

BERGEN RESOURCE CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

3 DECADES OF LAND REFORM IN ZIMBABWE

**Perspectives of
Social Justice & Poverty Alleviation**

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Table of Contents

1. Introduction:	3
2. Land, Social Justice & Poverty in Zimbabwe	3
2.1. Locating the concepts of social justice and poverty in Zimbabwe	4
2.2. Framing the Issues	4
3. Legacies of the White Settler State	5
3.1. White Land	5
The Labour Reserve Policy	6
4. Perspectives of the State and Social Justice in the African context 1960-1980.....	6
4.1. IMF policy conditionality and social justice in Africa	6
4.2. The Independent State in Africa as an agent of Social Justice	7
5. Zimbabwe: The situation from 1980-2000.....	8
6. Land Reform 1980-1990	8
6.1. Priorities: Social Stabilisation – Growth with Equity	8
6.2. The ODA’s assessment study of the Land Resettlement Programme (1988)	9
7. Land Reform 1990-2000	10
7.1. Zimbabwe’s Prime Agricultural Land – distribution & usage 1991-1999	10
7.2. Small holders take over production of key commodities	11
7.3. Dismantling Infrastructures – impacts for Food security	12
7.3.1. Strategic Grain Reserve (SGR)	12
7.3.2. Silos	12
7.3.3. Domestic Consolidation Trading Structures	13
8. Poverty under Structural Adjustment	14
8.1. The socio economic and political impacts of ESAP	14
8.2. Poverty Assessment Study Survey (PASS) 1995-1997.....	15
8.2.1. Labour productivity on white farms	15
8.2.2. Poverty in Large Scale Farms	16
8.2.3. Non monetarised gains from agriculture	16
9. Social Justice in Zimbabwe between 1980-2000	16
10. The Land Reform Agenda 1995-1998	17
10.1. ODA Land Appraisal	17
10.2. Policy Consultative Processes.....	18
10.3. The Land Identification Process and Listing	19

10.4.	The Government's Agrarian Reform Proposal (1998)	20
11.	Perspectives of Land Reform in Zimbabwe 1980-2000.....	21
11.1.	The Media	21
11.2.	CFU Public Relations	21
12.	Land reform 2000-2008	22
13.	The new Agrarian landscape:	23
13.1.	Redistributive Outcomes.....	23
13.2.	Crop Production & Markets: Emerging Trends	24
13.3.	Cotton.....	25
13.4.	Tobacco	25
13.5.	Food Crops	25
13.6.	Oil seeds.....	27
13.7.	Plantation Crops.....	27
14.	General conclusions	27
14.1.	Poverty Alleviation	28
14.2.	Reflections on Social Justice in the new context	29

1. Introduction:

Social Justice and Poverty are located in a context. Up until the late 1990's in Zimbabwe social marginalisation and poverty were the direct legacies of unreformed 'white land' policy structures.

Zimbabwe's diversified agricultural model today, is the outcome of 3 decades of agrarian reform; one which produced very positive results in the 1980's, stalled in the 1990's under the contradictions of structural adjustment policy, and took a radical turn in the 2000's.

The small farm sector today provides productive agrarian sector activities to over five times as many people as was ever achieved under the white farming model and is considered to be the 'dynamic' sector of today's agricultural economy¹. Numerous studies have produced strong supporting evidence that it also makes the greatest contribution to poverty alleviation and social justice. However, the lopsided media framing of land reform continues to have a major influence on donor policies which explicitly deny support to most of these new farmers².

The aim of this presentation will be to locate questions of social justice and poverty in Zimbabwe's broader socio economic context and to review changing perspectives of these issues through 3 decades of land reform.

2. Land, Social Justice & Poverty in Zimbabwe

From the early 1900's until 1980, the country we now know as Zimbabwe was governed under a doctrine of white racial supremacy which denied civil and economic rights to the indigenous population.

White land policy was the founding institution which defined the rationale for the entire system of government, politics and the socio-economic sphere which placed whites in a dominant position. The white land system embedded arguments about the incompatibility of 'indigenous' backwardness and 'white/European' modernity to justify its exclusionary socio economic structures.

The resulting discourses have continuously legitimated institutional scepticism against indigenous participation in the agrarian economy in Zimbabwe. Why then do we know so little about this and the socio economic issues leading up to 2000 which stimulated demands for reform?

The appearance of the Movement for Democratic Change as a political opposition party in 1999 is presented as a main justification to assert land reform was simply a way for a corrupt and unpopular regime to hang on to its rural constituency. This explanation denies the fact that a coherent land reform policy with clearly specified aims was articulated in 1981 and that detailed plans were successfully implemented as a matter of policy in the first two decades of

¹ Hanlon et al (2013)

²This point is well illustrated in the following article <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/sep/24/zimbabwe-coffee-farmers-struggle>

Independence. It also disregards the fact that socially and economically progressive outcomes they achieved, and recognized by the international community. Why then has there been so little media attention to this particular set of facts?

2.1. Locating the concepts of social justice and poverty in Zimbabwe

In considering the questions of social justice and poverty alleviation after land reform in Zimbabwe, it is useful to start off by thinking about how our existing understandings of the relationships between these topics and the land issue have been shaped. Up until land reform in 2000, social justice and poverty alleviation were not identified as key issues connected to land reform in the media; any mention of a connection between the two was usually dismissed as baseless populist pandering³. After land reform the discourse gravitated towards a human rights perspective where violations against white farmers anchored a new articulation of social justice. However, the broader questions of social justice as they relate to poverty alleviation have not been adequately situated in the media narratives about land in Zimbabwe.

2.2. Framing the Issues

Framing an issue involves locating an existing situation or status quo along a spectrum of values. Values are influenced by prevailing views about desirable social or economic goals and justifiable means to achieve them.⁴ The broader environment of philosophical or ideological thinking which accords different levels of importance to the role of state and market forces in reconciling economic, social justice, equality and rights claims also plays an important part in guiding understandings of what is at stake.

The environment which has shaped the possibilities for social justice in former colonies has its origins in a historical disjuncture dating back to the 17th century, between the Enlightenment discourse about inalienable human rights to equality and justice and the persistence of a mercantilist economic system founded on systematic human rights violations against populations subjected to colonization and slavery. The contradictions between these two systems of thought were brought into direct confrontation in the 20th century by the popular movements for emancipation which as late as the 1960's led to the end of colonialism in Africa and the granting of civil rights to African American descendants from slavery in the US. Popular emancipation from systems of white racial hegemony in Rhodesia and South Africa was only achieved at the end of the 20th century.

In this paper we begin by discussing the two major institutional legacies of the white settler system: the Labour Reserve and continuing white control over the agrarian economy which remained unreformed at Independence in 1980. We then consider the policy steps which brought about major changes in land, labour and food production from 1980-2000. In the second part of this paper we map out the new tri modal agrarian model and review the World Bank's (2012) latest economic data regarding agrarian production in Zimbabwe. We conclude with a discussion of the perspectives which have framed Africa's experience of

³ Alexander 2006, Moyo 2000a

⁴ March & Olsen (2000a & b)

social justice and poverty alleviation in the past decades and reflect on what the outcomes from Zimbabwe's land reform potentially contribute to these narratives.

3. Legacies of the White Settler State

3.1. White Land

From their arrival in the late 1880's, the white settlers were completely reliant on indigenous agriculture for their food requirements⁵. Colonial records show that before the expropriations of land in the mid 1920's, indigenous farming was economically viable and successful with some black farmers cultivating land areas of over 150 acres – which at the time was more than many white settlers.⁶ By 1899 over 9 million acres of prime land had been transferred into the hands of British companies mostly for speculative purposes and a further 6 million acres was in the hands of individual white settler owners who had no particular interest in agriculture⁷. Corporate control over huge tracts remained a main feature of land distribution into the 21st century⁸.

After failing to make any significant mining finds the settlers decided to establish Rhodesia as self-governing, permanent white settler state. The State's relations with different constituencies were defined by a by an ideology of 'European' supremacy which assigned exclusive economic, civil and land ownership rights to whites. 'Natives' were designated as a 'subject race' whose only economic function was to provide labour for the white population. Blatantly discriminatory policies against African farmers were specifically intended to eliminate their production of marketable crops and protect white farmers from competition.⁹

The Land Apportionment Act of 1930 laid down the legal foundation for white land policy. The Act classified over 50% of the country's total productive land resources located in the best geo-climatic locations as white land available for private ownership by whites only. The white population numbered fewer than 50,000 at the time. The balance of the land was transferred to the custodianship of the white settler state for the establishment of nature, wildlife and 'native' reserves – the latter in an area covering less than 30% of the country's land area and located in the driest areas, least suitable for cultivation or human habitation. This new classification legitimated the forced removal of the indigenous population of 1.1 million from the 'white' areas, to 'native reserves' and also laid down the foundations for future removals of illegal occupants or 'squatters'.¹⁰

⁵ Herbst 1990

⁶ Loewensen (1992:38)

⁷ Loewensen (1992:36)

⁸ Moyo 2000b

⁹ Herbst 1990:17. citing Palmer 1977.

¹⁰ Herbst 1990:17-18

The Labour Reserve Policy

Whites funded their extravagant ‘colonial’ lifestyle through the exploitation of over 97% of the population which was black; they performed all domestic duties, operated and laboured in all sectors of the economy for the sole benefit of whites who alone enjoyed the surplus. ‘*The labour reserve economy and complete control over the distribution of wealth allowed the whites to have the best of all worlds*’ (Herbst 1990:227)

The ‘native reserves’ were subject to special laws intended to eliminate peasant farming and indigenous enterprise, leaving the indigenous population no option but to provide cheap labour to whites. By 1937, crowding in the ‘native reserves’ was already intense while in white areas 45% of the land was completely unutilized.¹¹ White agriculture, industry, manufacturing sector and manual labour jobs never provided employment for more than about one 10th of the indigenous population and this transformed the ‘reserves’ into large human repositories which systematically produced poverty¹². Increasing removals of indigenous persons to make way for new white settlers in the 1940’s and 1950’s further aggravated the problems of policy driven poverty in the ‘reserves’ linked to the exclusion of African from economic activities¹³.

In 1980, 6-8 million people lived in conditions of squalor in the ‘native reserves’ whereas about 6,000 white families occupied about 15 million hectares of land in the best geographical areas for agriculture and used only about 30% of it productively.¹⁴ The white land system historically provided the white minority in Rhodesia with the legal means to monopolise the country’s main productive resources and to exclude indigenous economic activity.

4. Perspectives of the State and Social Justice in the African context 1960-1980

4.1. IMF policy conditionality and social justice in Africa

At the time of Zimbabwe’s Independence in 1980, the uneven application of policy conditionality by multilateral lending agencies in Africa influenced the conditions for social justice orientated policies during African de-colonisation and appeared to validate white settler rule.

In the 1960’s most former African colonies gained their Independence except the two permanent settler colonies of Rhodesia and South Africa who chose to step up human rights violations against the indigenous majority of their populations instead. At about the same time the IMF decided to attach policy prescriptions to budget deficit funding loans¹⁵. The practical result of this was to direct government policies towards fulfilling conditions laid down by external lending institutions rather than attending to issues of social justice.

¹¹ Loewensen (1992:37)

¹² Weiner et al, 1985, Moyo 1995

¹³ Alexander 2006

¹⁴ Herbst 1990, Lebert 2006, Moyo 1995.

¹⁵ Havnevik et al, (1987)

On the other hand, South Africa's sky rocketing budget deficit was principally the result of massive spending on regional military destabilization of independent countries and internal repression of the indigenous population. Unlike other countries in Africa however, South Africa was not subject to policy prescriptions about how to use the money it borrowed from the IMF¹⁶.

As Loxley writes:

*'IMF credits ... facilitate such spending (on the military destabilization of neighbouring countries) and help legitimate apartheid by improving the system's international credit worthiness. The very fact of the fund (IMF) dealing with South Africa serves to legitimate apartheid.'*¹⁷

Whereas the oil crisis and global economic downturn of the 1970's left many newly independent countries in a state of crisis, Rhodesia continued to benefit from its position as traditional 'corridor' for exports from neighbouring Zambia and Malawi, and close connections to South Africa where sanctions 'busting' channels were well established¹⁸.

Influential leaders such as Margaret Thatcher openly gave their support to the regime in South Africa and numerous other companies including prestigious firms such as IBM, Daimler and Ford ignored the UN trade embargo¹⁹. These factors generally gave the impression that the economic aspects of white settler rule were more important than their implications for social justice.

*'As the South African loans themselves demonstrate, the international financial institutions are already politicized. Ultimately the issue is one of political power and the multilateral agencies are controlled by states to whom human rights issues are of distinctly secondary importance to their own perceived strategic interests'*²⁰.

4.2. The Independent State in Africa as an agent of Social Justice

The euphoria of African Independence thus quickly gave way to a new 'Afro pessimism' and a revival of 'cultural' perspectives to explain socio economic or political breakdown through conceptual formulations of African society which are strongly reminiscent of anthropological explanations employed to justify colonial policies in earlier times.

Amongst the most powerful of these formulations has been the idea of state - society relations in post Independent Africa as a neo patrimonial society where affective relations, big leaders

¹⁶ In spite of UN sanctions - South Africa was classed by the IMF as a member of the 'European' group and continued to enjoy preferential terms on budget reducing loans from the IMF during the same period. Havnevik et al 1987 (1987:56)

¹⁷ Loxley in Havnevik et al 1987 (1987:56)

¹⁸ For details of this see Mlambo, Pangeti, Phimister (2000:58-59)

¹⁹ These companies have recently faced court actions by victims of apartheid
<http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/08/21/apartheid-lawsuit-idUSL2N0GM1R520130821>

²⁰ Loxley in Havnevik et al 1987 (1987:56)

and extended familiar type relations are more about tribe – less about the evolution of structures, classes or other types of relations governed by different logics than those of affective relations. Such ideas have made it possible to assign simplistic explanations about a ‘big man’ who is able to dictate a pattern to explain a whole range of politics and policies.

Such explanations obscure the struggles between groups, classes and even races, regions and other identities which are being played out over such important issues as for instance land reform. When we consider the development of the public narratives about land reform in Zimbabwe in the past decades, these same tendencies immediately become apparent. Virtually from Independence onwards, academic observers have also sought to apply this label to the State in Zimbabwe and the mere fact that land reform was on the agenda at all was used as a given, to justify the classification²¹. This explains why land reform policy has attracted so little rigorous analytical attention and is consequently so poorly understood.

5. Zimbabwe: The situation from 1980-2000

Zimbabwe was the pilot project to test whether the policy of reconciliation could work as a substitute to land reforms or restitution in transiting from white minority rule where the white population controlled the majority of agricultural land. It was closely watched as a precursor for South Africa. Independence in 1980 and the ‘commendable’ agreement to leave white farms intact was a vital part of the story. The narrative of economic collapse after land reform which is often dubbed: ‘breadbasket to basketcase’ – actually relies quite heavily on this compromise at Independence to shore up the argument that land reform in 2000 was irrational.

6. Land Reform 1980-1990

In the period 1980-1990 the Government respected the Lancaster House Agreement and focused its efforts to address the land question on resettlement and projects to modernize African agriculture.²² The policy of ‘reconciliation’ prevented any substantive reform to the legacy of white monopoly over the economic sphere from being undertaken. (Jenkins, 1997)

6.1. Priorities: Social Stabilisation – Growth with Equity

The Government prioritized restoring stability in the country by resettling populations displaced through the war and ‘native reserve’ policies who were legally and illegally settled throughout the country²³. The fact that white land policy had created chronic underutilization of the country’s best land resources was acknowledged by the white state authorities before Independence. The first *Transitional plan for Agriculture 1982-85*²⁴ aimed to resettle

²¹ See for instance the explanation proffered by Bratton (1994)

²² Moyo (1995), Tshuma (1997).

²³ Moyo 1995, Tshuma 1997

²⁴ Quoted in Weiner et al. (1985:262).

162,000 families on approximately 9 million hectares of land²⁵. Resettlement was intended to establish a small to medium scale indigenous farming sector.

Land was to be acquired through both the *willing buyer willing seller* framework specified under the Lancaster House settlement and recognising *de facto* occupiers of abandoned commercial farms and some tracts of ‘state’ land.²⁶ The pace of land acquisition was at its peak between 1980 and 1985 with about 430,000 hectares acquired each year.²⁷ From 1985, new funding constraints imposed by the Thatcher government in 1984 slowed land reform down to a mere 75,000 hectares per year - it became clear that acquiring sufficient land to satisfy resettlement objectives would not be achievable using available methods.²⁸ In an effort to diffuse this standoff, the Zimbabwe government invited the UK’s Overseas Development agency (ODA) to conduct an independent assessment of its land reform to date. Below is a summary of the report’s findings.

6.2. The ODA’s assessment study of the Land Resettlement Programme (1988)²⁹

In 1988 the UK’s Overseas Development Agency (ODA) carried out a study of the Government’s resettlement programme which produced three very important conclusions. The first was that by the end of 1987; just 7 years after Independence approximately 40,000 households had been resettled on 2.2 million hectares, at a cost of £80 million³⁰ which was below the plan’s budget.³¹ The programme’s implementation was found to have been well planned, delivered in an organised way and associated with heavy investment in infrastructure – all of which ‘*indicated it was an impressive achievement*’.³²

The second major conclusion was that the majority of households had benefitted considerably from resettlement in at least one way: either through increased opportunities for income generation and/or improved access to water, health or education services. Given that most of the resettled families came from the most deprived sector of the population, the report concluded that the land resettlement programme had a positive impact on poverty reduction.³³

The third positive finding of the report which – as one of the report’s authors has noted - was also perhaps the most controversial: was the finding that the economic rate of return on the land resettlement programme for the national economy was 21 percent. This was not welcome news for the Commercial Farmers Union (CFU) who had actively propagated the view that the resettlement programme was failing. (end of citation).

²⁵ Herbst (1990:43).

²⁶ Moyo & Matondi (2003:3), Worby (2001:487), Tshuma (1997:55).

²⁷ This included land abandoned by white farmers before Independence.

²⁸ Moyo (2004:6).

²⁹ The whole section is cited from Baron Bonarjee (2012:88-89)

³⁰ Cusworth, co-author of the original report – summarised findings from the ODA report 1988 (Bowyer-Bower & Stoneman eds., 2000:26).

³¹ Moyo 1995.

³² Cusworth, co-author of the original report – summarised findings from the ODA report 1988 (Bowyer-Bower & Stoneman eds., 2000:26).

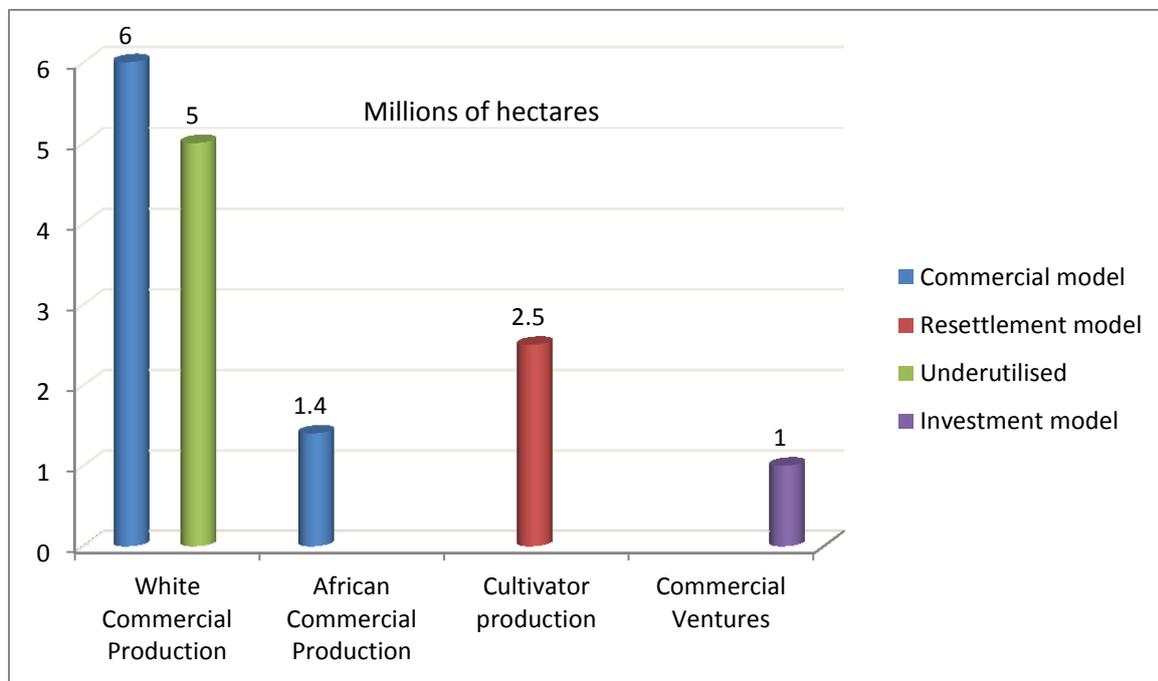
³³ Cusworth, co-author of the original report – summarised findings from the ODA report 1988 (Bowyer-Bower & Stoneman eds., 2000:26).

7. Land Reform 1990-2000

By 1990, 50,000 families people had been resettled on about 2.78 million hectares of land³⁴. About 5 million hectares of land was required to complete the resettlement programme. The New National Land Policy in 1990 was introduced as the second phase of land reform; the explicit aim was to resettle remaining 110,000 families originally intended for resettlement in 1980. More emphasis was placed on criteria of ‘efficiency’, ‘capability’ and ‘productivity’³⁵ in the targeted beneficiaries.³⁶

7.1. Zimbabwe’s Prime Agricultural Land – distribution & usage 1991-1999

In 1991, a World Bank report³⁷ confirmed that between 50-65 percent of the 11.4 million hectares of prime land remaining under white commercial agriculture was underutilized. This problem was a direct consequence of the white land policy which until 1990, had made it unlawful for indigenous people to be settled on ‘white’ land – even if it was unutilized.³⁸



Zimbabwe’s Prime Agricultural Land – distribution & usage 1991-1999³⁹

From 1991-1995 a radical structural adjustment programme (ESAP) advocated by the World Bank was adopted and implemented. It was assumed that market liberalisation alone could overcome racist legacies which continued to block off institutional access and economic channels of participation to the majority of indigenous people.

³⁴ Moyo (1995:123, 2000c).

³⁵ Moyo (2000a).

³⁶ Moyo (2000a), Alexander (2006).

³⁷ World Bank (1991).

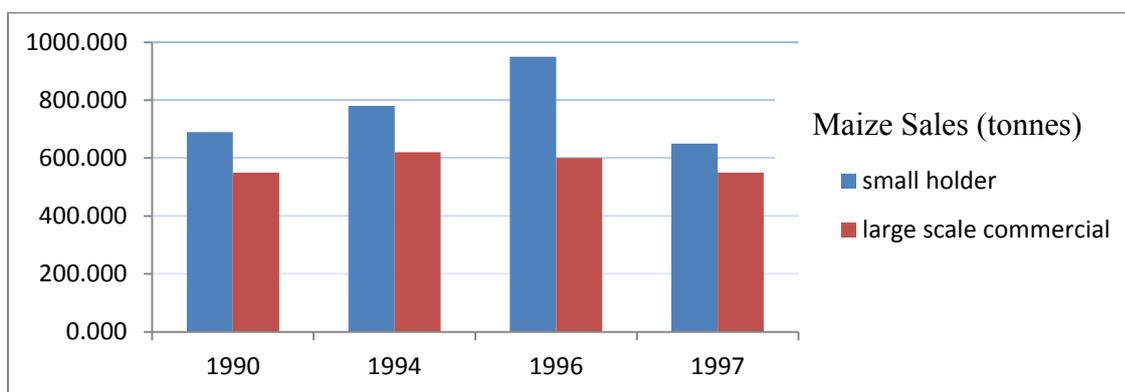
³⁸ These were referred to as Tribal Trust Lands before Independence, and Communal Lands afterwards. For more info on the development of this segregated situation see Herbst 1990, Moyo 1995, Alexander 2006.

³⁹ Adapted from Baron Bonarjee (2012:113)

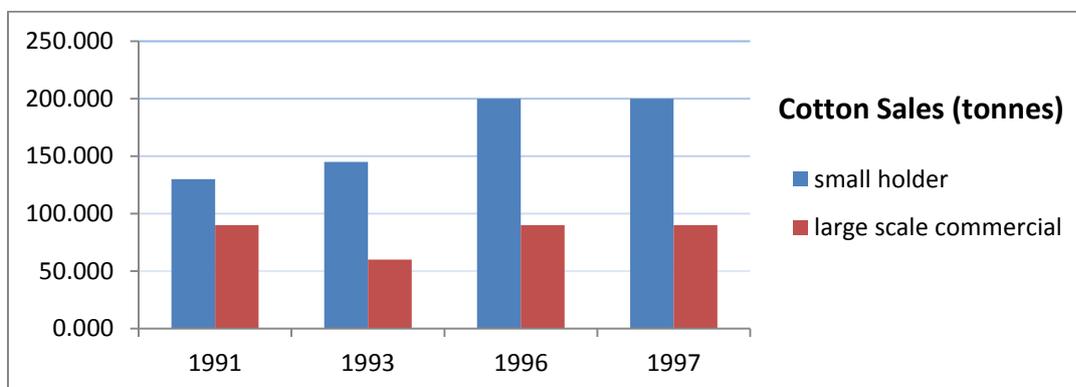
7.2. Small holders take over production of key commodities

During the 1990's White Commercial farming effectively withdrew from domestic food production. Tax breaks and other financial mechanisms under liberalisation provided incentives for commercial farmers who controlled the country's best agricultural land to turn away from food production and use it for activities with low labour requirements. Establishing wildlife resorts, tourism, and flowers were especially popular.⁴⁰

In spite of declining investment in agricultural extension in accordance with the World Bank agricultural memorandum (1991), and white farmers' continuing control over the best land, smallholder agriculture became more productive than large scale commercial agriculture in the main food crops and in years of good rainfall, dominated the market in both maize and cotton (Moyo 1995, Burgess 1997, Whiteside 1998).



Market Domination of Maize production/sales by Small holders



Market Domination of Cotton production/sales by Small holders

Both tables adapted from Bowyer-Boyer figure 6.1 (2000:64)⁴¹

Note:

Cotton is drought resistant and remained relatively constant in 1991/92 and 94/95 drought years

⁴⁰ 'Land Reform under Structural Adjustment in Zimbabwe' Moyo (2000). Nordiska Afrika Institute takes an in depth look at these changes.

⁴¹ Extracted from Baron Bonarjee 2012.

7.3. Dismantling Infrastructures – impacts for Food security

The World Bank’s agriculture sector memorandum (1991) advocated the removal of the core structures in place to ensure food security in Zimbabwe.

It prescribed trading away silo stocks, closing storage facilities and crop collection depots in communal lands, and dismantling trading consolidation structures. Communal farmers and the rural population suffered dramatically as a result of these changes.

7.3.1. Strategic Grain Reserve (SGR)

Zimbabwe’s rain seasons can be unpredictable and up until 1991 the strategic grain reserve managed by the grain marketing board ensured food security in the event of drought. In 1991 the World Bank pressured the Government to trade away silo stocks. In 1991/92 the country suffered a devastating drought and consequent crop failure, forcing the GMB to launch a massive purchasing exercise to meet the emergency requirements on external markets. This singular event incurred differential losses between the export price in 1991 and the import price in 1992 varying between Z\$400 to Z\$1200 per tonne.⁴² It was the greatest contributor to the GMB’s subsequent deficit which led to its emasculation and eventual bankruptcy.

GMB Losses and Subsidies 1986-87 to 1992-93 (million Z\$)

	1986/87	1988/89	1989/90	1990/91	1992/93
Losses	215	193	163	169	497
Subsidies	210	156	161	185	747

Source: IMF⁴³

7.3.2. Silos

Alongside its resettlement programme, during the 1980’s, the Government had prioritised the development of grain storage and distribution in the communal area successfully doubling the number of grain depots from 38 in 1980 to 78 in 1990 and also establishing 121 crop-buying points in the communal areas. In spite of their poor geographic locations, resettlement and communal farmers produced impressive output levels of maize and other food security crops. Infrastructure – notably irrigation and agricultural extension services were considered key to ensuring more consistent outputs for farmer in the small holder sectors and this was especially necessary in view of their increasing contribution to food security in the country.⁴⁴ World Bank demands in 1991 resulted in the elimination of 47 crop-collection depots by the end of 1991, with a further 57 of the remaining 74 to be closed in 1992.⁴⁵

⁴² All data extracted from Gibbon (1996:366-367) in Engberg-Pedersen, Gibbon, Raikes, Udsholt (eds.).

⁴³ All data extracted from Gibbon (1996:367) in Engberg-Pedersen, Gibbon, Raikes, Udsholt (eds.).

⁴⁴ Whiteside (1998).

⁴⁵ Data extracted from Gibbon (1996:366-367) in Engberg-Pedersen, Gibbon, Raikes, Udsholt (eds.).

7.3.3. Domestic Consolidation Trading Structures

From the 1940's a massive state funded infrastructure had been built up to serve white agriculture. The state supported agricultural production through large subsidies, guaranteed floor prices, parastatal marketing intermediaries and building on farm infrastructures.

Up until 1990, various marketing boards; including the Dairy, Cotton, Grain Marketing Boards consolidated and acted as intermediaries in the sale of domestic agricultural production from around the country – the aim was to protect farmers from the oligopolistic power of processors who were the main buyers. In the grain sector for instance, a virtual cartel made up of seven large scale millers accounted for 80% of national sales. One miller alone accounted for half of that figure. The miller's cartel was involved in both maize and wheat⁴⁶.

After liberalisation the Commercial farmers successfully lobbied the Government and were allowed continued protection against the millers' market domination by dealing exclusively with the GMB on wheat. In the maize market – the elimination of subsidies combined with the millers' capacity to push prices down made maize growing unattractive for commercial farmers.⁴⁷

From the early 1990's African smallholder farmers overtook large scale commercial farming in growing most food grains and maize.⁴⁸ They received no subsidies, had access to less than 9% of the national irrigation infrastructure⁴⁹ and were left to fend for themselves with opportunistic traders, oligopolistic millers and other middlemen.

Commenting on the situation, Gibbons has noted:

'Private traders have never been popular with peasants largely because they have evaded officially allowed margins in farm gate purchases, while also have a reputation for cheating. They seem to have become much worse since, with ... peasants complaining that the GMB had 'abandoned them to the exploiters', leaving them only with the option of selling to private traders at 60% of the floor price'.⁵⁰

Declining revenues and spiraling prices exacerbated the situation where many rural households retained less maize than what was required for their own food needs to meet other non-food needs such as transport, schooling, etc.⁵¹ The increase in hunger and rural poverty in the 1990's can be directly traced to the combination of these factors.

⁴⁶ Gibbon 1996, Skålnes 1995

⁴⁷ Gibbon (1996:365) in Engberg-Pedersen, Gibbon, Raikes, Udsholt (eds.). also Moyo (2000a), Skålnes (1995).

⁴⁸ Gibbons (1996), Moyo (2000a), Skålnes (1995), Whiteside (1998).

⁴⁹ Source: FAO corporate document repository for Africa. <http://www.fao.org/docrep/x5594e/x5594e03.htm>

⁵⁰ Gibbons (1996:369).

⁵¹ Moyo (1995).

8. Poverty under Structural Adjustment

The adoption of structural adjustment policies was premised on the notion advanced by international lending institutions - that it could replace land reform by increasing economic activity and creating jobs. It produced the opposite.

The World Bank's own ESAP '*performance audit*' (1995c:11) is revealing:

'the concerns, (however) go well beyond the issues of pace and design; the comprehensiveness of the programme seems a fundamental issue, especially given the objective of reducing poverty. Given the highly dualistic nature of Zimbabwe's economy (where the white minority dominates the formal sector economic activity and owns two thirds of high potential land, and the Black majority is concentrated in rural, communal areas and the urban informal sector), it would appear that some basic questions were not explicitly addressed at the outset'.⁵²

8.1. The socio economic and political impacts of ESAP

Zimbabwe's adoption of World Bank economic structural adjustment policy recommendations, during the Mugabe government's third round in office in 1991, gave cause for a new round of applause. Just one year later in 1992 - anti structural adjustment demonstrations began with the 'bread protests' by urban women denouncing skyrocketing prices which were cutting off the urban working majority's access to basic foods – including bread, milk, cooking oil and maize meal.

Structural adjustment policies made massive cuts to public education and health services, which the African population had only gained access to after Independence. In addition to public sector job cuts, liberalisation policies provoked the widest spate of mass redundancies in the country's history; over a third of urban employment in the industrial and manufacturing sectors were eliminated⁵³.

Jobs losses in town were far more than just an urban problem – their most important impact was in the rural economy which was structurally dependent on wage remittances from urban sector employment. Between 1993-97 'anti-ESAP strikes' demanded an end to the poverty producing effects of structural adjustment policies.

In 1994-95, these provided a platform for the ZCTU to try to consolidate the urban movement around wage and work condition demands – however, many people were on the point of losing their jobs or were already unemployed. Liberalisation's anchoring in wage deregulation made it difficult to deal effectively with these problems and the ZCTU's failure to come up with any tangible improvements in wages or conditions also meant that it lost its credibility and influence over the labour movement in late 1996. During 1997 smaller 'shopfloor' unions and the Public Services union which was not affiliated to the ZCTU were playing their own role and taking over leadership of the urban protest movements.⁵⁴

⁵² Cited in Kanyenze (1999:226) in van der Geest & van der Hoeven, eds.,

⁵³ Sachikonye 1995

⁵⁴ For detailed accounts of these movements See Sachikonye (1995), Saunders (1997b), Zeilig (2002)

The de-industrialisation of the Zimbabwean economy under structural adjustment had serious knock on effect for the urban labour sector as a whole and a large number of domestic and informal sector employment disappeared as well⁵⁵. Added to this, its documented effects in the rural areas were untenable. The relinking of urban and rural resistance to the country's economic collapse under structural adjustment, created the conditions for a radical change of direction.

8.2. Poverty Assessment Study Survey (PASS) 1995-1997

The advent of widespread poverty was highly visible at the end of the structural adjustment implementation phase and a wide ranging study was carried out to assess the full scale of the problem. Multinational funding and assistance was provided from diverse organisations including DANIDA, NORAD, ILO, CIDA, Oxfam, UNDP and the research was conducted in collaboration with NGOs, civil society groups and the donor community⁵⁶.

Two definitions of poverty were used which sought to identify both 'inability to meet nutritional needs and a defined set of non food expenditures' and 'exclusion from access to resources, knowledge, and rights' (UNDP 1996, OECD/DAC 1996, Oxfam 1996).⁵⁷

The Food Poverty Line (FPL) was defined as the amount of income required to buy a basket of basic food per annum.

The Total Consumption Poverty Line (TCPL): was defined as the amount of income required to purchase the basket of food and nonfood (clothing, housing, education, health, transport) per annum.

Those living below the FPL were classified 'very poor', those below the TCPL were 'poor' and those above the TCPL were 'non poor'.

8.2.1. Labour productivity on white farms

Large scale farming had the *lowest* cropped area as a percentage of total area, and employed the *fewest* workers per hectare than any other form of farming.

Productive Employment by Farm Sector

Farming Sector	Total Area per farm Sector In million ha	Total employed Per farm sector	Title holders ¹ actively farming	Employees	Crop area	Hectares per person employed
Large Scale Commercial	11.4 mill ha.	317,440	6,496	310,944	498,572 ha.	1,57 ha. / person
Small Scale Commercial	1.4 mill ha.	263,801	241,318	22,483	74,890 ha.	0.28ha / person
Resettlement	3.4 mill ha.	870,918	861,330	9,588	158,711 ha.	0,18 ha / person

⁵⁵ Sachikonye (1999)

⁵⁶ Bowyer-Bower (2000:84) in Bowyer-Bower and Stoneman (eds.).

⁵⁷ Bowyer-Bower (2000:85) in Bowyer-Bower and Stoneman (eds.).

Source: Adapted from Bowyer-Boyer table 6.1 (2000:65) Statistics from Central Statistics Office

Notes: ¹ Title holders refers to Owners, plot holders, lessees actively engaged in farming.

8.2.2. Poverty in Large Scale Farms

In the two decades from 1980-2000, about 300,000 farm labourers and their families made up an estimated 1,5 million people living in poverty in worker's 'compounds' on large scale farms.⁵⁸ Farm labour wages in commercial farming were historically low⁵⁹ and the so called compound labour system compelled family members living on the compound to work for little or no formal remuneration.⁶⁰

The Poverty Assessment Survey statistics revealed that one farm worker wage provided one basket of food (2,100 calories) and basic clothes, food and transport sufficient for one person (TCPL) per annum. The problem was that this wage usually had to be divided up between a family of at least 6. The PASS study found that on large scale commercial farms only 15% of inhabitants were non poor - 52% were very poor and 23% were poor (according to the study's definitions).

Given that commercial farms occupied about 73% percent of the country's agricultural land in the best rainfall conditions supplemented by extensive irrigation and infrastructure, the total poverty figure of 75% and very poor at 52% were of special concern.

8.2.3. Non monetarised gains from agriculture

Kinsey observed that people engaged in farming activities in resettlement areas were less dependent on wages from paid labour than communal area farmers⁶¹. Maize production in the rural areas overtook large scale commercial production almost immediately in the 1980's and had almost doubled the quantity produced in the large scale commercial sector in 1996.⁶² Research revealed the importance of '*non-monetarised gains*' from small scale farming for food security.⁶³

9. Social Justice in Zimbabwe between 1980-2000

During the 1980's ZANU PF made impressive achievements in promoting social justice through policy by dramatically increasing access to health, education, food and productive activities which were studied over several years and reported by Britain's ODA (1988). The white farmers sought to detract from these positive accounts by promoting spurious stories in the local media whilst mainstream commentators dismissed these efforts on ideological grounds as being anchored in socialism and unsustainable (Cliffe 2000).

⁵⁸ Source Central Statistics office – extracted from Bowyer-Bower table 6.1 (2000:65) in Bowyer-Bower and Stoneman (eds.).

⁵⁹ According to Herbst, the 'cheapest in the colonies.' (1990)

⁶⁰ Weiner et al. (1985) Potts & Mutambirwa (1997), Moyo, Rutherford & Amanor-Wilkes (2000c) Chadya & Mavayo (2002).

⁶¹ Kinsey (2000:115) in Bowyer-Bower and Stoneman (eds.).

⁶² Source Central Statistics office – Bowyer-Bower table 6.1 'market domination of maize and cotton by small holders 1990-1997 (2000:64) in Bowyer-Bower and Stoneman (eds.).

⁶³ Kinsey (2000:111, 115) in Bowyer-Bower and Stoneman (eds.).

The main effect of the Lancaster House Settlement was to hand over the most influential say over the Government's land reform agenda to the strongest institutional supporters of white land policy – the white farmers lobby. From Independence in 1980 onwards a highly sceptical view of land reform emerged from the white farming lobby which used its considerable resources and to undermine the land reform agenda especially through its diplomatic contacts and the media⁶⁴. Throughout the 1980's, while the Government remained more or less tied into its repertoire of 'reconciliation'. During the 1990's, the emerging indigenous people's lobby groups went on the offensive by far the most outspoken on issues of equality and social justice provoking a backlash from the white farmers lobby who sought to discredit indigenous groups by presenting themselves as innocent victims of racism.

10. The Land Reform Agenda 1995-1998

10.1. ODA Land Appraisal

Agriculture provided the majority of inputs and outputs to the manufacturing and industrial sector. In view of the economic collapse and aggravated mass unemployment following ESAP, it became clear that a more optimal use of land would be necessary to provide a new stimulus to production and generate employment. Britain's Overseas Development Agency (ODA), was invited by the government to take another look at the land resettlement issue.

In 1996 the Ministry of Local Government, Urban and Rural Development prepared a detailed working proposal for the implementation of a resettlement plan for 110,000 families. Cusworth states:

'This policy paper was prepared specifically to guide ... the appraisal mission. It was welcomed as a very positive step forward ... (which) indicated a pragmatic and flexible approach to resettlement'.⁶⁵

The plan specified roles and responsibilities, identified who would be involved in executing resettlement, indicated different types of land needs and described a number of different possible ways of meeting these which were strongly guided by the Tenure Commission report (1994)⁶⁶ which we discussed in the last chapter.

Three categories of need were identified: (1) the rural landless, who, as we have just seen, were amongst the poorest in the country; (2) skilled and experienced small producers; based on previous models these would be smallholder cultivators using some commercial farming methods, depending on the area; (3) indigenous Zimbabweans wishing to break into the large scale commercial farming sector; the entrepreneurial elite and ICFU were addressed here,

⁶⁴ Herbst (1990:56-57). Selby (2007) records that in the early 1990's Bratton was hired as a consultant for the white farmer's lobby: CFU - Bratton produced influential reports on land reform issues for the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung which promoted the CFU's views. See article (1994)

⁶⁵ Cusworth (2000:31) in Bowyer-Bower and Stoneman (eds.).

⁶⁶ Cusworth (2000:30-32) in Bowyer-Bower and Stoneman (eds.).

though problematically, as the reports authors note, this third group was not likely to be prioritised in the ODA assessment⁶⁷.

The mission concluded that significant economic gains could be made from resettlement and suggested a 'poverty' orientated programme aimed at the 'very poor' which could target to resettle 35,000 families on about 2 million hectares over a 10 years period⁶⁸. The mission consulted most of the major donors who expressed interest in being involved with a forum to consider how the revised programme might be funded; the mission also understood that the UK and possibly a couple of other donor may assist with land purchase.⁶⁹

From the ODA's two studies (1988, 1996) Cusworth concluded:

'in order for the economic benefits of resettlement to be maximised and sustained, it will be essential for the international community to provide finance and other support to the Government of Zimbabwe, so that it can manage the process of land redistribution in an efficient and effective way'.⁷⁰

From the end of 1996, preparations for the following year's general election were under way in Britain and little progress with the ODA recommendations could be expected until these were over. The new Blair government in May 1997 brought with it a change in international development priorities which included replacing the ODA with the Department for International Development (DFID) reporting to the Secretary of State for International Development Clare Short. The new focus of overseas development spending was poverty reduction.⁷¹ The Poverty Assessment Survey (PASS) findings published in 1997 revealed at least 6 million people were 'very poor'. Given the magnitude of Zimbabwe's poverty problem, Britain's new criteria remained workable.

10.2. Policy Consultative Processes

Between 1995 and 1998 the Government engaged with various non state actors and stakeholders to proceed with an implementation plan drawing on the findings and recommendations of the land Tenure Commission (1994) Ministry's reviewed land reform proposal (1996) and ODA (1996) recommendations, and within the legal framework of the Land Acquisition Act 1992 which provided for the payment of fair compensation and the right to legal recourse.

The policy consultations were intended to build consensus about how to move forward with structuring an agrarian reform plan. The CFU represented predominantly large commercial interests, the ZFU represented small holder commercial, resettlement and communal farming, and the ICFU represented emergent Indigenous interests in large scale commercial agriculture, many of them capital venture orientated. Other local actors and NGOs such as the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung acted as sponsors in local amongst different interests.

⁶⁷ Cusworth (2000:31-34) in Bowyer-Bower and Stoneman (eds.).

⁶⁸ 250,000 hectares per annum to resettle 3,500 families (ODA 1996) in Moyo (2000a:78).

⁶⁹ Cusworth (2000:33) in Bowyer-Bower and Stoneman (eds.), Moyo (2000a).

⁷⁰ Ibid.,34.

⁷¹ Bowyer-Bower (2000:83) citing HM Government policy document (UK).

The CFU had previously complained that the Government's failure to identify *'well in advance which farming areas the resettlement bureaucracy intends turning into resettlement areas so that farmers can plan accordingly'* was a main obstacle which prevented the CFU from working constructively with Government over a land reform plan; stating that *'if white commercial agriculture were really influencing the land programme, the farmers could at least have been able to force the government into saying which land it is going to use for the resettlement programme'*⁷².

10.3. The Land Identification Process and Listing

Responding to these concerns, in 1996/97 a Land Identification Committee had been tasked with identifying land for acquisition, and on 27 November 1997 the Government gazetted a list identifying 1,471 properties which would be targeted for acquisition.

The total land area involved was 3,986,944 ha, in other words below the 5 million hectare target previously specified by Government. The extensiveness of the listing can largely be explained with reference to infrastructural planning requirements; of the land area identified 62.52% (2.5 million ha.)⁷³ was in the driest regions whilst only 1% (43,410ha) was located in the good rainfall - prime 'region I'.⁷⁴

Detailed planning and cost assessments for irrigation and agricultural extension would have to be an integral part of any workable resettlement plan in these low rainfall areas; indeed this was the CFU's main argument supporting its earlier requests to Government for detailed listings of the properties it intended to target for its resettlement. It is clear from a financial planning perspective that building costly infrastructural will only be economically justifiable when it addresses a project as a whole; it is not something which can happen in a piecemeal fashion. Moyo confirms that the pattern of identification suggests that future resettlement will be in areas less suited to rain fed crop production and require heavy investment in irrigation as a result (2000c:19). The arguments in favour of ad hoc market purchases⁷⁵ in preference to planning expressed by many private lobbyists and observers at the time did not take the geographic location or infrastructural requirements of a coherent resettlement project properly into account.

The listing targeted particularly corporate and multiple ownership of huge estates: 32 owners accounted for 182 farms while a further 41 owners accounted for 123 farms.

Company ownership accounted for 72% of the total area identified (2,870,600 ha) and 59% of the total number of farms identified.

Finally, 250 Indigenous Commercial Farmers – mainly with farms under 3000 hectares were listed, and a further 26 farms with Indigenous owners or Directors, 3 of which were owned by

⁷² Herbst (1990:55).

⁷³ Moyo (2000c:17).

⁷⁴ Moyo (2000c:17), table 1.

⁷⁵ Moyo (2000c:27).

an organisation which purported to promote general indigenous empowerment (DTZ⁷⁶) were also listed.⁷⁷ The listing was broadcast to external audiences as ‘*Mugabe’s land grab*’⁷⁸.

10.4. The Government’s Agrarian Reform Proposal (1998)

Land Reform and Resettlement Programme Phase II Policy Framework & Project Document (1998)

The establishment of the Land Commission (1998) to ‘*rethink the (government’s) land reform programme*’, and ‘*careful diplomatic manoeuvring*’⁷⁹ to bring together a number of different stakeholders including the UNDP resulted in the elaboration of the detailed plan for the reestablishment of a small to medium scale farming sector on an area of 5 million hectares.

Critically the plan sought to revitalize the rural economy by providing the land and conditions necessary to resettle 150,000 households, and for over 1 million people⁸⁰ to become engaged in small to medium scale agriculture sector using different farming technology models depending on the region and scale of farming.

The intention was explicitly that the new sector would exist in parallel to the existing large scale commercial farming sector. The plan was specifically targeted at severe problems of economic inequity and to ‘*increase the conditions for sustainable peace and social stability by removing imbalances of land ownership*’ (Zimbabwe 1998:3).⁸¹

The land would be acquired in three ways; through sub division, voluntary offers and designation for acquisition with compensation. This more flexible approach was expected to be able to ‘*take advantage of the widespread phenomenon of underutilized land on generally productive farms*’ (Cliffe 2000:43)⁸².

This plan firmly established agrarian transformation as the confirmed and principal aim of land reform. It was presented to the International Community and Donors at the Conference which was held between 9 and 11 September 1998 in Harare. The plan was well received and there was optimism that the donor community’s endorsement would create a new impetus to implement it with the cooperation of local parties (Moyo 2000d, Cliffe 2000, Scoones et al 2010). By September 1998 the CFU’s ‘Team Zimbabwe’ had identified 118 farms mostly in moderate rainfall areas, covering a total area of 113,000 hectares as a key part of its policy proposal for a ‘modest but effective’⁸³ land reform programme.

⁷⁶ Development Trust of Zimbabwe.

⁷⁷ Moyo (2000c:23).

⁷⁸ See earlier discussion on this the CFU’s (October 1997) decision to ‘internationalise’ the land issue.

⁷⁹ Shivji et al. (1998) in Scoones et al. (2006:21)

⁸⁰ Based on statistics for number of persons employed in resettlement cultivation – refer earlier table 7.3.

⁸¹ Scoones et al (2006:21).

⁸² In Bowyer-Bower, Stoneman eds., (2000).

⁸³ Palmer (2000:15).

11. Perspectives of Land Reform in Zimbabwe 1980-2000

11.1. The Media

Several new, privately funded independent news media actors emerged in the 1990's.⁸⁴ They played a major advocacy role in promoting the ESAP programme and became extremely compromised in reconciling their stance with the ensuing economic debacle as it unfolded⁸⁵. Leading independent media did not promote an informed debate about issues to be tackled in the wake of liberalisation; instead it positioned itself alongside narrow economic and farming interests to divert public attention from the results of PASS, ODA 1996 and the new policy consultative process which legitimated a fresh look at land reform as progressive.⁸⁶ Well established actors such as the white farmer's lobby – CFU - used its strong media links to promote their version of events especially to external audiences.⁸⁷

11.2. CFU Public Relations

The farm workers' strike threatened to initiate a debate about the poverty assessment survey's sobering findings. Indeed, CFU minutes from 25 Sept. 1997 recorded farmer concerns that commercial farming was receiving, *'a lot of bad press, particularly with respect to farm worker conditions and the land issue'*.⁸⁸

The CFU resolved to take charge of redirect the national debate with a renewed attempt to cast land reform as a patronage driven ploy to gain the support of rural veterans of Zimbabwe's liberation struggle⁸⁹. Citing the minutes from the relevant meeting Selby writes: *'in response members resolved to 'internationalize the issue in the hope that external awareness would arbitrate the process'*⁹⁰.

Increasingly polemic media coverage about the prospect of land reform in Zimbabwe during the 1980's and 1990's had a profound effect in shaping the polarized narrative which emptied land reform of any real substance by consistently presenting it as a reckless bid for power by a corrupt, unpopular regime and its cronies on one side, against 'white farmers' as the main economic protagonists on the other. According to this rendering, white farmers were progressive and responsible force for good in the country – they were apparently providing employment to the majority of the country's population and feeding the whole region too. Whereas the government was simply relegated to join the ranks alongside other African tin pot dictatorships. These tactics were consistent with CFU's efforts since Independence to

⁸⁴ The Zimbabwe Independent and Daily News locally, the Mail and Guardian in South Africa are prominent examples.

⁸⁵ Saunders, R. (1997a): The Press and Popular Organisations in Zimbabwe; a frayed Alliance Southern Africa Report (Online Archive), Vol. 12, No.3, June 1997.

⁸⁶ Saunders (1997a), Moyo (2000c:27).

⁸⁷ See for instance Andrew Meldrum (Guardian correspondent), various articles in the Mail & Guardian during the period. Selby (2007:255) catalogues a good overview of the media coverage.

⁸⁸ Minutes of the CFU President's Council meeting, 25 Sept 1997, cited in Selby (2006:257).

⁸⁹ See earlier discussion of Michael Bratton's role as a consultant to the CFU, and article (1994).

⁹⁰ Minutes of the CFU President's Council meeting, 29 October 1997, cited in Selby (2006:257).

discredit land reform, and the organisation's standard lobbying strategy of using buffers against government⁹¹.

The unwinding economic crisis engendered by inappropriate measures which farmers and their economic allies had themselves strongly advocated, and the exploding import dependent deficit which had resulted, was laid squarely on the shoulders of 'war veterans'. (at the time of the ZFU merger), it was now recast as a ploy to appease '*Mugabe's old soldiers*'⁹².

This new perspective made it possible for some of the most conservative elements in the business and farming community to openly fund a political party led by former trade unionists to oppose land reform⁹³. From this point, political opposition to land reform could be framed as a progressive solution to the country's economic problems and donor support for land reform plan of 1998 fizzled out.

12. Land reform 2000-2008

Three periods can be discerned in the fast track land reform from 2000. It originally accelerated from a few semi autonomous and highly visible occupations in peri urban areas from 1998 to more widespread 'occupation' movements across the country which lasted until the mid 2000's. The government sought to regularize the situation through a large number of interventions during the 'dirigiste' phase which lasted from 2002-2008. The Zimbabwe dollar collapsed under the strain of economic isolation in 2008.

The introduction of the US dollar as the main transacting currency has significantly improved the returns to small farmers at the same time as the reintroduction of liberalisation policies are shaping new opportunities and contradictions in areas still in the establishment phase.

⁹¹ Herbst describes this strategy as part of CFU standard practice to get their way (1990). See chapter 5 of this study.

⁹² Mail & Guardian: 22 July 1997, 15 August 1997, 13 October 1997.

⁹³ Scoones (2010:20) also Raftopoulos (2006).

13. The new Agrarian landscape:

13.1. Redistributive Outcomes

In 1999 about 4,500 large scale commercial farms, including plantations (estates) and corporate holdings owned over 9,000 farmland properties covering an area of about 11 million hectares. The FTLRP targeted 5 million hectares for redistribution. By 2009, less than 400 of individually owned white farms remained. The large agro-industrial plantations or estates and conservancies were not substantively expropriated, although they lost some land and/or were partially ‘illegally’ occupied.

Land reform has reshaped the agricultural sector as a tri modal system an important feature of which is the differentiated sets of productive-labour relations they represent. The types of crops produced are strongly influenced by the access to inputs, output markets, irrigation and operating credit (Moyo 2013).

A1 – small family farmers (A1) make up the largest group with 1,3 million households each holding an average farm of 20 hectares.

A2 – is made up of 31,000 Middle farms about 140 hectares each and 1,371 large farms – 850 hectares each.

247 Agro Estates make up the last category covering a total area of 1,5 million hectares.

A1

The A1 sector is composed primarily of family /extended family enterprises where family members are engaged in agrarian production for income generation and family consumption. The labour force includes semi proletarians – members of the family whose activities straddle the rural urban divide: they are most commonly employed in relatively low paid full or part time urban jobs; as gardeners, vendors, security guards, waiters and return home to the family farm in peri-urban areas on their days off to participate in agrarian activities (planting, harvesting, weeding etc). Wages are typically used to compensate for the lack of credit to buy inputs – such as seed, fertilizer, implements (spades, hoes) or other equipment such as hose pipes, generators which they bring with them from town. They are also used to contribute to the purchase of larger farming equipments which may be shared with neighbours. A1 farmers produce: cotton, tobacco, small grains, beans, groundnuts, maize, poultry, sugar, coffee and sunflowers.

A2

This sector comprises a broadly based agrarian capitalist class, built on former and new farming ‘elites’. The large farm sector now includes both black and white farmers, however their land holdings are significantly smaller than their predecessors. Over 75 percent of the new middle size capitalist farmers have plots of less than 100 hectares however this varies

across different agro ecological regions. Shortage of working credit and finance to develop operational infrastructure is a significant problem in this sector which relies primarily on hired in labour and is relatively more seriously affected by shortage of equipment and inputs than the A1 sector (Hanlon et al, 2013, Moyo 2013). A2 farmers produce: soybeans, coffee, citrus, tobacco, horticulture, sugar, poultry and beef.

Agro Industrial Estates

Estates produce sugar, tea, coffee and sunflowers mostly under out-grower schemes with A1 and A2 farmers.

The main agro industrial estates have been retained but restructured and their land areas reduced. Foreign ownership of land was been retained in the sugar, tea and timber holdings to preserve large, specialized and integrated companies.

In addition to this, the control over wildlife conservancies and tourism reserves is also more diversified in terms of ownership amongst Zimbabweans and some foreign interests.

Zimbabwe GDP⁹⁴

year	GDP total in US Dollars	GDP growth year on year
2009	6.1 billion	+ 6%
2010	7.4 billion	+ 9.6%
2011	9.7 billion	+ 9.4%
2012	10.8 billion	+ 11.1%

Cotton, tobacco and maize continue to make a major contribution to the agricultural share of GDP however there has been a substantial increase in the production of small grains, beans and groundnuts which are drought resistant, traded on local food markets and contribute substantially to domestic food security for the majority of households. They also have regional export value potential.

13.2. Crop Production & Markets: Emerging Trends⁹⁵

Cotton and tobacco require a high level of costly inputs. Small farmers lack access to operating credit and contract farming with provision of inputs up front, has been an important access mechanism which has enabled them to produce for these markets. The entrance of many new contractors in both commodities has also increased demand, creating new opportunities at the supply end.

⁹⁴ Source World Bank stats. <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/zimbabwe/gdp>

⁹⁵ Data extracted from Recovery and Growth of Zimbabwe Agriculture. World Bank (2012) by Sam Moyo – Hans P Binswanger Mkhize.

13.3. Cotton

Mainly due to well organised contract farming arrangements and drought resistant characteristics, cotton production remained steady throughout land reform.

In 2012, 280,064 farmers produced cotton under contract in Zimbabwe.

The local cotton market is shaped around the requirements of 14 key contractors: amongst these, 6 companies have a major influence: Cargill, Cottco, SinoZim, Viridis, Romsdal and Grafax.

13.4. Tobacco

From an average of 198,600 tonnes per annum from 3,725 growers tobacco production fell steeply during land reform. In 2009/10 production levels were 50% of the 1990's average however, the market has grown from 3 contractors to 12 paving the way for an increase in the number of growers. In 2010/11 production climbed by 20% and is climbing steadily. By 2012, 60% of tobacco was produced under contract arrangement by 13,000 farmers; however up to 300,000 small producers grow tobacco (usually using lower input technologies) in addition to other agricultural products. Small farmers report that cash contributions from tobacco help to fund other parts of the farming operation (Hanlon et al, 2013, AIAS field surveys 2013).

Marketing takes place through 4 auction floors located in the capital Harare and this is where small independent farmers can bring their produce for sale. In view of the increasing numbers of participants – growers and contractors - there are plans to decentralize the existing system to districts where tobacco production is dominant.

13.5. Food Crops

Food security crops: beans, small grains and groundnuts

Severe drought in 2002/3, 2004/5, and 2006/7 and changing land use situation has had important impact on the food crops being grown in Zimbabwe.

From 2002, there was a dramatic increase in the production of drought resistant and more nutritious food crops notably, beans, small grains and groundnuts. Beans, Small Grains and Ground nuts increased. Peak years are given below.

Beans: + 123% in 2002, currently about 60% up from 1990's average.

Small Grains: + 700% (2008/9) up from 1990's average.

Groundnuts: +168% (2010/11) up from 1990's average

Groundnuts have important nitrogen fixing properties which plays an important role in preserving soil fertility and is highly desirable as a fertilizer substitute.

The prominence of these food crops show that land access has dramatically increased the production of nutritious and protein rich foods which now make up a greater part of staple diets.

Maize requires inputs and irrigation to ensure steady production land reform disrupted maize outputs for a variety of reasons. The droughts mentioned above had a major impact and late rains in the 2012/13 also affected output. Land access has made it possible for more people to grow their own food and in this situation nutritious, hardier crops which are also ideal for crop rotation are obviously preferable to the uncertainties of maize growing.

Another factor which has made maize growing less interesting for farmers with access to irrigation is the current market situation. At the supply end of the market, low tariff food import policies since 2009 have turned Zimbabwe into a major dumping ground for processed GMO maize and soybean which are banned from European markets. This has significantly affected prices making better paying crops – notably tobacco, sugar and horticulture more attractive options. Maize production remains about 15% below 1990’s levels.

The market for locally produced maize is composed of a number of private traders and the resuscitated Grain Marketing Board whose primary role is to fulfill the Strategic Grain Reserve (SGR) maize requirements from the local market. The SGR is currently set at 290,000 tonnes.

Wheat is a high input and irrigation demanding crop. It recovered temporarily in 2005/6 with the assistance of government subsidized inputs but has since plummeted. It plays no major role in local food security.

Vegetables 70 percent of national consumption is produced by small producers: Communal farmers make the most important contribution though as the below table illustrates, A2 farmers also play a role. The rest is imported from South Africa. Improvements in onsite processing, storage and transport logistics could further increase the local supply in urban areas and reduce South African imports which are primarily destined to urban supermarkets.

Estimated Market Supply Shares

Major Vegetables	Supplier Categories & Estimated Supply Shares (%)			
	Communal Farmers	Old Resettlement, A1 & Small A2 Farmers	Large-Scale A2’s	South African Imports
Tomatoes	55	3.5	11.5	30
Onions	3.5	37.5	9	50
Cabbages	0	40	60	0
Butternut	5	70	20	5

Data Source: USAID (2010) – Table adapted from World Bank (2012).

13.6. Oil seeds

Soybeans production is concentrated amongst medium to large A2 farmers and remains about 15.7% below 1990's averages. Price competition from GMO dumping is a factor which would make other more profitable crops more attractive.

Sunflower production is divided up between large A2 and A1 farmers. Output remains very low and it seems likely that in the A1 sector groundnuts have replaced sunflower.

13.7. Plantation Crops

Coffee production is currently limited though it is steadily increasing as evidenced by the growing number of locally produced coffees available in supermarket shelves in Zimbabwe. Production statistics support this observation. The extremely depressed coffee prices in the early years of land reform contributed significantly to the decline of coffee growing in the country as farmers directed their resources to producing with more profitable crops.

Sugar is now grown principally through outgrower schemes for the production of sugar and ethanol. There has been significant investment in these areas with new factories and a new ethanol plant being built in recent years.

Poultry meat and egg sectors were in decline during land reform however they are recovering slowly with further upside for local production. Local producers are facing competition with cheap imports from South America.

Limitations in terms of transport, logistics, lack of onsite processing facilities, packing sheds, operating credit are general constraints which need to be addressed however, the fact that such positive results have already been achieved suggests there is a great deal of upward potential as circumstances also improve.

14. General conclusions⁹⁶

GDP has rebounded since 2008 with an average growth of 8% per annum to date.

There is broad agreement among authors of empirically grounded studies that the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) implemented during the 2000's in Zimbabwe did finally reverse the system of land based racial segregation which had escaped reform at Independence and remained virtually unaltered in structure until 2000. By reallocating agricultural land which was not being effectively or fully utilized to over 1,3 million beneficiary families, land reform has more than doubled the productive use of land – and in this sense, land reform can also be seen as having intensified the productive use of national resources as a whole. In a little over a decade since the collapse of the country's industrial and manufacturing employment sector, new mode of production led by small farms is emerging as the 'dynamic sector' of the agrarian economy (Hanlon et al, 2013).

⁹⁶ Statistics from World Bank (2012) unless otherwise stated

Productive land use is far more extensive than under the previous system and has produced far more jobs – most of them as independent farmers (not poorly paid labourers). This has had direct effects for empowerment as labour reserves, farm labourers and poverty wages have been replaced with small to medium farms who are engaged in diversified farming across cash and food crop sectors. An increase in the number of contractors in tobacco and cotton has created more opportunities for small farmers to enter contract farming to compensate for lack of credit at the moment.

The extensive transfer of land disrupted existing production and the production of many agricultural commodities fell dramatically however, within a mere five years, by 2005 recovery in many sectors was beginning. Since 2009 most sectors have shown positive year on year growth.

By making land available to more people, land reform has enabled more people to grow food crops which are drought resistant, more nourishing for the soil and better suited to local conditions. The reduction of maize production is more than compensated by a dramatic increase in traditional drought resistant food with a higher nutritional content. This is leading to more healthy, nutritious and balanced, protein rich diets for the majority of the population as well as having a positive effect on food security. Residual prejudices against these food security crops as ‘women’s’ crops, their dislocation from processing facilities and limited access to regional markets largely account for the poor recognition these crops currently receive. However, this is an area with significant upside potential for future development.

The economic stabilization after the introduction of the US dollar as the main transacting currency has had positive effects for many small farmers.

From a distributive perspective, small farmers – the A1, peasant or family farming sector - have been the greatest beneficiaries from this reform both in terms of total land area and number of beneficiaries (Moyo 2011a). The average farm size is 20 hectares which is significantly larger than ‘peasant/family farmers’ plot sizes in other parts of the world (not only the African continent but also India and South America). These farmers are running their farms as small businesses (Hanlon et al, 2013).

14.1. Poverty Alleviation

It is now well recognized that land reform has benefitted the population sectors who were previously most marginalized; namely rural dwellers. To the extent that it challenged existing structures, it also allowed women to raise their own demands for the recognition of their land rights⁹⁷. This is seen as positive and progressive⁹⁸. It is also recognized as a unique case of redistributive land reform in the post Cold War era; which could provide useful data on poverty alleviation and empowerment to compare against those achieved through the ‘trickle down’ effect within the framework of ‘doing business and other such market led reforms. (Ndiaye, 2012)

⁹⁷ *Mapping of Women in Zimbabwe’s Agrarian Reform*. AIAS Paper prepared for Zimbabwe Land & Agrarian Network Seminar, Dec 2012, Harare.

⁹⁸ Moyo & Yeros 2007, Scoones et al (2010), Moyo 2011a, Matondi 2012, Hanlon et al (2013)

In directly improving people's access to agrarian productive activities capable of meeting their cash and consumption needs, Zimbabwe's land reform is revealing trends which significantly enhance existing understandings of popular empowerment processes under 'repeasantisation' which are driven from below (Amin 2012, Moyo 2013, Van der Ploeg 2009⁹⁹), and their implications which go well beyond poverty alleviation.

According to the latest production data and observations on the ground, one can conclude that by opening up access to productive resources which were previously underutilized land reform in Zimbabwe has improved the structural conditions for social justice. The increased options for economic activity also suggest it has been a progressive strategy for poverty alleviation.

14.2. Reflections on Social Justice in the new context

Zimbabwe's land reform was originally intended to make better productive use of the country's agrarian resources; by increasing agrarian based activities including self-employment it was expected to contribute to poverty alleviation and social justice. The dramatic elimination of urban employment in the industrial, manufacturing and public sectors under liberalization policies and the necessity to alleviate their poverty producing effects for the informal sectors and rural economy were main factors contributing to the radical scale of the reform which went well beyond what was originally planned. The economic results for the past 5 years show improvements in labour and land productivity, and a resurgence of rural activity. These tendencies are improving wellbeing for the majority of the population through an increase in employment (including self-employment) options, better access to more nutritious food and improved diets. The prospects for enhanced market access for small farmers in the future would represent a major victory for popular economic empowerment.

Surprisingly, this massive social reordering has not substantially affected the dominant position of white economic interests in Zimbabwe who continue to enjoy better access to most of the capitalist sectors of the economy than majority of black Zimbabweans and a high standard of living, even by European standards.

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