelihood activities rather than driving entrepreneurial expansion. The possibility of accumulation through irrigation in both cases is therefore severely limited both by the limited land area allocated and the inflexibility of the system, compounded by the unreliability of water supplies due to reliance on a single, fixed pump and an electricity supply in the case of the scheme.

We undertook interviews and held group discussions with irrigators in the scheme and the group garden.⁸ People repeatedly highlighted problems with the intermittent water supply and the loss of crops due to sudden stoppages when the electricity supply was cut. Some complained that the cooperative arrangements had broken down and those at the end of canals lost out. Free-riding was common, irrigators complained, and when fees were not paid there were no longer any state resources to support the scheme – to mend the pump, repair the fence, provide the seed, support the marketing and so on – as had been the case before. Some had developed alternative water provisioning systems, including their own pumps or hand irrigation when the main pump did not work, but the authorities frowned on such improvisation. Unlike in the past the level of extension support was limited. Some took advantage of this and planted the crops they wanted while others complained that the lack of guidance resulted in major market gluts and the potential for disease and pests.

In terms of their socio-technical configurations both are clearly bounded systems, constructed as a 'scheme', with standardised rules guiding operations, overseen by the state through an extension worker. They have a set of design characteristics – a boundary fence, levelled plots, a grid of canals and a large pump – that define the scheme. A set number of plots are offered to a limited number of scheme 'members' and, in the past, there were attempts at crop scheduling and restrictions on what could be grown when and where. Membership involves submission to these technical requirements and compliance with the collective rules, including the payment of fees, attendance at meetings and the management of water in line with regulations.

As in the past the formal irrigation scheme presents a particular political image of control and order wrapped in a modernising project of state control (cf. Scott, 1998; Molle et al., 2009). As part of irrigator 'groups', the schemes create subservient citizens who are reliant on a centralised hydrological vision that focuses mainly on offering welfare support on small plots rather than entrepreneurial opportunities for expanding commercialisation. Compared to formal schemes, farmer-led irrigation

Table 15.1: Three types of farmer-led irrigation in 2018.

Socio-technical dimension	Specific element	Homestead irrigators	Aspiring irrigators	Commercial irrigators
	N=	12	24	13
Scale	Area irrigated (ha)	0.03	0.43	2.36
Water sources	Well (%)	83	42	38
	River (%)	0	38	54
	Dam (%)	17	38	54
Water extraction method	Bucket (%)	92	42	0
	Mobile pump (%)	8	46	53
	Submersible pump (%)	0	29	46
	Hand (%)	92	17	0
Water distribution	Drip (%)	0	4	8
	Pipe (%)	8	83	100
	Length of pipe (m)	4	161	319
	Nos grown	2.9	3.4	4.2
Crops	Maize (%)	25	33	46
	Tomato (%)	83	92	100
	Rape (%)	50	38	54
	Onion (%)	17	25	38
	Cabbage (%)	8	50	77
	Cucumber (%)	8	17	31
Labour	Hiring (%)	8	38	69
Processing	Vegetable drying (%)	58	38	46
	Local (%)	92	13	0
Marketing	Traders (%)	8	42	38
	Masvingo (%)	0	79	92
	Supermarkets (%)	0	8	23

systems are more unruly and linked to private, market-based initiatives, where some irrigators can connect with a wider network on their own terms. This suggests a different social and political vision that is not only bound to an individualist, market-oriented neoliberal order, as some would argue, but in which local agency dominates and informal relations are created across social networks, from farmers to suppliers to repairers to traders, generating a more autonomous, less directed hydraulic politics.

In sum, different socio-technical assemblages generate their own patterns of social differentiation and thus potential for accumulation. The consequences for agrarian change are in turn divergent. Each requires a specific type of support as part of 'irrigation development', as we discuss in the conclusion.

CONCLUSION

In our study areas we identified three different types of farmer-led irrigation, each based on complex systems of water control. Farmer-led irrigation covers around 3.5 times more area than formal irrigation in the study sites. Farmer-led irrigation systems potentially offer opportunities for some to commercialise production through irrigation, generating surpluses, raising income, employing labour, investing and accumulating. Compared to formal irrigation schemes, which suffer multiple challenges, such systems, we found, have real potential in terms of the regeneration of agriculture following land reform.

Our data show farmer-led irrigation to be highly significant in our study areas. If these patterns are repeated elsewhere, it would represent a significant contribution to the agricultural economy of Zimbabwe. Yet, farmer-led systems remain poorly understood and are often not recognised in policy, as is common elsewhere in Africa where there has been a consistent under-estimation of informal irrigation systems (IWMI, 2016; Beekman et al., 2014). A recent study, for example, estimated that informal irrigation accounted for only 9.7% of Zimbabwe's total irrigated area (Manzungu et al., 2018: 37). Our data suggests that this may be a significant underestimate.

In Zimbabwe's new political environment there are frequent commitments to increase formal irrigation schemes many-fold through strategic state and donor investment. But is this the right approach? Formal smallholder irrigation schemes have suffered significant problems over the decades (Pittock et al., 2017; Moyo et al., 2017; Nhundu et al., 2015, among

many others). A failure to cover recurrent costs, a reliance on costly technologies and a lack of effective governance arrangements have plagued them. In recent years, as the cases discussed here show, such schemes have further declined, with the infrastructure dilapidated and the irrigation only intermittently functioning.

By contrast, farmer-led irrigation is linked into responsive, flexible production and marketing systems and is reliant on often mobile, repairable technologies. The processes that establish these systems are diverse and not confined by restrictive plans or designs. While formal systems depend on state support and direction, farmer-led systems connect to a wide network of actors, including other farmers, traders, market buyers and pump suppliers and repairers. State agents are involved – not solely the agricultural extension worker but also others connected to land allocation, water management and credit supply, for example. The ability to respond to shocks and stresses – whether shifts in price, market demand or the availability of water or electricity – is a key feature of system sustainability, and the farmer-led systems show clear advantages.

Nationally there are around 600,000 ha of potentially irrigable land or 365,000 ha from internal renewable water resources (FAOSTAT, 2018). By the early 2000s only 120,000 ha were irrigated under formal schemes due to droughts and decaying infrastructure, down from a peak of 200,000 ha (Nhundu et al., 2015). A key policy choice is whether to continue to focus on this formal irrigation infrastructure, attempting to rehabilitate or expand it, or whether to emphasise farmer-led alternatives, which, as we have seen in Masvingo, can expand the irrigated area rapidly through private initiatives and make use of land not normally regarded as irrigable through improvised socio-technical practices.

More modest and less visible but with larger overall impact, farmer-led irrigation can be facilitated through small-scale finance systems, technological experimentation and development, expanding and conserving water bodies and investing in local governance capacity to manage common water resources. As discussed, such systems are complex, co-evolved, socio-technical assemblages adapted to local circumstances. They cannot be subject to simple technology transfer programmes; nor can they be replicated or scaled up in instrumental ways. Instead, the basic principles of farmer-led approaches must be appreciated. These include low cost, individual control, technological flexibility and modularity in design, flexible and adaptable systems for diverse cropping arrangements and socially appropriate configurations that allow diverse groups of people to participate in both production and connections to markets.

However, alternative pathways of socio-technical change imply political choices about directions of development. Farmer-led systems clearly have many advantages, but the benefits of commercialised irrigation are only available to relatively few, especially as environmental constraints limit expansion. Those without access to land, water, technology, labour or markets, for example, will not be able to accumulate through irrigation and must seek out alternative livelihood options. This process of differential accumulation has important implications, we argue, for the future dynamics of agrarian change in these areas, with some becoming 'petty commodity producers' or part of an emerging 'rural petit bourgeoisie', employing labour, purchasing and upgrading technologies and expanding irrigation areas through nascent, informal land markets, while others are unable to benefit from irrigation in this way.

This has implications for class formation, gender inclusion and generational dynamics, and thus who benefits from irrigation and who does not. The process of change, set in train by the various socio-technical assemblages of farmer-led irrigation observed in our study areas and in similar areas throughout Zimbabwe contrasts with the more regulated and controlled formal irrigation system, where the accumulation opportunities are less available, yet basic social welfare provision is offered more equitably to a greater number.

In order to irrigate post-land reform Zimbabwe, government, donor agencies and NGOs, and the engineers and water experts who advise them, may have to abandon past policy preferences and unlearn embedded professional practices. Rather than equating irrigation only with a scheme or group garden, going to the field can expose the diversity of farmer-led systems and hence a wider variety of irrigation options. Learning from farmers about their achievements and failures, being attentive to locally co-constructed socio-technical assemblages and exploring options for extending existing systems of farmer-led irrigation and water control may be a significant, but currently under-recognised, complement to engineer-designed formal schemes.

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NOTES

- ¹ These are collectively run gardens with a common water source and individual plots.
- ² Zimbabwe's land reform of 2000 allocated land to smallholders (with average arable areas around 5 ha) and medium-scale commercial farmers (with total farm sizes averaging 100 ha). These were designated A1 and A2 respectively. This study focuses only on A1 schemes, which in turn have two forms: one a villagised arrangement where there is communal grazing, a village site for housing, and separate, individual fields and a 'self-contained' arrangement, where grazing, arable and housing areas are contained in one plot.
- ³ See: <https://zimbabweland.wordpress.com/2014/03/17/dams-flooding-and-displacement-the-tokwe-mukorsi-dam/> (accessed 10 January 2019).
- ⁴ Command agriculture is a government programme aimed at boosting production. It was initially focused on crops in irrigable areas, mostly medium-scale farms. Loans are offered for inputs via a private company and are expected to be paid back in full before the following season (see <https://zimbabweland.wordpress.com/2017/09/25/command-agriculture-and-the-politics-of-subsidies/>, accessed 10 January 2019).

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- ⁵ Based on Meteorological Department records, the coefficient of variation was 29%, maximum 982 mm, minimum 290 mm, and five of the 17 years had rainfall levels more than 20% below the mean, indicating a high frequency of drought.
- ⁶ Based on data from a full census survey of both sites carried out in 2011-2012, households in the villagised site (Wares) had fewer assets, including arable land (4 ha vs. 12 ha), cattle (5.1 vs. 12.2) and ox carts (45% vs. 70% of households owning one) than those in Extension. Wares farmers also produced and sold less maize (995 kg vs. 3480 kg produced and 250 kg vs. 1175 kg sold) in the 2010 and 2011 seasons. Additionally, Wares farmers were more reliant on off-farm income, including remittances (36% vs. 21% of households receiving remittances), and invested less in gardens and well-digging (average 0.19 vs. 0.22 wells dug between 2006 and 2011). The purchase of 'luxury' items is also less evident in Wares, with 11% owning a car, compared to 31% in Extension. Finally, in Wares, 19% of households had bought a solar panel in the 5 years prior to 2011, compared to 31% in Extension.
- ⁷ Other vegetables grown by a smaller proportion of households include butternut, beans, green pepper, tsunga (mustard greens), carrot, sweet potato, garlic and wheat (again in rank order).
- ⁸ Seven individual key informant interviews were undertaken, including three women. Focus group discussions were held at Wondedzo irrigation scheme (attendance 7, 3 women); extension group meeting (attendance 17, 4 women) and Mtirikwi Horticultural Association (attendance 18, 6 women).

16

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AND LAND REFORM IN SOUTHEASTERN ZIMBABWE: A COMPATIBLE PAIRING OR A CONTRADICTION IN TERMS?

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INTRODUCTION

The on-going land reform programme ought to take advantage of the economic and ecological attributes of wildlife production in parts of the country that are prone to drought and have fragile soils which cannot sustain crop production without massive investment in irrigation. Of the country's natural regions, wildlife based land reforms can be successfully implemented in Natural Region V whose crop production potential is generally poor (Ministry of Environment and Tourism, 2001, pp. 4–5).

This paper examines the melding of two ostensibly antagonistic discourses in southeastern Zimbabwe: land reform and wildlife

management. Since 2000 Zimbabwe's land reform initiatives have gained a high, and controversial, profile internationally. Land reform, in this context, has meant the compulsory acquisition of relatively large, privately owned 'commercial farms' and their redistribution to smallholders primarily for the purpose of dryland cropping. The speed and number of 'fast track' resettlement initiatives have been particularly marked on the large ranches of the southeast lowveld. In this part of the country there has also, in recent years, been a movement towards commercial wildlife management in both the commercial and smallholder sectors.

The former seeks to redistribute large, 'under-utilized' landholdings whilst the latter needs extensive land holdings (even by the standards of commercial agriculture) to be viable. These two discourses are rooted in very different, even opposing, models of development. The land reform exercise emphasizes direct redistribution, equity and land for crops; whilst the wildlife management discourse in southern Africa tends to stress the neo-liberal goals of maximizing foreign exchange earnings, encouraging public-private partnerships and trickle down.¹ Given this divergence it is at first glance rather surprising that there has been a recent flurry of interest by government ministries, NGOs and the private sector in the development of 'wildlife models' for land reform or 'conservation based land reform' which would meld the two, as outlined in the quote above. The attempt to incorporate inherently extensive wildlife management into resettlement schemes runs directly counter to the rhetoric and technical biases of land reform programmes in Zimbabwe. It is also a significant departure in various respects from Zimbabwe's experiences of community-based wildlife management to date.

This paper investigates whether the competing discourses about land for smallholders and wildlife-based land reform are compatible or can be successfully reconciled. It traces the ways they have come together in Zimbabwe's southeast lowveld and examines the 'science' and politics underlying their melding. Finally it explores the potential implications for rural people's livelihoods of this development.

LAND REFORM, WILDLIFE AND POLITICS

When one examines who stands to gain from advocating the new 'wildlife-based land reform' discourse it is not perhaps as surprising a development as it first appears. Its emergence can be clearly linked with the economic and political interests of the white dominated wildlife sector; politically

connected new black landowners and entrepreneurs; various NGOs and the environmental lobby (with international funding); certain branches of government/party at national, provincial and district levels; as well as local actors. These positions and agendas will be elaborated in more detail but first it is necessary to flesh out the history of wildlife management in Zimbabwe's southeast lowveld.

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT IN THE LOWVELD

COMMERCIAL WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

On the commercial ranches of Zimbabwe's southeast lowveld wildlife came to be conceived of as a potentially useful product in the 1960s.² The presence of wildlife was previously considered detrimental to cattle ranching (as a reservoir for disease and competitor for scarce grazing). However game meat and hide production was pioneered on two of the ranches and briefly boomed before stagnating due to difficulties in marketing, stringent veterinary and food-hygiene controls and pressure from a politically powerful cattle lobby. But the emergence of an international safari hunting industry and legislative change devolving 'appropriate authority' over wildlife to land owners in the 1970s and, more recently, the growth in live game sales and tourism; together with a relative decline in beef prices, severe drought in the early 1990s and the collapse of the Zimbabwe dollar and the broader shift to export-oriented agriculture, have massively increased the popularity of game ranching (see Bond and Manyana, 2002; Moyo, 2000).

These shifts have been underpinned, and encouraged by, Zimbabwe-based research (much of which was conducted in the lowveld). In the 1960s some influential studies on game meat production were conducted by Fulbright scholars (Dasmann and Mossman, 1961). This was followed, in the 1980s and 1990s, by a number of upbeat and highly favourable comparisons of the wildlife industry's prospects with those of beef production (Child, 1988; Jansen et al., 1992; Taylor and Walker, 1978). These researchers were drawn together in a research programme coordinated by Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) on 'multispecies systems of animal production'. The central hypothesis was that multispecies systems provide greater financial returns per unit area, per unit of ungulate live mass, and per unit of investment than extensive single-species domestic livestock systems. Also that they are more ecologically resilient and stable, permit

greater diversity, and are more sustainable; and that this is true under both private and communal ownership of land and wildlife resources (Cumming, 1988).

By 1994 wildlife ranching was one of the fastest growing new uses of commercial farming land in Zimbabwe generally with 20.7% of white commercial farms under some sort of wildlife utilisation (Hill, 1994). A further development since the late 1980s is the emergence of wildlife 'conservancies'. These are amalgamations of privately owned ranches surrounded by veterinary fencing and with internal fencing removed. The largest and best-known conservancy is located in the southeast lowveld and was initially established as part of a black rhino conservation scheme. This, the Save Valley Conservancy, is comprised of 24 properties and with a total area of 3387 km² it has become the largest private wildlife reserve in Africa (du Toit, 1998). Both economic and ecological arguments have been made to justify commercial wildlife utilisation on large properties. These derive, in large part, from the work of the researchers mentioned above. The economic arguments centre on the foreign exchange raising potential of charismatic fauna through hunting and ecotourism opportunities.³ The main ecological arguments were that the niche separation of browser and grazer wildlife enabled a higher carrying capacity and was hence more productive, and that wildlife species were evolutionarily adapted to dryland environments and thus more resilient in times of drought. The large size of the conservancies is thus justified on the basis of economies of scale and in terms of sustainable carrying capacities—commercially managed wildlife has to be done on a land extensive basis to be viable. As Suzuki (2001, p. 618) points out, in the process of establishing conservancies farmers and ranchers have also reinvented themselves as 'long-standing and dedicated conservationists, stewarding the country's faunal resources with beneficent knowledge and expertise' for the good of the nation. These have been oft-deployed arguments for staving off land reform and resettlement on these properties: extensive commercial wildlife management is the most economically and ecologically sustainable and productive and morally correct landuse (Moyo, 2000).

As this last point indicates, the economic, technical and moral arguments for game ranching shroud a highly politicized arena. Game ranching in general, and the lowveld conservancies in particular, have always been extremely politically controversial. The highly visible disparities between relatively 'empty' ranches, stocked at low levels with 'wild' animals separated by electric fences from overpopulated, poor communal areas are an obvious source of conflict and have been described

as representing Zimbabwe's 'land question' in microcosm (Wolmer, 2005; see also Saruchera, 2001; Wels, 2000). The conservancies were a unilateral undertaking on the part of the member ranchers and have no statutory definition in law. There has been a great deal of suspicion of their motives by many in government and at best this means the conservancies have been regarded as 'white self-indulgence' and at worst as attempts by large-scale farmers to 'hide and privatize wildlife',⁴ exploiting a national heritage and challenging the state's control over wildlife. The Minister of Environment and Tourism pledged to curb the 'unplanned and uncontrolled mushrooming' of private conservancies in areas suited to subsistence farming and commercial agriculture in order to prevent them 'threatening food security'⁵ and was at pains to emphasize that:

Government will not allow the privatization of wildlife resources through the back door, that is, through unplanned and uncontrolled private conservancies. We are fully aware of such Machiavellian plots to privatize wildlife resources from Kenya to South Africa.⁶

The conservancies and better-endowed game ranches have responded with 'community trust' and 'neighbour outreach schemes' in an attempt to gain a degree of political and social legitimacy. The most sophisticated example of this was the Save Valley Conservancy's wildlife endowment scheme;⁷ but more common are acts of good-will between game ranches and neighbouring communities such as borehole drilling, school fee handouts and permitting access to sacred areas.

However the Save Valley Conservancy's high profile attempts at neighbour outreach have been stridently criticized for proffering 'cosmetic changes that largely maintained the status quo of domination by one racial group' (Saruchera, 2001); and as strategic tokenism geared more towards attracting donor-funding (Wels, 2000). Indeed many of the outreach schemes could be read as attempts at converting communal areas to adjuncts to the wildlife and tourism cause by, for example, establishing 'cultural villages'. As a Councillor for one of the wards bordering Save Valley Conservancy put it to us: 'conservancy outreach was too small, too late, then land reform came' (see also Wolmer, 2005).⁸

CAMPFIRE: WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AS DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

In parallel to the politically controversial development of game ranching on the commercial farms of Zimbabwe's lowveld there have been attempts by

the state to disburse wildlife revenue and devolve authority to local communities in the communal areas through the world-renowned Campfire scheme (Communal Area Management Programme for Indigenous Resources). The central tenet of this scheme is that in contrast to colonial-style 'fortress conservation' there should be no conflict between the economic survival of agricultural communities and foraging needs of wildlife—rather they should complement each other (Alexander and McGregor, 2000; Hulme and Murphree, 2001; Logan and Mosely, 2001). Communities neighbouring protected areas should receive direct benefits from them and have some say in wildlife management and use if conservation policies are to be effective.

Campfire achieved iconic status in southern Africa and internationally—rapidly becoming the most famous exemplar of CBNRM (Community Based Natural Resource Management) and establishing a powerful constituency of researchers and practitioners. It received generous donor support and generated countless workshops, conferences and publications. By 1990 even President Mugabe was to say 'it is proposed to make wildlife an agricultural option to complement crop production and stock raising. Wildlife management will be rationalized to bring economic benefits to the rural communities that engage in it' (cited in Cumming, 1990). This expansion in the realm of wildlife utilisation from the commercial to the communal realm was justified in similar economic and ecological terms to those used by the advocates for game ranching. Hunting and game viewing with the bonus of cultural tourism were promoted as the most lucrative land uses in Zimbabwe's arid regions where dryland cropping was perceived to be a waste of time.

These promoters of wildlife management have tended to couch their arguments in the language of agricultural economics, emphasizing 'financial and economic profitability' and 'Africa's comparative advantage' with a focus on returns on land area. However this mode of analysis tends to be apolitical and ahistorical and, as we shall see, leaves many questions unanswered. And in developing models from studies on commercial ranches which presume a beef production objective in cattle ownership (as revealed by a stated focus on multispecies systems of animal production) and exporting them to the smallholder sector they are comparing unlike with unlike. These studies are often interpreted to mean that not only is wildlife a preferable land use option in certain regions, but that it is the only possible sensible option. For example:

Its wildlife only in the lowveld ... studies have proved it. That land is of no use to anyone except wildlife ... Get the cattle out and bring the buffalo

*in—it's simple.*⁹

Yet notwithstanding frequent drought and distance from markets, small-scale agriculture and livestock production cannot be written off so glibly in the communal areas of the lowveld. Livestock, in Zimbabwe's smallholder sector, are valued first and foremost for their supply of inputs to arable production rather than for beef production (Barrett, 1991; Scoones, 1992), in the lowveld it is their role as providers of draught power for ploughing fields that is particularly valued (Wolmer et al., 2002). Alongside labour migration and remittance income cropping and livestock are vitally important to people's diverse, complex livelihoods.

In this context what, then, has been the experience of community wildlife management in recent years in Zimbabwe's lowveld? Does it offer a viable alternative or even add-on to other livelihood activities? Wards 4 and 5 of Sangwe communal area in Chiredzi District bordering Gonarezhou National Park, for example, have Campfire committees and school blocks, clinics, grinding mills, small dams and shops have been built with the proceeds and committee members receive cash dividends. However the scheme's reputation in Chiredzi has been tarnished by corruption scandals (in 1999, for example, the CEO of a bankrupt Chiredzi Rural District Council plundered the banked Campfire receipts to pay the salaries of angry striking council workers); and a lack of real devolvement of power—communities are not involved in the sale of hunting rights and are suspicious of misappropriation by the council.

Many people in the area view Campfire merely as another means of enforcing unpopular natural resource conservation legislation. Resource monitors on each village committee are meant to inform the police about anyone they discover cutting trees, cultivating streambanks, causing veld fires or poisoning watercourses (this is a means of fishing). The fact that the local police station is located in Ward 5, bordering the national park but far from any township, lends resonance to people's suspicion that protection of animals from poaching is held to be a higher priority than protection of people from crime. In particular there are bitter complaints about damage to property, fields and livestock caused by marauding elephants and carnivores. Four people have been killed by elephants in these wards since 1996—including children herding cattle. There have been long time lags in dealing with compensation claims and compensation that has been paid is regarded as insufficient. In this context it remains more lucrative to poach than wait for meagre cash dividends.¹⁰ In some cases poaching can be read as, in part, a political demonstration. One interviewee—a self-confessed poacher—summed up his frustrations thus:

Campfire money is being looted and little finds its way back to the community. If it does, it will not be adequate to meet my family's daily requirements and other necessities. The whole process reduces me to the status of a beggar. I am a man! Campfire is more about the national park than us. We used to hunt and eat meat often, but now there are too many restrictions yet our crops are being severely damaged by problem animals every year and the compensation is too little and untimely.¹¹

Ostensibly the Campfire programme has allowed multiple resource use in the communal areas of the lowveld (wildlife, livestock and crops) and yet its driving philosophy appears to be a conservation one not a development one. Campfire areas are a de facto buffer zone aimed at taking the strain off protected areas. Further, as some commentators have observed Campfire is an explicitly non-redistributive development model which, notwithstanding its participatory rhetoric, legitimizes the status quo with regard to land and resource ownership and diverts legitimate demands for land reform in the direction of secondary rights to natural resources (Hughes, 2001; Katerere, 2002; Murombedzi, 2003). Indeed it could even be argued to make way for the expansion of commercial wildlife interests into communal areas in the guise of public-private partnership (Hughes, 2001). As Katerere (2002, p. 7) puts it:

In essence by focusing on increasing flows of money under the guise of CBNRM partnerships, Campfire has not contributed to transforming the rural economy. Instead, it has successfully given legitimacy to minority interests that have extended their tourist investments into the very communal areas. In short, those with land have been able to increase their access to land and wildlife resources ... [this has] only worsened the ever-widening income disparity between the poorer majority farmers and the rich.

Attempting to square the circle and combine Campfire with redistributive land reform in calls for 'wildlife-based land reform' would appear, in this reading, to be a rather surprising development.

FARM INVASIONS AND FAST-TRACK RESETTLEMENT POST-2000

At Independence in 1980 Zimbabwe inherited a highly skewed land distribution, with the majority black farming population being confined to the former 'reserves' (later Tribal Trust Lands, then communal areas), most

of which—like Sangwe—were located in the marginal agroecological zones. The ‘willing seller, willing buyer’ formula enshrined in the new constitution ensured that land transfer would have to be on the basis of full compensation in foreign exchange and effectively ruled out significant land redistribution (Palmer, 2000). This was only abandoned in 1992 and the government’s new powers of compulsory land acquisition at controlled prices were not used until 1997 when a swathe of farms were designated for acquisition in an attempt to answer the clamour for land reform and shore up the waning popularity of ZANU(PF)—the former liberation movement party. This rapidly became a complex and bureaucratic process and most of the designations were successfully challenged in court.

2000 heralded a very dramatic and very public shift in the political register in Zimbabwe. Soon after ZANU(PF) suffered an unprecedented popular defeat in a constitutional referendum a wave of farm occupations spearheaded by members of the War Veterans Association—and tacitly supported by government—occurred across the country. This was accompanied by a general increase in political violence and a much proclaimed ‘collapse in the rule of law’ as the campaigns for the June 2000 parliamentary and March 2002 presidential elections segued into each other and the farm occupations transmuted into an official ‘fast track’ land reform programme (see Chaumba et al., 2003a); Chaumba et al., 2003b).

Almost all the game ranches of the lowveld were occupied in varying degrees by war veterans including portions of the conservancies, as was a section of Gonarezhou National Park (see below). As widespread poaching and deforestation was brought to the attention of the world’s media it appeared that this was an irrevocable attack on the ‘wildlife management’ model of development on commercial and communal land. Fences were torn down and the wire converted to snares, cattle driven into the game areas leading to fears of veterinary disease outbreak, trees cut down for sale of firewood, fields cleared and huts built.¹²

Very broadly speaking there were three perspectives on the land occupations in the lowveld conservancies and game ranches. The first might be termed the ‘official’ ZANU(PF) and war veteran party line. Their campaigning slogan for the elections was that ‘the economy is land, and land is economy’. A populist moral discourse about the return of ‘African soil’ has underpinned the designation and seizure of white-owned commercial farms and redistribution to black smallholders primarily for the purpose of dryland cropping. Usually bound up in this discourse is an assumption that land is most productively and equitably used for farming. There is, as we have seen, a suspicion of wildlife ranching which is held to

be a ploy by whites to forestall land acquisition and justifying multiple and extensive land holdings. As one councillor put it:

We are aware this [land reform programme] is politically motivated but the political philosophy is trying to end shortage of land and create more space to locals who are overcrowded ... White men did not import wild animals from Europe.¹³

This bias against wildlife and towards agriculture and food security is rooted in the historical technical biases of landuse planning in Zimbabwe.¹⁴

A second broad perspective is that of the commercial farming sector and wildlife industry which has been largely shared by Zimbabwe's erstwhile donors and the opposition party. The farm invasions have been seen as an economic, ecological, moral and aesthetic outrage. The destruction of game has gained even more media attention than the destruction of tobacco by farm invaders. This has been expressed in very extreme terms as the quotes below indicate:

Huts are popping up like fever blisters as pristine areas are invaded.¹⁵

Since February last year [2000], the once lush green Zimbabwean agricultural landscape has been transformed into a motley of mud huts, tree stumps and charred pastures as new settlers torch flora and fauna in a land preparation process resembling Russia's World War II 'scorched earth' military strategy against Hitler's Germany.¹⁶

Last season ... there was a freak storm called Cyclone Eline that swept through the region, destroying everything in its wake. This time, another hurricane is sweeping through Mwenezi as thousands of war veterans and supporters of the governing ZANU(PF) party take over cattle and game ranches, felling trees at random and clearing huge tracts of land to grow maize, the Zimbabwean staple food which, unknown or ignored by the settlers, will never thrive in such a dry area.¹⁷

For their countless crimes against the environment and Zimbabwe surely the settlers have forfeited the right to ever own a piece of land. Whilst they continue to sell the wood from our precious trees the stretches of empty, desertified land grow like a cancer around their newly settled plots. With their fancy cars and trucks let them go back to their homes and plots in town and stop the rape of our countryside.¹⁸

The people in Save Valley Conservancy are not there for resettlement, only poaching.¹⁹

The settlements have been associated with rapid and unsustainable off-

takes [of wildlife] threatening the viability and survival of many species including those that are protected. Ultimately this undermines an attractive means of livelihood (Ministry of Environment and Tourism, 2001, p. 2).

The narrative of destruction of a formerly pristine wilderness runs into trouble when one considers that the conservancies and game ranches are all former cattle ranches in which efforts have been made to manufacture wilderness by buying in game and modifying the landscape (Wolmer, 2005; cf. Neumann, 1998).

A third perspective is provided by many of the settlers themselves. This again, masks an array of diverging viewpoints but broadly this encompasses a sense of reparation—of re-asserting territorial identity claims by returning to ‘our land’ and ‘our animals’ in either a general or a specific sense; and escaping land shortage:

Whites gave us the name poacher because we used to stay with animals and hunted them at will. Now when they are talking about conservancies—what do they want to conserve when all these are our animals.²⁰

We were overcrowded in the communal areas with less fertile soils—our children are finding it hard to get land—yet whites have these huge tracts of land ... We fought during the liberation struggle for the sole purpose of land and this has taken so long ... We will never forget the land where our forefathers were buried ... There are sacred places in these large estates and white farmers do not give us enough time to do our rituals.²¹

Before we were poachers. Now we live here.²²

THE NEW DYNAMICS

With Campfire discredited (in the eyes of some) as a win-win solution to rural development and conservation, and fast track resettlement and land claims potentially causing a major contraction in wildlife areas, what now for wildlife management as a landuse strategy in Zimbabwe’s lowveld? Despite these developments the wildlife management lobby is stronger than ever regionally and internationally. This is evident in the sudden enthusiasm in southern Africa for states to enter into Transborder Natural Resource Management (TBNRM) agreements, including the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park which incorporates Gonarezhou National Park. These derive their impetus from a complex mix of economic, political and symbolic criteria (Wolmer, 2003) but essentially provide a potential

financial incentive to states and the private sector to bring more land into the conservation estate.

After the March 2002 Presidential elections this was accompanied by a discursive shift on behalf of some politicians, with the Minister of Environment and Tourism talking up the Zimbabwean safari industry at the Safari Club International convention in Las Vegas and an increasingly pro-wildlife/hunting and anti-poaching line being taken in the state-owned media.²³ In parallel, notwithstanding the massive rise in poaching and conversion of invaded and fast-tracked game ranches to arable, there is—as we described at the beginning of this paper—an emerging discourse on ‘wildlife models’ for land reform. This has included the Ministry of Environment talking of implementing a ‘Campfire approach’ on resettlement areas (as the quote at the beginning of this paper indicates) and the UNDP’s interim report on the fast track land reform process suggesting that:

... any resettlement plan should ensure the preservation of adequate refuge areas for Zimbabwe’s rich natural flora and fauna. It is suggested that improvements of environmental policy should include encouraging new settlers to engage in various natural-resource enterprises, including ecotourism (UNDP, 2001, p. 50).

WWF are even more explicit—arguing for a: ‘wildlife-based model for affirmative action and community participation that will enhance Zimbabwe’s international conservation image and attract donor support’ as well as constituting a ‘complementary approach to land reform’ (WWF-SARPO, 2001, p. 1).

However it is very unclear as to what form such models would take in practice and the landuse planners implementing the fast-track resettlement programme have no expertise in this area and very few in the wildlife sector have experience of planning for land reform. As one resettlement planning officer put it:

There is no process for the inclusion of wildlife management in landuse plans. It is not set up to include that.²⁴

But in practice, on the ground in the southeast lowveld, there are examples of ongoing ad hoc negotiations over land and wildlife management in the lowveld. Game ranchers, conservancies, safari companies, new settlers and state actors (from national parks staff, to agricultural extensionists to the Provincial Governor) have made trade-offs and accommodations and done back-stage deals. In practice these new modes of articulating wildlife management and land redistribution have outstripped the incipient models

for wildlife-based land reform and rendered the neat community based natural resource management models of the 1980s inappropriate or irrelevant. There is no formal policy and legal framework for the management of wildlife outside of protected areas in Zimbabwe (Katerere, 2002) and, as we have seen, even the conservancies lack statutory definition. This, instead, is a confused and ambiguous situation where many actors are deploying a complex and sometimes contradictory set of narratives. This ambiguity brings opportunities and constraints to these actors. We will now explore two of these ad hoc initiatives in more detail.

THE SAVE VALLEY CONSERVANCY LAND OFFER

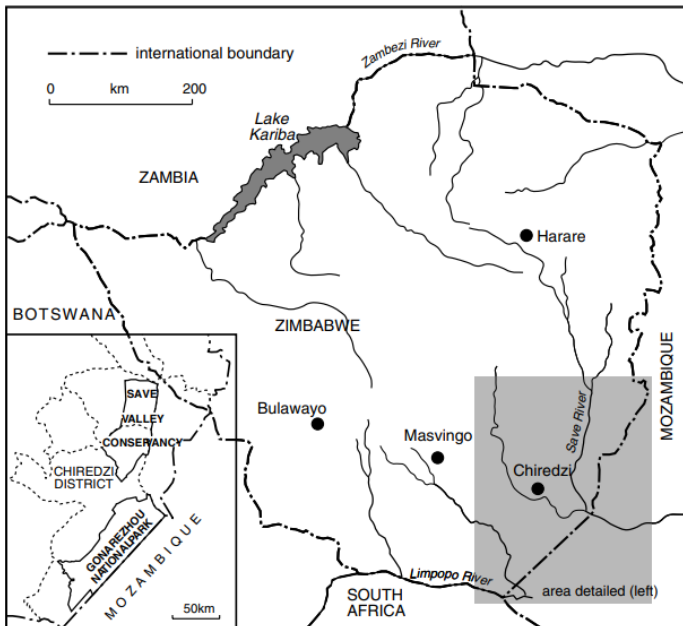
The occupations of properties in the Save Valley Conservancy (Fig. 16.1) and subsequent poaching gained a great deal of national and international media exposure of the emotive 'Zimbabwe's Killing Fields' variety of moral outrage (and see above). In a number of key hotspots, since February 2000, there have been numerous movements into the conservancy by war veterans, communities with historical land claims and landless peasants. Game scouts were attacked, fields were pegged, fences removed, cattle driven in, and poaching, burning, removals of firewood and thatching grass intensively carried out by local communities and opportunist entrepreneurs. There were increasingly violent stand-offs between game guards and war veterans²⁵ and escalating poaching and, by mid-June 2000, 'no-go' areas had been established (Wolmer, 2005).

This has prompted the conservancy to go beyond the much derided wildlife endowment offer to surrounding communities and to consider the obvious alternative: formally offering communities land inside the conservancy fence on the condition that much of the land remains under wildlife utilisation. This would mean the creation of a 'Campfire-style' concession area where safari hunting and tourism revenues accrue to the local community as the concession holder. However this arrangement is unlike Campfire in one crucial respect: it requires redistribution of land—albeit with strings attached to the way that land may be utilized. As such it has more in common with the emerging South African model of 'contractual national parks' resulting from land restitution claims on protected areas. The best known example is that of the Makuleke community who have agreed to maintain ancestral land in Kruger National Park that has been returned to them as a wildlife management area (see Reid, 2001; Steenkamp, 2001).

The Save Valley Conservancy has offered up three contiguous properties in the southwest of the conservancy on which a land claim exists for such a negotiated resettlement.²⁶ It is proposed to divide these properties north-south along the line of an old veterinary fence. On the west of the fence resettlement would be based on the standard smallholder agricultural model whilst the land to the east (approximately three-quarters of the area) would constitute a wildlife concession area for the community for hunting and tourism enterprises. In parallel the conservancy has talked up the opportunities for indigenisation—or buy-in by black entrepreneurs—as safari concessionaires on the community land or private landowners in their own right (WWF-SARPO, 2001); and income generating schemes such as craft production and cultural tourism in the communal and resettlement areas outside the wildlife zone.

Since the farm invasions began, the power dynamics of negotiations between the conservancy landowners and the government and local authorities have shifted considerably. Whereas previously the conservancy's outreach programmes were pitched as exercises in good neighbourliness and were mainly an attempt to ward off poaching and resource conflicts, the new land offers are a last ditch attempt to bargain

Figure 16.1: The Save Valley Conservancy and Gonarezhou National Park, southeastern Zimbabwe.



for the very survival of the conservancy as an entity and shore up the threatened commercial interests of the landowners. These landowners now recognize the need for change whilst hoping this can remain largely symbolic. As one broker to the potential deal put it: 'The Campfire-type deal helps dilute the whites-only image of the conservancy.'²⁷

Encouraging wildlife utilisation in adjacent (old and new) resettlement areas (as well as in the communal areas) serves another strategic purpose for the Save Valley Conservancy and other game ranches in the vicinity of Chiredzi. Now that Gonarezhou National Park is ostensibly part of a tri-national transfrontier protected area there are perceived economic and political benefits to be had from establishing 'connectivity' with the park. Symbolic connectivity or 'ecological integrity' could be achieved if portions of the resettlement and communal areas splitting the conservancies and game ranches and the park were turned over to wildlife utilisation. This would enable the local wildlife industry to market itself as part of Africa's biggest protected area and also, crucially, they would have a 'buy-in' to an international conservation agreement. This could be a valuable argument against designation for resettlement or for the eviction of farm invaders (Wolmer, 2003).

However, to the frustration of the wildlife industry and confusion of the settlers on the conservancy properties, the government has been very inconsistent in its position on land reform in the conservancy generally and on the proposed land deal specifically. Different politicians, including ministers, Vice Presidents, the Provincial Governor, MPs and councillors have variously advocated everything from further invasions and the complete poaching out of wildlife—to pulling out entirely. With such a range of actors trying to make political capital from the situation, and in some cases an eye to potential enrichment, this confusion is hardly surprising. As well as the politicians, certain opportunists have been able to benefit from the confusion. For example a black safari entrepreneur has been able to use his political influence to become the go-between for the white ranchers and government; and a war veteran has established a security company employing youth brigade militants—paid by the landowners—to guard against poaching.

Whilst, despite blowing hot and cold, the various arms of government appear to be moving towards accepting a wildlife-based land reform model in the Save Valley Conservancy,²⁸ many in the very communities this is meant to benefit remain unconvinced. The ethnically Ndau Gudo people in Ward 1 of Sangwe communal area, for example, have ancestral burial sites and ritual pools and conducted an annual fishing festival on what is

currently Levanga Ranch. Before 1986 the Levanga area was classified as State Land to which the Gudo people had relatively free access in order to visit their ancestral shrines, hunt, fish or graze their cattle. Since the ranch was bought in 1986 there have been a long run of conflicts over access to ritual sites for traditional ceremonies and to natural resources—particularly fish. The Gudo people's position hardened from a desire to negotiate access to certain pieces of land to an outright land claim, particularly when a respected headman caught poaching by the ranch owner was publicly beaten about the head with a fish. This antagonism has been made manifest in acts of resistance such as the starting of veld fires, fence-cutting, thefts of sugar cane, the burning of a 'traditional village' and now the massive-scale poaching accompanying the farm invasions (Wels, 2000; Wolmer, 2001, Wolmer, 2005).²⁹ As Chief Gudo put it:

The relationship between us and the owners is bad. We do not even know them, they have their separate lives and we have our own. We used to have our sacred pool ... where we used to carry out our rainmaking ceremonies ... It is a place where we bury our chiefs. Now this is no more ... But when they bury me, they will bury me there because that's where my father lies. Also when I want meat, I will go there because I cannot always graze!³⁰

The point is that it is particular pieces of land on which historical claims exist that are coveted. Although no wildlife-based land reform scenario has yet been offered to the Gudo people it is highly unlikely, given their recent experiences, that such a scheme for land restitution with 'strings-attached' would be satisfactory to them. They want direct access to natural resources and sacred areas rather than in absentia management via a joint venture company.

THE GONAREZHOU NATIONAL PARK LAND CLAIM

A similar, but relatively less publicized, land occupation has occurred on another boundary of Sangwe communal area. This one is of the northwestern portion of Gonarezhou National Park and has also been accompanied by talk of wildlife-based land reform (see Fig. 1). This is different from the Save Valley Conservancy land offer in two important respects. The first is that the land being contested is state land rather than being a private landholding in white hands. The second is that the proposals for marrying community wildlife management with resettlement have come from some of the settlers themselves rather than being a reactive offer by the landowner.

The contested portion of land is the ancestral home of the Chitsa people who in common with other Shangaan groups settled in the late 19th century in the region of the Save-Runde confluence. In 1935 this area, the southern portion of the then Ndanga District, was proclaimed a game reserve. However in 1940 it was subsequently deproclaimed as a tsetse fly control hunting programme was initiated along the Save and Runde Rivers. In 1950 it was again designated as a game reserve, only to be deproclaimed once more to accommodate further tsetse hunting operations (Wolmer, 2001). During these tsetse fly control operations large game was shot out and large trees bulldozed and roads built by the tsetse fly control teams. In 1962 the Chitsa people were evicted from the area on the understanding that they would be allowed to return after tsetse control was completed and settled in Sangwe communal area, bordering the park. This portion of 'State Land' was subsequently leased to Lone Star Ranch as cattle grazing land. Boreholes were sunk during this period. During the 1970s the area was in the thick of the liberation war and the local population was moved into 'protected villages' in Sangwe communal area. In 1975 Gonarezhou National Park was formally gazetted and the former tsetse corridor or 'State Land' was controversially incorporated into it.

The Chitsa community deeply resented their eviction and the fact that Independence did not bring restitution of their ancestral land. During the 1980s and 1990s many continued to utilize this portion of the national park illicitly to poach wildlife and to drive their cattle in for valuable 'poach grazing'. In May 2000, after commercial farms in the area had been invaded, a group of settlers largely from the Chitsa community of Sangwe communal area, at the instigation of a local councillor and war veteran commander and with the support of Headman Chitsa, occupied the contested portion of 'State Land'.³¹ This constituted a 20 km deep strip running along the north western end of the park. As on the farms in the area in the first instance this was a largely symbolic political demonstration involving relatively few people camped at the edge of the park in tents supplied by the army and an increased amount of 'poach grazing' (see Chaumba et al., 2003a). In a similar fashion to the Save Valley Conservancy the occupation was accompanied by large-scale poaching or hunting (depending on your perspective) and was explicitly described as the restitution of ancestral land:

*We had a rainmaking ceremony to tell the ancestors we are back. The rains came the same day.*³²

The invasion came to be 'formalized' when landuse planners pegged the area in July 2001 as part of the 'fast-track' land reform process after

getting the go ahead from the Provincial Governor (Chaumba et al., 2003a). 10 new villages were laid out along an old track built by the tsetse fly control teams, each village had arable plots demarcated to the north and communal grazing areas established to the south. Fertile basalt soils and the relative ease of clearing fields due to the fact that elephants had already done a good job in that regard meant growing maize and cotton was an attractive prospect.

However as well as arable and grazing areas the settlers' leaders—a ZANU(PF) councillor and war veteran base commanders—proposed the designation of an 8 km deep 'wildlife zone' beyond the grazing area. This could then constitute a new Campfire concession area where safari hunters would disburse hunting revenues to the populations of villages 1 to 10. The settlers' leaders even approached the government to get 'appropriate authority'—the legal right to exploit and sell the wildlife.³³ But the bulk of these settlers were from Wards 4 and 5 in Sangwe communal area who, as we have seen, have had at best ambivalent experiences of Campfire. Why then would they be so keen to sacrifice a large portion of their newly (if illegally) acquired resettlement area to a wildlife zone? The answer was revealed during the 2001–2002 planting season—the first in which crops were planted on the black soils of this portion of Gonarezhou. Herds of elephants not only destroyed the growing crops but also ripped down people's newly built huts. The wildlife zone was thus wanted as a buffer in which, it was hoped by the settlers, 'problem animals' could be destroyed or scared away by paying safari clients.³⁴ The settlers' primary concern was to continue to farm and graze livestock unhindered by elephants and other dangerous animals. Removal of elephants from this area was their main priority and any financial disbursement accruing from this merely a bonus.

This, however, is not the whole story. As well as the 10 villages and associated arable, livestock and wildlife zones a large adjoining portion of Gonarezhou known as 'Section 27' (also in the former veterinary corridor) has also been claimed for resettlement. 50 ha self-contained plots have been allocated to 56 people. These are all members of a relatively wealthy and politically well-connected local elite including, councillors, war veterans' leaders, army personnel, and senior policemen and National Parks staff. Yet none of these people have physically relocated to Section 27. The proposal, instead, is to operate it as a mini-conservancy: a further safari concession where revenues would be disbursed to the 56 landowners. This portion of land is strategically a very important one. It would form a corridor linking the rump Gonarezhou National Park to game ranches such as the Malilangwe Conservation Trust and the conservancies beyond. These

56 plot holders, similarly to the conservancy ranchers, envisage benefiting from buying-in to the transfrontier park scheme.

The state's position on these schemes is riven with ambiguities much as it is in the Save Valley Conservancy. Wildly conflicting messages have come from different politicians. The tenure of those with new plots in the park (and particularly the former—smallholder—group) is perceived as being markedly less secure than on private properties that have been carved up in the fast-track resettlement process with the risk that the government will decide to pull the plug on supporting the process and send in the army. But the uncertainty and confusion has again been a potentially lucrative ground for opportunists willing and able to exploit the situation, particularly the 56 new potential hunting concession owners.³⁵

CONCLUSION: THE LIVELIHOOD IMPLICATIONS OF WILDLIFE-BASED LAND REFORM

In essence wildlife is a potentially highly lucrative landuse option for wealthy elites (whether they be white or black) and offers very little financially to poor members of 'communities'. Wildlife management can only ever be extensive to be feasible which means it requires a lot of land. Even in Zimbabwe's lowveld this land is in demand for other uses. Wildlife does not combine well with other landuses—particularly those that involve the presence of people. Wildlife ranching employs less people than cattle ranching and the experience of revenue trickle down in the lowveld has to date been pretty miserable (dismissed by many as 'grinding mills and beer money'). A massive growth in tourism and hunting in the region would be necessary to create a revenue stream that would have a noticeable impact on livelihoods.

This is not to argue that cattle ranching for beef production is the answer in the new resettlement areas. Although this was the landuse which most studies of wildlife management in Zimbabwe have explicitly or implicitly posited as the alternative to game it is not an option in these areas. Commercial beef production also requires extensive landholdings. Cattle, as in the communal areas, are valued principally for their role in the agricultural production system—as providers of draught power for cultivation. Yet agriculture—in the absence of irrigation—is not an easy option either in a drought-prone region. But, particularly in a context of economic meltdown, agriculture—alongside labour migration, remittance income and other diversified activities—will constitute a vital element of

poor people's livelihoods in the new resettlement areas in southeast Zimbabwe and demands for smallholder irrigation schemes and restocking assistance will continue to rank highest in people's development priorities (Mombeshora et al., 2001; Wolmer et al., 2002).

Why, then, is 'wildlife-based land reform' being mooted at all, given the government's supposed commitment to equitable social transformation? As we have demonstrated it is bound up with the economic and political repositioning of the wildlife sector, various branches of government, NGOs, indigenous elites and local communities. To the existing (predominantly white) wildlife industry it is an attempt to safeguard dwindling assets and get state and community 'buy-in' to wildlife or to expand operations into new spaces. To indigenous elites (including local politicians, war veterans and civil servants) it is an opportunity to muscle in on a potentially lucrative industry under the twin flags of land reform and 'indigenisation'. To the Ministry of Environment and Tourism and conservation-oriented NGOs wildlife-based land reform is a potential means of bringing resettlement areas into their realm of expertise; and, should donors re-engage with Zimbabwe, this new development model could be used to attract funding. Finally to members of communities with land claims on private and state land the wildlife-based land reform discourse is a means by which the repossession of ancestral land can be justified in the language of community development (cf. Li, 1996). So can land reform and wildlife management be successfully reconciled? The answer is yes, but probably not in a particularly equitable way. It is more likely to provide business opportunities for local and non-local elites with wildlife interests than an impetus for broad-based rural development.

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- ¹ A range of policy approaches have emerged in southern Africa—from community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) to community-private joint ventures—that seek to encourage the management of wildlife to take on more commercial forms—and in particular link private sector tourism and safari operations with community or local involvement, usually with an emphasis on 'pro-poor' commercial investment (Ashley and Wolmer, 2003).
- ² The following section draws on Child (1988) and Wolmer (2001) who provide more detail on the history of game ranching in the lowveld.
- ³ According to Bond (2001) the value of sport-hunting in Zimbabwe increased from US\$2 million to US\$12 million per annum between 1984 and 1993, and the gross number of visitors to Zimbabwe—largely attracted to 'nature based' activities—increased by 325% from 1980 to 1990 (although real visitor expenditure per capita declined over the same period).
- ⁴ Chiredzi Rural District Council—Master Plan 1997.
- ⁵ Minister for Environment and Tourism (Chen Chimutengwende) in *Hansard*, 14/2/1996, 3967–3971.
- ⁶ Address to staff seminar on private conservancies and game ranches and the conditions for their establishment and growth, Mushandike Training Centre, Masvingo 3–6 October 1995; quoted by Cunliffe (1993). This is examined in greater detail in Wolmer (submitted for publication).

NOTES

- ⁷ This scheme was intended to use donor funding to purchase wildlife which would be released within the conservancy. The conservancy would then be obliged to buy their progeny each year at the prevailing market rate. This money could then be used to finance community projects (du Toit, 1998; Metcalfe, 1996; Wels, 2000).

⁸ Interview with Councillor, Chiredzi District 20/11/2001.

⁹ Interview with Commercial Farmers' Union representatives, Masvingo 23/11/2001.

¹⁰ The revenue earned by district councils leasing safari hunting and tourism rights to the private sector is allocated to wildlife management activities (anti-poaching enforcement, problem animal control etc.), to district council levies and with a recommended minimum of 50% going to the 'wildlife producer' wards themselves. This in turn is divided between ward-level management costs, ward projects (such as grinding mills) and sometimes a contribution to traditional leaders, with the remainder divided once more between all the households in the producer wards. Bond (2001) shows that the median benefit per household from wildlife dividends nationwide (in wards where Campfire is operating) declined from US\$19.40 in 1989 to US\$4.49 in 1996. In most wards the financial benefit per household from wildlife constituted less than 10% of that derived from agricultural production. He concludes that in most wards wildlife is not financially viable at the household level.

¹¹ Interview from an early phase of this work (see Mombeshora et al., 2001).

¹² See, for example, 'Poaching reaches critical levels in Save game parks' *Daily News* 27/8/2001; 'Invaders cause havoc in conservancies' *Zimbabwe Independent* 12/10/2001.

¹³ Interview with Councillor, Chiredzi District 21/3/2002.

¹⁴ For example, the agricultural extension service (AREX, formally Agritex) uses a standard landuse planning approach developed from the 1930s across the country that has no explicit recognition of wildlife as a potential productive landuse. Similarly Zimbabwe's land suitability categorization of 'natural regions' defined primarily by rainfall and soil quality (Vincent and Thomas, 1961) indicates that the appropriate landuse for Region V (dryland zones, including the lowveld) is extensive cattle ranching, with no mention of wildlife.

¹⁵ Interview with Environmental consultant, Harare 15/11/2001.

¹⁶ *Daily News* 14/12/2001.

¹⁷ Invaders wreak havoc in once thriving game parks *Daily News* 16/8/2001.

¹⁸ Letter from 'Patriot', Kadoma, *Zimbabwe Independent* 16/11/2001.

¹⁹ Interview with safari industry representative, Harare 28/11/2001.

²⁰ Interview with settler, Fair Range Ranch 10/12/2001.

²¹ Discussion with settlers, Fair Range Ranch 9/11/2001.

²² Interview with settler, Gonarezhou National Park 19/11/2001.

²³ See, for example, 'Local conservation programmes lauded' *The Herald* 15/4/2002; 'Troops dispatched to curb poaching' *The Herald* 29/4/2002.

²⁴ Interview with Agritex officer, Harare 14/11/2001.

²⁵ 'Farm guards shoot group of occupiers' *The Herald* 15/2/2001.

²⁶ The land claim derives from former ranch workers' families who had received land before the establishment of the conservancy and were displaced as ranching operations expanded but have never been fully assimilated into the neighbouring communal area (WWF-SARPO, 2001). In contrast to other land claims in Save Valley Conservancy these are not people who lived in the area before the ranches existed and want access to ancestral rainmaking shrines.

²⁷ Interview with safari industry representative, Harare 14/2/2001.

²⁸ See Ministry of Environment and Tourism (2001).

²⁹ The SVC annual report for 1997–1998 reported that the 'Gudo area has...been identified as an area posing the biggest threat to the SVC in terms of illegal hunting, veld fires, thefts etc.' (Wels, 2000, p. 294). In fact farm invasions first took place here long before the current occupations in 1998.

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- ³⁰ Interview with Chief Gudo (Mombeshora et al., 2001).
- ³¹ The settlers were able to exploit the ambiguous status of this portion of the park. Even the Minister of Environment of Tourism appeared unaware that it was part of the national park. See: 'No people were resettled in game park, says Nhema' *Daily News* 7/13/2001.
- ³² Interview with settlers, Gonarezhou National Park 20/11/2001.
- ³³ 'Gonarezhou settlers want to exploit wildlife' *Zimbabwe Independent* 9/11/2001.
- ³⁴ Interview with settler, Gonarezhou National Park, 19/11/2001.
- ³⁵ For more evidence of opportunistic exploitation of the situation in southeastern Zimbabwe by local political heavyweights and unscrupulous safari hunters see 'SA cashes in on Zim confusion' *Mail and Guardian* 2/5/2003.

17

LAND, LANDSCAPES AND DISEASE: THE CASE OF FOOT AND MOUTH IN SOUTHERN ZIMBABWE

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INTRODUCTION

Since 2000, media representations of Zimbabwe have portrayed a metaphorically and literally diseased landscape: a corrupt body-politic, the wanton destruction of productive commercial farmland, the tragic devastations of HIV/AIDS, and repeated outbreaks of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) in a dwindling commercial herd. Alongside Zimbabwe's other woes the presence of a relatively mild livestock disease perhaps seems somewhat inconsequential. However the presence of FMD has meant the total withdrawal of exports of beef to the European Union — a trade that brought in US\$50 million annually up to 2001. It has also brought to the fore a fundamental, yet often hidden, question: what constitutes appropriately 'productive' use of land and livestock?

Despite the lack of foreign currency to buy vaccines and the huge cost of rebuilding fences and re-imposing veterinary control regimes, many still talk optimistically of Zimbabwe recapturing this high-value beef export

market (see *Financial Gazette*, 2004; *The Herald*, 2004; *Newsnet*, 2005). But is this possible or desirable in contemporary Zimbabwe? The radical land reform programme of 2000-2003 has fundamentally changed the political, economic and physical landscape of the Zimbabwe countryside. A key question today is: what is the way forwards for the livestock economy and so veterinary policy? Should Zimbabwe attempt to go back to what was before, or imagine something different? Should the fences and regulations be reinstated or abandoned? What form of landscape — physical, social, economic and political — is likely and desirable?

The answer to these questions depends fundamentally on how a productive landscape is imagined, constructed and enacted. Visions of landscape in turn construct different perspectives on livestock and disease (see Lyons, 1992; Hoppe, 1995; Beinart, 1997; Wolmer, 2007). Livestock may be seen as an integral part of a farming economy, with important functions as savings and cultural value or a commercial enterprise with conquering export markets the major goal. Diseases may be seen as minor troubles or disastrous plagues; to be tolerated and managed or controlled and eradicated.¹ Over the last century in Zimbabwe, understandings and responses to FMD have imposed different visions of landscape, livestock and disease, fundamentally structuring both the discourse and practice of veterinary policy. Veterinary disease control regimes have in turn shaped and reshaped the landscape. Indeed attempts to control FMD have been at the heart of long-fought ideological struggles over the meaning and purpose of land use that have pitched the cattle and game industry lobbies; veterinarians, ecologists and administrators; and white farmers and black settlers, against each other.

This article explores the relationships between FMD and landscape in three broad periods. In each period assumptions about what constitutes the (normatively) right land use have driven FMD control policies. As discussed below, these assumptions are rooted in social, economic and political criteria, in interaction with veterinary science. Given these broader criteria, the article concludes by asking what next for Zimbabwe's livestock sector?

CREATING MARKETS: THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE BEEF SECTOR

Zimbabwe's (Southern Rhodesia's) first recorded outbreak of FMD was in the southeast of the country in 1931. Between 1931 and 2002, there were a

further 85 outbreaks (averaging 1.2 per year).² The first outbreak was a particularly devastating one for the emerging beef cattle industry, although barely felt by African herd owners in the 'reserves'.³ In a pattern familiar to this day, a ban was imposed on all live exports of cattle. The loss of markets made cattle virtually valueless and many ranchers, who were just establishing themselves, left the industry. To the government's concern, it was the large producers in particular who were disappearing (Phimister, 1978: 393-5). The massive Nuanetsi Ranch in the south-east of the country, for example, sold all but a handful of its 136 000 cattle.

Compared to the Americas and Australia, cattle ranching in Rhodesia had had relatively recent origins, emerging only after settler colonialists turned to agriculture after they had failed to replicate the success of the Transvaal and exploit a mining boom in the region (Samasuwo, 2003a: chapter 1). The British South Africa Company (BSAC) observed optimistically in 1919:

*From a ranching point of view Rhodesia is exceptionally well favoured in three important respects. Land is plentiful and cheap, grazing is abundant ... and in the native herds there is a good foundation stock available at a low price*⁴

In the early years of the colony a number of commercial ranching concerns were established, most notably Leibig's Extract of Meat Company (LEMCO). The BSAC struck a deal with Leibig's in 1911, offering 1.2 million acres in the southeast at a nominal one shilling an acre (Phimister, 1978). In addition a number of mining and land speculation companies established ranches, but the settler government failed to attract many significant investors, and most ranches were relatively small, undercapitalised affairs.⁵

The national herd grew significantly from the early 1900s, recovering from the decimation caused by rinderpest between 1896 and 1898. The white-owned commercial herd, for example, grew from 39 000 in 1907 to 954 000 in 1931, while African-owned herds grew from 164 000 to 1.63 million over the same period (Mosley, 1983). However, the beef industry never took off in a big way. A lack of capital, recurrent disease and poor market infrastructure hampered its growth. Numerous incentives through a series of 'Beef Control Acts' were offered which subsidised white producers, taxed African cattle producers and restricted the access to local markets for African cattle through strict quarantine measures (Samasuwo, 2003a). Early attempts to get coordinated marketing off the ground through local investments failed, with initiatives quickly folding.⁶ Later, the government made agreements with the Imperial Cold Storage Company

(for export of chilled and frozen meats) and with Leibig's (for a 'meat extract' factory) in attempts to boost the industry's prospects.⁷ However, throughout the 1930s, following the FMD outbreak, and in the face of Argentine competition, depressed economies worldwide and poor efficiency and quality, the Rhodesian beef industry continued to flounder.

Following a series of enquiries and much debate, the government decided to intervene to rescue in particular the struggling small-scale beef producers. In 1937, it assumed ownership and management of the Imperial Cold Storage Company's facilities, and the Cold Storage Commission (CSC) was established as a public body which aimed at galvanising the beef industry and providing price guarantees for white producers of beef. Until the 1990s, the CSC became a virtual monopoly player in beef marketing, both for domestic and export markets. (Mlambo, 1996). By fixing prices, stipulating grading systems and overseeing marketing, the CSC had a huge influence in structuring the beef industry and livestock production more generally for the best part of 50 years.

A DUALISTIC LIVESTOCK ECONOMY: CONTRASTING PASTORAL LANDSCAPES

In the early twentieth century, BSAC and settler cattle-grazing areas were not clearly demarcated and separated. Instead the ranches remained unfenced and without paddocks, with African settlements and cattle populations still scattered over the ranches. However, with the gradual implementation of the 1930 Land Apportionment Act, and the granting of formal concessions with title, commercial ranches came to claim exclusive grazing rights. African villages and cattle were removed and the ranches were gradually ringed by wire fences. These now demarcated a dualistic system separating top-of-the-range Rhodesian beef geared for export (often using pedigree animals) from 'the rest' — black-owned livestock in the 'communal areas'. These were two very different systems of production, with different management regimes. There were different breeds, stocking rates, range management approaches, and a range of uses for cattle (Scoones and Wilson, 1988; Mtetwa, 1978; Steele, 1981).

This resulted in the creation of two divergent pastoral landscapes. The state apparatus, however, was geared towards supporting the emergent commercial beef sector, often at the expense of the latter. Thus, in the early colonial period, research efforts concentrated on breed and fodder improvement and stocking rate trials to maximise beef production.⁸ This focus on beef cattle came to dominate thinking about livestock production,

with attempts made continuously to encourage communal-area cattle owners to increase off-take and enter the market as well.⁹

Low off-take from the African farming areas was a constant concern. In the war years in the early 1940s, supplies were insufficient to meet domestic demand and requirements for the war effort. In 1942 the Thomas Commission commented:

It is deplorable that a colony which prides itself on its cattle industry should thus, have failed hitherto so lamentably in the Empire's hour of need.... Instead [of Africans selling more cattle] witness is borne to the fact that thousands of native cattle are likely to perish this season through poverty. This is futile and wanton waste. No better argument than the spectacle of this grim and tragic state of affairs is required to justify the early establishment of orderly distribution and marketing [of cattle]. Meantime, it is strongly urged that regulations dealing with Native cattle framed by the Natural Resources Board should be brought into force without any further delay.¹⁰

An environmental argument was deployed (following the major enquiry of 1939)¹¹ to make the case for enforced destocking in the African 'reserves', with the aim of supplying more animals (forcibly) to the market. The CSC and Leibig's were given preferential access to cattle sales and slaughter rates increased accordingly (from 27 000 to the CSC in 1942 to over 100 000 in 1945) (Samasuwo, 2003a).

The country's Department of Veterinary Services was also geared primarily to the commercial beef sector. It thus devoted much attention to combating FMD, a disease of key economic importance given its prejudicial impact on exports.¹² The very high disease control costs were regarded as justifiable to protect these valuable beef export markets. The resulting control measures targeted at both wildlife and cattle outside of this sector had severe implications for landscapes and livelihoods, structuring imperatives around a beef production goal, rather than wider livestock and disease management objectives.

The establishment of cattle ranches, particularly in the dry south of the country, was underpinned by certain narratives concerning the relationship between white settlers, the landscape and disease. In particular the notion of the 'pioneer' taming the wild frontier for production was a powerful one, with cattle production perceived as the most appropriate and viable means of 'opening up' the semi-arid 'beef frontier' and bringing order and productivity to the wilderness (see Milton, 1997). Taming livestock disease (particularly FMD) was part and parcel of conquering the landscape — and

this was to be achieved, in the first instance, by shooting out wildlife (especially buffalo).¹³ The cattle lobby had long viewed wildlife as a threat to livestock production. As well as being a reservoir for disease, it was a destroyer of fences and a competitor for valuable grazing.¹⁴ From the 1950s further measures were employed to safeguard the white-owned export herd from FMD, and veterinary science was deployed to arrange the landscape into disease-free zones buffered from the unhealthy, disease-ridden wilderness areas beyond the beef frontier by fencing off designated 'game' areas in the southeast.

VETERINARY CONTROLS

Alongside attempts to recast the landscape with wildlife removal and fences, attempts were made to control two further perceived evils: the movement of [African] people and cattle. These were perceived as conduits for FMD infection and led to attempts at concentrating human and livestock populations; separating cattle from commercial ranches with a cattle-free buffer; and depopulating areas of people and livestock.

The problem, as seen by the Veterinary Department in Ndanga Crown Lands in the southeast, for example, was the following:

*The native cattle in these areas cannot be kept under proper control and in outbreaks of disease, particularly FM D, they constitute a very serious menace in any measures of control that may be required. It is quite impossible to prevent illegal movement or in the event of an outbreak to check up any movements that might have taken place in these areas*¹⁵

The proposed solution was to:

*concentrate the natives and cattle at present scattered over a wide stretch of Crown Lands south of Ndanga into a smaller area ... with a view to obtaining more efficient supervision of cattle and breaking contact between these cattle and surrounding native and European owned herds.*¹⁶

There were also various attempts at creating permanent or temporary cattle-free belts. In 1935, for example, the Chief Veterinary Surgeon insisted that cattle belonging to Chief Mahenye and his people were moved 40 miles away from their home grazing lands in order to create a cattle-free belt along the Mozambican border.¹⁷

However, the veterinary policy of creating cattle-free belts and concentrating livestock populations was to run up against the science of veld management and the politics of 'native affairs'. Ecologists and Native Commissioners became increasingly concerned that stringent

implementation of these blanket policies, even in herds where no FMD had been reported, was leading to overstocking, with the consequent dangers of veld degradation and soil erosion.¹⁸ This was part of an increasingly bitter stand-off between the Native Affairs Department and the Veterinary Service rooted in a fundamental difference of opinion over the place of African human and livestock populations.

To the Veterinary Service, whose principal concern was the health of cattle on the commercial ranches, these populations were essentially conceived of as vectors for FMD that could act as an infection conduit between the wild border region with Mozambique and the ranches. The Native Affairs Department, on the other hand, was broadly supportive of African settlement for a variety of administrative and political reasons.¹⁹ However, the Native Commissioners strategically chose to advance 'scientific' arguments to counter the Veterinary Service. As well as deploying the countervailing science of veld management to argue that veterinary policies were causing overstocking and hence soil erosion, they argued that the African population acted as a buffer (rather than a vector) between wilderness and the ranches; and that the presence of cattle was an excellent safeguard against the undetected advance of the tsetse fly. Depopulation, on the other hand, brought 'wilderness conditions' and with it disease carriers such as buffalo and kudu.²⁰ Also, as the less-than-sanguine Native Commissioner for Zaka observed in relation to the scheme to depopulate Ndanga Crown Land:

Experience has taught me that unfenced Ranch boundaries are so 'elastic' that I am not at all sure, if Native cattle are removed ... that the area that would then be cattle free would not in practice mean an extra bite for the Rancher's cattle, so there would still be 'contact' between European and Native cattle?²¹

He argued vehemently that the evacuation would cause needless hardship. However, for the Minister of Lands and Agriculture, safeguarding the health of the commercial herd was the issue of paramount importance. He decided that the 'scientific' claims of the veterinarians carried more authority than the Native Affairs Department's concerns about overstocking and land alienation through the backdoor, reasoning that in matters of this kind I feel we must be guided by the advice of our senior Veterinary Officials, and I cannot think that the concentration will inflict any serious hardship on the natives'.²² But the Native Commissioner's fears were realised when cattle from Angus and Devuli ranches were soon found to be occupying the areas from which African cattle had been removed to

form the 'cattle-free belt'.²³

Alongside fencing and the creation of cattle-free cordon sanitaires, the Department of Veterinary Services employed a further raft of control measures to the African cattle herd. A complex surveillance apparatus was established; routine inspections were initiated; and movement controls were instigated. These measures were enforced by a series of laws which were universally unpopular in the communal areas. Highly coercive measures such as strict movement controls in times of FMD outbreak and the shooting of cattle crossing lines were seen as inappropriate and unfair.

In colonial Rhodesia FMD control policies were thus rooted in a desire to safeguard the commercial beef ranching landscape and physically to separate it from a communal herd and wildlife zone perceived as disordered and unhealthy (see Hoppe, 1995). Notwithstanding the frequent lack of support from the Native Affairs Department/Ministry of Internal Affairs (who saw much of the veterinary activity in communal areas as an impingement on their physical and political territory) and their massive unpopularity in communal areas, this contested veterinary knowledge was physically inscribed in the landscape, suppressing alternative visions of appropriate land use.

These measures were rigorously enforced until the 1970s, when the liberation war led to a breakdown in disease control. With the spread of the war, movement controls were no longer enforced and stock thefts from commercial properties increased. These unpopular veterinary measures were used as a focus for mobilising rural populations to the liberation cause (Ranger, 1985). Thus, between 1972 and 1976, there were 16 FMD outbreaks on commercial properties (Forman *et al.*, 1980).

POST-INDEPENDENCE RECONSTRUCTION: FOREIGN EXCHANGE, EXPORTS AND NEW LAND USE OPTIONS

With Zimbabwe's independence in 1980, the pre-war veterinary regime was, notwithstanding the war-time rhetoric, quickly re-established. Fences were rebuilt and the bifurcated landscape of commercial and communal systems re-emerged. This was further reinforced in 1985 when Zimbabwe, alongside Botswana, Namibia, and Swaziland (all members of the Africa, Caribbean and Pacific group [ACP]), negotiated a deal with the European Union (EU) for export of boneless beef under a generous reduced-tariff, preferential-access arrangement.²⁴ Zimbabwe received a quota of 9 100 tonnes per year, generating around US\$50 million of much-needed foreign

exchange each year.²⁵ During the 1980s and 1990s, beef exports grew, with 4 397 tonnes exported to the EU in 1986 and 9 184 tonnes in 2000, peaking at 14 503 tonnes in 1993, up from a minimum level of 715 following the FMD outbreak of 1989 and a resulting 18-month ban.²⁶ Off-take from the commercial herd averaged around 25 per cent through this period, with the communal herd recording only between one and three per cent off-take as formal sales.

The CSC was the main channel for export sales, with its operations, particularly after 1985, geared to the EU market. In the post-1985 period, between 80 and 95 per cent of CSC exports were to the EU (except following the 1989 FMD outbreak when other regional markets were sought). Exports to non-EU markets declined through the 1980s, from a pre-independence volume of 47 279 tonnes (in 1979) to only 3 060 tonnes in 1990.²⁷ However, during this period the structure of the overall red meat market changed significantly, with the share of the total market controlled by the CSC reducing from 84 per cent in 1980 to only 47 per cent a decade later. By 2002, the CSC's share had dropped to only around 35 per cent. Private sector operators, both small-scale butcheries and larger commercial concerns, had taken over a significant portion of the market. Processing costs were estimated at 50 per cent lower in the private sector compared to the CSC, which was geared after 1985 to meeting EU market standards.

During this period the CSC continued to lose money, and was shored up by regular government support.²⁸ The foreign exchange derived from the EU beef deal was seen by government as strategically so valuable that, despite the failing economics of beef production and marketing, public support for the commercial beef industry continued in line with pre-independence efforts, except with even more vigour after 1985. This reinforced the long-running bias towards export oriented beef production in the livestock sector.

EXPORTS AND STANDARDS: SANITARY AND PHOTOSANITARY (SPS) REQUIREMENTS

The pre-condition for access to the high-value EU market was compliance with stringent Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) regulations. Given the extreme sensitivities about FMD in Europe, this necessitated the importation of a whole raft of EU regulatory paraphernalia, and a range of requirements for disease control and veterinary systems.²⁹ Specifically, these revolve around the need to construct and maintain adequate barriers between cattle and FMD-carrying buffalo. To this end, FMD control

measures were implemented in Zimbabwe, with EU support. Significant aid funds, in addition to on-going government expenditures, were thus invested in keeping a commercial beef industry going.

Measures included fenced zonation (establishing FMD-free beef export catchment, buffer/vaccinated, surveillance, and infected zones); surveillance and monitoring systems (including inspections at diptanks, auction sales and prior to issuing movement permits and during disease investigations); strict movement control (involving policed roadblocks between zones and on roads to conservancies and wildlife areas, as well as enforcement of movement permits); isolation and quarantining (of infected stock and those being moved to slaughter); and vaccination (twice yearly in designated vaccination buffer zones).³⁰

Following the acceptance of the World Trade Organisation SPS Agreement, which incorporated the OIE's (World Animal Health Organisation) Animal Health Code and the designation of FMD as a List A notifiable disease, the export requirements were made stricter still.³¹ Today the EU is in addition requesting full individual livestock identification and traceability schemes, so that all exported animals can be linked to origins.³²

All these investment and additional regulatory requirements were expected of the veterinary department at a time of declining capacity and restructuring. After 1991, the economic structural adjustment programme (ESAP) negotiated with the World Bank imposed severe budgetary constraints on all government services, including veterinary services. In 1994, a period of institutional reform and restructuring was initiated in the Veterinary Department, with a shift to commercialisation, cost recovery, and a focus on core functions. In practice this meant the department had reduced capacity for implementing the array of required measures, whether movement control, vaccination or building or repairing fences. In parallel with ESAP, major shifts occurred in the wider economy, notably a reduction in formal employment opportunities and changes to livelihoods that affected livestock management. The major droughts of 1991-2 compounded this, with many livestock keepers making good use of the reduced veterinary controls to move livestock onto ranches or into wildlife areas. In addition, an informal trade in communal-area livestock emerged, with a significant growth in transboundary smuggling of livestock to Botswana, South Africa and Mozambique.

DOUBTFUL ECONOMICS: QUESTIONS ABOUT THE BEEF INDUSTRY

Following independence, commercial herds were re-established on large-scale commercial ranches across the country, including in the higher rainfall zones of the highveld.³³ For example, by 1987 there were some 823 000 head on 1 838 farms in the FMD-free zone in the highveld (mainly focused on the EU market) and 845 000 head on 1 234 farms in the lowveld.³⁴ The structure and economics of the Zimbabwean meat industry became increasingly questioned, however. With this came questions about approaches to veterinary control measures. A 1988 Commercial Farmers' Union report observed:

[The market is] dominated by low income consumers who are very sensitive to price changes, with a consequential high elasticity of demand for beef and a surplus of high quality beef on the internal market. The domestic market is therefore not in a position to support incentive prices to beef producers in order to maintain the more intensive input systems of production to required to produce high quality beef (CFU, 1988).

With the beef industry so geared to export, with all the uncertainties and costs attached, the balance between supply and demand in the domestic market was out of kilter. Sixty per cent of the commercial production was geared to export markets, yet 90 per cent of the demand was for lower grade and cheaper meat, including goat meat.³⁵ High-grade export beef is expensive to produce, requiring as it does stringent application of veterinary controls and supplementary feeding. This price cannot be passed on to the domestic market, where there was a growing demand for affordable meat after independence.³⁶

Questions about the viability of beef ranching were also raised by those who argued that Zimbabwe had a greater comparative advantage in wildlife production (Child, 1988; Jansen *et al.* 1992; Dasmann and Mosmann, 1960). This has its roots in a long-standing 'cattle versus wildlife' debate. Before the 1960s, much wildlife was actively eliminated in ranching areas because it was considered seriously detrimental to cattle ranching. As well as being a reservoir for disease, it was seen as a competitor for scarce grazing and a potential predator of stock. Controversial early attempts to produce game meat and hides on some cattle ranches fell foul of marketing difficulties, stringent veterinary and food-hygiene controls and pressure from the cattle lobby (Dasmann and Mossman, 1960). However, the game-ranching industry was to experience a substantial growth from the 1970s,

when legislative change devolved 'appropriate authority' over wildlife to landowners and the emergence of a very lucrative international safari and hunting industry, alongside growing markets for live game sales and tourism.

By 1994, 20 per cent of Zimbabwean commercial farms were under some form of wildlife utilisation, some ranches had amalgamated into massive wildlife 'conservancies' and, reflecting the significant veterinary implications of this trend, the Department of Veterinary Services had its own wildlife unit (Hill, 1996). The fact that buffalo had been largely eradicated from the south-eastern drylands to safeguard the commercial herd from FMD presented a problem for the game ranchers. Buffalo are a crucial safari hunting species, commanding much larger fees than plains game and are key to the profitability of safari hunting concerns. The landowners that make up the Save Valley Conservancy managed successfully to negotiate with the Veterinary Department to relax FMD control restrictions and allow the reintroduction of buffalo, on condition that they disposed of any cattle they still owned and that stringent requirements for electrified perimeter double fencing were enforced (Anderson and Foggin, 1994). This was a controversial decision which angered many vets. 'Now we have dirty buffalo right in the middle of the country', they argued. This they saw as 'sitting on a time bomb'.³⁷ Such a policy shift also ran counter to years of practice of putting as much distance between domestic cattle and buffalo as possible. Many felt they were proved right when, first in 1997 and twice more in 1999, there were FMD outbreaks bordering Save Valley Conservancy.

Today, undaunted, advocates of the wildlife development model envisage vast swathes of southern Zimbabwe and beyond being given over to a dedicated wildlife landscape or biosphere reserve, and so tying in with a transfrontier peace park spanning Zimbabwe, South Africa and Mozambique (du Toit, 2003). Such advocates argue for the need to rehabilitate landscapes 'damaged' by people and livestock, and to rehabilitate a 'natural' wilderness, justified in terms of ecological connectivity and holism. Ostensibly this landscape vision is anathema to any regime of veterinary control: veterinary fences, it is held, obstruct animal migration trails, cause habitat fragmentation, block access of wildlife to water, and cause wildlife mortality, particularly during drought.³⁸ The free movement of wildlife is desirable both ecologically and for the lucrative ecotourism and safari industries. On the other hand, veterinarians argue that 'transfrontier conservation areas' are a potential biological bridge for infectious diseases, and so a threat to a long-established and critical beef

industry. The Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park, for example, was signed into existence in the absence of any formal policy on animal health and disease control, much to the dismay of veterinarians in all three countries involved.³⁹

Despite the apparent incompatibility of the disease-free beef export and safari landscapes and the evident difficulties in separating cattle and wildlife, again and again veterinarians, policy-makers and donors have attempted to square the circle and achieve both enlarged beef export zones and a landscape-level wildlife and wilderness experience through technical solutions. Thus veterinarians and wildlife ecologists come together when they can to argue for yet more and bigger and better fences, alongside the better enforcement of veterinary regimes. Separate visions of the landscape thus come together in a single policy option (du Toit, 2004).

BOTH WILDLIFE AND BEEF CATTLE: NEW LANDSCAPE VISIONS

In this mould the EU had, in the late 1990s, committed 10 million dollars for a new veterinary fence intended to streamline the landscape zonation into a wildlife zone, surveillance zone, and an uninfected zone. This would have increased the area from which beef exports to the EU were permitted.⁴⁰ As one rancher put it:

On the positive side it [FMD fence] ties in with the peace-park idea. The peace-park cannot form peacefully when you are trying to export beef unless there is a barrier. The fence will increase the size of the wildlife zone and the same time as providing FMD-free status to the zone on the other side.⁴¹

The technical solutions promulgated in the 1990s, however, did not take cognisance of any alternative visions, blanking out in large part the demands and aspirations of poor, communal-area livestock owners. Thus red, green and clear zones were imposed in a technical, rational ordering of the landscape, involving ever more elaborate fencing, surveillance and movement control systems, on the basis of a combination of disease epidemiology and export-driven economics. The underlying racial dynamic of black (still by and large the communal lands, and the vast majority of the population) and white (dominating the beef and wildlife sectors) was ignored in these technocratic solutions, driven by a relatively small group of scientific experts and beef and wildlife lobbyists, backed with large

amounts of funding by the EU and other donors. In the most recent period, this lack of attention to the politics of inequality came back with a vengeance, in ways that almost no-one predicted.

LANDSCAPES AFTER LAND REFORM?

Since 2000, there has been a massive escalation in FMD outbreaks in Zimbabwe, accompanying the dramatic changes in Zimbabwe's economic, political and physical landscape.⁴² The spectre of disease running rife has been emblematic of a disrupted landscape of *jambanja* — the chaos and disorder which ostensibly swept aside Zimbabwe's neatly organised spaces, as poaching, fire-starting, cattle theft and mutilation proliferated in the ranches; as people and cattle moved uncontrolled from 'communal' to 'commercial' areas, from red into green zones, and even into the buffalo-inhabited conservancies; and as miles of veterinary fencing disappeared to be recycled as snare wire (see, however, Chaumba *et al.*, 2003).

The Collapse of Control: FMD Outbreaks, 2001-2004

The veterinary risk assessments conducted prior to the establishment of the wildlife conservancies had carefully considered the possibility of fences being damaged by elephants or leapt over by antelope, and concluded that the conservancies posed a 'demonstrably low risk to the cattle industry' (Sutmoller *et al.*, 2000). Of course, these risk assessments had not counted for large-scale farm invasions, massive fence breakages and cattle movement.

The breakdown in enforcement of cattle movement control occurred at a time when, due to the wider collapse of the economy and ongoing restructuring, the Veterinary Department was experiencing severe budgetary constraints. This was compounded by staff vacancies (due to economic migration and HIV/AIDS), as well as shortages of fuel, vehicles and foreign exchange with which to buy vaccines. All these factors significantly impaired the capacity of the Veterinary Department.⁴³

By February 2002, the disease appeared to be spreading regionally, with an outbreak in south-eastern Botswana blamed on illegal movement of people and cattle from Zimbabwe. This was the first outbreak in that country in 30 years, and set in train a draconian European-style slaughter policy to safeguard EU exports. By November 2002, FMD from Zimbabwe foci had also spread to Mozambique, and fears were high that illegal imports of cattle into Limpopo province in South Africa were occurring. The

Zimbabwe outbreak was the subject of frantic regional discussions, as veterinary departments consulted one another on strategy. The political consequences for the entire region were potentially severe.

Within Zimbabwe, the worst news was yet to come. In July 2003, FMD was recorded near Harare, and it quickly spread through Mashonaland and then to the whole beef export zone, the first since 1989 (see *New Agriculturalist*, 2003). As a result, all exports were suspended and only movement of livestock for direct slaughter was permitted. A huge list of measures was advertised by the Veterinary Department, although limited capacity on the ground made implementation problematic. All three Mashonaland provinces were put under quarantine, and all private auction sales were banned. As the Chief Veterinary Officer noted: 'The spread of the disease was exacerbated by illegal livestock movements associated with land reforms and drought,' (WAH, 2003). There were also other factors at play. The massive growth of private abattoirs and local butchery slaughter following the liberalisation of meat markets after structural adjustment had encouraged a country-wide trade in meat, often contravening veterinary regulations. High premiums were paid within the export zone on local markets, creating a demand pull and a big incentive to break the rules. With government capacity to enforce such regulations severely hampered by reductions in budgets due to the general ESAP-imposed fiscal squeeze, a FMD outbreak in the export zone was waiting to happen.⁴⁴

Across the country in 2003, 354 outbreaks were reported, involving 20 295 cases and 97 deaths. A major ring vaccination campaign saw 4 144 070 vaccinations during the year.⁴⁵ There was no slaughter-out policy implemented, but all animals on infected properties and communal areas were vaccinated and branded, with a four-year quarantine imposed, and only direct sales allowed. Areas in concentric circles around affected sites were in turn vaccinated prophylactically and quarantined with different levels of restriction. The whole strategy, as noted by the Chief Veterinary Officer, was 'adversely affected by a critical shortage of vaccine, vehicles and fuel' (WAH, 2003).

A CHANGING LIVESTOCK ECONOMY

This period has also seen some major changes in herd size and composition. The national herd built up during the 1980s suffered major losses in the early 1990s because of drought. By the late 1990s, it had grown again to around six million head. In the period following 2000, however, total

numbers declined again, to the current level of around five million. Although reliable statistics are difficult to obtain, a significant aspect of this most recent decline has been a reduction in the commercial herd, and, accompanying this, substantial slaughters particularly in 2001 and 2002. More recently, a decline in commercial, high-grade animal off-take has occurred.⁴⁶

It is not only absolute numbers that have changed. With major shifts in land use resulting from land reform, the demand for breeds, the age-sex structure of herds and the broader production objectives have also altered. On most of the new resettlement areas, as in the communal areas, the demand is for drought-resistant, hardy animals that can provide multiple functions — including draught power, milk and meat. This requires a herd structure with a bias towards oxen for draught (although with such extensive shortages nearly any animal is used). In these relatively constrained farming areas with higher stocking rates, there is also a need for access to pasture in times of drought, and hence for flexible movement (see Scoones, 1995).⁴⁷

In the past, movements prompted by drought occurred to nearby commercial farms (sometimes on a commercial basis, sometimes not) or to wildlife areas. With fewer land areas now unoccupied or under-utilised, this flexibility is more difficult. The emerging production systems (particularly on the A 1 [communal] settlement areas) also require a veterinary service suited to these needs. While beef production is certainly one production objective (particularly in the drier zones), it is only one among many. Sales are generally not of high-quality, top-end products with export potential. Instead, the focus for marketing is on local networks of butcheries and informal sales to local markets. The demand here is for low-cost, non-premium cuts and so a different type of animal (and associated processing of meat products) is required. The disease-control requirements for such a system are not nearly as rigorous as the EU-imposed regime of strict control and disease-free zones. Indeed, for many producers, FMD is not a priority at all; it is after all a mild disease for indigenous livestock (and crosses) and has only a limited and temporary effect on production, with rare mortalities. Other veterinary issues are, by contrast, more of a priority, including tick-borne diseases or internal parasites.

The land reform has highlighted perhaps in sharper relief than before the contrasting visions of land, livestock and livelihoods in Zimbabwe. On the one hand, there are those who argue that a livestock strategy and disease-control policy oriented to the majority must be pursued, especially if poverty reduction is to be a key policy priority. This would mean focusing

on the multiple production priorities of smallholder livestock production (and so not only cattle), and re-prioritising disease-control efforts fundamentally. In the wake of the slaughter-out FMD control undertaken in Botswana, the Zimbabwean government commented: 'Botswana is wasting resources and impoverishing people whose livestock had to be killed.'⁴⁸ This position articulates with what might be termed a poverty-oriented approach to development, which argues that FMD control is not an issue for poverty reduction. As one consultancy report admits: 'In itself, clearly, the disease is not, at present, a major constraint to the poor [in Zimbabwe], nor is FMD control a major opportunity for poverty reduction ... Effective FMD control appears to bring very limited direct benefits to the poor,' (Perry *et al.*, 2003: 132, 136).

On the other hand, others argue that the disappearance of an export industry, so painstakingly developed over the past 60 years, would be a great loss.⁴⁹ Quoting the same consultants, the Chief Veterinary Officer recalled how his report to the OIE demonstrated that 'for every Z\$1 disinvested in FMD control, Z\$5 were lost by the country', and that returns to investment in an OIE-recognised FMD zone was Z\$1.4 for every dollar invested (WAH, 2002). This argument for the reinstatement of an export beef industry is echoed by the Commercial Farmers' Union's Cattle Producers' Association, and is certainly part of the government of Zimbabwe's thinking in preparation for a new livestock policy (see *Financial Gazette*, 2004a). Recognising the importance of livestock production, a new Department of Livestock Production and Development was created in 2003, with a new Division of Livestock and Veterinary Services. Its department of Veterinary Field Services was allocated an additional 1 000 veterinary extension technicians to cater for newly resettled farmers to establish commercially-oriented livestock production (WAH, 2003).

VISIONS FOR THE FUTURE?

The period since 2001, then, has seen a major upheaval in the livestock sector, resulting from major changes in land use and land ownership in the wake of land reform. Exports to the EU have ceased, and other markets have been sought.⁵⁰ For example, barter deals with Libya were saw beef exchanged for oil for a period; attempts to secure deals with Malaysia have occurred; and regional exports to the Democratic Republic of Congo were explored (*Financial Gazette*, 2005). Political rhetoric emphasised independence from restrictive European markets and the forging of pan-

African and south-south trade. However, the economic realities remained: global exports demand that increasingly strict SPS standards be met — wherever the market — and this in turn requires strict adherence to particular veterinary and food safety regimes. With the FMD outbreaks since 2001 and the virtual permanent bankruptcy of the CSC, the Zimbabwean beef industry, even in its much-revised form, is finding it difficult to re-establish itself in the face of both regional (Botswana, Namibia and South Africa) and international (Brazil, Argentina) competition.⁵¹

In many respects, the present situation is neither new nor surprising. Since its establishment, the Zimbabwean commercial beef industry has relied on the backing of the state (and later the aid industry) in order to survive. A highly subsidised industry and marketing system did for a time give the impression of a vibrant, successful beef production sector, but this was always very fragile. State backing from the early settler period through to the post-independence era created a vision of a controlled pastoral landscape, free of serious diseases and dominated by beef ranching aimed at export markets. Alternative visions were not far from the surface, however. These emphasised low-input, small-scale agro-pastoral production or wildlife production for tourism, trophies and meat. Whether through roaming 'scrub' stock from the communal areas or buffalo from the parks and conservancies, the threat of disease — and so the undermining of the beef production ideal — was always present. What is perhaps most surprising is that the state and its allies in the commercial livestock sector managed to maintain a vision of a beef-production landscape for so long. For, as we have seen, this was not a small undertaking: thousands of kilometres of fencing, a large infrastructure of veterinary services, and repeated legislative measures requiring stringent controls on movement, zonation and segregation, all combined with continuous and large subsidy from the state to — in national terms — a very small group of people. Embedded within the institutional and policy machinery of the state and replicated in the aid bureaucracies that have so moulded government actions in the period since 1980 are a set of assumptions about what a productive livestock sector is and what a pastoral landscape should look like. And despite the trials and tribulations of the industry over the best part of a century, these have seen remarkably limited questioning. Indeed, policy statements on livestock production and veterinary services at any time since the 1930s look very similar.

Land reform and its aftermath have disrupted all this. It has disturbed some very basic dearly-held assumptions of both institutions and

professionals, as well as the political, economic and aesthetic contours of the pastoral landscape ideal. Discussions about what to do next have proved challenging and difficult as a result. In seeking a way forward, there have been some extraordinarily convoluted attempts to find solutions to what seems a firm impasse.

In all of these debates, the bureaucratic impulse has remained strong, and long-held assumptions have stuck tenaciously. This has therefore resulted in a diversity of loosely and imperfectly articulated perspectives on what future landscape visions might be. For some, land reform was a short-term aberration, with business-as-usual hopefully soon resumed. For others, the old patterns of dualism are still part of the plan, with only a racial reshuffling of a resurrected beef industry being envisioned. Others see opportunities for different landscape visions. With the old patronage networks supporting the cumbersome beef industry having been swept away, the real economic advantages of wildlife options will now show through, unimpaired by prejudice and subsidy. Finally, yet others see an emergent small-scale sector meeting growing domestic urban demand and regional exports, but with a strong base in multiple-product livestock production in the communal and resettlement areas.

Several recent policy statements have explored some of these options. For example, elements of the wildlife lobby see new opportunities for shared use between wildlife and people. With the abandonment of movement controls, fencing can be removed and people brought into partnership with extensive, even cross-border wildlife enterprises. These initiatives, advocates argue, will bring not only 'ecosystem health', but solutions through a 'holistic approach' and innovative partnerships', where wildlife is conserved and local people benefit, addressing disease challenges of wild species and wild spaces — 'one world, one health'.⁵²

Others argue for a poverty- and livelihoods-orientation in the development of new approaches to FMD control and livestock policy more generally. Some have argued that 'what might be required is a continued support of the FMD measures, but financed more by those who benefit from the export market, and greater focus on public funds to the issues of small stock' (Perry *et al.*, 2003: 135). In concluding that FMD control as previously defined was not 'pro-poor', they advocate a new form of dualism, one where the state supports the public good and poverty-oriented programmes in the communal areas and in small-scale resettlements, while private sector investments (and export revenue generation) occur in smaller FMD-free, SPS - compliant fenced and protected beef-production enclaves. But to recapture EU markets (and

associated trust relations and market confidence) and urgently needed foreign exchange will, they argue, require re-establishing veterinary services and controls to meet standards and maintain regional competitiveness, something unlikely in the first instance to be funded from the nascent (black) commercial beef-farming industry on the new resettlement farms.

Many of these discussions fail to address the fundamental trade-offs that have been so sharply highlighted by the land reform. Too many attempt to fudge a compromise where all appear to be better off. All too often, particular interests prevail. Thus in the wildlife debates, the prospects for small-scale peasant production are very often ignored, and the interests of a conservation lobby allied to commercial wildlife operations dominate. The costs of maintaining a beef enclave will be high and will benefit a new, post-reform elite, perhaps at the expense of the larger multi-species, multi-function livestock keepers elsewhere. Where limited money is spent does make a difference; each alternative (and all the complex variations in between) has very important implications for future policy visions for landscapes, livestock and disease control. Choices are thus inevitably political. These cannot be ignored in the neat, technical talk of epidemiology and disease dynamics, veterinary control measures, and SPS and market-entry standards. Thus, how foot-and-mouth disease is viewed, and so how livestock and veterinary policy is ultimately constructed and played out, is at root a choice about politics and interests. These issues, as the post-2000 period in Zimbabwe has taught us, cannot be quietly brushed away.

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NOTES

- ¹ For a similar, but much earlier, debate about FMD as 'plague' in the UK, see (Woods, 2004).
- ² Of the outbreaks from 1931-2000, 59 were in commercial beef herds, three in feedlots and the rest were in communal herds; 52 were in Masvingo province and 27 in Mataberland North and South. Following zonation in 1985, there had been 13 primary and 92 secondary outbreaks recorded up to 2000. Of the primary outbreaks, five were in the vaccinated buffer zone, two in the surveillance area, one in the free non-export zone and five in the export zone. On average 28 000 animals were deemed at risk as a result of outbreaks up to 2000, but numbers at risk were as little as four in 1966 and up to 120 000 in 1972. In the period from 1987 to 2001, the average at risk was 2 256 with average morbidity of eight per cent and mortality zero (due to both low susceptibility and high vaccination rates). Patterns of secondary spread have been variable, with a range between zero and 68 foci in outbreaks up to 2001. As discussed below, the pattern changed dramatically from 2001-2004. See Thompson (1995), Forman *et al.* (2003) and Vosloo (2002).
- ³ According to the then Chief Veterinary Surgeon, the 1931 outbreak was of a mild strain (later identified as a SAT serotype) with slow spread, but widespread impact: see Sinclair, 'Annual Report of the Department of Veterinary Services' (Rhodesia, 1932). Mortality was less than 1 in 10 000 (far less than similar outbreaks at the time in Europe). During the outbreak, movement restrictions were imposed and exports were reduced by 80 per cent. Inoculation of uninfected cattle (aphthisation) was encouraged: see Perry *et al.* (2003), Appendix 2:11.

- ⁴ British South Africa Company, *Ranching in Rhodesia* (London, 1919), 5, quoted by Phimister (1978), p.395.
- ⁵ E. Rushmore observed: 'What has been called a farm or ranch has often been a large piece of ground, with or without beacons on its corners, and someone living on it': see Rushmore (1950), chapter 5, quoted by Phimister (1978), p. 398. This was similar in many ways to the situation across the border in South Africa until the post-war market boom following the growth of urban demand in the Johannesburg area: see Milton (1997).
- ⁶ Including the Rhodesian Meat Packing Company canning factory (c. 1917-19) and the Meat Producers' Exchange (c. 1921-23): see Phimister (1978).
- ⁷ The Imperial Cold Storage Company agreement occurred in the mid 1920s, and involved a significant export deal with Italy for the export of relatively low-quality frozen meat. For this the company received massive government concessions and subsidies, including a ten-year monopoly on exports, favourable tax, customs duty and haulage concessions, and a guarantee that, if profits fell below 10 per cent of the capital invested, the government would make up the difference to a maximum of £15 000: Phimister (1978); Child (1988). However, notwithstanding the massive support, the company later failed as the economics of the market proved too taxing. Following the FMD outbreak of 1931-2, Leibig's were persuaded to make use of surplus meat in the country in a canning factory which became an important outlet for the marketing of low quality meat: for an overview, see Phimister (1978).
- ⁸ For example, the research reported in the Rhodesian Agricultural Journal: E. Romyn and C. Murray, 'Cost of Fattening Bullocks of Various Ages in Matabeleland', Rhodesian Agricultural Journal, 35 (1938), 850; E. Romyn, 'Cattle Improvements and a Cattle Breeding Policy in Southern Rhodesia', Rhodesian Agricultural Journal, 32 (1935), 98-107; Anon, 'Cattle Industry in Rhodesia', Rhodesian Agricultural Journal, 21 (1924), 706. See also H. Weinmann, 'Agricultural Research and Development in Southern Rhodesia under the Rule of the BSAC, 1890-1923', Occasional Paper, 4 (Salisbury, 1972); H. Weinmann, 'Agricultural Research and Development in Southern Rhodesia, 1924-1950', University of Rhodesia Series in Science 2, (Salisbury, 1975); H. Tawonezwi et al., 'Evaluation of Beef Breeds for Rangeland Weaner Production in Zimbabwe, 1 and 2', Animal Production, 47 (1988), 351-9 and 361-7.
- ⁹ See, for example, the Godlonton Commission on 'Native Production and Trade' of 1944 and the 1992 Government of Zimbabwe Livestock Policy. Both argue along remarkably similar lines.
- ¹⁰ Government of Rhodesia, 1942, quoted by Samasuwo (2003b), p.497.
- ¹¹ Native Enquiry, National Archives of Zimbabwe (hereafter NAZ), S988.
- ¹² Prior to independence, the visibility of veterinary staff in the communal agricultural sector was close to zero. The veterinary department left that task to the then Ministry of Internal Affairs. Veterinary experts would only surface to issue quarantine orders when outbreaks of specified diseases occurred in communal areas: see also Aspinall (1993), pp. 132-7; Milton (1997).
- ¹³ Understandings of the epidemiology of FMD in southern Africa grew significantly in the 1950s following research largely in South Africa: see, for example, Thompson (1994), Bastos (1998), Bastos *et al.* (2000), and Bruckner *et al.* (2002).
- ¹⁴ See for example de la Rue (1942), pp.34-5.
- ¹⁵ NAZ, S 1542/FI 1/1, 'FMD 1934-1939', ACVS to CNC, 7 Sep. 1937. The following section uses material from Wolmer (2007).
- ¹⁶ NAZ, S 1542/F11/1, 'FMD 1934-1939', Minister of Agriculture and Lands to Prime Minister, 13 May 1938
- ¹⁷ NAZ, S 235/514, NC Melssetter Annual Report, 1935.
- ¹⁸ For example, NAZ, S 235/514, NC Chibi Annual Report, 1936.

- ¹⁹ The African population in the lowveld was depicted by some as beneficial in that it prevented reversion to 'wilderness' or the land being 'entirely handed back to nature': for example, NAZ, S 235/510 NC, Annual Report Ndanga, 1932. The NC for Zaka in 1937 was similarly against depopulation of the lowveld portion of the district: 'If that huge area of Crown Land were devoid of natives, there would be no-one handy to control grass fires or locusts and hoppers, to keep an eye on things in general, and criminals could hide away in that vast area without detection. In traversing such an area by car it is also of use at times to have someone living handy in the event of a breakdown in what otherwise would be "no man's land": NAZ, S 1542/F11/1, FMD 1934-1939, NC Zaka to CNC, 24 Sep. 1937.
- ²⁰ NAZ, S 1542/F11/1, 'FMD 1934-1939', Chief Entomologist to Secretary, Department of Agriculture and Lands, 4 Mar. 1938; Secretary for Native Affairs to Secretary to the Prime Minister, 31 May 1938. This argument was, in fact, later to gain impeccable scientific credentials as the basis for John Ford's theories about 'Grenzwildnis' in his renowned book, *The Role of the Trypanosomiasis in African Ecology: A Study of the Tsetse Fly Problem* (Oxford, 1971), chapter 7.
- ²¹ NAZ, S 1542/F11/1, 'FMD 1934-1939', NC Zaka to CNC, 12 Apr. 1938.
- ²² NAZ, S 1542/F11/1, 'FMD 1934-1939', Minister of Agriculture and Lands to Prime Minister, 13 May 1938.
- ²³ NAZ, S 1542/F11/1, 'FMD 1934-1939', CNC to Dept of Agriculture and Lands, 17 July 1938.
- ²⁴ The ACP-EU Partnership is also known as the Cotonou Agreement and succeeded the Lome Convention.
- ²⁵ However, unlike Botswana, Namibia and Swaziland, Zimbabwe was able to negotiate a beef export trade with the EU despite never having received formal FMD-free status from the World Animal Health Organisation (OIE).
- ²⁶ EU exports from 1986 to 2000 were: 4 397, 9 494, 8 055, 1 705, 715, 2 367, 6 640, 14 503, 13 810, 11 668, 7 000, 6 560, 7 653, 6 746, 9 184 tonnes per year exported.
- ²⁷ Non-EU export figures in 1980 and 1985 were 12 830 and 14 247 tonnes respectively: see Perry *et al.* (2003), Appendix 5.
- ²⁸ From independence, price controls were instituted, and before 1988, wholesale prices were kept lower than producer prices, resulting in significant government subsidies to the CSC. After 1988, wholesale prices were increased so that a positive margin could be made on beef. However, price controls were still retained at the retail level. From 1989, following the FMD outbreak, a quality incentive for export carcasses was offered, again incentivising export production. The financial woes of the CSC are of course not just a post-independence phenomenon: see Cross (1971), p.19; Cross (1990); also CSC. Recent press reports offer a similarly sorry tale: see *Financial Gazette* (2003; 2004b; and 2004c).
- ²⁹ Since the 2001 outbreak of FMD in the UK, these sensitivities have of course escalated. However, EU policy has for a long time seen 'transboundary animal diseases' as major threat, with imports potentially quickly undermining European efforts over much of a century to eliminate major livestock diseases. The policy objective of TBD disease elimination is reflected in the approach of the international standard-setting body, the OIE (Office International des Epizooties) which classifies FMD as a 'Class A' and so notifiable disease. To meet OIE standards FMD must be completely under control, with a range of mitigation and early warning measures applied: see www.oie.org.
- ³⁰ The Department of Veterinary Services is in charge of some 3 000 km of cattle fences and 1 500 km of game fences across the country: www.africaonline.co.zw/vet/field.html.
- ³¹ http://www.oie.int/eng/normes/en_mcode.htm.
- ³² Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 (OJ, L31, p. 1, 1 Feb. 2002) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 Jan. 2002, available on <http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/>.
- ³³ The commercial herd was estimated at 2.8 million in 1975, 2.3 million in 1980, 1.9 million in 1985, 1.86 million in 1990, and 1.4 million in 2000. In 2002, the estimate was only 0.33 million.

- ³⁴ In 1984, for example, only nine per cent of the commercial herd was to be found in Masvingo province (179 000 head on 192 farms, with an average herd size of 920), while 48 per cent of the commercial herd was in the Mashonaland provinces: Agricultural Marketing Agency Annual Report, 1985.
- ³⁵ The CSC started communal-area goat purchasing only in 1986. With the 1989 FMD outbreak, there was a massive growth in goat carcass sales. This, however, was only temporary, and the CSC gradually withdrew from this diversification, concentrating again on its core beef-export focus in the 1990s.
- ³⁶ Domestic demand for meat increased from 91 000 tonnes in 1980 to 128 000 tonnes in 1990. Beef retained 78 per cent of the market share of meat and per capita meat consumption rose from 15.6 kg to 17.6kg per year (higher than most African countries): see Perry *et al.* (2003), chapter 5.
- ³⁷ Interview, Provincial Veterinary Officer, Masvingo, 15 Nov. 1999. Save Valley Conservancy was blamed for FMD outbreaks in 1997 and 1999: Interview, Regional Chairman CFU, Masvingo Province, 8 Sep. 1999.
- ³⁸ See, for example, <http://www.wildwatch.com/resources/other/fencing.asp>.
- ³⁹ It also became clear in the FMD outbreak in the UK in 2001, the science of FMD transmission is deeply disputed and politicised. In Zimbabwe, some in the 'wildlife lobby' argue that DNA fingerprinting techniques prove that some outbreaks in Zimbabwe originated from carrier cattle rather than game: Griffen (1999). See also Thomson (1996). For more on the carrier cattle hypothesis, and on the prospect of poor vaccine quality giving rise to carrier status for vaccinated cattle, see Suttmoller and Olascoaga (2002). For wider debates about vaccination and FMD, see Barteling and Suttmoller (2002); on vaccination debates and FMD in Europe and the UK, see Woods, *A Manufactured Plague?*; for vaccination approaches in Africa, see Hunter (1998), pp.261-4.
- ⁴⁰ Interviews, Director of Veterinary Services, Harare, 14 Feb. 2001; Director, Wildlife Unit, Department of Veterinary Services, 14 Feb. 2001.
- ⁴¹ Interview, rancher, Mwenezi, 8 Nov. 1999.
- ⁴² However, several years before major land invasions, outbreaks had occurred as the ability to control FMD effectively had declined, resulting in sporadic outbreaks in the non-export zones. Thus in 1997 there was one outbreak (involving 655 cases, and 971 754 cattle were vaccinated). Again in 1999 there were two outbreaks (29 cases, with 460 692 vaccinated in 1999 and a further 339 675 in 2000 when no outbreaks were recorded). In 2001, the outbreaks accelerated, with 18 SAT 2 outbreaks (involving 4 710 cases and 979 891 animals vaccinated). In 2002, there were: 8 SAT 1, 2, 3 outbreaks (10 847 cases, 1 500 000 vaccinated) and in 2003, a massive 354 SAT 1, 2 outbreaks (20 295 cases, the first deaths (97) and 4 144 070 animals vaccinated): for details, see www.oie.int/hs2.
- ⁴³ As at July 2002, the Field Branch of Vet Services had an establishment of 53 veterinary officers, 97 animal health inspectors, 261 veterinary livestock technicians, 568 dip attendants, 27 veterinary guards, 10 hunters and 2 500 casual labourers: www.africaonline.zw/vet/field.html. These were across eight Provincial Veterinary Offices, three Provincial Diagnostic Laboratories, 53 District Offices, six sub-district offices in commercial farming areas, 308 Animal Health and Management Centres in communal areas and 2 628 dip tanks. However, many of these posts were not filled. In 2003, a total of 76 civil servants were reported to be on the books, together with 836 animal health assistants and auxiliaries: www.oie.int/hs2/gi_veto_pas?c_pays=220.
- ⁴⁴ See DVS website update, 3 Sept. 2003.
- ⁴⁵ www.oie.int/hs2.
- ⁴⁶ Discussions with officials from CSC, Veterinary Department, CFU and others, Zimbabwe, May 2005.

- ⁴⁷ A study of movement strategies of communal area livestock in Mazviwha communal area, Zvishavane district, during the 1982-84 drought showed that survival rates were only three per cent if animals remained in the area, but were 23 per cent if they moved in the dry season and were 40 per cent if they moved out of the area by November 1982: see Scoones (1992; 1996).
- ⁴⁸ A total of 12 197 cattle were destroyed in the outbreak of 2002 in north-eastern Botswana and another 3864 the following year: http://www.bernama.com/cgi-bin/snni2/listitem.cgi?peserta/-botswana/bo2102_1.txt. Equally controversial was Botswana's erection of an electric 'wildlife' fence along its border with Zimbabwe: see <http://www.afrol.com/articles/10498>.
- ⁴⁹ See, for example, 'As Millions Starve, Zimbabwe's Prestigious Beef Herds Head for Extinction', www.news.telegraph.co.uk, 4 Jan. 2004.
- ⁵⁰ Although the Director of Veterinary Services has announced that these will hopefully resume in 2006 (see above).
- ⁵¹ <http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=38755>.
- ⁵² AHEAD-GLTFCA Working Group — 4th meeting, Record of the 4th meeting held at Hotel Avenida, Maputo, Mozambique, 7-8 June 2004.

Land Reform and the Wider Context

18

MEDIUM-SCALE COMMERCIAL FARMS IN AFRICA: THE EXPERIENCE OF THE 'NATIVE PURCHASE AREAS' IN ZIMBABWE

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INTRODUCTION

Debates about the role of medium-scale commercial farms in African agriculture have returned recently, with analyses of changing farm size distribution across the continent (Jayne et al. 2014; 2016; Sitko and Jayne 2014; Anseeuw et al. 2016). This is not a new phenomenon. Attempts to generate a class of 'emergent', 'yeoman' farmers preoccupied colonial administrations and post-independence governments alike (Wolmer and Scoones 2000). A linear, technocratic, modernization vision of agricultural commercialization was often promoted, envisioning structural transformation of the agricultural sector, led by a new technically proficient and educated farming class (Bernstein 1998). However, as Sara Berry (1993) has shown for historical cases across Africa, commercialization processes are not linear or predictable, but are influenced by interlocking conjunctures of social dynamics, generational changes and political-economic conditions. Pathways of commercialization are diverse and contingent, dependent on intersecting social-relational and structural

processes.

This article explores the experience from the 1930s of the 'native purchase areas' (NPAs) – now known as small-scale commercial farming areas (SSCFAs) – in Zimbabwe, reflecting on Berry's analysis. We ask whether the experience of the NPAs provides potential insights into what might happen in the future to new medium-scale farms being established across Africa, and in Zimbabwe following land reform in 2000. NPAs were seen as a route to allowing educated, relatively elite Africans to purchase land under freehold title, and to generating a 'yeoman class' of farmer. NPAs were further extended in the 1950s as a political response to growing nationalist activity, again linked to a technocratic vision of 'civilized', good farming aimed at commercial production (Shutt 1997).

This experience has contemporary echoes. There is much policy hype today about the potential for such medium-scale commercial farms across Africa. They are supposed to be the new drivers of growth in rural areas, where new capital and expertise are deployed to modernize agriculture and increase its market reach (Morris et al. 2009). By enlisting well-connected business and political actors in a drive towards sustained agricultural growth, such medium-scale enterprises are seen as an alternative to large-scale corporate 'land grabbing' (Jayne et al. 2014) and small-scale peasant farming (Collier and Dercon 2014).

In Ghana and Zambia, for example, such medium-scale farms now account for more land area than small-scale farms (under 5 hectares) (Jayne et al. 2016). Land concentration in such farms, under new ownership and land tenure arrangements, occurs through different routes – either through accumulation of land by those who previously had smaller plots via local land markets, or through the acquisition of land by 'outsiders' via political and other connections. Jayne et al. (2016: 197) claim that:

Medium-scale farms control roughly 20% of total farmland in Kenya, 32% in Ghana, 39% in Tanzania, and over 50% in Zambia ... the rapid rise of medium-scale holdings in most cases reflects increased interest in land by urban-based professionals or influential rural people. About half of these farmers obtained their land later in life, financed by non-farm income.

In Zimbabwe, the major land reform of 2000 created over 20,000 medium-scale farms (designated A2). These now cover approximately 2.7 million hectares, with an average size of 134 hectares (Moyo 2011: 512). A2 farms emerged as part of a political bargain, allowing those in salaried jobs or in private business, or those recently retired, often from government service, to benefit from the land reform alongside smallholders on A1 land reform

schemes (Moyo and Chambati 2013). A2 applicants were supposed to produce a clear business plan for farming and show commitment, skills and capital to invest, although opportunities for corruption and patronage were rife (Scoones et al. 2010). As a result, there are many more people in rural areas with connections and political clout who have invested in agricultural production, at least on a part-time basis (Scoones 2015).

Could medium-scale farming be the bright new future for commercial agriculture in Zimbabwe and across Africa, as some claim? What are the dynamics of investment, and how can often part-time, urban-based farmers succeed? How will land and resources transfer across generations, and how will competing claims on farms be resolved? Will such farms inevitably evolve towards a commercial production ideal, or will other trajectories be observed?

THE NATIVE PURCHASE AREAS: A WINDOW INTO THE FUTURE?

One way of informing this enquiry is to look at past experiences. Today, the SSCFAs add up to 1.4 million hectares in total, across approximately 8,000 farms. As with the A2 farms, they accommodated an educated, urban-based middle class, often with jobs with the state. As with the land reform of 2000, there were explicit political motivations to enlist and incorporate members of this class, but also a production-focused modernization agenda to generate new forms of commercial agriculture.

The NPA policy narrative was clearly focused on a 'civilizing' mission – these were acceptable, English-speaking 'natives', educated through the mission school systems, and valued clerks, messengers, native police, teachers and others working for the colonial state (Shutt 1997). Politically, the colonial regime could not afford for such groups to rebel and join the ranks of the nationalists (although, of course, many did), and needed them to be co-opted by being given special favours – notably freehold title to land – that were not available to the 'reserve native' (Shutt 2002a). Others given land were those Africans who neither had land in the 'reserves' nor were acceptable in 'white' areas, and included South African Basotho migrants, members of African churches and others (Mujere 2014). The allocations of land varied from area to area, but they were of the order of 100 hectares – not dissimilar to those offered to most A2 farmers in the 2000s.

What, then, has happened to the former NPAs eighty years and several

generations on? Do these experiences give hints as to what might happen to the A2 farms in the future? What lessons can be drawn? We have focused our studies on Mushagashe SSCFA, about 35 kilometres north of Masvingo. Acquired by the colonial state in the early 1930s, it is 26,800 hectares in extent and contains 255 allocated farms. It is a dryland area, with an average of 662 millimetres of rainfall recorded per annum in nearby Masvingo over the period 2000–01 to 2016–17.¹ While most farms have poor sandy soils or loams, there are patches of wetland with heavier soil. In terms of areas cultivated in 2015–16, maize was the major crop (68 per cent of the cropped area), followed by groundnuts (11 per cent), finger millet (10 per cent), Bambara nuts (8 per cent), cowpeas (2 per cent) and sugar beans (1 per cent). A very small amount of rice is grown in the wetland patches. The total cattle population is around 3,500, with approximately 250 owners.²

The area is designated 'Region IV' in the national classification, implying its marginality for cropping, and many current residents commented on poor soils and frequent droughts. For example, one observed, 'Rainfall is also very low these years and crops are affected by drought. Our soils are now poor due to continued use.' Another said, 'The problems we are now facing are low rainfall and lack of resources – this is because of continuous drought we are encountering in recent years.' While the granite-derived sandy/loam soils of this region are depleted and deficient in soil nutrients (Mapfumo et al. 2007), long-term rainfall data do not show a secular decline but rather a pattern of increased variability (Makuvaro et al. 2017).

We randomly sampled twenty-six farms across Mushagashe West and North to encompass a range of agro-ecologies, and we conducted a survey of each farm, exploring current production and investment patterns, as well as a cross-generational analysis of livelihoods of all children of the current farm owners (n = 109). To complement the more quantitative assessments, we investigated detailed farm histories of all sampled farms, including life histories of older household members, both men and women.³

We were especially interested in patterns of change over time and the social dynamics of agrarian change across generations (Berry 1993). Commercialization outcomes are dependent on the intersection of relational dynamics (Berry 1989) and more structural, political economy features (Peters 2004). We thus traced relationships between demographic and accumulation cycles in the peasant economy (van der Ploeg 2013), patterns of circular migration (Potts 2010), farmers' identities (Cousins and Scoones 2010), and the gendered dimensions of life courses (Dancer and

Tsikata 2015). By tracing farm histories, we looked at how patterns of accumulation linked to the farm were financed, and what 'commercial' farm production meant in practice. The role of freehold title as a means to raise finance was also explored (Boone 2007), as well as the influence of structural features of state policy on the opportunities for accumulation (Poulton et al. 2006). Through a cross-generational analysis, we explored how inheritance or subdivision and the sharing of land were addressed, as well as examining the lives of children of farm owners (White 2012).

There has been remarkably little attention paid to the former NPAs in recent scholarship, and this study aims to fill a gap. The classic studies by Cheater in Musengezi near Harare (1982; 1984) are now over thirty-five years old. More recently, important historical work has been published, but this has not engaged fully with more recent developments (Shutt 1997; 2000; 2002a). Mujere (2014) undertook a fascinating study of the Basotho settlers in Dewure, also in Masvingo, but this concentrated on a particular group, not the wider area. A single survey by Ashworth (1994), meanwhile, offered a snapshot of conditions in the SSCFAs twenty-five years ago.

The NPAs, we argue, offer important insights for contemporary debates. Taking inspiration from Berry's earlier work in particular, our aim has been to look at the intersection of social relations and structural constraints influencing agrarian change, exploring the range of factors affecting processes of agricultural commercialization. As well as periods of success, we were also interested in processes of decline and even abandonment of farms. By investigating the dynamics of accumulation, investment, class formation and gender differentiation in Mushagashe, the aim has been to inform the wider debate about the future of medium-scale commercial farming in Africa.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF ZIMBABWE'S SMALL-SCALE COMMERCIAL FARMING AREAS

The NPAs were established as a result of the 1930 Land Apportionment Act, following the recommendations of the 1925 Morris Carter Commission (Cheater 1984). They were designed as compensation for the fact that, because land was divided between 'native' and 'European' use, Africans were not allowed to purchase land elsewhere. These were areas that had mostly been farmed by early settlers before the colony's land was carved up into racial designations. Africans were given the option of buying newly demarcated properties, but the land was often in remote areas and of poor

quality (Palmer 1977; Phimister 1988; Cheater 1984; Shutt 1997).

The NPAs were slow to become established. At independence in 1980, around 10,000 households had settled on around 1.4 million hectares, falling far short of the earlier promises of 50,000 Africans with freehold title (Shutt 1997; 2002a). The vast majority of the acquisitions were by men, although some women did manage to buy independently (Cheater 1981). Initially, those living in the 'native reserves' were reluctant to move, as the successful 'reserve entrepreneurs' (cf. Ranger 1995) had land, labour and markets where they already lived. Urban-based Africans, especially government workers, were also encouraged to sign up, but again many felt that the leap into the unknown was too risky, as, after all, they already had rural homes in the 'reserves'. The depression of the 1930s put the squeeze on incomes, and few had the money or cattle to purchase land.

In the 1930s and 1940s, farming of wetland patches was important. One informant recalled:

My father grew maize, groundnuts, Bambara nuts, finger millet, wheat, rice and yams in wetlands, often inter-cropping. There was a lot of rainfall during that time. He produced enough crops for household use and some excess for sale. He exchanged groundnuts and wheat for clothes and grocery items with a white businessman nicknamed muGreek.

In interviews, the difficulties of establishing agriculture were stressed. For example:

When K. M. came to the farm in the 1930s he had plenty of cattle and goats. He sold some locally or to the market in Zimuto communal area. He also grew crops such as maize, groundnuts, finger millet, wheat, Bambara nuts and a bit of rice. There were good rains at the time and the harvest was fair. He planted up to 10 hectares. Crops were sold to people in exchange for goods and money. The problems they faced included unreliable markets and wild animals, especially spring hares.

Households accumulated assets, notably cattle, over time, and labour was plentiful given the large polygamous families of that generation. One informant recalled:

When my grandfather came here [in the early 1930s] he had hundreds of cattle and three wives. He had many children so therefore the labour force was plentiful. Because of good rainfall, he grew very big areas of crops such as maize, rapoko [finger millet], groundnuts, rice and lots of winter wheat.

In our sample, around half of the farms were acquired before 1940, mostly

during the early 1930s, while just over a quarter were acquired during the 1940s, and a further fifth during the 1950s. Most were paid for in instalments, while some were paid outright with cash or cattle. Acquisition was conditional on the following of certain practices. For example:

This farm was bought from the government in about 1930. The first instalment was £30. The farm would become yours after you had been able to implement certain practices, such as digging of contour ridges. The number of cattle required at the farm was not allowed to exceed the farm carrying capacity. Those who owned many cattle and did not want to destock were evicted from the farms.

As noted in this recollection, accumulation of cattle was limited by the imposition of carrying capacity limits, and by destocking in the 1930s (Shutt 2002b) and again in the 1950s (Phimister 1988). Another current resident remembered this period: 'My father had many cattle when he settled here [in 1942], but these were reduced under orders from government to comply with the cattle carrying capacity of his farm.' Some were evicted for non-compliance in relation to stocking rates and the digging of contour ridges: 'At that time [1940s], if one did not meet the required standards of farming, you were evicted,' said another informant.

By the 1940s, the NPAs were often criticized for being poor, backward, wasteful and inefficient. Rather than intensified production, the main trends were extensification of low productivity, mixed farms, opportunistic use of wetlands and resource extraction of wood for timber and fuel (Shutt 2002a). Many NPA landowners were 'absentee farmers', and, according to officials, were not taking care of their properties. They accumulated, but not in ways that the planners had hoped. The commentary on both production efficiency and environmental degradation was damning. These were not the envisaged modern, commercial farming areas; instead, they were often the second homes of urban, employed Africans, for whom farming was a sideline. Today, the 'cell-phone farmers' of the A2 resettlements are cast in a similar light.

After World War Two, more people acquired farms as the colonial authorities offered opportunities to educated Africans (West 2002). The earlier reticence gave way to an enthusiasm for social and economic transformation. As Ranger's (1995) biography of the Samkange family shows, the purchase of their Musengezi farm was a key moment in the family's history, shifting their identity as an educated African middle class, now straddling urban and rural areas. As Shutt (1997: 556–7) put it: '[T]he Purchase Areas offered privacy, a measure of respect from the colonial

government, and a symbolic separateness from African cultivators in the reserves and from lower-paid workers.' As one of our informants recalled: 'I wanted a home that was independent.' This independence was reinforced in the 1950s when, following the Native Land Husbandry Act of 1951, freehold title was offered. Freehold was seen as the ultimate form of ownership, linked to a certain modernization ideology and pattern of accumulation (Cheater 1984) that were otherwise available only to whites.

From the mid-1950s, those who had earlier acquired farms began retiring. This was a moment when more commercialization took place. The areas were now fully occupied and land extensification and high stocking rates were no longer feasible. Tobacco and cotton became favoured crops, linked to new commercial value chains. From the 1950s, 'squatters' were considered a problem by the authorities, but farmers were grateful for additional supplies of labour (Shutt 1997). In Mushagashe, labour was hired from nearby communal areas and Makoholi research station, while 'squatters', many of whom were relatives of the farm owners with small plots of land, also provided labour. The labour regime changed from one based on family labour in large polygamous households to hired labour, complemented by collective work parties. The shortage of labour is a commonly cited constraint today. An informant recalled his father's time: 'He always worked with neighbours in work parties for weeding and carrying of manure. He also had many children and relatives who were staying with him, meaning there was always enough labour.' This contrasts with a contemporary complaint from an ageing couple: 'Now we are old and there is a labour and manure shortage; we are now failing to grow crops on large areas. Work parties come to our rescue especially when carrying manure.' Others complained about the decline in collective work: 'I am reducing the cropping land because of labour shortages. Neighbours are no longer interested in work parties; most of the youth in the area have gone to towns for work and others do not like to work on farms.'

In the 1950s, for the first time freehold titles acquired more than symbolic value, and loans were offered against titles as collateral (Shutt 2002a). Farms were more assertively demarcated, with fences put up to keep out neighbours from the reserves. The state invested more effort in these areas, improving infrastructure, providing finance and offering technical support. As the threat of growing nationalism became apparent, especially among the educated African elite, these areas became a focus for political and administrative attention after years of neglect (Cheater 1984).

Together with title deeds came a period of land sales and fragmentation

of farms, as plots were sold off. This provided important revenues for some, securing their retirement on smaller farms. Five of our sample farms were acquired as a result of subdivision, often with different brothers acquiring parcels together. Also, with increasing intensification of production there came the need for more labour. Those designated as 'squatters' were crucial. As Cheater (1982) describes for Musengezi, these included a wide range of people, including extended family members, peasants from the reserves, migrant labourers and others. The subdivision of land also meant that relatives – usually sons – could inherit land, and a new generation took ownership. Land rentals also increased, as demand grew for land – including from 'squatters'. Within increasing fragmentation, officials complained that the NPAs were becoming just like the reserves (Shutt 1997). However, despite these admonishments, the mid- to late 1950s and early 1960s saw a brief period of prosperity in the NPAs. Land sales and rentals, some cash crop production, continued resource extraction and plentiful cheap labour ensured that farming generated decent returns for the now resident, retired owners of these farms.

By the mid-1960s, and especially with the Unilateral Declaration of Independence in 1965, this changed again. Shifts in the political climate, which intensified during the liberation war, saw a decline in state support. The NPAs were often seen with suspicion as places of nationalist organizing and dissent (Ranger 1985). With independence in 1980, nothing much changed. The SSCFAs, as they were now called, were seen as an anomaly of the colonial era, and the state's efforts were focused elsewhere.

By the mid-1970s,⁴ Mushagashe had expanded to 249 farms, with an average size of 98 hectares, although only 7.2 hectares were cultivated on average. In the period between 1974 and 1977, maize output averaged 4.4 tonnes per household, with an average of 1.7 tonnes being sold. Households held 22.5 cattle on average, and sold 2.2 animals per year. Around a third of farmers had permanent workers – with 1.7 per farm on average – in addition to substantial casual labour hired by all farmers. There was also significant family labour, with on average thirteen people being resident (and most available to work) on each farm. Intensification was limited, with only five tractors recorded across all farms, and fertilizer inputs were relatively modest.

In sum, over the last eighty years, the former NPAs have seen mixed fortunes. Bursts of commercialization, notably of cotton and tobacco production, have been combined with periods of decline. Generational changes have influenced patterns of accumulation, land subdivision and labour demand, while the shifting focus of state policy has seen varying

levels of attention being paid to farms. Far from being linear, the process of change has instead been one influenced by contingent factors and the intersection of social-relational and structural political-economic dynamics, much as Berry (1993) has noted elsewhere in Africa.

MAKING A LIVELIHOOD IN MUSHAGASHE

How do we explain the changes in our study site of Mushagashe SSCFA over the last eighty years? This section offers an overview of how different farmers make a living in the area, and the problems they have faced.

Rankings of current challenges put 'drought' as number one, followed by 'poor soil fertility', 'family disputes' (mostly over ownership or title), 'absentee sons not investing', 'wildlife destroying crops', 'lack of government support' (for finance or loans, roads, irrigation, dipping, etc.), and 'theft by communal area people'. As discussed earlier, inter-annual variation in rainfall appears to be increasing, even if overall rainfall is not declining. Perceptions of 'drought' therefore are heightened, as low rainfall years are more frequent, even if they are interspersed with higher rainfall periods.

These challenges are not static, however, and will change within a household over time. Some changes emerge as part of a demographic cycle, while others are the result of a sudden event, with consequences that are either negative (such as deaths or illnesses in the family or significant cattle mortality due to disease or drought) or positive (for example, a pension or redundancy payout or an unexpected inheritance). One informant offered a picture of such change:

The original owner of our 92 hectare farm was a pastor, and he came to Mushagashe with fifty cattle and many goats. He grew maize, groundnuts and finger millet. His arable lands were around 10 hectares. He practised shifting cultivation. He also used leaf litter humus and kraal manure to add fertility to his lands. He was a respected farmer who had farming knowledge, and local farmers used to come and consult him. At present we are cultivating only 3 to 4 hectares between us. We no longer grow large areas because of labour shortages. We do keep livestock and have twenty-nine cattle on the farm owned by the two households that stay on the farm. We hope our sons will help revive the farm again.

All our biographical interviews, like this one, offer a vivid sense of cyclically changing fortunes over time – from periods of success, generating investment and accumulation, to periods of decline, and back again, with

hopes pinned on a new generation.

The following sections explore the Mushagashe farms in more depth, starting with a basic overview of the farms and their inhabitants.

FARM PROFILES

Table 18.1 offers a profile of current farms and household heads, showing an ageing, well-educated group, strongly linked to the Catholic Church, and with professional and business backgrounds. All but two were men. Average farm sizes have not changed significantly over time, but there is now a significant range observed, reflecting subdivisions and accumulation through purchasing or inheriting new land. With nearly three-quarters of households born on the farm, a pattern of multi-generational transfer of

Table 18.1: Farm and household head profiles.

Category	Criterion	Number/percentage
Farm size	Average	109 ha
	Range	63-250 ha
Age	Over 60 years	63%
	Over 50 years	75%
Education	Completed primary	54%
	Completed secondary	46%
Children	Average number	5.3%
	Farms with children's homes/plots	27%
Previous occupation	Farmer	15%
	Civil servant	15%
	Security services	27%
	Self-employed business	8%
	Work in a company	35%
Church affiliation	Catholic	65%
	Reformed Church of Zimbabwe	23%
	Other (mostly evangelical)	12%

farm holdings is seen, reflected in turn by the presence of children's homes and plots on farms.

Unlike in the past, polygamy is absent, and multiple marriages are no longer seen as 'idioms of accumulation' (Cheater 1984), a route to mobilizing large labour forces for on-farm production. Mission education through the Catholic Church has had a significant influence. In accounts of their lives, household heads saw education in particular, funded by agriculture, as a route to getting a job and for longer-term success. For example: 'We sold cattle to the whites who had farms near here. Our education came from farming. I was born in 1938, and I boarded at Gokomere to Standard 6 aged seventeen. I then worked as a policeman in Zambia during the Federation, coming back here in 1972.' Educational attainment of household heads was significant, but their children have had even more schooling, with all children educated at least to secondary school and many to university/college level.

Many household heads had worked in public service jobs in the pre-independence era. This included various civil service roles and a range of 'security' jobs, including police, prison officers and soldiers (Table 18.1). Younger household heads had worked in business for a company, while some had been farmers all their lives or were self-employed. This pattern mirrors the class profile of A2 farmers, with many being employed by the state, including in the security services, and as teachers and in other professions. A prominent role for businessmen, often with political connections, is also noted (Scoones et al. 2010). Profiles of medium-scale farmers elsewhere in Africa are similar, with a predominance of former government workers and urban-based business people (Jayne et al. 2016).

FARM PRODUCTION

Table 18.2 offers an overview of farm production across our sample farms. The small land areas cultivated, limited mechanization and small number of workers hired indicate, on average, a low level of commercialization, although there are important variations.

The relatively high numbers of cattle ease tillage constraints, with nearly everyone owning sufficient cattle to put together a span. In addition goats, sheep and donkeys are held, alongside indigenous chickens, while some have broiler projects (Table 18.2). Cattle are sold regularly, and a few households are involved in milk production, with milk sold to the nearby cooperative, with a maximum of 180 litres being sold per month.

Maize is the dominant crop. Total output averaged 3.5 tonnes between

Table 18.2: farm production.

Category	Criterion	Number/percentage (range)
Cultivated land	Area	4.7 ha (2.0-9.0 ha)
Livestock	Cattle owned	22.8 (7-57)
	Cattle held for others	0.8 (0-11)
	Cattle sales last year	1.4 (0-8)
	Dairy operations	11.5%
	Goats owned	6.1 (0-28)
	Sheep owned	0.8 (0-7)
	Donkeys owned	0.4 (0-4)
Cropping	Maize production (2015)	2.7 tonnes (0.0-7.0 tonnes)
	Maize production (2014)	4.5 tonnes (0.5-12.0 tonnes)
	Maize production (2013)	3.4 (0.2-9.0 tonnes)
Tillage	Ox ploughing	100%
	Communal work parties	35%
	Tractor ownership	7.7%
Hired labour	Numbers hired	1.4 (0-4)
	Worker days per year	17.4 (0-90)

the 2013 and 2015 seasons, with large ranges but regular sales by most households (Table 18.2). Other crops grown include groundnuts and *nyimo* (Bambara nuts). All households have a vegetable garden, but only two have pump irrigation for commercial production of green maize and horticultural products. Some have access to *dambo* (wetland) gardens but, as many commented, these are not as well watered or productive as they once were, and only two households in our sample grew rice. 'The wetlands have now dried up. We used to grow rice and yams there, and there were always two crops a year on these patches,' one informant commented.

DIVERSIFIED LIVELIHOODS

Farm production is combined with other sources of income in a diversified portfolio. Connections to urban areas are important for many, as are

Table 18.3: Income sources.

Income source	Percentage of households naming the activity in their top three income sources
Farming	96%
Employment off-farm	35%
Beer making	35%
Pensions	30%
Part-time piecework	15%
House rentals in town	8%
Grinding mill income	8%

remittances from children and others. Table 18.3 shows the activities identified in the top three income sources across the sample.

Only one household did not identify farming as one of its top three income sources, as it relied on a mix of house rental, remittance and pension income. Fifty-eight per cent identified farming as their main source of income, while 35 per cent identified ongoing employment, and 4 per cent pensions. Regular cash remittances from relatives were important for some, combined with in-kind support, such as the supply of groceries, or investments on the farm. Income earning was highly gendered, with women emphasizing beer brewing and vegetable sales.

In addition to houses built on the farm (some quite elaborate, and all with solar electricity and many with water pumps), farm households had invested in various forms of transport.⁵ However, compared with nearby resettlement areas or even communal areas, this level of asset ownership was not significantly higher,⁶ indicating limited accumulation in recent years as farm owners aged. Most pointed to remittance, pension or employment income as the source of financing, rather than the farm itself.

INHERITANCE AND PROPERTY

Many household heads are now old, and inheritance by the next generation is an issue. A range of patterns is observed, with wives, brothers and sons inheriting, but often with significant internal family wrangles. For example, an informant commented:

The farm was given to me through a will that my father wrote saying I be given the farm after his death. Today there are some squabbles about the inheritance issues. The older brother has taken the issue to the chief's court. I have gone to the chief's court nearly every week!

Social dynamics across generations and within families are central, as farming and processes of accumulation are deeply embedded in particular social relations. In the above case, due to ageing and a lack of labour, there was currently a reliance on cattle rather than cropping. But this may change again. Inheritance issues are at the core of these dynamics, as farms are usually passed between male kin, but not without disputes. Across our sample, there were three cases where inheritance disputes had emerged. In some cases, such disputes rumble on for years, with a noticeable impact on the farm, as people become disillusioned by the uncertainty.

Many title deeds were never updated after they were originally issued, and therefore they have no legal value; in other cases they are taken by relatives who want to gain access to the farm; in yet other instances they exist but people regard them as 'of no value; just a piece of paper', as they have failed to result in them obtaining loans. Nevertheless, title deeds carry important symbolic value; after all, they are what the 'purchase' areas were all about – the freedom to have the freehold, as this example illustrates:

There are some difficulties caused by our cousin who grabbed the farm's title deeds after my father's sister who was safekeeping the title deeds also died after the death of our father. We were too young to keep such important papers ... This disturbs our farming ... for example, in April we wanted to sell vegetables at OK supermarket, but they could not buy them because we failed to produce title deeds as proof of residence and made a great loss ... If our battle to get the title deeds succeeds we may be able to get a loan for drilling and installing boreholes and buying greenhouses.

CROSS-GENERATIONAL DYNAMICS

A key feature of our analysis has been change across generations. This has been far from predictable, with no uniform evolution of agricultural commercialization observed. Most farms had significant numbers of house structures; the average was nine, with the figure ranging from two to eighteen (see Figure 18.1). A number of these included investments by children, whose families sometimes were also resident, in order to keep links with 'home', even if working away was seen as important. As one informant recounted:

All my eight kids went to Gokomere after going to local primary near here. Some are working away, but my sons have homes here, and their wives and younger kids are around. It is a large extended family and my wife and my sons' wives work together. My eldest has a separate homestead and fields as part of the farm, but it is all part of the same community. We all work together.

By contrast, other farms are being abandoned owing to lack of interest by the younger generation. An eighty-one-year-old widow explained:

I am presently managing the farm, together with the second wife of my late husband. We are growing maize, cowpeas, groundnuts and finger millet. But we are facing a problem of low rainfall, and wild animals, like pig and spring hare. We have twenty-seven cattle, but our problem is distance to watering points. There is a drastic shortage of grass. I am hoping my son will come back and improve the farm, but he does not seem interested.

To get a sense of how cross-generational dynamics are evolving today,

Figure 18.1: A 'villagized' farm in Mushagashe small-scale commercial farming area.



we explored the circumstances of the 109 living children of the sample household heads, 53 per cent of whom were female, across an age range from one to sixty-two. Twenty-four per cent were still in education, while 19 per cent of female children were living elsewhere following marriage. Of those with defined occupations ($n = 72$), 28 per cent were in the civil service, with the importance of government jobs reflecting the pattern of their parents (Table 18.1). Many were teachers and workers in the health service, made possible by good educational qualifications; there were very few in the various security services compared with their parents, perhaps linked to the lack of connections with the current party state. As in the previous generation, the largest occupation category was defined as 'working in a company'. This varied hugely, from various highly skilled jobs overseas to relatively low-paid wage work in Zimbabwean firms. About a quarter defined themselves as self-employed; this was more common for women, mostly in their twenties and thirties. This again involved a diversity of work, often in the informal economy. Finally, 17 per cent defined themselves as 'farmers'. These were mostly older males, some of whom were farming in Mushagashe, while others had plots in communal and resettlement areas. Only a few had farms in the new resettlement areas, again reflecting the lack of social and political connections that were crucial during the land invasions in 2000. As one informant noted: 'The soil is tired here, no longer fertile. I regret not being able to join the land reform. We lost that chance.'

In terms of location, 14 per cent of the sample were resident on the farm, including the younger children and a few other sons and daughters who had settled there. The majority were living elsewhere in Zimbabwe, mostly in towns, but some farming in other rural areas. Twenty per cent were living outside Zimbabwe, mostly in countries abroad – including Australia, Canada, Ireland, South Africa, Sudan, the UK and the US. The educational head start that these children received, particularly when linked to mission education, for example at Gokomere, has ensured that most children born after independence have been able to secure good jobs. Quite a few are academics, but there are also doctors, lawyers and other professionals. Those educated in the first two decades after independence, now in their forties and fifties, are perhaps the most successful, while those younger than this have often had to struggle in a depressed local economy, and without the qualifications to get jobs abroad.

The fact that most children of current household heads are working away does not mean, however, that they are not interested in 'home' and the farm. As noted earlier, many send funds home to build houses and

invest in projects of various sorts. Some men work away alone and have their wives and children at the farm, working closely with their parents, as part of an extended family unit. A big question for the future, though, is whether these educated, but dispersed, children will come back and farm, as their parents did a generation ago, resulting in a new burst of commercial activity at a time when the previous generation is ageing or passing on.

ENTREPRENEURIAL PROJECTS

A number of farms had ongoing 'projects', or at least plans for them. Many of these were linked to sons or daughters who were in employment but investing at home. Four had broiler projects (with an average flock size of seventy-six); two had pump irrigation for horticulture production; three had dairy operations; while others were investing in enterprises, including a beer hall and a major greenhouse project (see Figure 18.2). For example, one informant explained:

Figure 18.2: a new irrigated horticulture investment in Mushagashe.



My uncle inherited the farm. He has recently retired as a plant engineer. He is still living in town but is planning to move back here soon. I live here, as my father is now late [has died], and help out. We mainly focus on maize production, getting six tonnes in good years. We grow beans, and some rice in the wetter portions of the field. The owner has been investing in some modern improvements to the farm. In addition to the new houses, a 50 metre deep borehole was drilled. Water is pumped into a 1,000 litre tank using a generator and irrigates a garden in addition to providing drinking water. A solar system is in place for lighting and playing the radio. We are planning another borehole in order to move into horticulture in a big way. We already started pen fattening of cattle; given limited grazing at this farm, pen fattening is the way to go. If capital becomes available we want to keep broilers and layers, and we are also thinking of fish farming, if we can increase our ponds.

Basic production challenges were often highlighted, but most informants had plans for diversification. For example:

Today there's continuous drought. I only use 2 hectares these days, and have one worker. Yields are poor and the GMB [Grain Marketing Board] don't pay. I have twelve cattle, and hold a few for others. I have one dairy cow, which I got on a loan, and sell milk to the Mushagashe dairy co-op. Two sons are staying here: one is resident, and he has a broiler project of a hundred birds, and has a separate home and field. I have an old truck, but it barely works. I need a borehole to do irrigation, but the cost is too much.

THE WIDER WORLD

Layered on top of these domestic and cross-generational dynamics are the impacts of external events and wider shocks. Across the interviews, the sense of abandonment by the state was evident: 'The government is not interested in us; it doesn't even come and repair the road.' Many complained about the lack of support, with the state failing to offer finance or markets, compounding other effects: 'Today production of crops and livestock is declining: the main cause being low rainfall and shortage of labour. There's a lack of finance to buy inputs and there are poor markets. All affect production.'

As several people pointed out, traditional leadership was prevented in the NPAs. 'We can't have politics here,' one commented. There are limited links to the ruling party, ZANU-PF, restricting patronage support. Such commentaries are combined with complaints about how, in earlier times, the state intervened too much, regulating farming practice. For example,

destocking was mentioned as a major constraint on accumulation in the past: 'My father had a lot of cattle, but the white people forced him to reduce the number of cattle. The cattle were bought by the white man at a price that was pathetic; it was daylight robbery.'

In sum, periods of investment and accumulation are interspersed with periods of decline, and the pattern across households is far from uniform. A highly non-linear and contingent pattern can be observed, affected by the intersection of local social relations and wider structural processes. With a few exceptions, the farms in our study are not exemplars of modernized commercial agriculture, as was hoped for, and they face many challenges. In the next section, based on our analysis of eighty years of Mushagashe SSCFA, we explore four pathways in more detail.

LONG-TERM PATHWAYS OF CHANGE

What, then, does our analysis suggest for medium-scale farming in the longer-term future? Eighty years ago the NPAs were seen as an opportunity for a new entrepreneurial class of farmers to emerge – these farmers were often highly educated, with jobs in the civil service or business and with close links to urban areas. As discussed above, the modernizing ambitions and the social profiles are very similar to those of medium-scale farmers across Africa today, including Zimbabwe's A2 farmers. Across the NPAs, and in Mushagashe in particular, we have seen that outcomes over time have not been predictable. They have been contingent on a range of factors, including both social dynamics across generations and genders, as well as structural political-economic drivers. Looking across our case studies, we can identify four main, but overlapping, pathways of change, ranging from idealized, but often temporary, commercial operations to farms that are effectively abandoned or simply held for the future.

THE COMMERCIAL FARM

In this pathway, the regular sale of surplus production results in accumulation and reinvestment in the farm. This occurs through various forms of petty commodity production, but, as our data show, this much-hyped ideal may appear only sporadically as time-limited bursts of commercialization when conditions are right. For example, in the late 1950s and early 1960s, some farms in Mushagashe operated as serious commercial enterprises, supported by state policies on marketing, finance, infrastructure development, tenure security and so on. Their owners were

resident, often retired, but not too old to run and manage a farm. But, in subsequent years, the commercial orientation faded, as older parents were no longer able to manage the farms and sons and other relatives were not around to reinvest. However, the economic crisis from the 1990s onwards meant that it became more attractive to abandon jobs in town, such as poorly paid civil service employment, in favour of farming, even if the family farm was remote and often run down by this stage. This has resulted in a renewed burst of activity. Commercial farming is thus something that happens at a certain life stage and is intimately linked to fortunes in the wider world of urban work, including patterns of income from remittances, now spread across an increasingly global diaspora. Political economy factors are crucial in both generating and closing down opportunities for commercialization. The structural adjustment period of the 1990s meant a decline in government services and investment in critical infrastructure such as roads. Redundancies and payouts at this time, however, allowed investment in farms. The economic crisis in the mid-2000s, and again today, has also increased the incentives to invest in farming, although under extremely difficult conditions and with limited external support.

'PROJECTIZING' THE FARM

For those who are absent, and with parents or other relatives still alive and resident on the farm, the option of 'projectizing' the farm exists. Discrete projects are invested in, commonly involving livestock, especially dairy, piggeries and poultry. Sometimes these projects are loan-financed by development aid projects, such as the dairy project in which three in our sample were involved. More commonly they are self-financed by absent children, some in the diaspora. These investments need some management, and, if the parents are not capable of taking on the role, local people are employed as resident project managers. However, in Mushagashe, road and market infrastructure is poor due to years of state neglect, making any commercial project difficult. The projects in our sample just about break even, but are all backstopped by external finance. Projects also allow sons and daughters to have a stake in the family farm, but without committing to running it or living there. They provide a small supplement to keep now ageing parents in groceries, and allow school fees to be paid, for example, for some poorer relatives resident on the farm. Most importantly, such projects maintain a psychological link with 'home' and a sense of commitment and belonging, however limited. This, though, is far from the image of the commercial farm. It remains merely a collection of projects, with focused investments on limited land areas.

THE 'VILLAGIZED' FARM

In this pathway, the land is viewed as belonging to a family, across generations. Over time, brothers, children and other relatives establish homes, and a village area is created. Sometimes these family units operate independently and have their own plots within the farm; in other cases they contribute collectively to what is usually the father's or elder brother's farm. Some members of these families may not be resident and may work elsewhere, but they regard the farm as 'home'. These villages – in the past viewed as 'squatter' settlements – may include others, such as labourers, or other relatives and their families, who are incorporated into the farm over time. Over the years, numbers can increase significantly. In our sample, one farm had nearly fifty people resident, including at least eight 'households' with plots plus several families of workers. In our survey, 38 per cent of farms had children's homes established on them, sometimes with a separate field.

HOLDING OR ABANDONING THE FARM

A final pathway is for farms to be left in the care of an elderly relative, who 'holds' the farm, with the prospect of a younger son returning at some point to take it on. Very limited activity is ongoing, and those living there are largely supported by flows of remittances. In the end, such farms may be abandoned on the death of those living there. Of the farms in our study area that were completely abandoned, we investigated the histories of three of them. In one, the owner had died around thirty years before. The sons live in the UK and Masvingo town and have plots in the new resettlements. Since the owner's death, local informants told us, no one had returned to the farm, which was now just used for grazing by neighbours. Another farm was inherited by a son who had never come to live there. He gradually sold all of his late parents' cattle and other farm equipment, leaving a worker to live there for years. Since then, the farm had been abandoned for a decade. In the third farm, the farm owner had died about twenty years earlier, leaving many cattle on the plot. No one had come to claim them, and they all disappeared over time. The place had been abandoned, but in recent years a female relative had arrived who is now spending intermittent periods of time on the farm, with plans to get it functioning again. Because of uncertainties about ownership, and the lack of incentives to sell, slow and more permanent abandonment can occur. This is perhaps becoming increasingly common as farm owners age and the younger generation is reluctant to commit to full-time farming.

Of these four highly contingent and non-linear pathways, the most common two among our sample of twenty-six were villagized and commercial farms (each at 35 per cent of cases). Nineteen per cent of farms could be characterized as 'projectized' (often combining with the above two categories), while 23 per cent of farms were being 'held', with real prospects of abandonment. The big question is what combination of these pathways is most likely to occur in other medium-scale farms across Africa, including Zimbabwe's A2 farms, after several generations.

CONCLUSION

There is nothing inevitable about pathways of agricultural commercialization. Looked at from the perspective of history, much depends on conjunctural factors (cf. Li 2014), including social dynamics (Berry 1993) as shaped by a wider political economy (Peters 2004). This contrasts with the standard depictions of agrarian change – whether from the perspective of structuralist Marxist analyses focusing on the competition between classes (cf. Bernstein 2010), or from the evolutionary approaches of agricultural or institutional economics that see a steady, path-dependent transformation of agrarian systems, based on the comparative value of key factors of production in a wider economy (cf. Mellor 1995). Instead, a nuanced, historical assessment of changing livelihoods over time suggests a much more complex story, with predictable changes (such as demographic shifts and ageing) confronting more uncertain events (whether ill health, mortality, drought or policy shifts). As Berry argues, 'no condition is permanent':

Agricultural intensification has been neither inevitable nor continuous in African farming systems. In some areas, intensification was halted or reversed by changing environmental or political and economic conditions; in others, it has occurred not as an adaptive response to population growth or commercialization, but in the face of growing labour shortages and declining commercial activity. Such cases underscore the importance of studying farming as a dynamic social process. As farmers contend with social as well as environmental conditions, changes occur not only in what is produced and how much, but also in when work is done and by whom. (Berry 1993: 189)

What, then, does this imply for the future of medium-scale commercial farms in Africa? In Zimbabwe, the A2 farms are seen as potential drivers of commercial production, replacing the large-scale sector. While historical

parallels are always limiting, and exact comparisons are not possible, there are some important questions that can be posed. While the NPAs were established under very different economic and political circumstances, and in places that were far from ideal in terms of agro-ecological conditions, infrastructural investment and marketing connections, there are important similarities of both policy ambition and composition of the farming population.

Our analysis shows four different but overlapping pathways of change emerging over eighty years. Singular, linear projections of agricultural commercialization are thus clearly inadequate. Commercialization emerges due to intersections of demographic cycles, changes in the wider economy, shifting environmental factors, external policy events, and more. The Mushagashe cases show how agriculture and agrarian change are always embedded in social and political relations and cannot be engineered through simple technocratic interventions and external policy – whether by allocating freehold tenure or by providing technical extension advice. Wider conditions of political economy are important too. In Mushagashe, state support for infrastructure investment (roads, water supply, dip tanks and markets) was significant in certain periods, allowing market connections to be made and the productivity of farming to increase, much as is suggested in the mainstream policy literature on agricultural commercialization (see, for example, Pingali and Rosegrant 1995; Wiggins et al. 2011). Equally, the state's actions have constrained livelihoods and opportunities for accumulation, whether through imposed restrictions on production (such as through destocking) or the limiting of political engagement, or by ignoring small-scale farming area populations during the land reform process. Conditions in the wider economy were crucial, too; these affected the supply of labour as well as opportunities for investment from remittances and off-farm work. In periods of economic crisis, as in the last decade, there have been increased demands for land, and farming has become an essential livelihood option.

There is no inevitability about such changes, however; instead, there are ebbs and flows, peaks and troughs, as fortunes change, conjunctures combine, and chance, luck and misfortune impinge. In the context of this non-linear, uncertain dynamic, a number of outcomes emerge: none are permanent, all are contingent on both local and wider conditions. Bursts of commercialization on farms are contingent on access to employment by farm holders, labour (hired, squatters and offspring), and, perhaps above all, money to invest. Some will achieve commercial success if the conditions are right; for others, this will be only temporary. For yet others, graduating

to a significant commercial farm business may be out of reach, and the farm becomes something else – a home, a place of retirement, a source of security and independence – with farming combined with other livelihood activities. Policies can make a difference, but only up to a point. In eighty years' time, the four pathways seen in Mushagashe may emerge as typifying the potential outcomes seen in the medium-scale farms currently being established elsewhere across Africa. This article therefore suggests a more qualified response to the current hype about policies to encourage commercialization pathways and medium-scale farms in Africa.

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NOTES

- ¹ The coefficient of variation is 29 per cent, maximum 982 millimetres, minimum 290 millimetres, and five of the seventeen years had rainfall levels more than 20 per cent below the mean, indicating a high frequency of drought.
- ² Data from the local Ministry of Agriculture, Agritex office, 2016.
- ³ The survey and interviews were undertaken from April to November 2016. All quotes in the article are derived from the historical interviews with the twenty-six sampled households.
- ⁴ Data derived from Central Statistics Office annual reports on purchase areas, which were produced for the years 1973–74, 1975–76 and 1976–77 (only average figures are presented).
- ⁵ On average, households had 0.4 trucks (range: zero to two), 0.5 cars (range: zero to four) and 1.3 bicycles (range: zero to six).
- ⁶ See: 'How have the "new farmers" fared? An update on the Masvingo study IV', ZimbabweLand blog, 21 April 2014 <<https://zimbabweland.wordpress.co/01///049/>>; 'Comparing communal areas and new resettlements in Zimbabwe IV: accumulating assets and investing in the land', ZimbabweLand blog, 28 July 2014 <<https://zimbabweland.wordpress.co/01///omparing-communal-areas-and-new-resettlements-in-zimbabwe-iv-accumulating-assets-and-investing-in-the-land/>>, both accessed 6 April 2017.

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LIVELIHOOD CHANGE IN RURAL ZIMBABWE OVER 20 YEARS

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INTRODUCTION

Most insights into rural and agrarian change are based on snapshots. There is often poor understanding of longer-term changes, and the implications this has for changing livelihoods. Yet livelihoods are always dynamic, involving transitions between different strategies (Ellis, 2000). Livelihoods comprise a range of elements – including assets, resources, claims and capabilities (Conway and Chambers, 1992; Bebbington, 1999). Any study of rural livelihood change must capture this diversity, focusing on on- and off-farm income, the individual and household material asset base, social connections and relations, health and disease status, among other variables (Scoones, 1998). Each, in turn, is influenced by different drivers, whether demographic, environmental, economic or political (Carney, 1998). Over time, a number of livelihood change processes can be distinguished.

Dorward (2009) contrasts processes of 'stepping up' (accumulating household assets and improving income and well-being through local production), 'stepping out' (diversifying income sources, including off-farm work) and 'hanging in' (surviving through a mix of local farm production, labouring and off-farm income earning). Mushongah (2009) adds the category 'dropping out' to encompass those who are destitute, reliant on external support or in the process of migrating away.

Using Dorward's framework to analyse long-term livelihood change in

Mazvihwa communal area in southern Zimbabwe, this paper assesses the effectiveness of a repeat use of the wealth ranking methodology (Grandin, 1988), combined with household surveys and in-depth biographical interviews, to illuminate the complex dynamics of livelihood change in southern Zimbabwe over a 20 year period. The paper contributes to a growing body of literature on methods for understanding livelihood change. For example, longitudinal panel surveys, life history interviews, sustained ethnographic studies and some participatory appraisal methods have all been tested (cf. Baulch and Scott, 2006; Davis and Baulch, 2009; Whitehead, 2002; Narayan *et al.*, 2000). In different ways they offer important insights into poverty dynamics (Baulch and Hoddinot, 2000; Addison *et al.*, 2009), and in particular the role of asset thresholds in livelihood transitions (Carter and Barrett, 2006). Much work recognises the importance of combining quantitative and qualitative methodologies (White, 2002; Kanbur, 2003; Hulme and Toyé, 2006), while acknowledging the challenges (Kanbur and Shaffer, 2006). This in turn is allied to a long tradition of holistic approaches to livelihood analysis, encompassing diverse methodological traditions (Francis, 2000; Murray, 2002).

A unique opportunity to contribute to this debate arose as part of a study of long-term livelihood change in southern Zimbabwe. This work complements a number of important panel studies looking at changes in poverty and livelihoods in Zimbabwe's rural areas, both more broadly through repeat surveys (Alwang *et al.*, 2002; CSO, 1998) and in the resettlement areas through a long-term panel study (Gunning *et al.*, 2000). The Mazvihwa study allowed a highly focused assessment of livelihood change over 20 years – from 1986-87 to 2006-07¹ – centred on the application of a 'wealth ranking' methodology among a small sample of households, all of whom were traced in the follow-up study. This paper therefore has two aims. The first is to reflect on and test the applicability of wealth ranking as a methodology for understanding patterns of livelihood differentiation, and as a way of tracking livelihood change over time. The second, building on the results of this approach, is to offer insights into livelihood change in this particular context over a 20 year period; a time when major shocks and stresses have impinged on people's livelihoods, with the aim of examining local responses and consequences both for development policy and for agrarian change more generally. The two studies which this paper draws on were undertaken as part of the PhD studies in the same area, working with the same sample of households, but separated by a period of 20 years (Scoones 1990; Wilson, 1990; Mushongah, 2009). The wealth ranking methodology was used in the 1986-87 study and

reported in Scoones (1995). Exactly the same approach was used in the repeat study, including involving the same workshop facilitators and many of the same informants.

The study site is situated in Zvishavane district in the Midlands province of southern Zimbabwe. Mazvihwa communal area is a dryland smallholder farming area, where crop farming combines with livestock rearing, and off-farm activities. As with most nearby communal areas, migration to work in towns, mines and farms has been characteristic of people's livelihood strategies (Potts, 2000). Over many years, livelihoods in this region have been marginal, with extensive and entrenched poverty (Campbell *et al.*, 2002). There has been much continuity, with farming systems and livelihood strategies showing broad stability. Yet there has also been change. With Independence in 1980 came investment in education and health services, which affected the opportunities for many. There have also been major droughts, often decimating crop production and causing large livestock mortalities (notably in 1982-4 and 1991-2), resulting in shifts in livelihood strategies, including the taking up of illegal off-farm activities such as gold panning and cross-border trading to South Africa (Scoones *et al.*, 1996). From the 1990s the HIV/AIDS epidemic hit rural populations hard, peaking in the late 1990s, with major impacts on household structures, labour and gender and other social relations (Feeney, 2001)². From 1991 structural adjustment had dramatic effects on the formal economy, with reductions in employment opportunities and a retreat in state support (Marquette, 1997). In many ways this pre-figured the economic decline which started in the late 1990s, the result of fiscal indiscipline, political patronage and economic mismanagement which accelerated through the 2000s, resulting in hyperinflation and ultimately the almost complete collapse of the formal economy (Bond and Manyama, 2003). Land reform was an important part of government policy from Independence (Moyo, 1995), but the resettlement programmes of the 1980s and 1990s had little impact on Mazvihwa, although substantial out-migration to frontier areas in the Zambezi valley was important (Nyambara, 2001). From 2000, the land invasions and the subsequent 'fast-track land reform programme' had significant ramifications for those living in Mazvihwa and the country as a whole (Hammar *et al.*, 2003). The political and economic crisis in the period from 2000 has had a huge impact on the country in terms of macro-economic indicators, provision of state services and indicators of human development (Raftopoulos, 2009).

Over this 20-year period, therefore, there have been a range of shocks and stresses – ecological, economic, social and political - affecting

livelihoods in different ways. In this paper we want to ask a set of simple questions. What happened to people's livelihoods over this time? What factors, at different times, influenced livelihood change, precipitating patterns of 'steeping up', 'stepping out', 'hanging in' or 'dropping out'? The paper is organised as follows. In the next two sections, we introduce the methodology, both the details of the sampling and the wealth ranking method. Next, the data from Zimbabwe are presented, both in terms of local perceptions of wealth across the two time periods, and in terms of the livelihood transitions observed. These are further highlighted by two illustrative cases. The final section concludes with an overview of the findings and a discussion of their implications for development policy and practice.

TRACKING HOUSEHOLD CHANGE

In 1986-87 a small sample of 71 households (made up of 721 individuals) was defined. This was selected across a series of household clusters in a way that represented a range of different households, according to some key criteria, notably cattle ownership (Scoones, 1990; Wilson, 1990)³. Comparing with wider survey data (e.g. Jackson and Collier, 1988), the sample was broadly representative of the rural population in communal areas in this part of the country. Being a small sample, intensive interaction was possible over a sustained period of fieldwork. Indeed, contact with many households was maintained over 20 years, which made the re-study feasible, and widely welcomed. This process was made even easier as the author of the 2006-07 study (Mushongah, 2009) had worked during the 1990s in local government in the area as an assistant district administrator, and so already knew many people.

In this paper we term the original sample households, 'primary households'. For the re-study much effort was invested in tracing all of these. While five households had dropped out because of deaths and a lack of a next generation to maintain them, all others were traced. Thus the re-study had a sample of 66 primary households, representing 979 individuals. Because of the relatively small sample size and the good contacts with people, the problems of tracing households and sample attrition, which so often undermines other longitudinal studies and panel survey, was substantially reduced (Rose, 2000; Alderman *et al.*, 2001).

By 2006-07 most of the original 71 primary households were still resident in Mazviwha (78%), but others had moved to frontier districts as

part of informal migration to new rural areas (4%), to pre- 2000 resettlement schemes (1%) or to the new resettlement areas as part of land invasions and fast- track land reform (10%). Only one household proved very difficult to locate. Mandebvu (not his real name) migrated to Hurungwe district, around 500 km away. He had completely lost contact with his close relatives, including those who remained in Mazvihwa. No one knew anything about him, let alone his whereabouts. It took almost two weeks to trace him. He was eventually found in a commercial farming area, but had just lost his job as a farm worker, although he had been given a temporary residence and a piece of land at a neighbouring farm, in exchange for his labour.

Of course 20 years on, there had been a substantial demographic shift in the original primary households, with important consequences for household structure and livelihood strategies. The average age of the household head⁴ in the 1986-87 study was 49.5 (range 29-93 years), but by 2006- 07 it was 62.4 (with an even larger range of 18-90 years). In some cases the household had been taken over by a son, especially when the father died. In three such cases, the mother was still resident and the household retained its unity, although with a different composition.

In order to have a sample linked to the original one, but of a more comparable age profile to the primary households in 1986-87, a group of 173 'secondary households' was defined. These were all households established by male children or other extended family members who were resident in the original primary households. Daughters were also traced but, because of patrilocal and patrilineal descent systems households are usually established by men on marriage, only male-origin households were included in the definition of secondary households.

The tracking data showed the wide dispersal of next-generation households, including abroad in the diaspora, notably in South Africa (8.1%), Botswana (1.2%) and the UK (1.7%). This generation also took up resettlement opportunities, both before (5.2%) and after 2000 (6.9%), and some moved to other districts as part of informal rural-rural migrations (7.5%). While overall 36.4% of secondary households established rural homes close to their parents (32.9% with independent fields), a comparable proportion (32.9%) had established homes in Zimbabwean towns and cities, without a rural home base. This pattern of migration and household location is a major departure from earlier forms of circular migration, involving a temporary absence in town for work, having established a rural home following marriage.

For the study of livelihood change in 2006-07, there were therefore two

samples – the primary households (N=66) and a sub-set of all secondary households who had established new homes with independent home fields in Mazvihwa communal area (N=57) plus five households with independent home fields in a ‘fast-track’ resettlement area immediately adjacent (total N=62). Some emerging secondary households in both sites, while having a separate home shared the primary household’s home field, and so were not included in the sample. These 62 secondary households had an average age of household head of 32.7 years (range 21 to 71)⁵.

WEALTH RANKING: UNDERSTANDING DIFFERENTIATION AND LONGITUDINAL CHANGE

Wealth ranking is a simple, participatory research tool that evolved from the 1980s alongside the growth of participatory rural appraisal (Grandin, 1983, 1988; Guijt, 1992). It has been widely used to gain qualitative understandings of patterns of social differentiation within communities, and as a complement to survey techniques (Hargreaves *et al.*, 2007). The method involves a group of local informants first discussing what they mean by the term ‘wealth’, in ways that tease apart the multiple meanings and nuanced implications through an in-depth dialogue. Then cards, on which are the names of all households derived from a household list, are sorted into different groups. Multiple groups can be used and an average ranking developed, which is subsequently grouped.

As this approach became widely used, adaptations, refinements, as well as critiques, emerged (Adams *et al.*, 1997). Some have preferred to use a more generic criterion, such as ‘well-being’ (Gough and McGregor, 2007) or ‘success’ (Scoones, *et al.*, 2010), to set off the discussion, as it is sometimes felt that ‘wealth’ is too narrow a concept, and can get focused on income and material assets rather than on wider criteria. Others have argued that the focus on households and household lists ignores some of the more complex domestic relationships that exist between and across notional household units and that, in any case, households are very difficult to define (O’Laughlin, 2007). Picking up on this critique, others point to the problem of focusing on households as a unit, as this misses the many important intra-household relations, and results sometimes in the emphasising of male head livelihood activities, to the exclusion of others, especially women and young people (Guyer and Peters, 1987). A household focus also means that relations between households within ‘clusters’ can be under-emphasised (Drinkwater 1993). Some have reported that carrying

out such 'participatory' exercises in even small groups is culturally inappropriate and can potentially result in shame and dispute, and a reluctance for some people to speak up (Mosse, 1994).

Bearing these limitations in mind, the 2006-07 ranking workshops followed the same methodology as used in 1986-87. Workshops were held separately with men and women and started with an extended discussion of 'wealth', followed by a household ranking approach. Participants included people employing a diversity of livelihood strategies and who were knowledgeable of the whole area. In the 2006-07 17 men and 21 women were involved, while in 1986-87 there were 13 men and 10 women. In both groups there was some continuity in participation between the two periods.

In discussing the term 'wealth', the vernacular Shona translations which consistently emerged were *upenyu hwakanaka*, *kugara zvakanaka*, *mupfumi*; all composite terms/phrases meaning 'good life', 'relating to one's happiness and well-being, being rich'. '*Upenyu hwakaipa*, *kutambudzika*, *kushushikana*' had the connotations of 'ill-being' 'vulnerability' or 'bad life'; all associated with suffering due to scarcity in material and non-material terms, also linked to deprivation or unfulfilled psycho-social needs, defencelessness or lacking in strength to meet the uncertainties and stresses of life including the death of family members. Causes of 'bad life' ranged from droughts, diseases, unemployment, inflation, social relationship problems caused by intra-household tensions emanating from unequal power relations and being accused of witchcraft, among others.

As in 1986-87, these were lively workshops lasting over several hours, involving much good-humour, but often heated debate. No-one seemed to shy away from the discussion. Reflecting on the experience, Panze, a woman in her 60s, declared: 'I look forward to doing better when we have the next ranking exercise...from now on, I want to get ideas and strategies from others, I will try to take a leaf from those who have done well...'. Indeed, beyond the utility of the final ranking, it was often the discussion that proved particularly insightful. Four ranks were produced in each case – from relatively richer (rank 1) to relatively poorer (rank 4).

As we discuss below, in both studies, wealth ranking proved a powerful methodology, especially when used in combination with survey results and in-depth biographic interviews, with quantitative and qualitative information generating important insights into the causes and consequences of livelihood change, and the nature of livelihood transitions.

UNDERSTANDING 'WEALTH': CONTRASTING 1986-87 AND 2006-07

How have perceptions of 'wealth' changed between the two periods? A number of criteria emerged in the 1986-87 workshops, including:

- a) Number of cattle owned.
- b) Crop production
- c) Income from remittances
- d) Rural non-farm income
- e) Type of house
- f) Education of children
- g) Groceries (bread, tea, margarine)

Cattle ownership featured prominently in the 1986-87 discussion. As one participant from the men's group noted 'these days cattle are fewer, so there is less sharing. A rich man can own just a few cattle, or even donkeys'. Another man summed up his perception; 'wealth is being a successful farmer, having access to money, making good use of your assets, educating your children and building a fine home'. The generational dynamics were discussed in the women's group: 'in the past, the older people were richer... wealth was determined by your background and reliant on inheritance.. [but] younger people can be rich these days, because of work in town' (Scoones, 1995, p. 72). Yet it was also more intangible factors, such as status, conduct and social relations, that were important too. For example, a man with 25 cattle who never sent his children to school could not be regarded as 'rich' by the women's workshop (Scoones, 1995, p. 76).

In 2006-07, many of the criteria were the same, but there was a different ordering and some new criteria were mentioned. The main criteria were:

- a) Number of cattle owned
- b) Land size and crop outputs
- c) Good health
- d) Children's education
- e) Off-farm income (including remittances)
- f) Farm equipment owned (including cotton sprayers, dip spray)
- g) Ownership of 'modern gadgets' - mobile phone, solar panel, car
- h) Hiring of farm labour

While assets and outputs associated with the core livelihood activity of farming remain dominant, other aspects were also mentioned. Health, for example, although discussed in 1986-87, was a dominant theme as in 2006-07, reflecting in large part the impact of HIV/AIDS. '*Utano upfumi* (good health) is, by definition, an indicator of wealth', observed a participant in the women's workshop. Another commented: '... having a family where you live in peace and harmony and in good health in an era of 'the disease' [HIV/AIDS]. Such a life is even more important than a household which owns a lot of cattle...'. (Mushongah, 2009, p.59). In 2006-07, children's education was mentioned very much together with access to off-farm income and remittances. Education was most definitely seen as a route to 'stepping out' and, although remittance flows were less significant overall, those who had managed to educate their children that enabled them to get decently paid jobs were ranked consistently high. For example, Sarai, a widow and household head, was placed in rank 1 because she had educated her children. 'Despite being a widow, she managed to raise and educate her children ...she now has a good life...her children are now looking after her...', one participant commented (Mushongah, 2009, p. 57). While the quality of the house, and notably its roofing material, was used as an indicator in 2007, other material items were also mentioned, notably cotton sprayers, tick insecticide sprayers, mobile phones, solar panels and cars; none of which were part of the discussion 20 years before. In the men's workshop, one participant commented on the association between material items and perceptions of 'modernity':

...a 'good' home - that is a housing structure constructed with bricks, asbestos or iron sheet- roofed, it is well plastered, with a toilet and a homestead fenced with barbed wire. They obtain water for household consumption from protected sources such as wells and boreholes, they own equipment such as a plough, harrow and cart for farming activities, they have an orchard at homestead, and farm workers...[In addition] the person has other luxury assets and possessions acquired for 'pleasure', such as solar panels, TV, cell phone...the kind of possessions which, we, Africans [meaning black Zimbabweans] would regard as modern and normally associated with non-black people" [meaning Zimbabweans of European or Asian origin]. (Mushongah, 2009, p.58)

The 2006-07 men's workshop offered a definition of a 'wealthy' person (*mupfumi*), this was associated with land, livestock and educated children and the economic support these children provide their parents. 'A wealthy

person/household is one with enough land and about 12 cattle and above, plus chickens, goats...he/she has educated children such as agricultural extension workers, teachers, managers, doctors, soldiers and policemen...' (Mushongah, 2009, p.53). In the women's workshop, a woman in her 60s again emphasised the importance of land-based livelihoods:

Wealth is all about the soil...the land...that is, working on the land, being passionate about farming. Farming generates wealth...connected to this is cattle ownership and adequate farm equipment such as ploughs, cultivators, etc...in addition, one will then need to pray and have faith in God for strength, good health and capacity to work on the land. A combination of these factors generates wealth. Wealth is synonymous with abundance of food in the household...when there is hunger or food scarcity in the household, there is no wealth to talk about! (Mushongah, 2009, p.53)

Non-material and intangible factors were again important in the 2006-07 discussions. As in 1986-87, education was repeatedly mentioned, as was status and standing in the community. Even someone's social habits were sometimes brought into the equation. For instance, an individual's poor public image, notoriety and livelihood pursuits which yielded limited returns would attract a lower ranking. A discussion of one secondary household head went as follows: '...he has no reputation at all...the few who know him say he is just a hopeless drunkard...he has no time to work in the fields...he spends most of his time involved in gold panning in Runde river... Definitely group 4 material!' (Mushongah, 2009, pp.52-53). In 2006-7 there was less deference to those in power. As one participant in the woman's group argued, to the wild approval of other participants:

The focus must always be on the ranking criteria we outlined...a village head or sub-chief may find himself ranked in group 4 if, for instance, his home is known to be poorly built...relies on neighbours for a span of cattle to plough his field, and does not have any source of remittance. These criteria are more important than one's age or status...indeed we will show the respect, but we will still group them where he or she belongs! (Mushongah, 2009, p.60)

Although there was consensus between ranking groups on a number of core factors, different groups had different perceptions of what constituted 'wealth'. For both periods, we looked in detail at the discrepancies between ranks across groups, highlighting in particular any cases where all three groups ranked a household differently or where one group ranked a group two groups different to the others. In the 1986-87

study, this represented ten cases. Women, for example, emphasised cash income as an important indicator, particularly because of remittance income, but also because of off-farm local livelihood activities, such as building, trading and craft-making. Women also emphasised support through relatives and social networks as means by which people secured livelihoods. Not surprisingly, women also emphasised the intra-household patterns of income generation, and the importance of women's own activities, such as trading, embroidery and small stock sales, as often highly significant to the overall 'wealth' of a household. The men's group, by contrast, while mentioning all these factors, focused more on local assets and farming, emphasising in particular cattle ownership, crop production and particularly sales. The image here was the traditional successful 'big man' farmer, the '*hurudza*', or the technically-trained 'Master Farmer'.

In 2000-07 there was much more consensus in ranking across the groups, and there were only three cases of difference (as defined above) each for primary and secondary households. Differences emerged on two cases where the household had moved to the new resettlements, with one group ranking them low, despite the fact that their wealth had substantially increased following relocation according to the other groups. The other divergence centred on how much a disability (increasing blindness) was affecting the wealth of a once highly productive farmer, and whether cross-border trading by other family members was sufficient to compensate. Divergences in ranks for the secondary households centred on debates about how much they were reliant on the primary households, and whether they were really food secure or simply vulnerable and dependant.

Over time, then, perceptions of wealth have shifted. By 2006-07 there was more of an emphasis on good health, as well as ownership of a range of material goods, and a reduced focus on cash income earning because of hyperinflation and economic collapse). At the time of the 2007 workshop, inflation was running at 2000 per cent, but a year later it had risen, in some estimates to a staggering 231 million percent.⁶ Yet having core assets, notably land and cattle, remained essential and an important hedge against such rampant inflation, and thus indicators such as a 'good home' persist. This was highlighted in an exchange in the men's workshop between the local headmaster who argued: 'Bill Gates is the richest man in the world... so money definitely is important' (Mushongah, 2009, p. 54). This was countered by others, one saying:

There is enough proof in Zimbabwe that having money can be worthless as witnessed by our currency which has lost value due to inflation...our currency is now a worthless piece of paper. This experience has really

taught us a lesson. Having assets such as cattle and land enables us to embark on crop and livestock production, from where we will meet our basis needs. This is the most important thing to us. (Mushongah, 2009, p. 54)

Local assets, notably cattle, were seen to be a way of dealing with shocks, and so reducing vulnerability. For example, during the men's workshop, a widow was considered to have been resilient when faced with the death of her husband because, despite this loss, she held on: '...she did not dispose of most of the cattle because she remarkably survived through other means...she persevered and thus preserved the family wealth (cattle), many years after the death of her husband. The household deserves to be ranked in group 1' (Mushongah, 2009, pp.54-55).

Thanks to the remittances from their children, the capacity to hire labour, full-time or on a casual basis (*maricho*), was a key indicator in 2007. However, the ability to hire labour was much decreased in 2006-07, and most people relied on family labour only (Table 19.1). In 1986-87, there were many households across all the wealth groups who could afford to hire labour.

How, then, do the composite rankings relate to survey data collected from the same sample? Table 19.2 presents data on a number of criteria – all mentioned in the wealth ranking discussions – and relates these to the

Table 19.1: Percentage of primary households hiring labour for various farming activities: 1986-87.

Farming activity	1986-87	2006-07
Weeding	32%	4.5%
Ploughing	23%	0%
Harvesting	23%	3%
Coppice cutting	18%	7.6%
Fencing	4%	4.5%
Herding cattle	14%	9.1%
Thatching	0%	1.5%

Source: Scoones (1990, p.352) and Mushongah (2009, p.195).

different wealth ranks, both over time and between primary and secondary households. The data shows a strong association between wealth rank and measures across a range of criteria focused on asset ownership and agricultural production, with some major changes occurring across the two periods and some stark contrasts between 'primary' and 'secondary' households.⁷

LIVELIHOOD TRANSITIONS

With ranking data from two points in time, we can look at transitions between ranks, as a reflection of a household's wealth and livelihood status. Although the overall distribution of ranks remained similar, a number of changes can be observed (Table 19.3):

- a) 40.9% (27 households) remained static (10 households remained in rank 1; 3 households remained in rank 2; 6 households remained in rank 3 and 8 households remained in rank 4).
- b) 27.1% (18 households) declined, with the household ranked in 2007 one or two ranks below the rank allocated in 1986-87.
- c) 31.8% (21 households) increased their rank, moving up one or two ranks over the period.

Table 19.3: 1986-87 and 2006-07 primary households' ranking compared (numbers).

		2006-07 Primary households				Total
		Rank 1	Rank 2	Group 3	Rank 4	
1986-87 Primary households	Rank 1	10	5	2	0	17 (25.8%)
	Rank 2	6	3	6	0	15 (22.7%)
	Rank 3	1	8	6	5	20 (30.3%)
	Rank 4	0	1	5	8	14 (21.2%)
Total		17 (25.8%)	17 (25.8%)	19 (28.8%)	13 (19.7%)	66 (100%)

Thus in a period of 20 years, nearly 60% of households had changed, representing a substantial dynamism in wealth status.⁸ What were the causes of these transitions? We looked in detail at all 39 households that had moved up or down ranks, and explored the reasons. This involved both in-depth interviews with household members, as well as an examination of survey data from the two periods. The results were revealing. Transitions downwards involved a number of recurrent features.

A death or extended illness of one of the household heads (often presumed to be associated with HIV/AIDS) was sometimes a precipitating factor in decline or the household's dissolution. This was particularly so in five households where the household heads' spouses also fell ill and subsequently died. Across all individuals identified as members of the primary households in the 1986-87, 123 people had died by 2007, and of these 53% had reportedly died of HIV/AIDS-related illnesses, including eight primary household heads (Mushongah 2009, pp. 150-151). This pattern reflects both an ageing population, but also one exposed over the last two decades to HIV infection, even if incidence has been declining in the past decade (Halperin *et al.*, 2011). Long-term illness and the consequent medical expenses were often a significant burden on households, on many fronts. Equally deaths often required the further deployment of assets at funerals.

The primary households represented an ageing population. By 2006-07, 52.2 % of male household heads were over 60. This resulted in a combination of infirmity and ill health, resulting in less ability to work in the fields. In the past, older households would rely on the next generation to support them through either on-farm production, or more likely remittances. However, as discussed above, those secondary households resident in Mazvhiwa were often asset poor and not producing significantly, as so often unable to help out. In addition, those who had migrated to towns in Zimbabwe were often as vulnerable, if not more so than their rural relatives, given the economic crisis. It was only those in the diaspora, with access to high value currencies that were able to provide this sort of remittance-based social security.

Loss of critical assets, notably livestock, was also linked to declines in ranks. Those whose ranks declined over this period all had fewer cattle holdings than they did two decades before, declining from an average of 6.1 (SD: 9.8) in 1987 to 3.2 (SD: 2.4) in 2007, and the same pattern applied to goats and donkeys. Cattle in particular were hit hard by the 1991-92 droughts. In previous droughts, those unable to move animals to new grazing had the highest mortalities. This was usually the poorer households

without labour or ability to pay for lease grazing (Scoones 1992). In the 2000s, cattle populations were again affected by drought (notably in 2000-01 and 2004-05, although more modestly than the dramatic declines of 1991-92), and mortalities increased due to an increase in tick-borne disease caused by the lack of dipping, as veterinary facilities declined.

Other assets declined too for this group, including land area – often parcelled out to sons establishing new homes, with those whose ranks had declined having on average 6.5 ha (SD: 2.7) in 1986-87 and only 3.1 ha (SD: 1.1) in 2006-07. In some cases house quality and equipment ownership decreased, as people were unable to maintain these assets. And finally loss of external income was often important. This was particularly an issue during the 1990s as structural adjustment hit hard, and people lost jobs, and especially so post-1997 as the economy imploded.

Looking at those who moved up ranks over time, in fact more than those who declined overall, there were again a variety of causes. Again, demographic change was important. Many of these households were young, starting out and establishing their homes often with young, dependent children in 1986-87. By 2006-07, they had been farming for 20 years; some had returned from periods of work, sometimes with windfall packages from retrenchments, and children had often grown up, providing remittances and other forms of support. The secondary households linked to this upwardly mobile group of households were more likely to be non-resident, having moved away from Mazvihwa and in gainful employment, sometimes abroad. These were the children who benefited from post-Independence education investments, and now in their 20s and 30s were able to manage the economic shocks of the period better than others.

Increases in rank were usually associated with accumulation of assets, again cattle being a key indicator. For this group, cattle holdings increased from 2.7 on average (SD: 3.4) in 1986-87 to 8.1 (SD: 7.4) by 2006-07. Land area did not increase significantly for those who remained in Mazvihwa, but 20 percent of those whose ranks increased had acquired new lands in the frontier lands, old resettlement areas and 'fast-track' resettlements. By 2006-07, the 11 households which had moved out had more land for crop production: 4.0 ha (frontier lands, N=3), 5.0 ha (old resettlements, N=1) and 4.4 ha ('fast-track', N=7) compared to those who remained in Mazvihwa (3.6 ha). Of these households, only one had declined in rank (a household in the frontier lands), while four had increased in rank (two from the 'fast track' resettlements, one from the frontier lands and the one household who had been resettlement under the pre-2000 scheme). All others had maintained their earlier rank. Resettlement – formal and informal – has thus been an

Table 19.2: Relating wealth ranks to survey data (averages, with standard deviations in brackets).

	1986-87				2006-07				2006-07			
	Primary households				Primary households				Secondary households			
Ranks	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
N=	17	15	20	14	17	17	19	13	4	13	20	25
Field area (ha)	7.8 (3.8)	4.2 (2.2)	4.7 (2.1)	4.4 (1.9)	4.0 (1.3)	4.0 (1.2)	3.5 (1.2)	2.9 (1.4)	3.3 (1.0)	3.1 (1.6)	3.0 (1.5)	2.1 (1.3)
Cereal production 1984-85 and 2005-06 (t)	11.2 (9.4)	3.8 (2.4)	3.7 (2.6)	3.0 (1.3)	2.5 (1.9)	2.1 (1.9)	0.8 (0.5)	0.5 (0.2)	0.2 (0.3)	0.2 (0.2)	0.2 (0.3)	0.1 (0.2)
Maize sales 1985 and 2006 (kg)	3379.1 (4079.9)	297.3 (665.6)	210.7 (834.6)	133.8 (346.7)	117.6 (485.1)	205.9 (587.9)	41.7 (176.8)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Cattle owned (N)	14.1 (14.3)	4.6 (3.2)	3.4 (4.4)	0.7 (2.1)	17.8 (11.5)	7.4 (4.5)	3.3 (2.7)	0.9 (1.6)	14.5 (12.0)	5.9 (4.1)	1.3 (1.4)	0.7 (1.0)
Goats owned (N)	31.5 (19.5)	17.6 (20.7)	14.0 (16.0)	7.9 (7.0)	9.2 (5.8)	4.6 (3.2)	3.6 (3.7)	2.8 (2.7)	14.8 (9.0)	3.8 (5.5)	2.4 (2.6)	1.2 (1.5)
Roofing	1.6 (0.49)	1.35 (0.49)	1.35 (0.48)	1.35 (6.49)	2 (0)	1.6 (0.5)	1.4 (0.5)	1.1 (0.3)	2.0 (0)	1.7 (0.5)	1.3 (0.5)	1.0 (0.4)
Equipment (N)	2.7 (0.47)	1.9 (0.66)	1.75 (0.72)	1.5 (0.5)	4.1 (1.7)	2.8 (1.0)	1.6 (1.2)	1.3 (0.8)	3.3 (1.3)	1.5 (1.1)	0.8 (1.2)	0.4 (0.6)

Note: Field area refers to the main outfield; cereal production is the sum of maize, sorghum and millet production; cattle ownership includes all animals owned, including those loaned out, but not those held but loaned in; roofing refers to tin/asbestos roof on the main dwelling and the response average of yes (=2) and no (=1); equipment relates to the average of the sum of numbers of ploughs, cultivators and harrows. Data sources: Wilson (1990), Scoones (1990) and Mushongah (2009).

important opportunity for some, with the new land assets being the basis for increasing 'wealth'.

In these movements up and down the ranks, can any thresholds linked to asset ownership, for example, be identified? This is actually rather difficult to pinpoint. As the ranking workshop discussions highlighted, the threshold level is different for different people, and interacts with other variables. For example, having plenty of cattle may be significant, but becomes less of a wealth generator if there is no labour to herd it. Thus young households, without farm and herding labour, while asset-rich, may actually end up relatively income poor, and so are ranked low. Clearly there are key thresholds in asset ownership for farming activities. Having sufficient animals for a draft team (four cattle, or in combination with donkeys) is vital for timely ploughing and planting, which is in turn critical to agricultural success in a dryland area. Similarly, having enough basic farm equipment (especially ploughs and scotch carts) again offsets the need to borrow from others.

However, it is the combination of assets, linked to other features of people's lives and livelihoods, that is important. Very often temporal patterns are highly significant too. As emphasised above the sudden impact of a death, a retrenchment, a drought may have the biggest impact, moving a household from a trajectory of 'stepping up' to a more precarious 'hanging in' strategy, with some ultimately 'dropping out'. The ability to withstand shocks and stresses is substantially enhanced either through asset accumulation, notably of cattle ('stepping up'), but also by 'stepping out', particularly through the provision of remittances across generations. Indeed it is the holistic combination of material, social and other factors over time that the wealth ranking captures, making it such an insightful tool. This is especially revealed when looking at the qualitative biographical data (see below), which emphasises how different factors combine over time, creating 'ratchet effects' influencing vulnerability (Chambers, 1989), and patterns of stepping up, stepping out, hanging in and dropping out.

The demographic cycle, as already discussed, also makes a big difference. Table 19.4 relates the primary households to their Mazvihwa-based secondary household offshoots with the rankings from 2006-07. If secondary households exactly reflected the rank of the primary household with which they are associated, all households would appear along the diagonal of the table. But this is not the case, as there are 34 such secondary households whose ranks are lower, while only eight are higher than their 'origin' primary households. This reflects of course the asset poverty of these new households, and even access to wealth rank 1 parents

Table 19.4: 2006-07 primary households and 2006-07 secondary households ranking compared (numbers).

		2006-07 Secondary households			
		Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Rank 4
2006-07 Primary households	Rank 1	3	4	6	8
	Rank 2	1	4	4	6
	Rank 3	0	3	8	6
	Rank 4	0	2	2	5

Table 19.5: 1986-87 primary households and 2006-07 secondary households ranking compared (numbers).

		2006-07 Secondary households			
		Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Rank 4
1986-87 Primary households	Rank 1	3	6	10	9
	Rank 2	1	1	2	1
	Rank 3	0	5	5	8
	Rank 4	0	1	3	7

nearby, meant that 14 of secondary households associated with the best-off group of primary households were in ranks 3 and 4.

This suggests that the support formerly offered through 'household cluster' arrangements which in 1986-87 was the focus of asset sharing relationships and other forms of mutual aid are less prevalent, and that new secondary households are more individualised and reliant on their own, often very limited, resources. The eight secondary households who were ranked higher than their parents include: four who are engaged in successful entrepreneurial trade (ranging from the buying and selling of goats to the illegal sale of marijuana), two who had continued access to remittance flows, one who had recently received a retrenchment payout and one who gained new land under the 'fast-track' resettlement programme.

Given the generational shift over the last 20 years, one 'control' for this would be to compare the secondary households today with the primary households from 1988. Table 19.5 offers this comparison. 36 secondary households of 2007 are ranked lower than their 1988 primary household

equivalents, while only 10 households were higher in rank. 16 households were categorised in the same rank. As indicated before, secondary households in 2007 were ranked lower overall, with 72.3% in the lowest two ranks.

These comparisons suggest that the next generation, at least those resident around Mazvihwa, are not prospering. A lack of household assets, limited access to off-farm employment and a decline in cluster-based support from others, all contribute. With a few exceptions, it seems that the next rural-based generation is slipping deeper into poverty, and the trajectories of positive change observed for those primary households who have increased their rank level over 20 years are no longer available for most. As we discuss in the conclusion this has major implications for rural development policy.

DYNAMICS OF LIVELIHOOD CHANGE: CASE STUDIES

Wealth ranking allows us to pose questions about why such transitions occurred. Detailed case studies were undertaken to explore the dynamics of livelihood change across all households which increased and decreased wealth rank over time (21 increases and 18 decreases, see Table 19.3). These in-depth interviews took place with multiple members of the household with the aim of piecing together the story of what had happened over the intervening 20 years. This qualitative life history interviewing proved enormously valuable in situating the broader data on changes in ranks as well as the two time-point surveys, as well as exploring complex causal relationships. Below two cases are offered as illustrations.

CASE STUDY 1: A HOUSEHOLD WHICH INCREASED ITS RANKING IN THE PAST 20 YEARS: CHIKWANDA

Marwei Chikwanda's household was in wealth rank 3 in 1988. At that time his father, Tonono Chikwanda was a migrant worker at Zimasco mine, in neighbouring Shurugwi district but was estranged from his family. In 1992, Tonono was pensioned off due to old age. He returned to his family in Mazvihwa, almost a pauper. In the meantime, a relative had sponsored Marwei's education until he graduated as a teacher in 1993. From 1993 Marwei was effectively the household head. By then he was a married man. He was now looking after his parents. Access to remittance income earned from his teaching job enabled Marwei to improve his household's welfare.

From his remittance income, Marwei built a modern, asbestos-roofed four-roomed house at the family homestead in 1994. In the same year he bought a cow. He also bought an ox-drawn cart (1996) and replaced the brushwood fencing of the family homestead with a steel fence (1998). He also bought furniture, a TV and a radio (1999). Meanwhile, in the early 1990s, he gave his wife, Winnet, start-up capital to embark on cross-border trading in South Africa and Botswana. These were the early years of structural adjustment. Winnet's cross-border business was quite lucrative. With some of the profits generated, she expanded their portfolio of non-farm activities by opening up a chicken project venture. Marwei also used part of his remittances to expand the chicken project. There was a ready market for poultry and eggs at schools in the area. They also continued with its farming activities and Marwei financed crop inputs and wages for a farm employee. He was also able to pay school fees for his siblings. By 2000, Marwei was content with his household's progress:

Around 2000, I think I was comfortable because all one needs are possessions which allows one to have a decent living...that is livestock, capital [money], equipment such as a plough...even good health...remember being-able bodied these days is wealth per se...my household was also food secure. (Interview, Mazvihwa, April 2007)

Marwei stressed that his household made this progress in the 1990s, thanks to the lower cost of living and an enabling economic environment at the time. He regrets the post-2000 economic decline, the ill-health and subsequent death of his mother in 2002 and of late his wife's ill-health, as factors which have arrested his household's further development. Despite these setbacks, his household was clearly on the ascendancy and from wealth rank 3 in 1988; it was ranked in wealth rank 2 in 2007.

CASE STUDY 2: A HOUSEHOLD WHICH DECLINED IN THE PAST 20 YEARS: MUZA

Muza's household epitomises a household which descended significantly - from wealth rank 1 in 1988 to wealth Rank 3 in 2007. Muza was a successful farmer (*hurudza*) of great repute 20 years ago. Agricultural extension workers even used to hold 'Look and Learn' meetings at his farm, just to showcase his successful agricultural work. Taking advantage of the agro-ecology of his farm which had good, *dambo* (valley wetland) soils, he was able to grow crops all year round. His yields in crops such as groundnuts were exceptionally high and had a ready market for this crop in Zvishavane

town.

The polygamous Muza considered his children's education unimportant and family (child) labour was a key factor of production in his agricultural-based livelihood. His marriage to a young wife, Chipiwa, who had previously been married to a cousin in the late 1980s created long-standing inter-household tensions. When the young wife later entered into an adulterous relationship, the conflict degenerated into a tragedy when he killed her in a fit of rage. After serving his prison term for this offence, he never managed to recover to his *hurudza* status. An uncle, Poshai confided:

Muza died mysteriously in 1996...his death was linked to the avenging spirit (ngozi) of his young wife, Chipiwa, whom he killed...it was also clear that two young women he later married never managed to bear any children because of the work of this avenging spirit. It is unfortunate that Muza persistently refused to repay the avenging spirit (ngozi) of this murdered woman. He thought he had paid his dues by going to prison...he died a miserable man...Later, as a family elder, I played a leading role in ensuring that Muza's household repaid this ngozi in line with our tradition...As settlement, the murdered wife's family demanded 23 cattle...the whole of Muza's herd of cattle went toward this payment or compensation. (Interview, Mazvihwa, April 2007).

Soon after his death, Muza's two younger wives returned to their parental homes. Maidei, his senior wife died in 2003. Two of his daughters returned home soon after they divorced and by 2006, they had both died of HIV/AIDS related illnesses, leaving their young children at Muza's home. Two of his sons established their secondary households in the same village and none of them has been keen to take over Muza's homestead, as is sometimes the customary practice. The other son, Thomas, is a border-jumper to South Africa where he spends most of his time. It is alleged that mysterious happenings occur at Muza's homestead and there are fears that it is haunted. Muza's youthful nephews, particularly Edmore, have been the custodians of the household for the greater part of the last few years. In early 2007, Edmore also joined the border-jumping activities to South Africa. Only young relatives (23 year old and 17 year old wives of Muza's South Africa-based son and nephew, respectively) lived at Muza's farm in 2007 and they could only manage to plant 2.2 hectares of crops compared to the 13 or more hectares planted in the 1980s. This resulted in a paltry 0.2 tonnes of cereal production, compared to the 33 tonnes, and 11 tonnes of sales recorded in 1984-85. In 1986-87, the household had a herd of 15 cattle, and the number had declined to one by 2006-07. Without a key asset (cattle), the household had little chance of recreating earlier success.

The first case illustrates the important link between off-farm income ('stepping out') and local accumulation ('stepping up'). In this period, Marwei was able to build his asset base, and invest in new economic activities (such as trading and chicken production) since he was in gainful employment during the early 1990s. A diversified livelihood strategy was pursued, with clear lines of gender differentiation, but on the back of a strong household unit and much cooperation. Investment in this crucial period has stood them in good stead, particularly as a result of the chicken project which generated a good income stream, as well as employment for a worker. Despite the economic woes and ill-health of late, they have been able to weather the storm. The origins of this success, however, can be located in the investment in education during the 1980s; in this case by a relative who paid school fees. This meant that from humble beginnings, Marwei was able to accumulate and invest, and improve the household's 'wealth'.

The second case, by contrast, shows how decline can often be sudden, the result of catastrophic, highly contingent events, exacerbated by multiple, interacting factors. In the 1980s, Muza had been on a 'stepping up' trajectory, and was perhaps the most successful farmer in the area, able to hire labour, and invest in his farm enterprise and home. The dramatic family dispute which ended in tragedy and his subsequent imprisonment and later death meant farm production collapsed. Ill-health and continued family tensions resulted in rapid social and economic decline to a situation of only just 'hanging in'. These tragic events took place at a time when opportunities were declining on many fronts. Dependents had to seek alternative livelihoods and migrated. Instead of reliance on substantial local farm production and crop sales, derived from access to good soils and water availability as well as significant farming skill, Muza's family members were forced into fragile, vulnerable 'stepping out' livelihoods, such as illegal border jumping and temporary employment in South Africa, linked to limited farm production at home.

These are of course just two illustrative examples of 39 cases. But they do show some recurrent themes, represented across the case studies. First, accumulation is often reliant on a combination of both 'stepping up' and 'stepping out' livelihood strategies, and dependence on one, whether farming or off-farm employment, is always risky. Second, accumulation may take decades, with small gains made each year from crop sales or employment savings, and is dependent on stability in livelihood opportunity and intra-household cooperation, although, as we have seen, often with many ups and downs over time. Third, declines to a position of

'hanging in' or even 'dropping out', can be very sudden: often the result of a combination of factors, precipitated by a chance or at least unexpected event, such as an illness, a retrenchment or a season of crop failure or high livestock mortality. Fourth, accumulation is highly dependent on wider contextual factors at a particular time. Stepping up or out may be possible in periods of wider economic prosperity, but may be nigh or impossible when the broader economy is in decline, such as in the 2000s. Equally, extended periods of drought, such as in the early 2000s, especially when combined with political crisis and economic collapse, provoke very difficult livelihood conditions. Whether stages of the demographic cycle which allow off-farm employment, or older children to provide labour for example, coincide with patterns of good or bad rainfall or economic boom or bust, make a huge difference to people's livelihood trajectories, with consequences that stretch across generations, as we have seen.

CONCLUSION: UNDERSTANDING COMPLEX AND DYNAMIC LIVELIHOOD CHANGE

What insights for rural development policy and broader understandings of agrarian change in Zimbabwe are revealed by such studies? Can the wealth ranking methodology, linked to survey and life history approaches, help us understand these complex dynamics?

The 20-year study from Mazvihwa has shown a highly dynamic pattern. Clearly a differentiated view of rural livelihoods is needed. From the wealth ranking data and individual biographies, we have observed interacting and highly differentiated processes of stepping up, stepping out and hanging in and, indeed, dropping out. The survey data shows the asset base has decreased (although not for everyone and for all assets, see Table 19.2), and both farm production and off-farm income earning has declined (Mushongah 2009). There have been substantial exits from the rural home area, in search of opportunities in Zimbabwe's urban centres or in other countries. Successful farm-based production and accumulation, which characterised wealth rank 1 and some of rank 2 in 1986-87 is increasingly constrained. Those secondary households who have established a rural based are finding it increasingly difficult to make a living, and the type of mutual aid cooperation within household clusters that allowed people to get going in the past appears to be on the decline.

Is this, then, a failing rural economy, where the prospects for development are minimal, and development efforts should be focused on

seeking alternatives, probably in other areas? This dismal view is one that has been forwarded by others working in nearby areas (Frost *et al.*, 2007), and particularly in the context of the dire economic context of the mid-late 2000s, has some justification. But the patterns of decline are not universal. There are some who are doing well, even in such difficult circumstances, among both primary and secondary households. Can the key elements of this success be built on? A core element of local agrarian success ('stepping up') has been, as discussed above, linked to new access to land and so a shift back into farm-based production. This was only a small group in this sample, but it was striking that increased land area resulted in boosts in farm production and accumulation of assets, a pattern seen more widely in the neighbouring province of Masvingo and elsewhere (Moyo *et al.*, 2009; Scoones *et al.*, 2010; Moyo, 2011; Cliffe *et al.*, 2017). Remittance income, particularly from abroad, remains significant as a 'stepping out' strategy, and sustaining and facilitating links to allow remittance flows to reach rural settings such as Mazvihwa remain critical. Such remittances are often invested in farm-based assets, such as cattle and equipment, and these asset investments may result may help shift a household over a threshold and into an upward trajectory.

Lessons exist here for asset-based social protection measures that allows threshold transitions, from simply 'hanging in' (or with the prospect of 'dropping out') to a pathway of 'stepping up' (Dorward *et al.*, 2006). Another important lesson from the studies is the significance of health and education. Ill-health, as we have repeatedly seen, is a major factor in livelihood decline, and education of the next generation has been critical in providing a route out of poverty; and is very often key in the relative success of secondary households and, as case 1 showed above, a vital contributor to longer-term success. The decline in health and education provision in Zimbabwe over the last decade has been dramatic, with the quality of rural service provision now very poor across the country resulting in a decrease in a range of human development indicators.⁹

In this context, the wealth ranking approach, combined with survey results and in-depth biographical interviews, has proved a powerful method, allowing for the interpretation of longitudinal studies. As a relatively cost- and time-efficient methodology it could be a useful complement to monitoring and evaluation tools, potentially as a way of tracking over time the impacts of different interventions in a qualified and sophisticated way which focuses on broad livelihood outcomes as defined by local people. The results from wealth ranking exercises are also an important reminder that any interventions must take account of the

complex contexts and configurations of factors that influence livelihood outcomes over time, and that assessing impact is never easy or straightforward, as multiple shocks and stresses combine with local processes, external interventions and people's very particular and contingent livelihood trajectories.

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NOTES

- ¹ In this paper two periods of study are referred to – 1986-87 and 2006-07. This is when the field data referred to was collected. The actual ranking exercises were held in early 1988 and mid-2007.
- ² Data from Mazvihwa suggest that adult mortality peaked in the period from 1996-2005, depending on age group, with female adult mortality peaking later (Ken Wilson, pers. comm., 7 March 2011). This suggests a later onset and tailing off of the epidemic compared to data from other regions of Zimbabwe (Halperin *et al.* 2011).

- ³ While mostly easily recognisable as units, 'households' in Mazvihwa are often not the units of asset ownership (very often individuals), consumption (kitchens linked to particular women, particularly in polygamous households) or the loci for long-term decision making and asset transfer (usually shallow patrilineages, operating in clusters of households). As Wilson (1990) showed, data on individual women and their kitchens and the wider lineage relationships were the best predictors of child welfare outcomes. Thus the household unit used here for the wealth ranking and survey data must be qualified by insights from other scales of organization.
- ⁴ The 'household head' usually the eldest male associated with the rural home, even if absent. The definition thus recognises the patriarchal and patrilineal system of household organisation and inheritance in this setting. Where the male household head had died and a woman had taken over and was recognised as the household head, the data refers to this individual.
- ⁵ There were two outliers (aged 71 and 61) affecting the average/range who were living with their brothers in the 1980s, and subsequently set up separate homes. All other secondary households were from the next generation.
- ⁶ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/zimbabwe/3167379/Zimbabwe-inflation-hits-231-million-per-cent.html> (accessed June 14 2011).
- ⁷ Comparisons of agricultural production and crop sales over periods are difficult, as there are never any exactly comparable years. Here we compare the best rainfall seasons in the two periods of study – 1984-95 and 2005- 06.
- ⁸ An unpublished study from 1993, five years after the original ranking showed that even by then 40% of households had changed ranks. Those who had improved their status were more often located in the 'sandveld' areas, while those who had declined were more likely to be in the 'clay' soil zone of the study area, reflecting in large part ability to respond to drought shocks (Ken Wilson, pers. comm., 7 March 2011). The ecological dimensions of these changes were not so evident over the 20 year period (Mushongah 2009).
- ⁹ See: <http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/ZWE.html> (accessed June 14 2011). Despite such declines, Zimbabwe continues to have a high literacy rate, with a disputed estimate of 92%.

20

CONTESTED PARADIGMS OF 'VIABILITY' IN REDISTRIBUTIVE LAND REFORM: PERSPECTIVES FROM SOUTHERN AFRICA

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INTRODUCTION

'Viability' is a key term in debates about land reform in southern African and beyond, and is used in relation to both individual projects and programmes. 'Viability' connotes 'successful' and 'sustainable' - but what is meant by viability in relation to land reform, and how have particular conceptions of viability informed state policies and planning approaches? More broadly, how have different notions of viability influenced the politics of land in recent years? This paper interrogates this influential but under-examined notion, reflecting on debates about the viability of land reform – and in particular about the relevance of small-scale, farming-based livelihoods – in southern Africa and more broadly.¹

These questions are not merely of academic interest. How debates are framed and how success is judged is a major influence on the formulation of government policies. With arguments for and against redistributive land reform often hinging on the notion of viability, justifications for public expenditure and budget allocations can be offered if programmes and projects are deemed viable. Conversely, portraying redistributive land

reform as 'unviable' provides a basis for arguments that this is a poor use of public funds. Different framings of viability also influence the way that a range of interest groups think about and contest the wider politics of land and agriculture in the region.

Yet, despite its centrality in debates about land reform, viability is rarely defined, and its precise meaning often remains obscure.

In southern Africa such debates tend to focus rather narrowly on farm productivity and economic returns. An implicit normative model in much usage in the region is the large-scale commercial farm, even when policies suggest that other scales and forms of production, such as smallholder farming, should be accommodated. The dominant framing of viability is embodied in technical recommendations around 'minimum farm sizes', 'economic units', and 'carrying capacities'. Methods and measures for appraisal of land reform – in planning, monitoring and evaluation – are defined in terms of marginal returns on investment or farm profitability. Processes of planning and implementation are framed by standard approaches to farm management and business plans developed for large-scale commercial farms, with the consequence that generalized statements indicating a role for other types of farming, such as small-scale, household-based systems, do not readily translate into programmatic support. This way of framing viability (and therefore 'success' and 'failure') is highly restrictive, but has far-reaching consequences, since the wider benefits and costs of land reform are rarely examined, the social and political dimensions are often ignored, and important cross-scale and linkage effects are not considered. Yet alternative ways of framing viability, drawn from a variety of analytical paradigms, are available, but have been much less influential in the region to date. This article explores a range of different framings evident in both the broader literature on redistributive land reform and in debates in the region, and examines their diverse practical and political consequences. For, if policy contestation is in part about struggles over the framing of issues, then being clear about the assumptions and commitments of different alternative framings is essential.

The fact that large-scale commercial farms remain the implicit normative model for viability in Southern Africa is of course not accidental, and can only be understood in the context of the region's history. Settler colonialism in the region involved large-scale land dispossession, the confinement of the indigenous rural population to densely-settled 'native reserves', massive state support for the development of a white settler farming class, and discrimination against small-scale black farmers in the

reserves (Moyo 2007: 60-63). A highly dualistic and racially divided agrarian structure emerged, comprising a large-scale (white) capitalist farming sector, which dominated production for both the domestic and international markets, on the one hand, and a struggling peasant sector, on the other. The reserves functioned as pools of cheap, male, migrant labour for the emerging mines, industries and commercial farms of the region, since small plots (and in some cases agro-ecological factors), coupled with poor infrastructure and lack of access to markets, meant that peasant agriculture on its own was unable to support the rural population. Although a few peasant producers became successful producers of agricultural commodities, in particular places and at particular times, the generalized pattern was one of rural poverty rooted in the structural features of colonial political economy (Palmer and Parson 1977).

In countries where land alienation by the white minority was particularly marked, as in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Namibia, liberation struggles focused on land dispossession as a major grievance. As a consequence, a key policy focus of post-liberation governments in all three countries has been land reform programmes designed to alter the racial distribution of land holdings. But should land reform involve the break-up of large-scale farms into smaller production units allocated to large numbers of the rural poor, with agrarian restructuring conceived of as a key poverty reduction measure? Or, alternatively, should a productive large-scale commercial farming sector be retained but de-racialised, as a contribution to national reconciliation? Both existing land owners and aspirant capitalist farmers have a clear interest in resisting the break-up of large holdings, and this has converged with a seemingly apolitical and 'technical' notion of farm viability to support arguments that large production units need to be preserved rather than restructured. Those advocating the break-up of large farms, on the other hand, have advance political rather than economic arguments for land redistribution, and have often shied away from debating the question of viability.

This article describes the origins of a hegemonic, 'large-scale commercial farm' framing of viability and its influence on policy debates on land redistribution in South Africa, Namibia and Zimbabwe. The discussion is located in the context of competing analytical paradigms for assessing land reform: neo-classical economics, new institutional economics, livelihoods approaches (and a welfarist variant), radical political economy and Marxism. Against this backdrop, we propose an approach to thinking about viability that draws on key insights from different frameworks, and we use these to suggest what a re-casting of the debate might imply for

policy and practice in southern Africa today.

MODERNIZATION AND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHERN AFRICA: PAST AND PRESENT

Key ideas in policy, such as the notion of viability, must be viewed in historical context. They emerge in particular places in relation to a range of debates and practices that are firmly embedded in historical experience. In Southern Africa, discourses around viability have a long pedigree. From the colonial era to the present, dominant views on agricultural development have been based, implicitly or explicitly, on a modernization narrative, and have survived political ruptures such as the liberation struggle and the attainment of independence. Normative-political constructions of 'good', 'modern' and 'progressive' farmers and farming were implicit in linear models of economic development involving transitions from agriculture-based to industrial economies (cf. Rostow 1960, Schultz 1964, Johnston and Mellor, 1961). These constructs were, in turn, influenced by evolutionary views of technical change, in which low productivity farming shifts to intensive farming as a result of demographic pressure, and by technology transfer approaches, in which 'scientific' farming practices and technologies are provided to help modernize and civilize 'backward' farming systems (Scoones and Wolmer, 2002).

This narrative has often come to define understandings of agricultural development in Africa, in relation to technology (and a shift from 'backward' to 'modern' practices), markets (and a shift from self-provisioning to market based production and consumption) and economic productivity and growth (and a shift from 'subsistence' to commercial farming) (Scoones *et al.*, 2005). Emphases have varied by setting and period, but a remarkable consistency is evident across time and space (cf. Ellis and Biggs, 2001). Striking continuities exist between colonial prescriptions on agricultural development in the 1920s or 30s, for example, and more recent exhortations about the need for a new, business-driven, commercial agriculture to replace older, subsistence modes (World Bank 2007).

State-led agricultural modernization programmes peaked in the late 1940s and 1950s, just before decolonization was initiated, and a discourse of economic viability became widespread in this period. In Kenya, for example, the Swynnerton Plan of 1954 identified the ideal model as 'economic farm units' composed of a (yeoman) farmer, together with three labourers on a freehold property with selective credit and extension

support (Williams 1996). Land was to be transferred to male farmers in order to boost cash crop production, particularly in the highlands (Throup, 1987). In South Africa, the 1955 Tomlinson Report on black agriculture similarly identified 'economic farm units' as the goal, and in Southern Rhodesia the Native Land Husbandry Act of 1951 was implemented in order to modernize and transform African agriculture, and create a class of 'progressive farmers' operating viable economic units (Duggan 1980).

Settlement schemes of different kinds were seen as one route to achieving such goals. Sometimes this involved a major reorganization of patterns of settlement and land use in native reserves – such as following the Native Land Husbandry Act in Southern Rhodesia, or 'betterment policies' in South Africa (Yawitch 1981). It also involved the creation of new settlements in areas where 'modern', 'progressive' agriculture could be practiced, as in the African Purchase Areas of Southern Rhodesia (Cheater 1984), or irrigation-based resettlement schemes in Kenya (Metson 1979).

In Southern Africa, a variety of institutions, such as departments of agricultural research and extension, were given the task of achieving the modernization of agriculture. These institutions were profoundly influenced by the needs, aspirations and objectives of white settler farmers, an important political constituency for the colonial and apartheid state (Herbst, 1990). In the early period many settler farms did not conform to normative models of commercial farming derived from realities in the American mid-west or in East Anglia in Britain, but these ideal types formed key reference points for policies and programmes. Technical agricultural knowledge imported through colonial connections helped frame knowledge and practice in particular ways, and so came to shape how notions of viability were deployed.

In relation to peasant farmers living in so-called 'tribal' areas, recommendations to promote integrated, 'mixed farming', which became highly influential throughout the region, were based on models from 18th century England, as well as experiments undertaken in colonial northern Nigeria in the 1940s (Scoones and Wolmer, 2002). Later, these kinds of technical imports were complemented by 'farm management' techniques and understandings of farming systems derived from mainstream agricultural economics, the classic texts and training models being imported largely from the United States. These understandings and techniques, often based on temperate zone agro-ecologies and production systems very different to those that were being developed in practice by farmers in Southern Africa, became the standardized tools-of-the-trade for planning and implementing agricultural development. Departments of

agricultural research and extension tended to replicate the organizational modes and priorities found in Europe or the US, and opportunities to challenge dominant framings and practices were extremely limited.

Despite numerous re-organizations and notional shifts in priorities after independence, the institutional and organizational infrastructure of African agriculture – though populated by different people, with a very different formal mandate and a vastly expanded target group, but often with a much depleted resource base – has remained remarkably consistent in its biases and assumptions. The continued dominance of an agricultural modernization narrative is also evident in the design and priorities of such recent initiatives as the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme and the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa². These are influenced by the versions of agricultural development promoted by globally powerful institutions such as the World Bank, whose World Development Report of 2008 emphasizes the need to transform existing systems of production and move them towards a modernized, business-oriented, ‘new’ agriculture (World Bank 2007). These labels and categories carry with them assumptions about transformation, ‘progress’ and development trajectories that influence the specific policies advocated.

A core feature of the colonial period³ was attempts by the state to develop a class of ‘commercially viable small-holder farmers’. In southern Africa, however, these efforts were largely unsuccessful. Early peasant successes that threatened to compete with emerging white commercial farmers were snuffed out (Phimister 1988, Bundy 1979). For the most part the native reserves continued to function as areas supplying labour to dominant capitalist sectors such as mining and industry, as they were originally designed to do, with peasant agriculture providing a supplement to wages and remittances, and thus subsidizing low wage levels (Wolpe 1972, Palmer and Parsons 1977). Even strenuous efforts by the Rhodesian state to create a buffer class of small-scale commercial farmers, in the African Purchase Areas, made little impact on the overall agrarian structure. This remained starkly dualistic in character, with large-scale commercial farming at one pole and so-called ‘subsistence farming’ at the other (although the latter was always more productive than stereotypes of ‘backward peasants’ admit, as well as more socially differentiated). Rural poverty had its roots in both the dispossessions that helped create this dualism, and in the discriminatory manner in which the agricultural sector was managed. This was widely understood, with the ‘land question’ fuelling support for the liberation struggle in all three countries.

Inevitably, a key issue for newly elected democratic governments in

Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa was whether or not to alter fundamentally the agrarian structure through a large-scale and rapid redistribution of productive land. For a variety of reasons, including doubts about the productive capacity of small-scale producers, this was deemed not feasible in any of the three countries. Instead, policies set out to reform agrarian structure more gradually, through removing barriers to racial ownership and encouraging the de-racialisation of commercial farming, and through versions of market-based land reform. These policies were premised on a particular view of viability and centred on preserving the productive capacity of the large-scale farming sector, while at same time promoting the growth of small-scale commercial farming, both in communal areas (the former reserves) and on redistributed land. A key consequence of this choice is the persistence of agrarian dualism, especially in South Africa and Namibia, and the revitalization of colonial-era modernization narratives, that see 'viable' small-scale farms as scaled-down versions of large-scale commercial farms. These narratives have proved remarkably resilient, and have continued to frame discourses on viability and the future of agriculture across the region.

Despite the centrality of the concept, ideas of economic viability are rarely defined with any clarity. As van den Brink *et al.*, (2007) point out, in former settler colonies the notion of viability generally derived from a specified income target, and viable farm sizes were calculated by first setting a target minimum income for white farmers, and then calculating the size of the farm. Rather than an objective, technical exercise, this was 'a social policy which ensured that white farmers earned an income acceptable to white society' (*ibid.*: 170). This objective provided the rationale for legislation that restricted the subdivision of farms. According to Moyo (2007: 68), viability was always seen through the lenses of both race and class, Africans being seen to have lower requirements for 'subsistence' incomes than whites. Notions such as 'viability', despite their seemingly technical origins, carry within them multiple social and political meanings and implications. The tenacity of such concepts within policy discourses on land in the region is striking.

FRAMING VIABILITY: FRAMEWORKS FOR ASSESSING LAND AND AGRARIAN REFORM

While any term has its own location and history, it also must relate to a wider field of debate. What does the international literature on land and

agrarian reform suggest is the appropriate way to assess viability? How do debates in southern Africa, informed by particular historical experiences, resonate with these? There are a number of competing analytical frameworks commonly used in assessments of land and agrarian reform (Table 20.1). The most important approaches are neo-classical economics, recent variants such as new institutional economics, livelihoods approaches (and a welfarist variant thereof), and frameworks of analysis derived from Marxism and traditions of radical political economy. These approaches are associated, to varying degrees, with competing political ideologies and stances, and all have resonances in the southern African debate. Thus neo-classical economists are often associated with neo-liberal policy prescriptions, while new institutional economists often articulate a conservative form of agrarian populism, or neo-populism. In contrast, the sustainable livelihoods approach is associated with either 'developmentalism' or 'welfarism', a kind of centrist populism, which can be contrasted with the radical populism of the radical political economists. Marxists emphasize the importance of class politics and the socio-economic differentiation of rural populations. Thus a primary influence in assessments of viability in redistributive land reform is the choice of analytical paradigm, whether or not this is explicitly acknowledged. In the contested arena of policy debates on land in southern Africa, this choice of framing is often driven primarily by ideological commitment, rather than simply analytical considerations.

We briefly summarize and contrast these six frameworks in order to highlight the importance of intellectual paradigms and their associated theories and concepts in framing issues and problems, as well as their political correlates. There is of course the risk of over-simplification and caricature, since there are many different strands of thought within each of these six frameworks. But our intention is to highlight distinctive features and their articulation with debates about viability, rather than offer any comprehensive review. Clearly there are many overlaps, nuances and grey areas, that we hint at but do not have the space to discuss in any depth. The benefits, we hope, of comparing and contrasting a wide range of perspectives will outweigh these limitations. In later sections we examine the degree to which these different frameworks – or sometimes blurred combinations of them – have framed and influenced viability debates in Southern Africa, and with what consequences for policy, politics and practice⁴. We believe that, by making explicit these diverse framings of land and agrarian reform – and so viability – and by highlighting the associated political struggles over meaning and consequence, the debate about the future of southern African land reform can be enhanced.

NEO-CLASSICAL ECONOMICS

The central concerns of neo-classical economics are well-functioning markets and the Pareto-optimal efficiency outcomes that are achieved if market failures and distortions are minimized. Government planning and intervention are viewed as being accompanied by rent-seeking behaviour, and therefore inefficiency. Key concepts in neo-classical theory include the notion of utility-maximizing activities by individuals who produce commodities for self-consumption or for sale, operating through a firm (or farm, in a rural setting), in order to maximize profit. Efficiency is evaluated by assessing factor productivity (i.e., the relative productivity of land, labour and capital).

The ideology associated with contemporary neo-classical orthodoxy is neo-liberalism, with its stress on getting the state out of markets (to reduce market 'distortions'), 'getting the prices right', and structural adjustment measures such as deregulation, currency devaluation, privatization and fiscal austerity. The state's necessary role in providing public goods is recognized, as is the role of law in underpinning property rights and contracts. These reduce perceptions of risk and thus 'stimulate profit-maximizing firms to invest, utility-maximizing households to save, and hence economies to grow' (Lipton 1993: 642). This means that neo-classical economists are ambivalent about unequal distributions of property rights based on ascription (e.g. inheritance) rather than achievement, and hence about land reform, which can create the conditions for an optimal, cost-minimizing, distribution of farm sizes (*ibid*: 642).

Byres (2006: 227-29) suggests that in the post-war period neo-classical development economists accepted that planning and state interventions, including land reform, were necessary in poor economies before the market could come into its own. Byres distinguishes this 'old' neo-classical economics from the strongly anti-state views that eventually came to dominate mainstream development economics from the 1970s until the late 1990s, and is often tagged the Washington Consensus.

As Byres notes, in the Washington Consensus there was no place for land reform of any kind (*ibid*: 226)⁵. The beneficiaries of structural adjustment are seen to be efficient farmers at any scale, and this can include large-scale land owners engaged in production, with economies of scale relevant in relation to capital, farm machinery or chemical inputs. The declining role over time of the agricultural sector within a successfully developing economy is accepted as necessary and inevitable. Trade liberalization is seen as improving incentives to agriculture through the

removal of protections for the urban, import-substituting sector, and agricultural price increases are expected, leading to a switch from subsistence to cash crops, improvements in agricultural productivity and output and hence the incomes of the rural poor (Deraniyagala and Fine 2006: 52-53).

In a neo-liberal perspective the growing role of agri-business in global agro-food regimes is viewed as an outcome of market-efficient processes based on the logic of comparative advantage, leading ultimately to socially optimal prices for both producers and consumers (Weis 2007: 119). The inconsistencies involved in wealthy OECD countries promoting structural adjustment in the South, while simultaneously providing massive subsidies to their agricultural sectors and keeping in place protectionist tariffs on processed agricultural goods, is one reason why critics see neo-liberalism as ideology rather than respectable theory (*ibid*: 119).

In terms of neo-liberal ideology, then, viability must be assessed simply in terms of farm efficiency and the rate of return on investments in land and agriculture. Large farms and a declining rural population can be 'socially efficient', as can an agrarian structure dominated by large farms and global agri-business corporations. A viable land reform must promote market and business efficiency as its primary goal.

NEW INSTITUTIONAL ECONOMICS

For new institutional economists the neo-classical paradigm and its associated policy prescriptions are inadequate, and institutions assume a much more central role. In this view, while both peasants and large landowners are seen as rational decision-makers, real markets are often absent or 'thin' because of the existence of inadequate information or high transaction costs (such as the costs of supervising hired labour or enforcing contracts). To reduce the risks associated with imperfect information and high transaction costs, institutions such as rural money markets or sharecropping come into being. These can include interlocked markets, which are explicable as an 'endogenous' response to market imperfections. Property rights are seen as endogenous rural institutions that help reduce transaction costs (Lipton 1993: 641-42).

Power relations and structures are recognized as important in the new institutionalist paradigm, since groups or coalitions seek to use or alter their property rights and resources to their advantage (*ibid*: 641). Power structures, despite being 'endogenous', can thus lead to sub-optimal outcomes for society. For Lipton (*ibid*: 643), this is often the case when

large land owners prevent land markets from optimizing farm size and allowing the economic strengths of labour-intensive, small-scale agriculture to be realized. Where an inverse relationship exists between farm size and output per hectare, the redistribution of land from large to small, family-operated holdings can 'accelerate and to some extent 'equalize' the (long-run endogenous) institutional outcomes of agricultural factor and product markets, technologies and power structures' (*ibid*: 642).

Since highly unequal distributions of land can constrain economic growth, effective redistributive land reforms can make large contributions to development, as well as underpin industrial take-off (as in parts of East Asia).

To achieve these aims, Lipton (*ibid*: 642-43) argues that land reform must be market-oriented and 'incentive compatible', and aim to replace existing economic entities that perform endogenous economic functions (such as credit provision, security, technological innovation, processing, marketing, etc) with effective new institutional arrangements. It must also find a 'power compatible' path in order for it to be politically feasible. Both criteria are met by what he terms 'new wave' land reform, which should replace the state-led, land-confiscating approaches of the past that often involved the (forced) formation of inefficient collective or co-operative forms of production (*ibid*: 650-55).

In this version of land reform the major beneficiaries should be efficient, small-scale farmers, who are enabled by appropriate rural development policies to maximize returns of land and contribute to rural non-farm economic growth (Lipton, 2009). The key focus of viability assessment is farm efficiency, as well as overall economic efficiency ('general equilibrium effects'). Assessing the potential for growth multipliers and backwards and forwards linkages to farming is important too, because these help contribute to rural poverty reduction.

Lipton is a key exemplar of this type of new institutional economics thinking on land reform. The World Bank's 2003 policy research report on land, authored by Deininger, presents similar arguments in favour of 'new wave' land reform, but places greater emphasis on policies to secure land rights and promote land markets (and rental markets in particular) than on redistribution. The cornerstone of these arguments is once again the inverse relationship, arising most fundamentally from that fact that farms, worked by family members, do not incur the high supervision costs incurred by large farms hiring in labourers, and also have higher incentives to provide effort, giving the former a 'productivity advantage' and 'general

superiority' (Deininger 2003: 81).

However, imperfections in credit, input, product and insurance markets can overwhelm the inherent productivity advantages and give rise to a positive relationship between farm size and productivity leading to 'undesirable outcomes' (*ibid*: 82). State policies to reduce these imperfections and promote rental markets are recommended, with a strong emphasis on strengthening property rights and tenure security in order to facilitate long-term rental contracts.

For the World Bank redistributive land reform is required where 'the extremely unequal and often inefficient distribution of land ownership' is the result of 'power relationships and distorting policies rather than market forces' (*ibid*: 143). Since market forces cannot be expected to lead to land redistribution 'at the rate that would be required to maximize efficiency and welfare outcomes', state interventions are required (*ibid*). Complementary policy instruments include secure land rights for beneficiaries, expropriation with compensation, progressive land taxation to increase the supply of underutilized land, divestiture of state land, foreclosure of mortgaged land, and promotion of rental and sales markets, decentralized implementation, training and technical assistance, and ensuring the rule of law (*ibid*: 155-56). Grants or loans should be provided 'on a scale that is sufficient to establish economically viable undertakings, while at the same time striving to accommodate a maximum number of beneficiaries' (*ibid*: 156).

New institutional economists thus assess viability in redistributive land reform in terms of three main criteria: productive efficiency, higher levels of equity and contributions by land reform to both wider economic growth and poverty reduction. Arguments along these lines were made in the Soviet Union in the 1920s by the agrarian populist Chayanov, who advocated agricultural development on the basis of co-operative peasant households, organised as an independent class, and driven by the technical superiority of peasant household-based production systems (Chayanov 1966). Given their strong emphasis on peasants/small-scale farmers and the (mostly undifferentiated) rural poor, new institutional economists are sometimes seen as 'neo-populists' or 'neo-classical neo-populists' (Byres 2004).

LIVELIHOODS

A livelihoods perspective to development has influenced policy advocacy in

relation to land reform, as well as the framing of many donor policies on land. The emphasis is mostly on reducing the vulnerability of the rural poor by securing their access to productive assets and resources (tenure reform), and sometimes reforms that result in greater equality in the distribution of land. Here land reform is strongly associated with mainstream developmentalism, as embodied in donor policy frameworks such as the Millennium Development Goals (DFID 2007).

A key concept in this approach is multiple and diverse livelihoods that combine a range of capabilities, assets and activities in order to off-set risks and cope with stresses and shocks such as drought, disease, and loss of employment (Chambers and Conway 1992). Another is the classification of material and social assets (including social relationships) into natural, human, social, physical and financial forms of 'capital' (Carney 1999). A third is the notion that livelihood strategies are institutionally and organizationally mediated, influencing the vulnerability or robustness of livelihood strategies. Land is a form of natural capital, access to which is mediated by institutions, such as land tenure, and policies (Scoones 1998, 2009).

The 'sustainable livelihoods framework' is seen by its proponents as providing explicit recognition that the livelihoods of the poor are complex and dynamic and combine formal and informal economic activity. The holistic and integrative aspects of the approach have made it attractive in comparison to approaches that focus more narrowly on production, employment and household income (Ellis 2000, Shackleton *et al.*, 2000). Criticisms of the livelihoods approach include its neglect of power relations (Murray 2002) and of structural inequalities rooted in class and gender relations and their complex interconnections (O'Laughlin 2004).

In rural economies land is seen as 'a basic livelihood asset, the principal form of natural capital from which people produce food and earn a living', and comprises cropland, grazing and common lands from which a range of natural resources can be harvested (Quan 2000: 32). Land also 'provides a supplementary source of livelihoods for rural workers and the urban poor' and 'as a heritable asset, land is the basis for the wealth and livelihood security of future rural generations' (*ibid.*: 32). Caste and gender inequality in land access are problems that need to be addressed, as is the dampening effect of high levels of inequality on economic growth (DFID 2007: 1-2). Land reform may be required to secure equitable and efficient land use and promote pro-poor economic growth. Land can be used as collateral for loans, providing opportunities for investment and accumulation and encouraging the growth of business activity in general (*ibid.*: 6).

Kydd *et al.*, (2000:18-19) agree that, while globalisation and liberalization are undermining the relative efficiency of small-scale farming, there are still grounds for supporting smallholder farming as a central feature of rural development, because it is multiplier- rich, accessible to the poor, and creates the basis for eventual 'good exits' from agriculture. Since it is 'unwise to automatically assume that settlement of previously large farms by small farms will lead to 'win-win' equity and efficiency gains' (*ibid*: 19), the case for redistribution must be made on an area by area basis. Kydd *et al.*, see potential for redistribution at the 'quite extensive' margins of large farms (*ibid*: 19), but also emphasize legislation to facilitate leasing of land and encouraging endogenous evolution of tenure systems towards clearly defined property rights. Government support will be crucial, and elite capture must be avoided, so that these policies do not 'erode the livelihoods of the poor and vulnerable' (*ibid*: 20).

Some analysts who use a livelihoods lens to examine agrarian change stress the de- agrarianization of rural economies in recent years. Bryceson (2000)⁶ argues that livelihood systems in Africa have been profoundly transformed over the past two decades. Many households have diversified their livelihoods, shifted to non-agricultural income sources and individualized their economic activities. Bryceson questions whether agriculture should remain the core focus of development policy, but notes that 'African rural dwellers ... deeply value the pursuit of farming activities. Food self-provisioning is gaining in importance against a backdrop of food price inflation and proliferating cash needs' (*ibid*: 5). Rigg (2006: 196) notes the rapid diversification of rural livelihoods in the Asian contexts and suggests that 'sustainable livelihoods ... are increasingly likely to be divorced, spatially and occupationally from the land'. In his view policy should support people's efforts to leave farming, permitting the amalgamation of land holdings and the emergence of agrarian entrepreneurs.

In a livelihoods perspective, viability thus relates to a combination of assets, activities and social relationships that are robust and resilient, and which together reduce the vulnerability of poor households and individuals to shocks and stresses. Ecological sustainability is also stressed. However, in many livelihoods analyses an inherent tension is often revealed - between emphases on poverty alleviation via enhanced livelihoods of the poor (a form of welfarism), on the one hand, and on promoting economic growth and increased market access, on the other.

WELFARISM

Contemporary arguments for land reform on welfarist grounds are also often derived from the livelihoods approach. An emphasis on 'poverty alleviation', and a strong focus on household food security, is often proposed as a rationale. Tenure reform that secures access to land for food production and self-consumption is usually the main focus, but welfarist rationales for land redistribution are sometimes offered too. For example, the World Bank's 2003 report on land policies (Deininger 2003: 148) argues that 'access to relatively small amounts of land, in some cases not even owned land, can provide significant welfare benefits...'. The Bank's primary emphasis, however, as discussed above, is on 'productive efficiency' as a rationale for land redistribution, which should aim to maximize efficiency *and* welfare outcomes (*ibid.* 143).

Welfarism in relation to land currently takes a variety of forms. In recent years there have been calls for agricultural development and 'livelihood promotion' in poor countries to be more explicitly linked to social protection policies and programmes, such as pensions and other forms of cash transfer, employment guarantee schemes and microfinance (Ellis *et al.*, 2009). Social protection measures could be designed to strengthen the resilience and reduce the vulnerability of poor households or individuals, and agriculture is inherently risky. But smallholder farmers in Asia and Africa are exposed to 'exceptional risks' (Farrington *et al.*, 2004, 2), many resulting from 'over-hasty' privatization of service-delivery or reductions in public investment, and market mechanisms are unlikely to deliver social protection. In relation to land, Farrington *et al.*, mention land redistribution only in passing, and identify various tenure reforms as important policy interventions: reform of tenancy arrangements, reform of inheritance laws that discriminate against women, improvements in documentation of freehold and leasehold rights so that land records can be used as collateral for loans, and enhancing poor people's security of access to common pool resources (*ibid.*, 3).

Viability is thus defined in terms of the ability to protect poorer people from shocks and stress, the alleviation of poverty (according to a range of measures) and the reduction of vulnerability of those most at risk. While such definitions overlap with the concerns of those focused on livelihoods, here a viable land reform is aimed much more specifically at social protection and welfare goals.

RADICAL POLITICAL ECONOMY

Radical political economy is very diverse, and here only one strand is discussed; that which tries to theorize contemporary forms of radical agrarian populism (McMichael 2008, Rosset *et al.*, 2006)⁷. Radical populists see rural poverty as the result of an unequal agrarian structure, and emphasize the oppression and exploitation of workers and peasants by powerful land-owning classes and agri-business interests. Unlike Marxists, however, class and other divisions amongst the rural poor receive less emphasis, and instead the convergence of the interests of groups who live on the land is stressed.

Peasants are seen as under threat of dispossession by policies and actions that support an emerging global food regime dominated by large corporations. Since the mid-1990s, however, these threats to family-based farming have been resisted by resurgent peasant movements, including some that are transnational in scope. The leading example is Via Campesina, the 'peasant way', that advances the concept of food sovereignty as a radical alternative to conventional agricultural and food policies (Borras 2008). Implicit in this notion is a very different conception of viability.

Redistributive land reforms are seen as a key component of a broader agrarian reform that seeks to restructure class relations in the countryside (Rosset 2006). Agrarian reform includes a range of complementary policies alongside land redistribution, aimed at supporting peasant farmers and enhancing agricultural productivity, rural livelihoods and food sovereignty. Sometimes the inverse relationship and the contribution of equitable distributions of land to economic development more broadly, as in East Asia, are appealed to when arguing for radical land reform (Rosset 2006: 315-17).

Peasants as both beneficiaries and as agents of change are the main focus of contemporary rural radical populism, although social movements often suggest that agrarian reform should benefit other groupings as well⁸. The precise meaning of the term peasant, however, is often somewhat unclear. Borras (2008: 274) describes the heterogeneity of Via Campesina members, who include landless peasants and rural workers, small and part-time farmers in Western Europe, family farmers in the global South, middle to rich farmers in India, and the semi-proletariat in urban and peri-urban settings. These kinds of class-based differences between members, and the conflicts they might produce (for example, between the interests of small-scale capitalist farmers and the landless labourers they employ), are often

ignored or down-played in radical populist analyses.

McMichael argues that contemporary peasant movements are reframing the classical agrarian question and formulating an alternative version of modernity. Mainstream development, it is argued, is complicit with neo-liberal globalizations and an international food regime overseen by the World Trade Organization, is dominated by corporate interests from the North and leads to 'peasant redundancy' (McMichael 2008: 209).

Peasant movements reject this ideology and trajectory, pointing to its disastrous effects on food production by small-scale farmers in the South. The global dominance of industrialized farming and agri-business interests in the North, underpinned by rich country state subsidies, is fuelling cycles of dispossession in the South, and de-peasantization is leading to the massive growth of a displaced, casual labour force, it is argued. In addition, such analysts argue, farming systems that rely heavily on artificial fertilizers, chemicals and fossil fuels are much less ecologically sustainable than the peasant systems that they are replacing.

Movements such as Via Campesina propose a notion of food sovereignty, 'the right of each nation to maintain and develop its own capacity to produce its basic foods, respecting cultural and productive diversity' (cited in McMichael, 2008: 210). Corporate agriculture entails securing the conditions for capitalist accumulation by lowering the cost of labour worldwide, and 'rules out a place for peasants, physically expelling them from the land, and epistemologically removing them from history' (*ibid.*: 213). In contrast, the food sovereignty movement is grounded in 'a process of revaluing agriculture, rurality and food as essential to general social and ecological sustainability, beginning with a recharged peasantry' (*ibid.*).

Conventional criteria for assessing viability in terms of efficiency and productivity, drawn from an economic logic that fetishizes growth in quantitative terms, are rejected. These criteria externalize ecological effects such as chemical pollution, discount energy costs and subsidy structures for agri-business and undervalue the economic costs of agro-industrialization (*ibid.*: 214). While conventional criteria based on the 'spurious logic of monetary valuation'⁹ lead to small-scale agriculture being viewed as inefficient, food sovereignty emphasizes the 'incommensurability of diverse agri- and food-cultures' and an 'agrarian identity based in a value complex weaving together ecological subjectivity and stewardship as a condition for social and environmental sustainability' (*ibid.*: 215).

For this strand of contemporary radical populism, viability in land reform

thus means the ability of productive small-scale farming to secure peasant livelihoods, but also to promote 'broad-based and inclusive local, regional and national economic development, that benefits the majority of the population', as well as ecologically sustainable methods of farming (IPC for Food Sovereignty 2006, cited in Borras 2008: 144). Viability in this conception must be assessed at a scale beyond the individual farm or land reform project, and seen in the context of a new agrarian order that embodies social justice, socio-economic transformation and ecological sustainability.

Marxism

Marxist analyses of land reform and agriculture are very diverse and disagreements over nuance and interpretation are common. They, however, share a central focus on class relations, class structure and the dynamics of capital accumulation in agriculture. Key concepts include the social relations of production, the unequal distribution of property rights between classes, and class power (both economic and political). A key issue is the contribution of agriculture to capitalist accumulation and industrialization more broadly (Akram-Lodhi and Kay 2009a: 5). This was a central concern in classical framings of the 'agrarian question' in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and is debated today in the very different context of neo-liberal globalization.

The 'classic' agrarian question is usefully summarized by Bernstein (2004:198-200). In pre-capitalist societies the surplus labour of peasant producers is appropriated by landed property through rent. The transition to capitalism involves a process of primary accumulation that sees the formation of new agrarian classes (capitalist landed property, agrarian capital, and proletarian agricultural labour). The logic of capitalist social property relations establishes the conditions of market dependence, and drives the growth of agricultural productivity through technical innovation. If emergent industrial capital is strong enough to secure its interests, the enhanced agricultural surplus can be mobilized for industrial accumulation. Primary or primitive accumulation involves the dispossession of peasants, who are 'freed' to work in industry and other non-agricultural enterprises. Increased agricultural productivity helps lower the costs of reproducing the urban proletariat, contributing to capitalist accumulation in general.

Marxist analyses of the agrarian question focus on agrarian transitions in specific contexts. Resolution of the agrarian question can be achieved in variety of ways, including 'from above', as in the case of 19th century Prussia, where a land owning class metamorphosed into an agrarian

capitalist class, or 'from below', where peasants differentiate themselves over time into classes of agrarian capital and agrarian labour (the 'American path'). To destroy the power of pre-capitalist landed property and ensure a successful transition to capitalism, a redistributive land reform, typically of the 'land to the tiller' variety, may be required. In this conception of the agrarian question '[o]nce pre-capitalist landed property – with its predatory appropriation of rent (vs productive accumulation) – is destroyed *there remains no rationale for redistributive land reform* any notion of redistributive land reform that advocates the division of larger, more productive enterprises (capitalist and/or rich peasant farms) is *ipso facto* both reactionary and utopian'¹⁰ (Bernstein 2004: 199). It is utopian because it is unlikely to 'achieve its stated objective of 'efficiency and equity', of increasing agricultural productivity and rural employment and incomes on the basis of an egalitarian structure of 'family' farms' (*ibid*). Byres (2004) and Sender and Johnson (2004) are representative of this strand of Marxism¹¹.

Bernstein (2004: 202) proposes another interpretation of the agrarian question: that in the contemporary world there is '*no longer an agrarian question of capital on a world scale*, even when the agrarian question – as a basis of *national* accumulation and industrialization – has not been resolved in many countries of the 'South''¹². He argues that a new agrarian question of labour has come into being, separated from its historic connection to that of capital, and manifested in struggles for land against various forms of capitalist landed property. This agrarian question is not centred on the development of the productive forces in agriculture, but on a crisis of the reproduction of increasingly fragmented classes of labour within a capitalist system unable to generate secure employment at a living wage for most people.

In Bernstein's conception 'classes of labour' include those engaged in unskilled wage labour, in insecure informal sector activities, in small-scale farming, and in various combinations of these, often linked across urban and rural sites and sectoral divides (*ibid*: 206). Peasants are best understood as petty commodity producers subject to processes of class differentiation: some succeed in becoming small rural capitalist farmers, some are able to reproduce themselves as small farmers, but others have to engage in wage labour or other forms of activity, such as micro-enterprises, to secure their livelihoods (Bernstein 2006: 454). Fragmentation and differentiation means that land struggles are 'likely to embody uneasy and erratic, contradictory and shifting, alliances of different class elements and tendencies' (*ibid*:

456).

Bernstein questions 'uncritical attachment to the benefits of large-scale farming' (*ibid*: 458), partly because the scale and distribution of capitalist property is often speculative rather than productive in character, and also because 'the productive superiority of large(r)-scale farming is often contingent on conditions of profitability underwritten by direct and hidden subsidy and forms of economic and indeed ecological rent', as well as the environmental and social costs of modern capitalist farming systems. He is equally sceptical of 'small is beautiful' arguments, or indeed any models of 'virtuous farm scale' constructed on deductive grounds, and emphasizes the importance of agriculture being able to provision the growing urban population of the world (*ibid*, 458).

Other Marxists are not of the view that the agrarian question of capital has now been resolved, or can be separated from the agrarian question of labour. Akram-Lodhi and Kay (2009b), for example, argue that the core of the agrarian question is the balance of class forces, nationally and internationally, between capital and labour. The balance of forces is contingent and variable, producing substantive diversity across different national and regional contexts, but the nature and trajectory of accumulation within (incomplete) transitions to capitalist agriculture remain a central issue in many parts of the world. They also argue that in an era of neo-liberal globalization, the agrarian question has assumed new relevance, with food and agricultural production within global circuits of accumulation becoming of increasing concern to capital (*ibid*: 332), and massive levels of agro-food imports by China playing a key role within the global economy (*ibid*: 324).

Neo-liberal globalization is extending the commodification of rural economies, and market-led concentration of land ownership is contributing to ongoing 'accumulation by dispossession' (of the rural poor). The increasing emphasis on agricultural exports as the motor of accumulation means that a key aspect of the agrarian question in countries of the South is now the nature and extent of linkages between the export-oriented sub-sector and the peasant production sub-sector. These linkages deeply influence the character of agrarian transitions under current conditions, and thus the capacity of a rural economy to enhance peasant livelihoods (*ibid*: 324-327).

From a Marxist perspective, then, viability in redistributive land reform is primarily a function of class relations and dynamics, and could refer to either successful accumulation by emerging classes of agrarian capital,

either 'from above' or 'from below', or the reproduction of peasant farmers as petty commodity producers, or improved prospects for the livelihood security of differentiated classes of labour, for whom farming may be only one source of income. These are often mutually exclusive pathways, which means that answering the question 'viability for whom?' is likely to be politically contested. Another key criterion for Marxists, however, is the ability of growth in agriculture to contribute to national economic growth more broadly, which means that for society as a whole, viability must mean increasing productivity via reinvestment of a portion of surplus value.

VIABILITY IN REDISTRIBUTIVE LAND REFORM IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

How, then, have these different perspectives, each framing viability in very different ways, influenced the policy and practice of redistributive land reform in southern Africa over time? As we have seen, the way viability is defined has a major impact on the way land and agrarian reform is conceived, planned for, and politically contested.

As discussed above, modernization narratives, focused on promoting an 'economically viable agriculture', have deeply influenced the framing of policies for redistributive land reform in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Namibia. But this has often been in a somewhat ambiguous manner. Indeed, a key feature of land reform debates in southern Africa is a pervasive disconnect between discourses centred on the politics of land reform, often involving heavy doses of populist and nationalist rhetoric, drawing on a variety of arguments with their roots in livelihoods perspectives, agrarian populism and Marxism, and the more technical discourses of economics, which stress pragmatic adjustments at the margins, and draw on variants of neo-classical and new institutional economics.

Across the region, policy coherence has proved elusive (Lahiff 2003). In the following section we offer a brief review of some of the ways in which viability has figured in policy discourses in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Namibia, and explore the degree to which the different framings discussed above have influenced the way land and agrarian reform has been thought about, implemented and reflected in political contests over land¹³.

SOUTH AFRICA

The objectives and scope of post-apartheid land reform are set out clearly in the 1997 White Paper on South African Land Policy, summarizing the goals of land reform as: 'to redress the injustices of apartheid; to foster national reconciliation and stability; to underpin economic growth; and to improve household welfare and alleviate poverty' (DLA 1997: v). A number of economic benefits are identified, including food security for the rural poor, and opportunities for expanded agricultural production by around 100,000 small-scale and subsistence farmers (*ibid*: 13). Land reform is said to be able to make a major contribution to reducing unemployment, given the potential of small, family-operated farms to generate more livelihoods on high potential arable land than larger farms and through the multiplier effect on the local economy. Implicit in these rationales is the view that small-scale forms of production offer many advantages over large-scale production.

A 'market-assisted' approach to land acquisition and transfer was adopted, based on voluntary transactions between willing sellers and willing buyers (*ibid*: 37). Grants were to be made available to applicants, and 'the poor and marginalized', as well as women, were targeted. Other criteria for prioritizing projects included the 'viability and sustainability of projects' defined in terms of economic and social viability of intended land use, fiscal sustainability by the local authority, environmental sustainability, proximity and access to markets and employment, and availability of water and infrastructure (*ibid*: 43). In framing the design of the programme a new institutional economics perspectives mixed uneasily with livelihoods and welfare priorities.

By the end of the 1990s progress in land redistribution was very slow, and a major problem was the lack of resources made available for post-transfer support to beneficiaries (Turner and Ibsen 2000). In addition, most redistribution projects involved groups of applicants pooling their government grants to purchase farms, as a consequence of the small size of the grant relative to farm size and the general reluctance of sellers and officials to sub-divide farms. Tensions and conflicts within large groups were common. In 1999 a review of the programme was commissioned, and a new policy framework called Land Redistribution for Agricultural Development (LRAD) was announced in 2000.

Under LRAD the previous focus on targeting land redistribution at the poor gave way to an emphasis on promoting black commercial farming, with a separate food security programme aimed at the poor¹⁴ (Jacobs

2003). Larger grants together with loan finance were offered to applicants, on a sliding scale, and an income ceiling was removed to encourage black entrepreneurs to apply. 'Commercial viability' now became a key criterion for approving the business plans required for all land reform projects.

Agricultural support programmes for land reform beneficiaries were announced, to be implemented by provincial departments of agriculture, but these have been under-funded, poorly planned and ineffective to date (Lahiff 2008). According to Lahiff (2007b: 1589), 'the official emphasis on commercial 'viability' has increased considerably since the beginning of the land reform programme', and 'the 'commercial' logic of LRAD is now applied to all land reform applicants, regardless of their resources, abilities, or stated objectives'. The key mechanism through which this commercial logic is applied is the business plan, which is usually drawn up by private consultants who have little contact with the intended beneficiaries:

Such plans typically provide ultra-optimistic projections for production and profit, based on textbook models drawn from the large scale commercial farming sector, and further influenced by the past use of the land in question. Production for the market is usually the only objective, and plans typically require substantial loans from commercial sources, purchase of heavy equipment, selection of crop varieties and livestock breeds previously unknown to the members, hiring of labour (despite typically high rates of unemployment amongst members themselves) and sometimes the employment of a professional farm manager to run the farm on behalf of the new owners...

A central weakness of most business plans is that they assume that the land will be operated as a single entity (i.e. as used by the previous owner), regardless of the size of the beneficiary group.... Because of the lack of support for subdivision, beneficiaries are often obliged to purchase properties much larger than they need, and even to expand the size of groups to aggregate sufficient grants to meet the purchase price. This results in widespread problems of group dynamics as former single-owner farms are turned into agricultural collectives.... (Lahiff 2007b: 158-89).

Outside of government, the language of viability dominates the discourse of a conservative alliance of landowners, agricultural economists and officials which is opposed to changes in agrarian structure, and argue instead for de-racialisation of landownership (*ibid*: 1589), and the establishment of 'viable and sustainable upcoming commercial farmers' (Doyer 2004: 8). This vision underpins the Strategic Plan for Agriculture agreed in 2001 between farmers' unions (representing white

and black commercial farmers) and government. The strategic goal for the sector is 'to generate equitable access and participation in a globally competitive, profitable and sustainable agricultural sector contributing to a better life for all' (DoA 2001: 3). Enabling black South Africans to become successful in commercial farming and agribusiness requires 'well designed and targeted efforts to level the playing field and bring about a more representative and diverse sector' (*ibid*: 8). Land reform is identified as critically important for ensuring 'broad-based participation in the agricultural mainstream', not for altering agrarian structure.

Despite the new focus on commercial viability, high rates of failure in land reform continued to make headlines, and in 2005 a National Land Summit involving a wide range of stakeholders called for a fundamental review of land reform policy, including the willing seller, willing buyer principle. Following the Summit, the idea that land redistribution should be embedded within a wider agrarian reform focused on poverty reduction and that creates opportunities for smallholder farmers, became common in policy and public debates. However, there has been little clarity on what this might mean for beneficiary selection, programme design, post-transfer support and agricultural policy more generally (Lahiff 2008).

In 2007 the Department of Agriculture commissioned a study of 'minimum viable farm size' in different agro-ecological regions, to guide land reform planning (Aihoon *et al.*, 2007). This would provide 'an acceptable level of disposable household income' to a farmer and a dependent family (*ibid*: 7). The study recommended that the baseline should be a minimum household income of R4000/month (equivalent to the mean income of 'emerging consumers'), well above the official poverty line of R2275/month. One rationale was that this target group would attract 'more competent small farmers than the more marginalized and less skilled communities' (*ibid*: 19). Adding premiums to compensate for risk and responsibility, and allowing for reinvestment of some income into the farming business, resulted in a targeted minimum net farm income of R7400/month. Farm sizes needed to provide such an income would vary by category of farming enterprise (based on extensive grazing, field cropping, horticulture, tree crops etc) and by agro-ecological region, the assumption being that the economics of commercial farming under current conditions would provide the basis for these calculations.

Such visions of viability echo the colonial discourses on modernization, and are sometimes located in terms of a neo-liberal framing of land reform that emphasizes business profitability. This view is expressed by private sector-funded think tanks such as the Centre for Development and

Enterprise (CDE, 2005, 2008), as well as organizations representing large-scale farmers. Given the legacies of colonial rule and apartheid, it is acknowledged by such groupings that the commercial farming sector has to be de-racialized, but the beneficiaries will be a few, relatively better-off black farmers and landowners, not the rural poor, because land reform 'is not the answer to rural poverty' (CDE, 2005: 30).

Political debates on land policy, however, continue to be disconnected. For example, in the wide-ranging resolution adopted by the ruling African National Congress (ANC) at its 2007 national conference in Polokwane calls for an 'integrated programme of rural development and agrarian change', and for policies that support agriculture and labour-intensive forms of production in particular, expand the role and productivity of small-holder farming by the rural poor and land reform beneficiaries. It also resolves to restructure value chains and promote co-operatives, and review policies and laws that promote 'capital intensity and farm consolidation ... and that make it difficult to redistribute land to a modern and competitive smallholder sector'¹⁵. The 2009 ANC election manifesto promises that the ANC will 'intensify the land reform programme' and provide the rural poor with 'technical skills and financial resources to productively use the land to create sustainable livelihoods and decent work'¹⁶.

These statements suggest that viability in land reform needs to be assessed in terms of a wider set of criteria than those derived from large-scale commercial farming, but what these might be is not spelled out. Meanwhile, in the South African context, the dominant technical framings centre, not on a broader focus on agrarian restructuring, livelihoods and welfare issues, but on narrow business and target income criteria of viability.

ZIMBABWE

In Zimbabwe land resettlement formed a major element of post-independence government policy. Ambitious targets were set in the early 1980s, and a commitment to offer land to war veterans and the extremely poor (Palmer, 1990). In Zimbabwe, welfarist goals for land reform have been combined with those that stress increased productivity and contributing to economic growth. The first post-independence resettlement programme set out to 'ameliorate the plight of people adversely affected by the war and rehabilitate them', and to 'provide, at the lower end of the scale, opportunities for people who have no land and who are without employment, and may... be classed as destitute', as well as to

'extend and improve the base for productive agriculture in the peasant farming sector' (Government of Zimbabwe 1980, cited in Gonese and Mukora 2003: 175). The second phase of resettlement, initiated in the 1990s, included the objective of reducing 'the extent and intensity of poverty among rural families and farm workers'.

In the early period there were essentially two competing ideas about viability in land reform. First, there was the political imperative to address racially skewed patterns of land holding, within the constraints of the Lancaster House agreement. Providing land for former guerrilla fighters was a key part of the demobilisation process, and addressing extreme poverty in the communal areas formed part of a wider commitment by the new independent government to achieving food security for the poor and a more equitable pattern of development. Second, in parallel, and seemingly not in contradiction with the first imperative, was a technical version of agricultural viability, to be secured through farm planning and technical models.

Resettlement plans thus proposed a variety of different 'models'. These included Model A schemes, based on a planned village settlement and land use similar to that promoted in communal areas in earlier decades; Model B schemes, based on a socialist cooperative model; Model C out-grower schemes, linked to state farms; and Model D schemes, based on a village ranch model. In practice the village-based Model A dominated the resettlement landscape. This was a close replica of the vision for re-organised communal areas advocated by the influential American missionary and agricultural extension advisor, E.D. Alvord, in the 1930s (Alvord 1948). It involved separate grazing and arable areas in the context of a mixed farming system, a planned village settlement dividing the two, and full-time farmers engaged in productive and efficient smallholder agriculture, gaining the benefits of new technologies through state-supplied extension. For new settlers who complied with this vision, familiar livelihood strategies had to fundamentally alter, with links to kin and associated labour and draught sharing arrangements, key features in communal areas, disrupted. A prohibition on external employment reduced opportunities for remittance-sourced investment, and, given the wealth status of many new settlers, there were major capital constraints on the new farms. In this early period resettlement farming was circumscribed by this narrow view of viability.

Over the course of the 1980s, however, a number of shifts in thinking and practice occurred: each had implications for how viability was thought about. First, the strict planning and extension regime was difficult to

maintain. Field-level agents realised that its strictures did not always make sense, and, at the margins at least, a certain amount of discretion was allowed (Alexander 1994: 334-35). Second, the early rush to do something about resettlement waned. Under the restrictive 'willing-seller, willing-buyer' conditions of the Lancaster House agreement, combined with the intensive planning and investment required to establish schemes, the programme was proving expensive. The pace of resettlement slowed and the ambitious targets set at 1980 were revised downwards. Third, with the slowing of the programme as a whole, the range of models of resettlement being promoted was narrowed essentially to the Model A schemes. Fourth, there was a significant shift in the process of selection of resettlement beneficiaries over time. While the initial settlers were indeed predominantly poorer (with fewer assets and less land in the communal areas), in the late 1980s asset-rich, skilled farmers became the main target group for resettlement. This was formalized in the government's 1990 Land Policy document (GoZ, 1990; see Moyo, 2000).

Through the 1980s these trends – and particularly the shift in resettlement beneficiaries

– had a significant impact on how the 'viability' of resettlement was viewed. At the beginning, the programme was seen very much in social welfare terms, linked to a political commitment to redress inequality and reward liberation fighters. Except at election times, the programme was out of the political limelight and not seen as a major priority. Indeed, by the mid-1980s, the commercial farming sector was booming, with continued substantial support from the government, combined with a growing number of private initiatives geared to entry into new markets, including horticulture, floriculture, and wildlife. With less – or only sporadic – political interest, it was easy to hand the programme over to the technocrats.

The agricultural extension service, Agritex, was by now the main government agency involved. Tasked with providing technical advice to agriculture, with its previous history largely focused on the commercial sector, planning and extension took on a particular form. In extension manuals and training programmes, viability was defined in narrow, technical and economic terms and centred wholly on agricultural production, emphasizing efficiency metrics drawing on neo-classical economics perspectives. The models used were based on farm management plans, rates of return and enterprise-specific budgets derived directly from the commercial sector. As the planners saw it, the drift of the land reform programme towards promoting the 'expansion of the communal areas' had to be stopped. If the resettlement programme was to

mean anything, they argued, it must provide income and production for the nation, and be a model for small-scale, entrepreneurial commercial farming.

At the same time, the early 1990s saw major shifts in economic strategy in Zimbabwe, especially following adoption of the structural adjustment policy (ESAP) from 1991, pushed by an ideology of neo-liberalism by the International Financial institutions. An export-oriented, free-market agenda drove government policy, with redistributive land reform now seen as a marginal issue, one which was not going to deliver the economic growth and foreign exchange earning possibilities that a focus on the commercial agricultural sector would. This remained largely in white hands, and efforts to 'indigenize' commercial farming took centre stage. In this period, land acquired for the resettlement programme was often offered on long-term leases to well-connected, black business people, politicians and security force personnel (Moyo 2000, Alexander 2006). With structural adjustment putting a major squeeze on government resources and donors being reluctant to support it, the pace of resettlement declined, with only 20,000 households being resettled between 1989 and 1996 (Moyo, 2000).

By the late 1990s results began to emerge from the long-term monitoring of resettlement households (Kinsey 1999, Deininger *et al.*, 2000, Gunning *et al.*, 2000; Hoogeveen and Kinsey 2001). Settler beneficiaries were reported as having higher incomes, lower income variability and more evenly distributed incomes (although higher childhood malnutrition) than their (near) equivalents in the communal areas (Kinsey 1999). Kinsey and colleagues argued that these (mostly) positive results emerged after a time lag, with an establishment phase where people organised themselves, gained access to services and accumulated productive assets (Kinsey 2003; Owens *et al.*, 2003). In sum, 'viability' had to be given a time dimension, and was not just the result of efficient production, but also about social organisation, institution building and coordinated post-settlement support. Emphasis thus extended to institutional and wider livelihoods perspectives, moving beyond the narrow neo-classical economics focus on commercial business models.

In this period, however, it was political processes, not empirical evaluation of performance and debates about different versions of viability, which put land reform back on the agenda. Land became central to a reassertion of the Mugabe government's populist/nationalist credentials (Hammer *et al.*, 2003; Moyo and Yeros 2005, 2007). In 1997, under the powers of the 1992 Land Acquisition Act, the government began a process of designation of 1471 commercial farms for compulsory purchase. As in

the 1990 land policy, there were to be two main target groups: poor, landless people from communal areas, and entrepreneurial farmers (with college training or a Master Farmer certificate). A dual approach to resettlement was recognized – with welfare goals for the poor and landless and a production and business orientation for others. Implicit assumptions about ‘viability’ were evident: productive use meant making use of the whole farm, and direct involvement in farm management; there was a new emphasis on the entrepreneurial, small-scale commercial farmer. While there were social welfare objectives running in parallel, and quotas set for particular categories of people (female headed households, war veterans) highlight more populist social justice criteria, the main thrust re-emphasized a commercial orientation for resettlement.

In 1998 the government presented the Phase II plan of the Land Reform and Resettlement Programme to a donor conference (GoZ, 1998). This identified the slow pace of land reform as a problem, and the urgent need to scale up the programme. Land reform, it was claimed, would contribute to the economy by increasing the number of commercialized, small-scale farmers using formerly under-utilized land, and, through careful planning, would result in environmentally sustainable use. Such a policy, it was argued, would increase the conditions for sustainable peace and social stability by removing imbalances of land ownership in the country (GoZ, 1998). A series of model plans for resettlement were presented, including a village model (A1), a village ranch model, a self-contained small-scale commercial farming model (A2) and an irrigation scheme model. Technical designs embodied versions of viability, making a clear distinction between village-based systems, where production was for household food security (A1, again echoing Alvord’s thinking in the 1930s), and commercial systems, where a business model of viability was assumed (A2, echoing the African Purchase Area, small-scale farming models of the 1950s).

Twenty years after Independence, land reform looked set to move forward with a vision of ‘viability’ once again firmly based on a dualistic system of agriculture, with commercial profitability and economic returns the central metrics of success. But it was not to be, as a new political dynamic took hold. An announcement by the government in late 1998 that two million hectares of land were to be acquired upset the careful balance achieved only months before. From 1999, in the midst of political confusion and intense debate generated by a Constitutional referendum and in the run-up to the 2000 national elections, land invasions started across the country. Sometimes these were spontaneous efforts involving only local people, sometimes they were organised by networks of war veterans, and

sometimes they involved the government and security forces. (Chaumba *et al.*, 2003a, Moyo and Yeros 2005, Marongwe 2009)

In parallel to the government's objectives, based on the commercial viability of the smallholder sector, other visions of the resettlement programme soon emerged – including claims for restitution of 'ancestral lands', compensation for war veterans, and wider social and equity goals linked to a radical political economy argument for the restructuring of the agrarian economy. Each suggested in turn different framings of viability, and the neat if uneasy consensus struck around a commercially-driven smallholder sector, linked to a reduced, but still significant, large-scale commercial farm sector, rapidly unraveled. The hastily concocted 'Fast Track Programme' confirmed elements of the earlier plans, including the distinction between A1 and A2 models, as well as maximum farm sizes by type of farm and agro-ecological region (GoZ, 2001).

Large targets for land acquisition were set – initially five million hectares - and were then significantly exceeded as land invasions continued. 'Beneficiary selection' no longer focused particularly on skilled, well-resourced entrepreneurial farmers, but responded to local circumstance, sometimes involving political pressure to offer poorer people land as well as the manoeuvring of elite interests (UNDP, 2002; PLRC, 2003; Sachikonye, 2003; Masiwa, 2004; Marongwe, 2003, Marongwe 2009).

The result has been a tense to-and-fro between the technocrats who have tried to reassert their authority and the politicians, who have continued to use the offer of new land as a form of patronage (Fontein, 2005). Thus technical definitions of viability – in terms of farm size, land use and business plans – rubbed up against political expediency and processes of local political accommodation. Thus, in any area today, some so-called A1 farms are larger than some A2 farms, with significant numbers of both A1 and A2 farms being smaller than what was deemed the 'viable' economic size for that particular natural region, as more people were squeezed in. In many places, disputes and uncertainties persist about the status of new settlements, with some areas still being 'informal', having been settled spontaneously during the invasion period with a wide variety of settlement and land use patterns. And alongside this variety of smallholdings, very large farms do still persist, sometimes held by former owners and sometimes having been taken over by a politically well-connected 'new' farmer.

Fast-track land reform has resulted in extreme diversity, certainly at a

Table 20.1: Paradigms for assessing the 'viability' of redistributive land reform.

	Neo-classical economics	New institutional economics	Livelihoods	Welfarism	Radical political economy	Marxism
Central focus	Well- functioning markets vs market distortions and	Linking equity and productivity	Development as livelihood improvement and poverty reduction	Poverty alleviation, social protection	Development as agrarian transformation	The Agrarian Question, focusing on the transition to capitalism in agriculture
Key concepts	Efficiency in factor productivity (land, labour, capital)	Transaction costs, institutions, the inverse relationship	Multiple and diverse livelihoods; de-agrarianisation	Household food security; vulnerability; social protection	Peasants are a social class exploited by a global corporate food regime	Social relations of production, property and power (class); dynamics of accumulation in agriculture;
Land and agric in wider context	Declining role of agric in economy; globalisation of agro-food markets is positive in lowering food costs	Unequal land distribution can constrain economic growth	Key role of agriculture in kick-starting growth; globalisation offers opportunities but often negative for the poor	Small-scale agriculture as residual, as safety net	A global corporate global food regime dispossesses peasants via market discipline & renders them 'redundant'	Links between agricultural development & industrialisation are a key issue Globalisation is a key feature of contemporary capitalism
Policies	Market-led land reform: reduce market imperfections; register private property rights; provide credit to promote investment	Market- assisted land reform: reduce policy biases favouring large farms or urban consumers; promote efficient markets; secure property rights; credit; land	State action to support smallholder production e.g. land reform, targeted subsidies, co- ordination of marketing.	Enhanced and secure access to land for small-scale food production as a safety net	Radical agrarian reform that secures rights to land and resources by peasant farmers	(a) Retain efficient large capitalist farms & improve conditions of labour), or (b) reforms that promote accumulation from below, or (c) support struggles for land by
Beneficiaries	Efficient farmers at any scale; (often economies of scale apply and larger farms seen as socially efficient)	Efficient small farmers who maximise returns to land	The rural poor with multiple livelihoods; small farmers	The rural poor and unemployed with limited access to jobs or alternative incomes	Food sovereignty	Landless workers, semi-proletarians, petty commodity producers, emerging capitalist farmers
Measures of 'viability'	Farm efficiency; rates of return on investment; minimum viable farm size	Farm efficiency; distribution of income; poverty impacts; growth multipliers	Livelihood impacts; poverty measures	Levels of household food production that make efficient use of household resources	Peasants (small family farmers); landless farm workers; the rural poor	A function of class relations and dynamics Agriculture's contribution to national economic growth
Key questions	How efficient is production on redistributed land? Returns to land, labour, capital?	What factors & conditions influence the efficiency of different scales of production?	What are the multiple sources of livelihood for land reform beneficiaries?	What difference does food production make to household welfare of land reform beneficiaries?	Does land reform transform exploitative agrarian structures and food regimes?	What dynamics of class differentiation and accumulation occur within LR?

national level, but also within districts and provinces, and even on single former farms (Chaumba et al., 2003b; Moyo, 2005; Scoones, 2008). The debate about 'viability' in Zimbabwe today therefore is particularly complex and much more contested than elsewhere in the region. At the level of formal policy there remains a distinction between a household food security oriented objective (for A1) and a business-oriented, commercial objective (for A2), reflecting a mix of livelihood and welfarist perspectives and neo-classical and new institutional economics perspectives respectively. Dualism remains a strong feature of official thinking about the agrarian economy, but the variations within and across these models is such that neat distinctions do not mean much in practice. As people establish themselves on the new farms a large range of trajectories are evident – and with this multiple versions of viability. Different people, with different assets, different connections and different ambitions are able to do very different things with the land. What happens on new land gained under the Fast-Track Programme is highly dependent on wider livelihood portfolios of individuals and households, as well as social, economic and political connections. Constructions of viability therefore vary significantly within the new resettlements, and may not tally with those in the minds of the technocrats and planners. Zimbabwean experience thus suggests that a fundamental rethink of definitions and framings of success and viability is required in land redistribution settings.

NAMIBIA

Namibia is somewhat different from South Africa and Zimbabwe, in that white settlers took possession of land that was mostly semi-arid in nature and suitable for livestock production rather than cropping. As a result it was relatively sparsely populated. People living in more densely settled areas with higher rainfall and thus suitable for cropping, found in the north of the country, were generally not dispossessed. White farmers established a commercial farming sector based largely on extensive livestock ranching, with farm size averaging between 5000 and 6000 hectares. Land redistribution is focused on these large ranches (Werner and Kruger 2007: 6).

Before independence in 1990, SWAPO thinking on land reform 'was essentially pragmatic' and its approach was modeled in part on the approach being followed by Zimbabwe in the 1980s, in relation to both methods of land acquisition and resettlement models (*ibid*: 6). In SWAPO's view farms in the semi-arid south of the country needed to be kept 'viable

and efficient' (*ibid*: 6). After independence, according to Tapscott (1995: 165), the most vocal claims for land redistribution came from wealthier black farmers wanting to increase their access to land. A national conference on land reform in 1991 tried to find a balance between concerns for addressing colonial dispossession, equity and efficiency. It resolved to base decisions on the redistribution of freehold land on 'scientific data' on issues such as the extent of under-utilized land, multiple ownership of farms, and 'viable farm sizes' (Werner and Kruger 2007: 9).

A land redistribution policy framework was adopted in which government purchases large scale commercial farms on from willing sellers, sub-divides the farms and allocates the new units to small-scale farmers. The objectives are to redress past imbalances, provide opportunities for food self-sufficiency, create employment in full-time farming, 'bring smallholder farmers into the mainstream of the Namibian economy by producing for the market', alleviate population pressure in communal areas, and allow those displaced by the war of liberation to re-integrate into society. Previously disadvantaged Namibians are specified as the targeted beneficiaries (RoN 2001: 3).

The main resettlement model that has been pursued is the Farm Unit Resettlement Scheme (FURS), in which individual beneficiaries owning not more than 150 large stock units are allocated a 'small' farm (notionally at least 1500 ha in extent in the north, and 3000 ha in the south)¹⁷ and enter into a long term lease agreement with government (Werner and Kruger 2007: 13). A small number of group schemes for unemployed farm workers and very poor people have also been implemented, mainly adjacent to communal areas in the north where cropping is feasible. In addition to resettlement, an Affirmative Action Loan Scheme (AALS) provides subsidies for purchase of commercial farms by black Namibians, with the objective of encouraging large herd owners from communal areas to 'become fully-fledged commercial farmers' (*ibid*: 14). By 2005 a total of 625 farms had been acquired through AALS, compared to 163 under FURS, or almost four times as many. Around 85 percent of freehold land remained in the ownership of whites (*ibid*: 17).

Although policy documents have occasionally voiced concerns that land reform was not doing enough to address poverty, government planning targets continue to be low. For example, only 36 families per annum were to be resettled under FURS between 2001 and 2006, compared to official estimates that 243 000 people were 'unemployed, homeless and landless' and eligible for resettlement (*ibid*: 20).

The majority of FURS beneficiaries earn most of their income off-farm from jobs or businesses, many are employed in low-level clerical jobs in government, and less than a third regard farming as their main occupation. One study concluded that they can be classified as 'lower-middle income households' (ibid: 21). Some studies suggest that the major farming problems facing beneficiaries have been inadequate capital to build livestock herd size to the point where the grazing resources of the farm are fully utilized, and lack of sufficient water points (Schuh *et al.*, 2006, cited in Werner and Kruger 2007: 23). Another study found that gross margins per annum from livestock sales in 2003 were around N\$ 6 799, compared to a 'decent living income' for Namibia estimated by the National Planning Commission at N\$ 15 000 per annum for a household of five (PTT 2005: 50, cited in Werner and Kruger 2007: 24). Lack of post-settlement technical support, especially in relation to management skills, has been commonly identified as a major problem.

Few data on AALS beneficiaries are available, but Sherbourne (2004: 16) suggests that the evidence on hand suggests that most are part-time rather than full-time farmers.

Many appear to be finding it difficult to repay their loans, in part due to the fact that land prices are much higher than the productive value of the land, and many have had to sell livestock to service loans at the expense of building up herd size (Werner and Kruger 2007: 25).

A notion of 'economically viable farm size' has been central to debates about land redistribution in Namibia, the key reference point being the profitability of commercial livestock ranching. The National Land Policy states that subdivision of large farms should be conditional on the 'maintenance of farming units of an economically viable size' (RoN 1998: 16, cited in Werner and Kruger 2007: 22). Government's Permanent Technical Team on Land Reform has suggested that 'there is a cut-off point below which a piece of land cannot be farmed on economically viable basis', but 'any size above this absolute minimum depends on the income expectations people have' (PTT 2005: 22, cited in Werner and Kruger 2007: 22). The Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation has accepted a target income of N\$15 000 per annum for a household of five.

Other studies suggest that small-scale cattle farmers on 1 000 ha could earn gross margins of around N\$ 27 000 per annum, and sheep farmers on 3 000 ha in the arid southern regions could generate a gross margin of N\$ 99 000 per annum. However, these potential incomes assumed that beneficiaries owned sufficient livestock, or had access to sufficient off-farm income to finance herd build-up, and had experience of managing medium-

scale farming enterprises (GFA 2003: 14, cited in Werner and Kruger 2007: 23), and it appears that few, if any, beneficiaries, meet these criteria. In contrast, the Namibia Agriculture Union argues that farming is a business and that the yardstick for viability should be 'medium enterprises' with a turnover of N\$ 1 million per annum, no more than ten employees and no less than 500 large stock units. This would require farm sizes ranging from 5 000 to 8 000 ha (NAU 2005: 54, cited in Werner and Kruger 2007: 22).

Werner argues that current models of resettlement do not accommodate the poor, and that alternative modes of land utilization need to be developed, such as range management areas used by groups organised into grazing associations, or even the expansion of communal areas (Werner and Kruger 2007: 31). This implies rather different interpretations of viability than those that currently dominate policy thinking, which are all based on scaled-down versions of commercial ranching.

RETHINKING VIABILITY IN SOUTHERN AFRICAN LAND REFORM

As previous sections have shown, debates about viability and land reform in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Namibia involve contested, overlapping and sometimes contradictory framings of viability. The result is often extreme policy incoherence and tension, even within political formations which are committed to particular visions of land reform. To move the debate forward, a substantial and informed deliberation on alternative framings – and their conceptual underpinnings - is urgently needed. How to go about this? What are the questions that must be asked? This is inevitably an intensely political process: different framings are pushed by different interest groups with different interests. Consensus on an ideal will always be elusive. But analysis and deliberation remains important, for without this dominant framings always have their way.

This final section therefore explores how the different frameworks introduced earlier define the 'success' of redistributive land reforms. Key elements are summarized in Table 20.1. The key questions posed at the bottom of the table are all important and complementary, and, in our view, need to be asked together to help define an effective, progressive and holistic approach to land reform.

For example, from the neo-classical economics perspective, the key

question is: how efficient is production on redistributed land? A concern with productive efficiency cannot be dismissed; policies that promote the optimal use of scarce land, labour and capital are important, while not accepting a simplistic emphasis on 'market forces' as the driver of wealth creation. From the new institutional economics perspective, the key question is: what factors and conditions influence the efficiency of different scales of production? Questions of scale of production are highly relevant in the southern African context, and so a focus on factors (including institutions and policies) that influence the efficiency of a variety of forms and scales of production is important, while not accepting the neo-institutionalist premise of a pervasive inverse relationship between scale and efficiency. From a livelihoods perspective, the key question is: what are the multiple sources of livelihood for land reform beneficiaries? In southern Africa, a focus on the multiple livelihood sources of poor people would help avoid an overly-narrow focus on farming alone, while not being blind to the structural roots of poverty. From a welfarist perspective, the key question is: what difference does food production make to household welfare of land reform beneficiaries? The potential impacts of land redistribution on household food security and vulnerability are unquestionably significant in southern Africa, while this does not mean accepting the view that this should be the main purpose of land reform. From contemporary radical populist perspectives, the key question is: does land reform transform exploitative agrarian structures and food regimes? In the southern African setting, one might therefore take on board a central concern with the need to reconfigure food production regimes and associated agrarian structures (at both the national and international scale), including the distribution of productive enterprises and associated property rights, and their performance in terms of output and net income, while not accepting an over-emphasis on the common interests of 'peasants' or 'the rural poor'. Finally, from the Marxist tradition the key question is: what dynamics of class differentiation and accumulation occur within land reform? A central concern with evaluating the economics of land reform in terms of a wider concept of social efficiency and the contribution of agriculture to the growth of society's productive capacities would be an important contribution in the southern African context. This would combine with a focus on the class and gender relations that underpin the organization of production and of agrarian structure, while not accepting the idealization of large-scale farming in some strands of the tradition, or an overly-narrow focus on class dynamics to the exclusion of other relevant factors.

Derived from our earlier analysis of experiences from southern Africa –

but also a reflection on underlying analytical paradigms – we suggest that each of the above questions must be posed in tandem in any assessment of the viability – or success – of land redistribution or agrarian reform. A debate about alternative framings and their implications for policy could then unfold in a way that would help shift the debate about viability away from the narrow, technocratic economism which has dominated the way such issues have been viewed in southern Africa and beyond to date. Too often this dominant framing has been allied to strong normative assumptions and well-articulated political and commercial interests, hooked into a long history of the assumed benefits of a dualistic agrarian system where modern, large-scale agriculture is seen as the ideal.

We suggest that a more textured and variegated approach to assessing viability, rooted in diverse conceptual frameworks, can provide a more effective – and ultimately more rigorous – approach to the assessment of redistributive land reform. Using the key questions highlighted in Table 20.1 and discussed above, Table 20.2 offers a set of assessment approaches that, in combination, could be used to explore these themes, redefining viability – and associated measures of success – in new ways. Each offers a different lens on the questions surrounding ‘viability’, drawing on different conceptual frameworks, with different foci and scales. Taken together, we argue, these provide a more comprehensive approach to assessing land and agrarian reform.

Eclecticism has its limits, however, and the different ‘lenses’ in Table 20.2 have to be integrated into a more coherent and robust alternative model that shows how they link to each other in practice, which will involve trade-offs and prioritization rather than simple ‘combination’. As discussed, this must inevitably be a political process, informed by deliberation about alternative framings, as each analytical framing of viability is necessarily co-constructed with a different politics of land and agrarian reform. In tandem with analyses of empirical data on the livelihoods impacts of land redistribution in southern Africa, the elaboration of such an alternative model is in progress¹⁸. This prioritizes assessing the material conditions of possibility of productive farming on redistributed land, in combination with other forms of income and means of securing a livelihood. It involves the evaluation of a number of critical factors: agro-ecological realities such as soil and climate, the availability of productive technologies appropriate to these realities, the availability of capital for investment in productive enterprises, and the structure and dynamics of agro-food markets and value chains. Our approach also stresses the need to factor in the social organization of agricultural production and incipient processes of socio-

economic (i.e. class) differentiation in (often complex) articulations with other social identities such as gender and age, with assessments foregrounding the socially and politically embedded nature of property rights, production systems and power relations in land redistribution programmes and contexts.

In sum, we argue that assessments of viability must embrace heterogeneity, complexity and competition in relation to multiple

Table 20.2: Assessing land reform and framing viability – six questions.

Conceptual framework and key question	Approaches to assessing land reform – and framing viability
<p><i>Neo-classical economics:</i> How efficient is production on redistributed land?</p>	<p>Returns to land, labour and capital across different farm sizes. Focus on production efficiency – and farm scale.</p>
<p><i>New institutional economics:</i> What factors and conditions influence the efficiency of different scales of production?</p>	<p>Transaction costs (e.g. labour supervision) and institutional factors (e.g. market functioning) affecting production in land reform areas. Non- market interventions to improve efficiency through coordination. Focus on institutional conditions – and programme-level scales.</p>
<p><i>Livelihoods perspectives:</i> What are the multiple sources of livelihood for land reform beneficiaries?</p>	<p>Multiple livelihood portfolios, with land access contributing to overall sustainability of diverse and differentiated livelihoods. Focus on livelihoods and local economic linkages – and household, community and regional economic scales.</p>
<p><i>Welfarist approaches:</i> What difference does food production make to household welfare of land reform beneficiaries?</p>	<p>Role of land – and agricultural production derived from it - as a source of social protection, and a buffer against shocks and stresses. Focus on vulnerability – and individual and household scale.</p>
<p><i>Radical political economy:</i> Does land reform transform exploitative agrarian structures and food regimes?</p>	<p>Changes in agrarian structure, and the position of and relationships between peasants, workers and large-scale farmers – and the wider agrarian economy. Focus on political economy and (food) sovereignty – and regional scales.</p>
<p><i>Marxism:</i> What dynamics of class differentiation and accumulation occur within land reform?</p>	<p>Patterns of accumulation (and decline, dispossession) across different classes – and genders - in land reform settings – and the impacts on wider economic growth and class</p>

objectives (what different people want), multiple livelihoods (what different people do), multiple scales (including linkages between local, national, regional and global economies) and multiple contexts (including the structural dimensions of political economy, as well as local project/scheme settings). In this approach, the politics of land is at the very centre of assessments of viability, and arises from the changing significance of land and farming for different categories of people in rural Southern Africa. Thus land reform *in whose interest* remains the core question that viability debates must seek to clarify.

CONCLUSION

A central challenge – certainly for southern Africa, but also beyond - lies in embracing a new approach to assessing land reform, and thus to understanding viability and success. This must go beyond the narrow technical view that currently holds much debate on land reform in southern Africa in its iron grip. As we have seen, the dominant approach is strongly influenced by project appraisal and farm management techniques developed for the large-scale commercial farming sector, is powerfully informed by ideas about efficiency derived from neo-classical economics, and is rooted in the dominance of a particular type of commercial farming within a highly dualistic agrarian structure. This approach is ideological, rather than technical and 'neutral'. This paper argues that alternative framings, from diverse theoretical and political traditions, help to expand and enrich the debate, and to clarify a central question: whose interests does reform serve?

The implications are several. One is that an expanded and more diverse set of measures of viability than those used in the past is required, which in turn requires new methodologies for the collection and analysis of data. A more plural, holistic and integrated set of methods will acknowledge the tensions and trade-offs between different pathways of agrarian change – and so also of different framings of viability and success. A second implication is that analysts and policy makers should be encouraged to make explicit their framing assumptions, underlying values and larger policy goals when assessing or advocating alternative policy options for redistributive land reform. This will help to locate their assessments and choices within the framework of competing paradigms and approaches, and facilitate consideration of coherence and consistency. It will also make deliberation about alternative policy directs more informed, and the trade-

offs – technical, economic and political – more explicit. Finally, bringing a wider array of perspectives into the picture, and making clear the different assumptions, political commitments and methodologies for assessment implied by each, could contribute to a more effective and coherent public debate about land reform policies. In southern Africa, in particular, this is urgently needed.

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NOTES

- ¹ The authors are members of a team investigating the livelihood impacts of redistributive land reform in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Namibia, over a three year period (2007-2009). The project also seeks to interrogate the meanings and impacts of alternative versions of viability within land reform policy frameworks. For details of the project and interim outputs, see www.lalr.org.za. An earlier version of this paper was presented to members of the regional team and the project reference group, and their feedback and advice is gratefully acknowledged, along with the comments of three anonymous reviewers. We would also like to thank the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) of the UK for their financial support for the project (project number RES-167-25-0037).
- ² <http://www.nepad-caadp.net/> and <http://www.agra-alliance.org/>.
- ³ In South Africa, the periods when the state pursued policies of segregation and apartheid.
- ⁴ We have chosen not to discuss approaches to viability or sustainability that stress the ecological dimensions of land reform and agricultural systems, since these have not been so influential in the southern African context to date. For a review of some of the central issues, see Boyce *et al.*, 2005.
- ⁵ See for example Lal (1983: 162-63).
- ⁶ It is important to note here that Bryceson's work is influenced as much by materialist political economy as by the livelihoods approach, which illustrates the difficulty of using this typology to try to pigeon hole individual authors. Our intention is to highlight the influence of key concepts and analytical paradigms in assessments of viability, rather than to try to classify everyone within a wide range of nuanced positions on land reform and agrarian change.
- ⁷ Bernstein (2002) distinguishes between oppositional (anti-capitalist) and accommodationist (to neo-liberalism) varieties of neo-populism. We classify the former as radical populists.
- ⁸ A civil society statement issued at the International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development in 2006 calls for agrarian reform that will benefit 'communities of peasants, the landless, indigenous peoples, rural workers, fisherfolk, nomadic pastoralists, tribes, afro- descendants, ethnic minorities and displaced peoples, who base their work on the production of food and who maintain a relationship of respect and harmony with Mother Earth and the oceans' (cited in Borras 2008: 143).
- ⁹ This phrase is drawn from Martinez-Alier (2002: 150), cited in McMichael 2008: 214.
- ¹⁰ Emphasis in original.
- ¹¹ Sender and Johnston argue that in South Africa the redistribution of commercial farms to small farmers will have only negative effects on the employment and incomes of the rural poor, who will benefit most from policies that promote 'capitalist farming and the growth of decently remunerated agricultural wage employment' (Sender and Johnston 2004: 159).
- ¹² Emphasis in original.
- ¹³ For more comprehensive country overviews, see papers by Lahiff (South Africa, Marongwe (Zimbabwe) and Werner and Kruger (Namibia) on www.lalr.org.za
- ¹⁴ The food security programme was never operationalized.
- ¹⁵ See www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/conf/conference52.
- ¹⁶ See www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/manifestos.html.
- ¹⁷ In practice, average resettlement farm sizes have been smaller than these targets: 1200 ha in the north and 2138 ha in the south (Werner and Kruger 2007: 13).
- ¹⁸ Under the auspices of the 'livelihoods after land reform in southern Africa' programme, www.lalr.org.za.