

Review

Agrarian and life style change in Zimbabwe: From colonization to the formation of government of national unity

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In a predominantly agricultural country like Zimbabwe, the problem of land reform has naturally been one of the most important subjects of political campaigning and economic turmoil. Zimbabwe's land distribution was racially highly skewed towards whites before land reform and the status quo was not politically, socially or economically sustainable. This has been the state of affairs since the British reform of 1890. It is this inequitable distribution of land that prompted the black people to take up arms and fight for independence. At independence, the government of Zimbabwe decided to embark on the land reform programme. It is therefore of paramount importance not to overlook the events of the then Rhodesia at colonization through to the independent Zimbabwe at the Fast Track Land Reform stage. This article therefore provides the untold story of Zimbabwean agrarian change from colonial times to the present. It clearly explains how land rights of both the whites and the black Zimbabweans were damaged by the government of Rhodesia and later by the government of Zimbabwe.

Key words: Colonization, government of national unity, land reform, land invasion, racial discrimination.

INTRODUCTION

Land is an important and sensitive issue amongst all Zimbabweans. According to Jill (2005), land is a scarce resource, a corner stone for reconstruction and development. The life of people living in rural areas mostly depends on its availability and use. Rugege (2004) stressed that the interests of the majority have been damaged by the interests of the few who controlled this limited resource. Past land policies were a major cause of insecurity, landless citizens and poverty in Zimbabwe (Moyo, 1986). This has severely restricted effective resource utilization and development. By 1965,

the white Rhodesians¹ seized control of the majority of fertile land within the country and forced blacks to use the poorer, arid and unproductive ground. The white, large-scale commercial farmers (less than 1% of the population) occupied 45% of all agricultural land, of which 75% was found in the most agriculturally productive areas (Shaw, 2003). After minority rule ended in 1980, Zimbabwe inherited a thriving agro-based economy. To address the imbalances in land access while alleviating population pressure in the communal areas, extend and improve the base for productive agriculture in the smallholder farming sector and bring idle or under-utilized land into full production, the government of Zimbabwe adopted land reform and a resettlement program premised on land acquisition and redistribution (Kinsey, 1999). The land reform that has unfolded in Zimbabwe since 1980 has had diverse consequences.

There is no single story to the land reform programme in Zimbabwe. For many years hailed as southern Africa's bread basket, Zimbabwe's agriculture has been on a

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Abbreviations: GDP, Gross domestic product; BSAC, British South African company; EIRR, economic internal rate of return; NECF, National Economic Consultative Forum; MDC, Movement for Democratic Change; GNU, Government of National Unity; IMF, International Monetary Fund; IDB, African Development Bank.

¹ Zimbabweans before independence (18 April 1980)

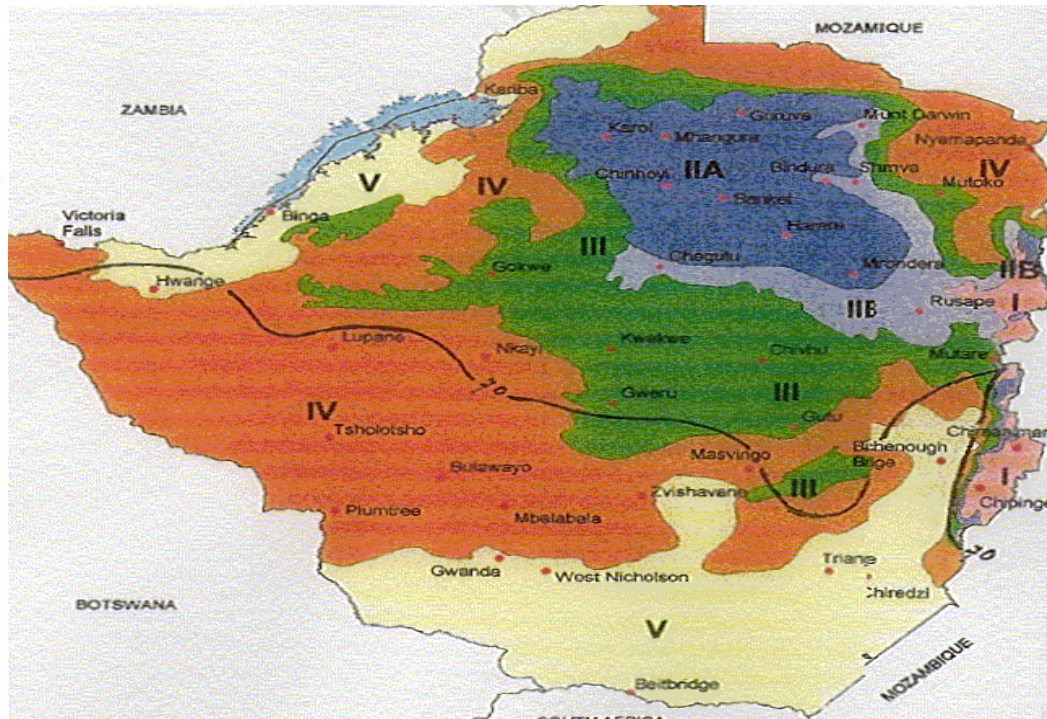


Figure 1. The five natural regions of Zimbabwe, Source: surveyor-general, 1984.

steady decline, since year 2000 shrinking by 50% in seven years, triggering a wave of food shortages and pushing up the prices of food stuffs (Richardson, 2006). Since 2000, the agricultural sector in Zimbabwe has been in disarray. Small-scale farming families obtained more land since the land reform, but government support has disappeared almost completely (Richardson, 2006). External inputs such as fertilisers, seeds and pesticides are very difficult to get, and when available, economically out of reach for most farmers. In addition, successive droughts, poor investment in production, equipment and inputs, lack of know-how and shortage of labour have taken a toll on Zimbabwe's agricultural sector, which is failing to feed its hungry population or supply raw material to its agriculture-based industries (Richardson, 2007). The collapse of the agricultural sector has brought huge food shortages. One in every 3 Zimbabweans, or about 4 million people, depends on food aid (FAO, 2001). To add on to this, the ecological degradation is enormous, exacerbating poverty even further. Although the agricultural sector declined dramatically in the early 21st century, it is still an important productive sector of the country's economy. It regularly generates about 15% of the gross domestic product (GDP). More than one-half of the total labour force is engaged directly in agricultural activities (Chitiga and Mabugu, 2008).

Zimbabwe land question

Colonialists moved into then Southern Rhodesia (now

Zimbabwe) in 1890 with the hope of prospecting minerals but it became clear that the area would not be a second Rand (now South Africa). The settlers turned their attention to the land for agricultural purposes, and the herds of cattle possessed by the native population (Moyo, 1999). The Rudd concession which was fraudulently obtained from the Ndebele King Lobengula in 1898 gave the settlers mineral rights (Mukanya, 1991). According to Martin and Johnson (1981), the first group of settlers was granted 3 000 acres of prime land without compensation to the black population. Each member of the company police force was granted 4500 acres of the best agricultural land in Mashonaland. To force the black Zimbabweans off the prime land the company introduced laws. In 1898, the Native Reserve Order in Council was established. This created areas where blacks would live away from the whites (Gundani, 2002). The areas designated for indigenous people became known as the Native Reserves. This was followed by a systematic massive expropriation of about one sixth of the total farming land in the country. According to Utete (2003), the native population was removed from regions I, II and III and then forced to crowd into regions IV and V² (Figure 1). Historical records of the period 1896 to 1897 depict a

² Zimbabwe's agricultural land (about 32.2 million hectares) is divided into five natural ecological zones (natural regions). Natural regions I, II and III (covering about 12.6 million hectares) are characterized by high rainfall, lush vegetation and rich soil, properties that are most suitable for agricultural production. On the other hand, natural regions IV and V (covering about 19.6 million hectares) have low rainfall, scant vegetation and soil properties of low inherent fertility.

sorry picture of a systematic violation of the rights and dignity of the indigenous people under white domination which resulted in the indigenous people waging a war of liberation known as *Chimurenga/Imfazwe* (The First Chimurenga) during this period (Gundani, 2002). The war was basically a struggle to recover lost land and dignity.

In 1914 the settler population increased to about 28000. This increase in population exacerbated the conditions of the indigenous population; they had to make way for the increasing population of the settlers. About 750,000 Africans occupied 24 million acres, while 28000 settlers owned 22 million acres of the best farming land by 1914. This means that 3% of the population owned 75% of the prime land, while 97% controlled the rest of the land, of which 32% was arid (Gundani, 2002). In 1915 the British South African Company (BSAC) expropriated some high potential land that was adjacent to the Native Reserves and created the Reserve Purchase areas. For the African to procure land within this area one had to hold a master farmer's certificate. But the settlers did not need a master farmer's certificate or any other license to own and manage large-scale farms; being white was enough (Utete, 2003). The year 1923 marked the end of the company rule and ushered in a new dispensation, the government of the Responsible Authority. In this scenario Southern Rhodesia became a self-governing colony subject to the British government with regard to a few constitutional provisions. The elected responsible authority did not address or redress the uneven distribution of land in Zimbabwe; in fact it worsened the conditions of the native population (Gundani, 2003). In 1930, Land Apportionment was instituted and this formally divided the country between the races (Mukanya, 1991). Under the Land Apportionment Act, 51% of land was reserved for white settlers (who numbered about 50,000), 30% for African reserve areas (for about 1 million blacks) and the remainder for commercial companies and the colonial government (Palmer, 1977). The whites reserved for themselves the more fertile land with high rainfall and Africans were forcibly removed from some previously demarcated native reserves, whose conditions were considered good for settler use and crowded into reserves whose rainfall and soil was poorer (Utete, 2003).

The arid soils and sparse rainfall could not guarantee adequate food for the ever growing African population. Faced with food shortages and malnutrition due to the land-restrictive agricultural system, in terms of land, the black farmers left reserves to work for wages in mines and commercial farms. To further weaken the indigenous people agricultural income base, restrictive acts such as the Maize control act and the cattle levy act were put in place (Mukanya, 1991; Gundani, 2002). The maize control act made sure that the blacks had limited marketing outlets and the Cattle Levy Act basically reduced numbers of cattle owned by a black farmer (Moyana and Sibanda, 1989). The period that followed

the end of the Second World War ushered another new dispensation in the struggle for land in Zimbabwe. There was a marked influx of immigrants from Britain into Zimbabwe. About 150000 postwar émigrés were received in the country from Britain (Gundani, 2002). In order to fine-tune the racist policies of the colonial government, the Land Apportionment Act of 1930 was amended many times. In 1945 the Land Acquisition scheme was established in order to facilitate the handing out of farms to the World War II veterans as payment or grant. To create room for the Second World War veterans, the colonial government forcibly removed about 10000 Africans from the land that was earmarked for the settlers by the Land Apportionment Act of 1930 (Mukanya, 1991; Gundani, 2003). As the number of whites increased in the country the land loss to blacks also increased. Africans crowded in the native reserves where they were exposed to poverty, malnutrition, as well as to disease and death. Overcrowding led to severe land degradation of the native areas. The amendment of 1951, which became known as the Land Husbandry Act, gave the settler farmers a green light to use forced labour (*Chibharo in Shona*) (Mukanya, 1991). It sanctioned the compulsory destocking of the African herds and limited African families to five herd of cattle and eight acres of land. Every family had to comply or face the confiscation of the total herd.

The condition was exacerbated by the introduction of taxation that had to be paid in cash. They had no choice but to work on settler-owned farms and in mines. The final amendment of the Land Apportionment Act of 1930 came in 1961. Its purpose was to further institutionalize racial segregation. Under this amendment more and more land was allocated to the settler community. Statistically according to Gundani (2002), European Areas stood at 49 149000 acres, Native Areas remained static at 21 600000 acres. Native Purchase Area was 7 465 000 acres; this was land that could be bought by some natives that had the money to do so. Unassigned Land, 17 193 000 acres, was not allocated to any particular group of people. Forest Land, 591 000 acres, was allowed to remain as forest. Undetermined Land stood at 88 000 acres. In spite of the high birth rate and the terrible conditions in the African areas the land apportioned to the indigenous people remained static. From the introduction of the Responsible Authority in 1923 down to the end of Winston Field's rule in 1963, nothing was done to address or redress the racial nature of land distribution in Zimbabwe. Ian Smith came to power through a coup that was conducted against Winston Field. Ian Smith's government managed to remove 88 000 black farmers from the so called European Lands (Mukanya, 1991). In 1969 the Land Tenure Act was introduced. Many more black Zimbabweans were evicted to create space for more white immigrants. While half of the country belonged to the whites who constituted about a quarter of a million,

the poorer and dryer half belonged to the majority black population which stood at about 5.5 million. With the horrible life that the indigenous people experienced in the reserves the possibility of an uprising was inevitable.

Another war known as the Second Chimurenga, the main objective of which was to regain and redistribute the lost land to poor and landless blacks, was fought from July 1964 to end 1979 (Utete, 2003). The war and its subsequent resolution ultimately led to the implementation of universal suffrage. The guerrillas had promised the masses that land would be distributed to the native population as soon as the war came to an end; that all the farms that belonged to the whites were going to be redistributed to the native population, who according to the principles of the war were the original and real owners of the land (Sachikonye, 2005a). With this understanding in their minds the Africans supported the war to its end. On 18 of April Zimbabwe was declared independent from British colonial rule. At independence, 6000 white farmers owned 15.5 million hectares; 8500 black farmers operating on a small scale held about 1.4 million hectares; and approximately 4.5 million communal farmers³ held 16.4 million hectares (Gundani, 2002). Most of the communal land was located in the periphery and margins of the country prone to droughts, where the soil fertility was very poor and where rainfall was very low (Utete, 2003).

Land reform and the resettlement programme

Zimbabwe inherited a thriving agro-based economy upon independence in 1980 characterized by duality (small-scale communal farms and large-scale commercial farms) and a racially skewed land ownership pattern. This unequal access to use land forced the government of Zimbabwe to adopt land reform and a resettlement program premised on land acquisition and redistribution. According to Kinsey (1999), the main long standing objectives of this program has been to address the imbalances in land access while alleviating population pressure in the communal areas, extend and improve the base for productive agriculture in the smallholder farming sector and bring idle or under-utilized land into full production. Despite the new government's commitment to land reform, it was highly constrained by the constitutional provisions of the Lancaster House agreement signed in 1979. 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 for the new government taking over from a war economy (Mukanya, 1991). Many rural people who supported the liberation struggle on the understanding that they will get back their land lost to colonialists took land reform seriously and were impatient (Utete, 2003).

The first phase of land reform (1980 to 1998)

The first phase of land resettlement programmes was launched by the Zimbabwean government in September 1980, just five months after independence. According to Utete (2003), the objectives of this first phase of land reform were as follows:

1. To reduce civil conflict by transferring land from whites to blacks;
2. To provide opportunities for war victims and the landless;
3. To relieve population pressure in the communal lands;
4. To expand production and raise welfare nationwide; and
5. To achieve all of the above without impairing agricultural productivity.

The Government of Zimbabwe acquired 3498 444 hectares of land and resettled 71000 families under this first phase of land reform programme in the period between 1980 and 1998. The programme provided crop input packs (seeds, fertilizers and pesticides) and tillage services for half a hectare to each family in the first year of settlement. Commendable progress was achieved in providing infrastructure for the black settlers in the early stages of resettlement. The majority of black settler families experienced real increases in incomes, which exceeded those of their counterparts in communal areas (Utete, 2003). Some settler families invested in substantial land improvements, permanent housing and production and transport equipment such as tractors and scotch carts. In addition some families diversified into specialized crops like tobacco, paprika and cotton. Phase 1 of the resettlement programme achieved an ex-post economic internal rate of return (EIRR) of 21%, well above the 14% at its planning stage (Zimbizi, 2001). Resettlement also created more jobs than large-scale land holdings.

Afforestation programmes were implemented in most of the resettlement schemes by the Forestry Commission, which provided extension services in schemes that enhanced natural woodland management. Conservation measures were employed on arable land to prevent soil erosion and water loss. Sustainable wildlife utilization was enhanced through the CAMPFIRE Programme in appropriate agro-ecological regions. Land acquisition, following the willing seller willing-buyer approach, limited

³ Reside in communal areas and practice agriculture for subsistence purposes. Sometimes they produce excess crops and livestock products for sale. A notable feature of communal areas is that the inhabitants do not possess title to the land. The land is communally owned and allocated to families for arable farming and settlement. Historically, allocation of arable land in the communal areas was the responsibility of the chiefs. After the independence in 1980 this responsibly was given to locally elected district councils. In many areas of Zimbabwe, there is some conflict between these district councils, now known as rural district councils, and chiefs with regard to the power over land allocation.

the capacity of spatially matching land supply with demand for resettlement. Land sold in very small parcels was expensive to develop for resettlement. Scarcity of land, exorbitant prices of land available on the market and the inability of the government to pay exorbitant land prices demanded by the white settlers, limited its capacity to achieve its targets. The 14th Constitutional Amendment and the land Acquisition Act of 1992 were intended to facilitate the land redistribution programme through land designation and compulsory land acquisition. However, the land acquisition process still remained cumbersome and expensive. During the first phase resettlement programme the major donors were the British government, the European community, the African bank and the Kuwait government. The government of Zimbabwe paid market prices for land. Land tenure in resettlement areas was based on a permit system⁴ for arable, grazing and residential land, in terms of permits issued under the rural land act. According to Utete (2003), the government of Zimbabwe learnt the following lessons from the first phase of land reform:

1. Land redistribution can result in better and higher financial and economic returns;
2. Environmental losses can be mitigated through afforestation projects and following good farming methods;
3. The pace of land acquisition needs to be enhanced for the sake of social stability, poverty alleviation, peace and justice;
4. There is need to support fully the resettled families in order to optimize agricultural production.

The second phase of the land reform programme

The government of Zimbabwe and all land reform stakeholders who include, farmer organizations (including CFU) industrial and financial organizations, the land task force of the national economic consultative forum (NECF) and civic organizations using the lessons of the first phase launched the second Phase of the land reform and resettlement programme in september 1998. Its objectives were to redress the inequities in land resource allocations and to provide a more efficient and rational structure for land through:

1. Ensuring greater security of tenure to land users;

⁴ The Government of Zimbabwe provided settlers with written permits to reside and use the land on which they settled in a setting overseen by resettlement officers rather than by established local authorities. During the First Phase Resettlement Programme, according to Utete (2003), the period over which the permits were valid was not specified and the settler has the right of use of land for as long as he does not violate the provisions of the permits. However, "most settlers feel that the permit system was insecure" because in theory, the permits could be withdrawn without adequate reason or protection of settlers by local institutions. This motivated Phase II to shift the land-tenure policy towards providing 99-year leases.

1. Promotion of investment in land through capital outlays and infrastructure;
2. Promotion of environmentally sustainable utilization of land;
3. Retention core of efficient large-scale commercial agricultural producers;
4. Transfer of not less than 60% of land from the commercial farming sector to the rest of the population.

Phase II of the land reform and resettlement programme commenced in October 1998 with a two year inception phase where farms covering 2.1 million hectares were to be acquired for resettlement. Infrastructure and farmer support services were to be provided using government of Zimbabwe and donor community resources. The white commercial farmers contested acquisition of most of the identified farms. The donor community failed to deliver the promised resources. The government of Zimbabwe using limited resources, was only able to acquire 168 263 hectares and to resettle 4 697 families between October 1998 and June 2000. Between October 1998 and June 2000 the resettlement programme slowed considerably as donors who pledged to financially support the programme failed to deliver on their promises.

The fast track land reform programme in Zimbabwe

Under the Lancaster House Constitutional provisions, no meaningful land reform programme could take place. The Constitution obligated the government to acquire land on the willing buyer willing seller principle during the first ten years of independence. When land was offered to the Government, in most cases it was expensive, marginal and occurred in pockets around the country, making it difficult to implement a systematic and managed land reform. Moreover, land supply failed to match the demand for land for resettlement. Added to the complicating factors was the absence of international support to fund land acquisition. In a bid to speed up the process of land acquisition and resettlement, Government passed the Land Acquisition Act of 1992, following the introduction in 1990 of Constitutional Amendment Number 11. These legal instruments had the effect of freeing Government from the willing seller willing buyer phase. The process however remained slow, cumbersome and expensive largely because of the commercial farmers' resistance. For example, when the government designated 1471 farms for compulsory acquisition in December 1997 a total of 1393 objections were received of which 510 were upheld. The British conservative government under John Major had agreed to assist with further funding for land reform, in 1996. However with the coming to power of Tony Blair's Labour Government in 1997 the British reneged on the agreement. The labour Government refused to advance the process of land reform, in effect reverting to British obligations under the Lancaster House understanding.

This unexpected stance by the British government marked the beginning of worsening relations between the two Governments. No further funds were made available for Zimbabwe Land Reform Programme. Disappointed at the pace of land distribution, the people brought pressure to bear on the government by resorting to the vigorous protests and land occupations. In an unprecedented move, villagers in Svosve communal areas in June 1998 occupied Igava Farm vowing to stay until the government provided a written promise to resettle them. The villagers cited poor soils and overcrowding as factors that had forced them to occupy white farms next to their villages. Similar and extensive occupations of white commercial farms followed at Nyamandhlovu in Matabeleland, Nyamaguru in Manicaland and Nemamwa in Masvingo. The villagers unwillingly acted in accordance with the Government orders for pulling out from the occupied farms. The first bombardment by a land hungry and increasingly impatient peasantry had however been ignited.

In February 2000, a Referendum was held on a draft constitution that could have formed the basis for a lasting solution of the land issue. The Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), which was composed of landowners and others in opposition to the referendum, defeated President Robert Mugabe's proposal. The MDC, along with Western governments that disagreed with President's land-reform policies, insisted his economic solutions, namely the seizure of property, worked in the short term but did not create a more sustainable economy for the long term. It seemed that President Robert Mugabe's long struggle to redistribute land had been defeated for good. However, a few weeks after the referendum, a combination of war veterans, unemployed youths and other members of ZANU PF began a series of violent land occupations throughout the country without support of the law.

The farm invasions had a devastating effect on the white commercial sector, the main producer of food in the country. The farm invasions increased as the country was nearing the crucial general elections in June 2000. Initially, the government told the international world that the land invasions were a result of land-hungry peasants denied access to land by the white commercial farmers. However, it became quite obvious that the government was using land as its last trump card to win the hearts and minds of voters for the elections. The land discourse increasingly became racialised. The land invasions led to deaths of many black citizens and some white farmers. The violations included assaults, property damage, detention, abduction, death threats and displacement from home areas.⁵ Against the background of the land occupations by the impatient landless people, namely the absence of international support for land reform notwithstanding the government desire to engage

the former colonial power and the international community, the rejection of the 2000 Draft Constitution, partly as a result of the British influenced political opposition and the continued legal challenges by the white commercial farmers, the government embarked on the fast track land reform programme.

Having lost two years with little activity between October 1998 and June 2000, the government of Zimbabwe resolved to accelerate the second phase of the resettlement programme, kick-starting the Phase II Resettlement with an accelerated pace, code-named "fast track", initiating those activities which can be done quickly. This phase was expected to cover the period of July 2000 to December 2001. The objectives of the "Fast Track" Phase were as follows:

1. The immediate identification for compulsory acquisition of not less than 5 million hectares for Phase II of the resettlement programme, for the benefit of the landless peasant households.
2. The planning, demarcation and settler emplacement on all acquired farms.
3. Provision of limited basic infrastructure (such as boreholes, dip tanks and roads) and farmer support services (such as tillage and crop packs).

It was envisaged that secondary infrastructure like schools, clinics, rural service centers, staff houses, etc will be provided as soon as resources become available. The fast track approach to resettlement also termed *jambanja* or the *Third Chimurenga* in Zimbabwe was officially launched on 15 July 2000 to speed up the pace of land acquisition and resettlement, under the provisions of which 1 million hectares would initially be acquired to resettle 30,000 households. Thereafter another 4 million hectares would be expropriated to accommodate about 120,000 households within three years. However, the target of the programme soon grew exponentially, from 5 million hectares to 9 million and then to 11 million in the following two years. It was now predicted that altogether 300,000 households and 51,000 black commercial farmers would receive land under the A1⁶ and the A2⁷ models, respectively.

In reality, however, only about 127,000 households and 7,200 black commercial farmers had been allocated land by mid 2003 (Utete, 2003; Sachikonye, 2005b). By July 2003, the amount of land used for large-scale commercial farming had shrunk to 2.6 million hectares, from 11.8 million in 1999 (Utete, 2003). The Third Chimurenga entailed a comprehensive redistribution of land that was

5 Human Rights NGO Forum (2001). *Who was Responsible? Alleged perpetrators and their crimes during the 2000 Parliamentary Election Period*.

6 Model A1 is intended to decongest communal areas and is targeted at land-constrained farmers in communal areas. This model is based on existing communal area organization, whereby peasants produce mainly for subsistence.

7 Model A2 is a commercial settlement scheme comprising small, medium and large scale commercial settlement, intended to create a cadre of black commercial farmers. This model is, in principle, targeted at any Zimbabwean citizen who can prove farming experience and/or resource availability and is based on the concept of full cost recovery from the beneficiary (People First, 2001).

accomplished with considerable chaos, disorder and violence and this disrupted production and destabilised human security. As about 11 million hectares changing hands within a three-year period, it was the largest property transfer ever to occur in the region in peacetime (Utete, 2003). Although the government announced that the programme would be complete by August 2002, the fast track land reform did not come to any end. Land occupations continued until mid 2003, and then on a diminished scale in 2004. Although the government began to instill some order and regulation into the fast-track process from mid 2003, intermittent occupations of farms and evictions of farmers continued, even into 2005. This last phase of the process included the 'land grabs' by the black elite, in contravention of the government's 'one person, one farm' policy. There was considerable resistance to this policy. Conflicts between the new commercial farmers and settlers on small farms also broke out from time to time during this phase (Sachikonye, 2005a).

Post-fast track land reform

A total of 11.8 million hectares of land was occupied by large scale commercial farms while the communal area occupied a total of 16.4 million hectares of land in June 2000 (Utete, 2003). Following the implementation of the *Third Chimurenga* a new picture emerged with regard to land ownership patterns. In an attempt to force peasants into rural farming areas, the government of Zimbabwe embarked, without warning, on a widespread campaign to demolish 'illegal' market stalls of small traders and informal domestic buildings in the shanty towns of Harare, Bulawayo and other urban areas. This campaign was codenamed "Operation *Murambatsvina*" (a Shona word variously translated as "Drive out the Rubbish" or as the Zimbabwe Government prefers "Restore Order"). The large-scale demolition operation was not confined to informal markets and shanty towns: as it progressed, some long-established, substantially built homes and businesses were also destroyed, as were "illegal structures" without planning approval in the more prosperous suburbs of Harare. The purpose of this operation was to bulldoze shantytowns in order to force peasants out of cities and onto farms in rural areas. Hundreds of thousands of people were left homeless due to Operation *Murambatsvina*. Critics claim that President Robert Mugabe instituted this policy to punish people who voted against him in the past.

This exemplifies why foreign and domestic critics referred to Mugabe as a dictator and an ineffective, power-hungry leader who was unconcerned about the well-being of his people. However according to Robert Mugabe the main objectives of the operation were to clean up cities which were now dirty and also reduce crime rate in cities, which was increasing due to

overcrowding of unemployed youths. Zimbabwe's struggle for land reform was a pervasive sub-Saharan African dilemma. Many countries throughout the region continued to suffer from similar postcolonial struggles. Global organizations and world leaders agreed that in order to help African countries rise out of poverty, resources and wealth had to be redistributed more equally. However, instead of economically elevating the lower class, fast-paced policies like the one adopted by Zimbabweans seemed to bring more poverty. Zimbabwe has been experiencing economic hardships since 2000. Its economy shrank faster than any other country that is not at war (Richardson, 2006). Zimbabwe's currency was nearly worthless from hyperinflation until it resorted to using the American dollar and the South African Rand, its financial institutions were in disarray until the formation of the Government of National Unity; its world-class farms sat idle and its manufacturing, mining and export sectors declined steeply until September 2008. According to Tupy (2006), the fast track land reform programme destroyed property rights, the foundation of the economy and led to a chain reaction, which was exacerbated by additional actions of the government. As the market's foundation, property rights serve many purposes: they bind together work and rewards, expand time horizons from days to years, allow wealth to be transformed into other assets, and encourage foreign investment. The speed at which an economy can develop ultimately depends on the ability of the government to inspire trust among citizens, banks, and investors that it will fairly enforce the rule of law. Between 1998 and 2001, foreign direct investment dropped by 99% in Zimbabwe.

In addition, the World Bank risk premium on investment in Zimbabwe jumped from 3.4% in 2000 to 153.2% by 2004 (Richardson, 2006). A distinctive trend in most agricultural production since redistribution has been a decline in output over the past four years, although there have been one or two exceptions. Maize production declined from an average annual output of about 1.7 million tonnes in the mid-1990s to between 0.9 million and 1 million tonnes in 2000 to 2004. In communal areas, maize yields declined from approximately 1.3 million tons per hectare in 1986 to approximately 0.8 million tons in 2004 (FAO, 2007). Since 2000, from being a regional breadbasket, Zimbabwe has become a food importer and between 2001 and 2002 and the country has needed to import maize to meet its population's nutritional requirements (Moyo, 2004). Similarly, wheat production has fallen by about 20% from the average annual output in the mid 1990s. Declines in the production of soya beans and groundnuts have also been reported (Central Statistical office, 2004). Tobacco production, the main foreign currency earning crop in Zimbabwe declined heavily from an average annual output of about 200 million kilograms to 65 million in 2003 to 2004 season (Sachikonye, 2005a). There was also a smaller drop (of about 10%) in the cotton output of both large-scale and

small-scale farmers during this period (Central Statistical office, 2004). The production of sugar, tea and coffee has generally remained steady since the beginning of land reform in 2000 (Central Statistical office, 2004). According to Sachikonye (2005a), there appear to have been small increases in the production of paprika, citrus and vegetables between 2000 and 2004, as well as in floriculture. Clearly there is a huge difference between the productivity levels of the white farmers operating on a large scale, who have now largely been expelled from the farms, and those of the resettled farmers who are working smaller farms. However according to Utete (2003), some of the resettled farmers particularly those growing commercial crops like paprika, and cotton highlighted that they had become instant millionaires after marketing their produce whilst others were able to purchase livestock for the first time in their lives. Some newly resettled farmers in Manicaland and Mashonaland East Province had ventured into Agriculture. High unemployment levels combined with high cost of living in recent years have made the poverty situation worse amongst the Zimbabweans. Particularly caught in this double squeeze are the urban unemployed and the urban poor. Other food insecure groups include farmers who were affected by the January dry spell and February March heavy rains in 2007 causing water logging predominantly in the southern parts of the country, and more than 200 000 farm workers who have been out of work since the farm invasions or land acquisitions for redistribution. Most farm workers live under extremely difficult conditions and some have become destitute (Sachikonye, 2005b). Farm workers who are jobless, landless and without homes in communal areas have tried various coping strategies which include piecework jobs on the farms where they live. These piece work jobs are often temporary, insecure and badly paid. But their situation in aggregate does not seem to be as desperate as previously thought since many of the workers may still be partially employed and partially paid by the new land owners. Some earn income from informal trading in agricultural produce and second hand clothes, and in craft materials in local markets. In rural areas where food insecurity is becoming a problem, the main coping mechanism is remittances from men or children working in the cities. If the urban unemployment increases due to factory reducing their levels of production because of shortages of inputs of production, this income stream could dry up taking away one of the important coping mechanisms from the rural poor and food deficit households.

Zimbabwe after 13 February 2009

In March 2008 a general election was held but this did not bring an outright winner from the three main political parties. This forced the three parties to form a

Government of National Unity in February 2009. There can be no doubt that since the formation of the Government of National Unity (GNU) on the 11th of February 2009, there has been positive improvement in the livelihoods of the people. Since the introduction of the multi-currency system, the run-away inflation has been dealt with and has been below 2% for most of 2009 (Shumba, 2010). Zero duty on basic commodity imports has meant that food is available and that consumer prices are stabilised. The GNU have resulted in agricultural inputs becoming available in the shelves of many shops as in the past before the fast track land reform. Bank loans have also been made available for the farmers. Firms manufacturing agricultural inputs have reopened and others which were operational during hard times have increased their production capacity, creating employment opportunities for both the skilled and unskilled civilians in the country (Shumba, 2010). Some schools and hospitals that had closed have now been reopened. International finance institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the African Development Bank (IDB) have expressed willingness to reengage with Zimbabwe, and have offered technical support. Some of the Zimbabwe Diaspora population has begun to return home. Politically, the GNU has significantly reduced incidents of violence in the country. Processes such as constitutional reform have also given the people of Zimbabwe hope. Since the formation of the unity government on 13 February 2009, there has been an intensified wave of attacks on commercial land by thugs, all in the name of 'land reform'. Farmers and their workers have been physically and brutally attacked, valuable produce and equipment has been stolen, and the fast-track prosecution of farmers in the country's courts has been encouraged (Bell, 2009).

An estimated 200 farmers have spent months fighting their legal cases in courts, already eroded against them by directives from the Attorney General Johannes Tomana. The escalating legal fees alone have left many farmers facing ruin. The mainstream Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) party has reiterated its calls for an end to the new wave of farm invasions that have been visited on many farming communities throughout the country. The MDC says these invasions have a potential to rock the boat of the inclusive government and block the desperately needed financial assistance that many international donors have promised. During his 85th birthday celebrations in Chinhoyi in February 2010, President Robert Mugabe said that the land reform was irreversible and accused white farmers of refusing to vacate designated land. He stated that they would instruct police to deal with 'resistant' farmers. As this was not enough, President Mugabe said land reform will continue despite objections from his partners in the unity government to seizures of commercial farms which they say are hurting the country's prospects for securing reconstruction funding. The MDC through Tendai Biti, the

minister of finance of Zimbabwe after formation of the government of national unity however said “*Every farm that is invaded shuts a door of international goodwill and vindicates assertions by financiers and the broader global community that Zimbabwe is far from respecting basic things like property rights. Every case of disturbances shatters the hopes of domestic, regional and international actors who are key catalysts to Zimbabwe’s economic revival.*” Meanwhile several white commercial farmers continue to be arraigned before the court for refusing to vacate their farms to make way for black benefactors of land reform.

CONCLUSION

Land dispossession of the black population in Zimbabwe was driven by the need to reduce competition to white farmers and to create a pool of cheap labour to work on the farms and mines and, later industry. The experience of Zimbabwe demonstrates that the market on its own is unable to effectively alter the pattern of ownership in favour of equity for the targeted beneficiaries of land reform, as well as in favour of broader goals of job creation and poverty alleviation. The state should therefore actively intervene in the land market through the use of expropriations to a small extent, scrapping of restrictions on subdivision of land, extensive support for small-scale agriculture, reversing the growing concentration of land holdings, promoting the principle of “one farmer one farm”, changing the current large-farm-size culture, regulating foreign ownership and through regulation of land use to optimise social benefit. The “willing buyer willing seller” approach should be used to a larger extent and expropriation (with compensation) used as an instrument of last resort where urgent land needs cannot be met, for various reasons, through voluntary market transactions. Government must not support land invasion since it affects property rights and markets resulting in the decline of the economy as was the case in Zimbabwe. Black citizens who want to buy land should buy it through the government. The government needs to evaluate the need for the person to have land because if land is just sold to blacks, unequal distribution of land amongst blacks may arise and this might be an expense to the government in future decades, when the government would have to redistribute land again amongst blacks.

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