

Decolonizing Kenya, Zimbabwe and
South Africa: The “Land Issue”

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Introduction:

“Decolonization, as generally understood, means the transfer of political authority from a colonial state to indigenous leaders within the framework of state sovereignty. This definition deals only with the formal transfer of ‘authority’, referring to the capacity to legitimate political decisions, and not with political ‘power’ which may be taken to mean the ability to influence those decisions.”¹

Over the course of the 20th century, Africa made the transition from a continent where all but two countries (Liberia and Ethiopia) were colonies, to a continent of 53 independent and sovereign countries. Decolonization did not always occur peacefully or democratically. Between 1960 and 1980, Africa experienced more than 70 coups and 13 presidential assassinations. The majority of African nations are republics operating under some form of presidential rule. In reality however few have been able to sustain democratic governments. As Wasserman indicated, the transfer of ‘authority’ need not necessarily imply the transfer of ‘power’. Additionally an indigenous nationalist government does not necessarily imply a government responsible to the will of the people.² Rather the opposite has been the norm in Africa where political violence and corruption are only now abating.

The ‘land-issue’ refers to the ongoing conflict in certain sub-Saharan countries over rights to access land. During colonialism in Kenya, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe, land-holdings became concentrated in the hands of European settlers. This created a dualistic structure of agricultural production with a minority of white commercial farmers cultivating large tracts of high potential land and an overwhelming majority of African peasant farmers cultivating small tracts of moderate to low potential

¹ Wasserman, 1976 p.4

² Ibid, p.5

land. A continuing dual agrarian economy would represent a glaring contradiction to the ideal of independence. Land redistribution was therefore an essential component of the decolonization process in many sub-Saharan African countries. Proponents of land redistribution also supported the programs on the basis of economic efficiency and equity.

The purpose of this paper is to address the role of land redistribution in the decolonization of sub-Saharan Africa with a specific focus on the experiences of Kenya, Zimbabwe and South Africa. Since land redistribution involves the transfer of land from one group to another, it will be necessary to first develop an understanding of the different groups or classes which emerged during colonialism. Using this framework the land redistribution programs in the three sub-Saharan countries will be discussed from the perspective of how the interests of the different classes were represented. Additionally the land redistribution programs will be evaluated from the perspective of equity and agricultural productivity.

This study is significant to the study of the contemporary African agrarian economy because, across Africa, many 'land-issues' have yet to be resolved. For instance in South Africa there is a "No Land, No House, No Vote" campaign, where frustration over stalled land redistribution programs is obstructing the formation of participatory democracy. To illustrate the point, more than a decade after the end of apartheid, whites in South Africa still own the majority of commercial farmland. The experience of Zimbabwe in the 21st century highlights how devastating the manifestations of the 'land-issue' can be. It

would be an immeasurable human tragedy if South Africa were to follow in the footsteps of Zimbabwe.

This paper is organized in two major parts. The first part of the paper addresses the colonial heritage of the three sub-Saharan African case studies. The origins of the 'land-issue' are discussed and the colonial administrations attempts to resolve the 'land-issue' are analyzed. Conflict over land emerged with the expropriation of land by European settlers and intensified as indigenous populations grew and European commercial agriculture expanded. The colonial administration is shown to have recognized the existence of a problem, but was either ignorant of or uninterested in its solution.

Part two extends the work into the post-colonial period. While independence signified the transfer of authority from European settlers to African nationalist parties, strong legacies of the colonial economy persisted. The attempts of the nationalist governments to overcome colonial legacies through agrarian reform are critically examined. In Kenya the emphasis is on how agrarian reform facilitated the stable transition to independence but did little for the poorest of the poor. For several reasons Zimbabwe was unable to follow in the footsteps in Kenya and after twenty years of attempting to resolve the 'land issue' through market led land redistribution, peasants and war veterans began the illegal occupation of European farms; which in turn led to the collapse of the Zimbabwean economy. Lastly in South Africa where indigenous agriculture was suppressed for almost a century, land redistribution progressed slowly and for many the situation is deteriorating.

The three case studies together demonstrate how the strict adherence to market led land redistribution has severely constrained progress in overcoming the colonial legacy of inequality and landlessness. Furthermore the economic principles that support market led land redistribution are shown to be non-substantive. The policy of 'willing-buyer' 'willing-seller' should be abandoned in favor of a program, which is fundamentally based on principles of social justice and economic development.

Part 1:
The Colonial Experience of Kenya, Zimbabwe and South Africa:

Section 1.1 Expropriation of Land:

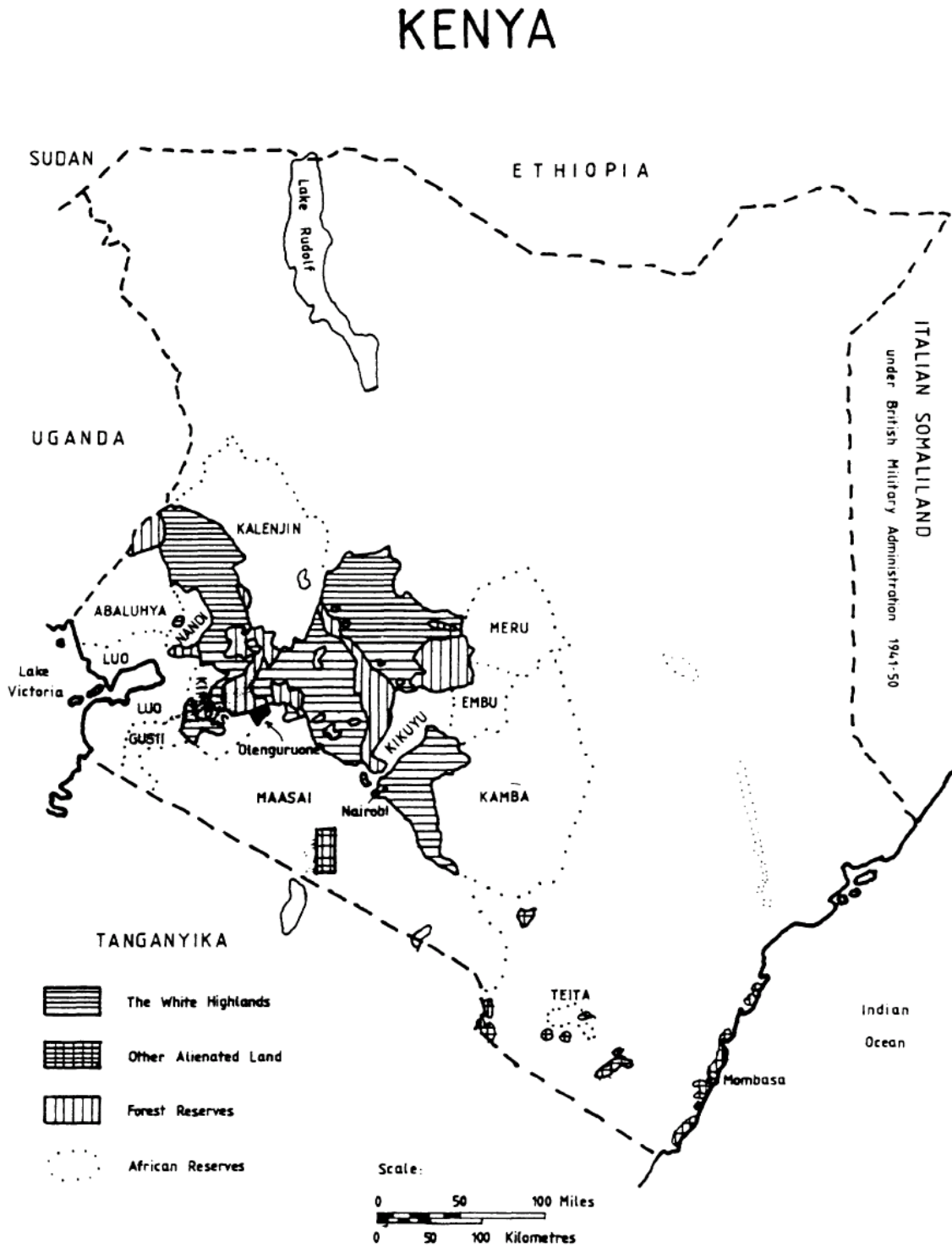
Kenya, Zimbabwe and South Africa had similar experiences of colonization. The three countries all became colonies of the British Empire; South Africa in 1652; Zimbabwe in 1890; and Kenya in 1897. Despite South Africa entering European influence two centuries before Zimbabwe and Kenya, extensive European settlement occurred simultaneously across the region. In each of the countries, agricultural development was defined by racial stratification instituted by the colonial administration through the expropriation and allocation of land.

Colonial expropriation of large tracts of land occurred across sub-Saharan Africa. In Kenya, the 1902 Crowns Land Ordinance declared the British Crown responsible for the administration of all land in Kenya. By independence in 1963 over eight million acres of land, representing nearly 75 per cent of Kenya's high potential land had been transferred to the settlers.³⁴ The distribution of lands in Kenya is shown in Map 1. The lands allocated to settlers were either deemed to be 'unoccupied' or were purchased by the colonial administration from the tenants. The claim that lands were 'unoccupied' has since been strongly contested by the Kikuyu tribe. The Kikuyu claim that lands were not 'unoccupied' but being allowed to lie fallow while the owners cultivated lands elsewhere. Additionally the Kikuyu did not understand that the sale of their land could result in their eviction.

³ Okoth-Ogendo 1981

⁴ Hall 1981 p37 states: "In Kenya the white highlands constitute only some 20 per cent of high quality land"

Map 1: Alienated Land and Indigenous Areas in Kenya



In Zimbabwe informal alienation of land began with the arrival of the European settlers who began to claim large tracts of land.⁵ Increasing conflict between European settlers and indigenous tenants led to the formalization of indigenous reserves in 1902. These reserves were intended to be located in areas of dense indigenous population; however they did not necessarily reflect the land customarily cultivated by the local people. This was because the designation of indigenous reserves did not take into account the displacement of people by the rebellions in 1896-97.⁶ Additionally land which European settlers had begun to develop was not considered for the establishment of reserves regardless of the density of indigenous Africans.⁷ While the explicit purpose of the reserves was to resolve the 'land-issue' by allotting local Africans sufficient agricultural lands to meet their needs, the settlers interpreted the reserves to be areas where Africans, who could not be absorbed as farm workers on European farms, could be resettled.⁸ The 1958 apportionment of land is shown in Table 1. By independence in 1980, white commercial farmers controlled approximately 18 million hectares (50 percent) of agricultural land in Zimbabwe. Land in Zimbabwe has been categorized into five natural regions. The description of these regions is outlined in Table 2; the distribution of these regions is shown in Map 2. It is clear from Maps 2-4 of natural regions that the Gwaai and Shangani reserves were of very poor quality and did not reflect the pre-colonial settlement patterns

⁵ Zinyama 1986, p.367

⁶ Ibid, p. 368

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Moyana 1984, p.41

Table 1: Land Apportionment in Zimbabwe (1958)

| Category | Acres | Percent of Country |
|-----------------------|------------|--------------------|
| European Areas | 51,987,000 | 53.5 |
| Native Areas | 21,020,000 | 21.5 |
| Special Native Areas | 12,878,000 | 13.0 |
| Native Purchase Areas | 8,052,000 | 8.0 |
| Undetermined areas | 57,000 | 0.5 |
| Forest areas | 3,190,000 | 3.5 |
| Total | 97,184,000 | 100.0 |

Table 2: Zimbabwean Natural Regions

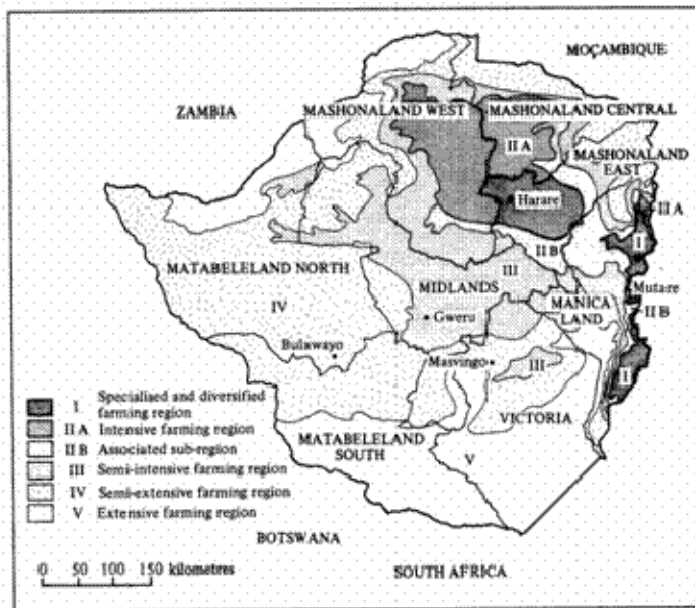
| Natural Region: | Agricultural Potential: | Area (km ²) | Percent of Total |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| Type I | Specialized and diversified farming | 7,000 | 1.8 |
| Type II | Intensive farming | 58,000 | 15.0 |
| Type III | Semi-intensive farming | 72,900 | 18.7 |
| Type IV | Semi-extensive farming | 147,800 | 37.8 |
| Type V | Extensive farming | 104,400 | 26.7 |

In South Africa, the 1913 Native Land Act and the 1936 Native Trust and Land Act expropriated 85.7 million hectares of high potential land for the white agriculture sector, and shunted 12 million native Africans onto 17.1 million hectares of predominantly medium to low potential land.⁹ Of the 17.1 million hectares of land allocated to indigenous Africans, only 15 percent is considered potentially arable. Comparatively 18 percent of the white commercial farmlands have agricultural potential, of which more than two-thirds are medium to high potential.¹⁰ These statistics highlight the inequalities in both land quantity and quality between the two sectors.

⁹ Weiner 1990, p.294

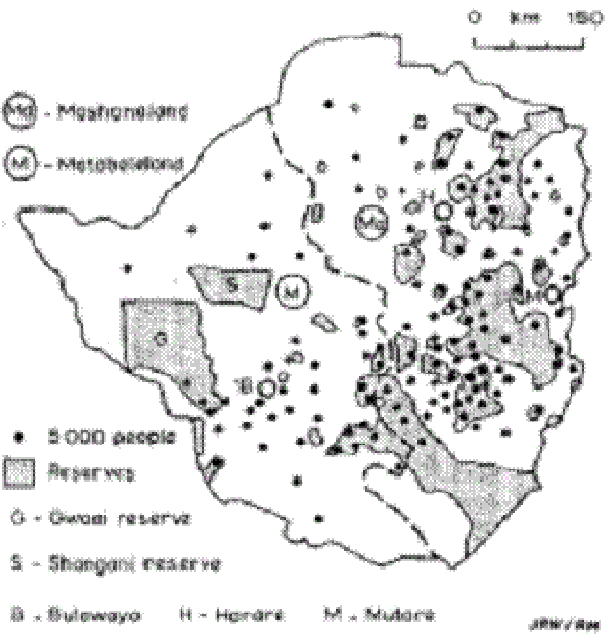
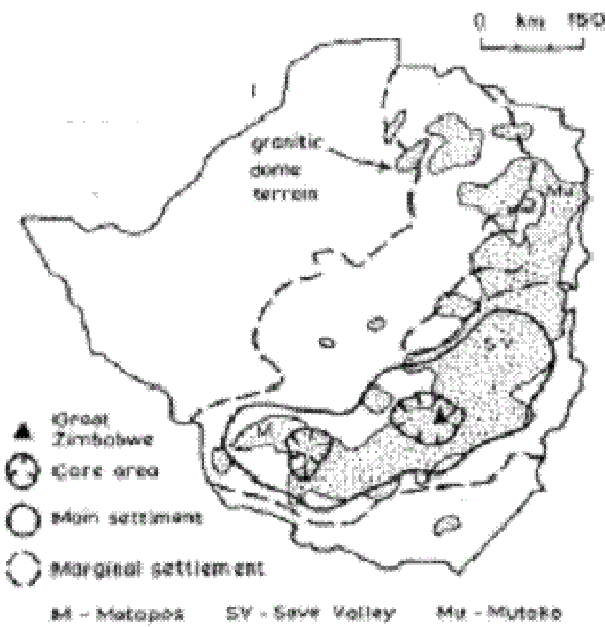
¹⁰ Ibid p.297

Map 2: Distribution of Zimbabwe's Natural Regions¹¹



Map 3: Pre-Colonial Population Distribution¹²

Map 4: Population Distribution in 1911¹³



¹¹ Surveyor-General, Harare, 1984

¹² Zinyama 1986, p. 367

¹³ Ibid

The duality of agriculture was common feature of settler colonialism across sub-Saharan Africa. The white commercial sector was characterized by freehold tenure of large farms on high potential agricultural land. The development of the white commercial sector was nurtured by the colonial administration through the provision of subsidies, agricultural extensions, and credit. The communal sector on the other hand was characterized by communal tenure on overcrowded tracts of marginal potential arable land. Government expenditure in the two sectors was far from equitable.

“The native should be trained not so much as a competitor with the white man in the business of life but as a useful auxiliary to help in the progress of the country.”¹⁴

In 1967 the expenditure of the South African government on agricultural subsidies for “100,000 white farmers was almost double the amount spent on education for more than 10 million Africans”.¹⁵

The colonial administration further restricted the economic development of the communal sector in order to guarantee a plentiful supply of cheap labor to the commercial agriculture and mining sectors¹⁶ and to limit potential competition from the African agricultural sector. Mechanisms used to limit the competition between African and European agriculture included: dual prices for maize¹⁷; compulsory destocking of livestock¹⁸; and restrictions on cash cropping¹⁹. The poverty experienced by Africans in sub-Saharan Africa during colonialism was not a coincidence; rather it was institutionally

¹⁴ Chief Native Commissioner’s Report, 1918 p. 4 from Moyana (1984) p.51

¹⁵ Deininger 1995, p.503

¹⁶ Ntsebeza 2007, p.33

¹⁷ Instituted in Kenya and Zimbabwe in 1931: In Zimbabwe a white farmer received 40 shillings per bag of maize, whereas an African producer only received 27 shillings.

¹⁸ Occurred in South Africa (1930s), Zimbabwe (1938) and Kenya (1940)

¹⁹ Before the Swynnerton Plan Kenyan farmers were prohibited from producing pyrethrum, coffee and tea. Zimbabwean farmers were prohibited from farming tobacco.

imposed upon them in order to lower the “reservation-utility” at which they would accept wage-labor and to promote the nascent white commercial agriculture sector.

The economic development of the communal sector in Zimbabwe and South Africa was restricted more severely than in Kenya because Kenya did not have sufficient mineral resources for the development of a mining industry. Only in Kenya did a viable indigenous agricultural sector emerge before independence. In South Africa and Zimbabwe conditions within the indigenous reserves rapidly deteriorated. In the South African ‘homelands’ by the end of apartheid 30,000 to 50,000 people were dying every year from hunger or hunger related diseases.²⁰

Section 1.2: Class Formation

In sub-Saharan Africa, before the colonial era, class structure was relatively simple. There was a small administrative class of tribal chiefs; however this class would have been a small minority of the population because the subsistence agricultural practices would not have generated surpluses sufficiently large to support a complex administrative class. The majority of indigenous Africans before colonialism were subsistence agriculturalists, each endowed with an equitable supply of labour. The arrival of British imperialists marked the beginning of an era of capitalist accumulation and class formation.

A defining characteristic of the colonial class structures in sub-Saharan Africa was the injection of a class of capital-endowed white commercial farmers. The colonial

²⁰ Weiner 1990, p.294

administration allocated the European settlers vast tracts of land far beyond what they could be expected to cultivate productively. In part the colonial government gave the land freely to the settlers as a reward for service; however in reality the land had little value at the dawn of colonialism. Land that is undeveloped is unproductive and cannot be taxed. The grants of land given to the settlers were thus a part of the British strategy to make the African colonies economically self-sufficient. The real “British interest in East Africa was part of a global strategy designed to protect British interests in India”.²¹

The impact of land expropriation on the indigenous people was to create a distinction between labor tenants on the European farms and subsistence agriculturalists within the indigenous designated areas. In Kenya the labor tenant class was drawn primarily from the Kikuyu reserve. Approximately 250,000^{22,23} Kikuyu migrated onto white commercial farmland forming the majority of what became known as the squatter class. The migration out of communal areas was largely voluntary as, at the outset of colonialism, the conditions of the squatter class were quite favorable. Squatters were allowed to farm plots of land on settler farms in exchange for farm labor and the squatters maintained their rights to communal lands on the reserve. In times of hardship access to communal land on the reserve provided the squatter class with a degree of income security.²⁴

An important characteristic that differentiated Kenya from Zimbabwe and South Africa is that the Kenyan farm workers were a fairly homogeneous group with a common lineage.

²¹ Harberson 1973, p. 7

²² Another estimate of the Kikuyu population living outside of the reserve was 290,000 in 1948

²³ Gary Wasserman estimates 250,000 Africans employed in European farming, p109

²⁴ Leo 1984, p.206

In Zimbabwe the source of farm labor was not “those with land and residence rights in the communal areas”.²⁵ In Zimbabwe the “colonial state and producer organizations collaborated in recruiting extra-territorial labor on limited contracts”.²⁶ In South Africa there is not substantial literature on the formation of the farm-labor class, however Ntsebuza comments that “farm workers were by far the most marginalized”.²⁷ They did not have strong links to the communal reserves and their mobility was significantly limited.²⁸ The abundance of cheap labor in the Bantustan areas further jeopardized their security of tenure, making them less likely to organize successfully.

Section 1.3: The Emergence of the ‘Land Issue’

“Land was never a cause of grievance between subjects and rulers as it became during the colonial experience. [...] The Shona and Ndebele land tenure system left no scars and sores among the hearts of the people it served because it did not create classes of people who stood dialectically opposed to one another as the colonial capitalist formula did”²⁹

The contemporary concept of the ‘land issue’ emerged during colonialism. In Kenya before colonialism “individuals were usually free to cultivate new land in any locality so long as it was not in use by someone else”.³⁰ The expropriation of land by the colonial authority, which eventually led to the exclusion of Africans from accessing land, formed the foundation of the ‘land issue’ in sub-Saharan Africa. Access to land was regarded by

²⁵ Worby 2001, p.484

²⁶ Ibid

²⁷ Ntsebeza 2007, p.34

²⁸ Ibid

²⁹ Moyana 1984, p.13

³⁰ Haugerud 1989

the indigenous people as an inalienable right.³¹ This principle was one which the “Africans would go to war and die for without any form of compromise whatsoever”.³²

The indigenous unrest over the creation of communal reserves was exacerbated by the colonial administration’s use of coercion within the reserves. Within the communal reserves of Kenya, African farmers were prohibited from the cultivation of profitable cash crops. This policy was instituted to protect the European agriculture sector from competition in the output market. The situation in the indigenous reserves of Zimbabwe and South Africa was worse than in Kenya due to labor demand of the mining industry. In South Africa and Zimbabwe the colonial administration used taxation and more direct forms of coercion to convert Africans from subsistence agriculturalist to wage laborers.³³

The ‘land issue’ intensified over the course of colonialism because the relative position of Africans, both on white commercial farms and within the communal reserves, rapidly deteriorated. Within the European settler agricultural sector the high commodity prices of World War II allowed European farmers to accumulate significant capital resources.³⁴ European farmers were “bringing more of their land into production and using more capital intensive techniques”.³⁵ In Kenya the expansion of agricultural production meant the reduction of squatter cultivation and stock rights. These restrictions led to a drastic decline in the real income of Kenyan squatters on white commercial farms. Income from

³¹ Moyana 1984, p.13

³² Ibid, p.14

³³ The restrictions on the Zimbabwean reserves did not arise immediately; rather they were a response to the viability of peasant agriculture which forced mine wages to rise from between 5 and 10 shillings a month in 1896 to between 30 and 80 in 1903. (Palmer 1977:71)

³⁴ Throup 1985, p.399

³⁵ Leo 1984, p.207

livestock per squatter family “fell from 1,400 shillings per year in 1942 to less than 300 shillings per year four years later”.³⁶ Over the same period the average agricultural wage rose from 8 shillings to 12 shillings per thirty-day contract. Furthermore in the Kenyan indigenous areas a class of accumulating black commercial farmers had emerged. This led to the privatization and commercialization of agriculture in the communal reserves, which eroded the squatter’s traditional rights to a share of land within their githaka³⁷ in Central Province.³⁸ While commercial agriculture did not develop in the indigenous areas of South Africa or Zimbabwe, rising capital intensity and scarcity of commercial farmland led to the eviction of hundreds of thousands of farm workers. The Surplus People Project found that between 1960 and 1983 a total of 1.1 million South Africans had been forcibly removed from white commercial farms.³⁹ In Zimbabwe between 1931 and 1950, 111,261 families were forcibly relocated onto indigenous reserves.

Likewise the economic conditions experienced by Africans on the communal reserves deteriorated. In Zimbabwe and South Africa the lands designated as indigenous areas were initially of marginal agricultural potential. The Native Affairs Department of Zimbabwe noted that in certain reserves: “a large portion of the soil is poor”; “water is deficient”; and “certain localities are wholly unsuitable for human occupation”.⁴⁰ Additionally in Zimbabwe and South Africa the use of the indigenous areas as a reservoir for Africans led to increased population pressures in the indigenous areas of these

³⁶ Throup 1985, p.414

³⁷ Githaka refers to a traditional African community based around one tribe. Historically if land became overcrowded within a githaka, a household leader could move to new lands to create a new githaka of which they would be the tribal leader. This tradition was ended in the 1920s when the colonial administration “froze” the tribal boundaries.

³⁸ Ibid

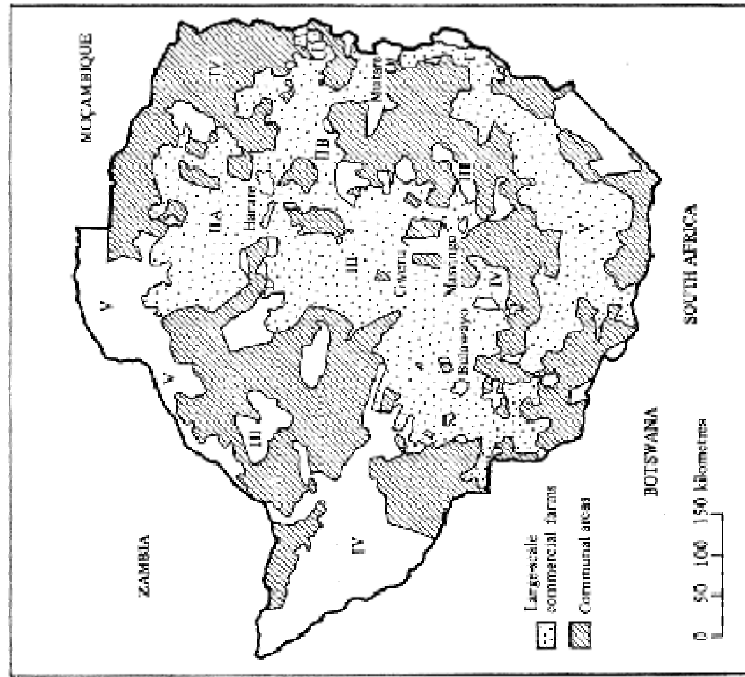
³⁹ Wegerif 2005, p.28

⁴⁰ Moyana 1984, p.44

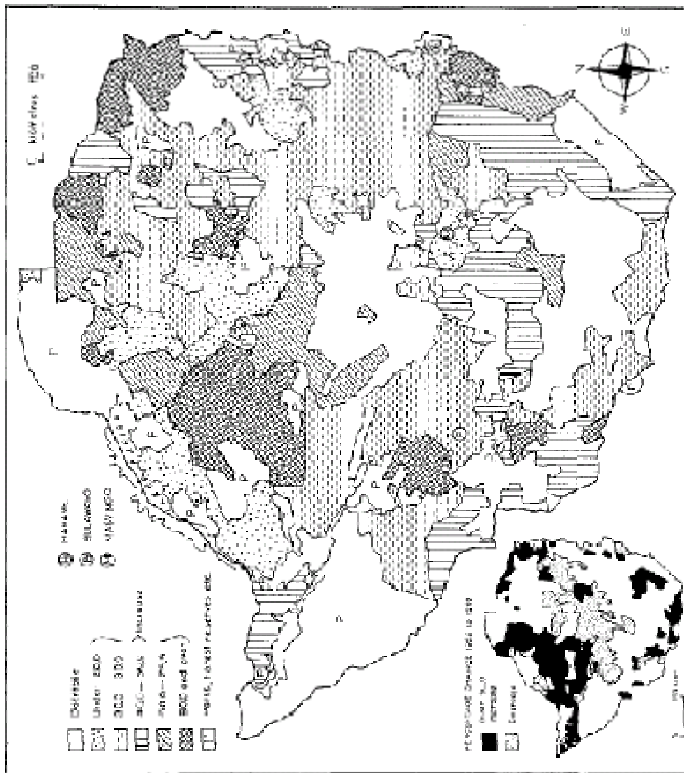
countries. While in Kenya the situation in the indigenous areas was significantly better than in Zimbabwe or South Africa, population pressures in the Kenyan reserves still became significant over the course of colonialism.

A further cause of the declining economic conditions within the indigenous areas was the rapid population growth, which occurred across sub-Saharan Africa during colonialism. Population growth occurred as European public health, medical, and sanitation technologies disseminated to the native population, and for the first time in the economic history of sub-Saharan Africa there were persistent economic surpluses. The explosion of African population during the colonial and post-colonial period is demonstrated in Figure 1, which shows a relatively stable population up until around 1900 when the population began to grow exponentially. Over the colonial period the population of Africa doubled and in the post-colonial period populations have, in some cases, as much as tripled. Furthermore the increase in population was not evenly distributed across sub-Saharan Africa. Map 5 and 6 highlight how population growth was densely concentrated in the indigenous areas of Zimbabwe, where population growth rates may have been greater than 6 percent per year. This trend was due to both high fertility rates in the indigenous areas and the compulsory migration of families out of European Areas. During the same time period in many European areas populations actually decreased. Even if sufficient agricultural land had been allocated to Africans at the time of the expropriation the rapid growth of African populations ensured the emergence of land shortages and conflict within the indigenous areas.

Map 6: Distribution of European and Indigenous Areas⁴²

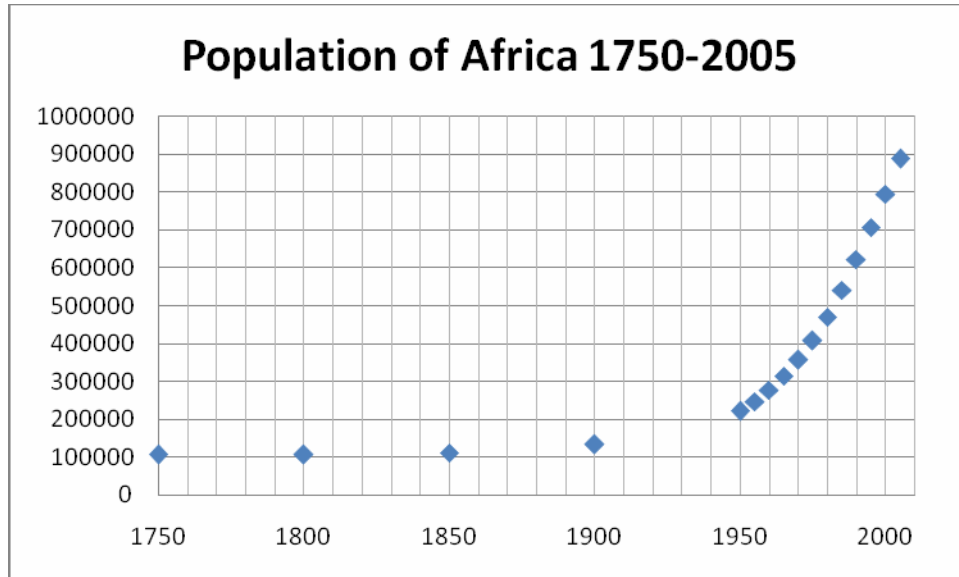


Map 5: Percentage Population Growth Rates: 1969 to 1982⁴¹



41 Ziriyama 1986
42 Weiner 1985

Figure 1. African Population 1750-2005 ('000s)⁴³



As populations grew, a trend towards the privatization of land-tenure within the indigenous areas emerged. This created a class distinction between land-owning farmers and tenant farmers. The land-owning farmers earn rents, which they may invest in accumulating land and capital. On the other hand, the price of agricultural land relative to the agricultural wage rate is such that the landless class is generally incapable of purchasing agricultural land. This pattern of inequitable progress entrenches the class distinctions and leads to a wider social gap as the emergent middle class dominates the landless class in terms of human capital formation and political influence.

It should be noted that population growth will not inevitably lead to conflicts over access to land. While the privatization of land-tenure should result in the emergence of a landed and landless class, this is not necessarily a negative thing. The migration of landless

⁴³ Wikipedia: World Population

labor to the urban economy is a requisite of industrialization and modernization. Additionally the welfare of individuals made landless may even improve as the real wages they receive likely exceed the benefits which they had expected from subsistence agriculture. This is however under the assumption that industry is capable of growing at a rate necessary to absorb the landless class. This was not the case in Southern Africa as population growth rates significantly exceeded the industry growth rates. The unemployed landless class, far from being absorbed into industry, continued growing.⁴⁴

Section 1.4: Manifestations of the ‘Land Issue’

Across sub-Saharan Africa the indigenous peoples did not tacitly accept their marginalization in the colonial economy. The ‘land issue’ was the foundation of nationalist movements across sub-Saharan Africa and it frequently manifested itself in the form of violent opposition to colonial institution.

In Kenya the declining relative position of the squatter class led to the formation of the “Mau Mau” secret society led by Jomo Kenyatta.⁴⁵ In 1952 violence (directed primarily at pro-colonial Africans) flared on the farms, in the slums of Nairobi, and in the Kikuyu reserve”. The “Mau Mau” society was defeated militarily in 1954; however the revolt is largely credited with the early decolonization of Kenya. An important feature of the “Mau Mau” emergency was that it was essentially an African civil war fought between “those Africans who had gained and those who had not gained during the years of

⁴⁴ Godia 1987, p.361

⁴⁵ The role Jomo Kenyatta played in the Mau Mau is debatable; however it was the official opinion of the colonial government that he was the instigator of the Mau Mau violence.

European settlement”.⁴⁶ The “Mau Mau” emergency demonstrated “the Europeans’ inability to maintain political and military dominance”⁴⁷: a large British military force was required to suppress the movement. This reasserted British imperial presence in the region and weakened the political influence of the European settler class.

In Zimbabwe violent indigenous confrontation with the colonial administration occurred in two wars known as the first ChiMurenga (1896-97) and the second ChiMurenga (1966-79), which were “the most violent, sustained, and highly organized instance of resistance to colonial rule anywhere in Africa”.⁴⁸ Unlike the ‘Mau Mau’ emergency the ChiMurenga wars were fought directly between the native Africans and the colonial administration. It is also important to note that the Shona and the Ndebele people were united in the uprising. In total 372 Europeans and an untold number of Africans were killed in the first ChiMurenga uprising. The second ChiMurenga, also known as the Rhodesian Bush war, lasted thirteen years and is largely attributed with Zimbabwe’s independence in 1980.

Lastly, in South Africa the land issue was used to nationalize and mobilize the indigenous people by the African National Congress and its militant wing Umkhonto we Sizwe. These organizations sought to destabilize the apartheid administration by attacking colonial resources. It was these violent uprisings and the threat of violent uprisings, in the absence of visible progress, which drove the colonial government to attempt to address the ‘land issue’.

⁴⁶ Harberson 1973, p.22

⁴⁷ Wasserman 1976, p.21

⁴⁸ Palmer 1977, p.55

Section 1.5: Colonial Response to the ‘Land Issue’

The colonial response to the ‘land issue’ was reflective of pervasive racism within the colonial government and the political influence of the settler community. The manifestation of settler influence over the colonial government is apparent in that no attempt to transfer lands from the settlers to the indigenous people during the colonial era was successful. This was despite the fact that certain settlers had been allocated land far exceeding their capability of management, which would become a significant constraint on the economic development of Rhodesia.⁴⁹

“The cause for this rapid and even increasing deterioration is well known to us. The blame for it may be laid at the feet of the Native people themselves because of their appalling misuse of the land by misguided farming and overstocking”⁵⁰

The presumed inferiority of indigenous African agricultural practices led the colonial government to incorrectly blame the degradation of land in the indigenous areas on inappropriate systems of indigenous tenure and poor conservative practices. This assumption led to a series of poorly conceived administrative solutions to the visible problem of land degradation within the indigenous areas. The administrative solution to the ‘land issue’ was therefore the privatization of tenure and the compulsory culling of livestock.

The Swynnerton Plan, implemented in Kenya (1954), was designed to “replace uncertainty of customary tenure with a system of individual land titles registered and

⁴⁹ Moyana 1984, p.177

⁵⁰ The Commission of Inquiry into the Development and Regeneration of the Colony’s Reserves

guaranteed by the state”.⁵¹ It was envisaged that the Swynnerton Plan would create a new class of ‘accumulating’ farmers.⁵² It was believed that the creation of a formal land market would allow highly productive individuals to acquire larger tracts of land. The people made landless through the sale of their land were to supply labor to the new commercial farms and to the expanding industrial sector.⁵³ The Swynnerton Plan was the Kenyan colonial administration’s solution to the problem of land degradation within the indigenous areas. It was believed that land degradation was caused by overly intensive land use, which was characteristic of indigenous cultivation. The solution was therefore to consolidate indigenous holdings and to impose restrictions on the fragmentation of holdings.

During the late 50s and early 60s, in Kenya, the contribution of small farms (under 20 hectares) to total agricultural output rose from 15 per cent in 1956 to 47 per cent in 1967.⁵⁴ It is unclear, however, to what extent the Swynnerton land-tenure reforms were responsible for the growth in small-scale agriculture. It is believed that the majority of growth in small-scale agriculture, during this period, was due to: the “removal of prohibitions against Africans’ to produce high value commodities”; investments in communication and transport infrastructure; improvements in extension services; and improved access to credit.⁵⁵ Additionally the successful growth of African commercial

⁵¹ Haugerud 1989, p.63

⁵² Adams 2000, p.10

⁵³ Haugerud 1989, p.64

⁵⁴ Haugerud 1989, p.64

⁵⁵ Migot-Adholla 1991, p.169

agriculture has been attributed to favorable commodity prices during the reconstruction following World War II.⁵⁶

Overall the impacts of the Swynnerton plan on agricultural production, in the Kenyan indigenous areas, have been shown to be negligible.^{57 58} Land was not consolidated and fragmentation continued unofficially. An unintended impact of the reforms was the marginalization of women and pastoralists who were not eligible for land titles from the Swynnerton plan.⁵⁹ The failure of the Swynnerton plan was because the colonial government did not have the resources to enforce the new system of property rights. Had the reforms been successful, however, it remains doubtful that they would have had a significant impact on the 'land issue'. In Kenya, violent opposition to the colonial government emerged from the class of farm workers outside of the indigenous areas. Additionally given that the origin of the 'land issue' was the alienation of native Africans' right to access; it was hardly likely that an administrative solution which would further excluded many native Africans from their, already limited, access to land would be well received.

The first attempt to address the 'land issue' in Rhodesia was the Morris Carter Land Commission which recommended the creation of Native Purchase Areas, where African 'master farmers' would be permitted to purchase lands, and the segregation of the white and black economies. The recommendations of the Morris Carter Land Commission

⁵⁶ Throup 1985, p.409

⁵⁷ A study by Angelique Haugerud showed no significant difference between the agricultural techniques of large and small scale African cultivators

⁵⁸ John Philip Platteau could discern no significant impact of Swynnerton on land sale transaction

⁵⁹ Platteau 1995, p.16

were eventually implemented in the 1930 Land Apportionment Act, which legislated segregation of European and African agriculture. The Land Apportionment Act led to the forced migration of indigenous peoples onto the designated indigenous areas. It was believed that conflict between indigenous people and European settlers could be averted through spatial segregation. The total expenditure on compulsory relocation of 111,261 African families between 1936 and 1962 was estimated at £30 million.⁶⁰ Comparatively less than £2 million pounds over this period was allocated to African agriculture, marketing and lands.⁶¹

The impact of land apportionment was the rapid degradation of land within the indigenous areas due to over intense cultivation of marginal lands. Growing resentment of colonialism amongst the indigenous people was fostered by the fact that while indigenous areas were becoming severely overcrowded, white commercial farmers did not have sufficient resources to cultivate more than a small percentage of their farms.

The Zimbabwean colonial administration's response to the degradation of land within the indigenous areas was the Land Husbandry Act of 1951. The Land Husbandry Act established administrative regulations of agriculture within the indigenous areas. The principle impact of the Land Husbandry act was to "limit the stock in any area to its carrying capacity".⁶² This involved the culling of livestock in excess of the administratively determined maximum stock. The Land Husbandry Act "evoked much

⁶⁰ Moyana 1984, p.129

⁶¹ Ibid

⁶² Moyana 1984, p.132

anger and despair” amongst the indigenous people.⁶³ Eventually in 1969 the Land Apportionment Act was replaced by the Land Tenure Act, which increased the land allocated to indigenous people by 2 million hectares. In the midst of a civil war over access to land, the Land Tenure Act, did little to resolve the conflict.

In South Africa by the 1930s soil erosion in the indigenous areas was becoming an ecological crisis.⁶⁴ The administrative solution to the impending crisis was the implementation of ‘betterment planning’. Betterment planning refers to a collection of programs to combat erosion, conserve the environment and develop agriculture in the indigenous areas. An example of a betterment scheme was the expenditure of approximately £30,000 on the construction of terraces.⁶⁵ Betterment also included the compulsory culling of stock and movement of people to newly created residential areas.⁶⁶

Overall the betterment planning failed to resolve the problem of land degradation and in 1948 the Tomlinson Commission was set to “devise a programme for the rehabilitation and development of the native areas”.⁶⁷ The recommendations of the Tomlinson Commission were: expenditure of £30 million⁶⁸ on secondary and tertiary industry in the indigenous areas; expenditure of £12 million⁶⁹ on urban development; and privatization of land tenure in the indigenous areas.

⁶³ Ibid, p.135

⁶⁴ Beinart 1989, p.153

⁶⁵ Beinart 1989, p.144

⁶⁶ Wet 1989, p. 327

⁶⁷ Kariuki 8

⁶⁸ Wet 1989, p.327

⁶⁹ Ibid

The expenditure on secondary and tertiary industry in the indigenous areas did not increase, the expenditure on urban development was cut to £3 million⁷⁰ and the proposed land tenure reform was rejected on the grounds that it would render “half the population of the reserves landless”.⁷¹ Additionally the government continued compulsive migration of native Africans onto the reserve, further exacerbating the existing problems.⁷² The native objections to betterment planning were manifested by rural rebellions in Witzieschoek in 1950 and Mpondoland in 1960.⁷³

The three case studies illustrate the inability of the colonial government to resolve the ‘land issue’ to the satisfaction of native Africans. Unresolved, the ‘land issue’ heightened tensions between European settlers and native Africans. Tensions over the ‘land issue’ enabled nationalists to mobilize Africans and ultimately resulted in independence⁷⁴.

Section 1.6: The Decline of Colonialism

As nationalist movements intensified their opposition to colonial administrative structures, the cost of maintaining the disenfranchisement of black Africans steadily rose. Eventually the maintenance of European political domination over sub-Saharan Africa became infeasible or undesirable. The transition to indigenous governance went from fiction, which would occur “not in a thousand years”⁷⁵ to a reality.

⁷⁰ Ibid

⁷¹ Kariuki 2004, p.8

⁷² Ibid

⁷³ Peires 1992, p.342

⁷⁴ Independence refers to the first native governments.

⁷⁵ Ian Smith former prime minister of Rhodesia referring to the likelihood of African governance

In 1960 Kenya was one of the first countries to achieve independence in sub-Saharan Africa. Kenya's early independence is largely attributed to the dominance of the colonial administration by the British government. The British presence in Kenya was further entrenched by the inability of the European settlers to resolve the 'Mau Mau' emergency without the aid of British forces. After 'Mau Mau' had been quelled the British government was positioned to determine the fate of the Kenyan colonial administration. From the perspective of the British the Kenyan colony was an anachronism with limited strategic value. Moreover the Kenyan colony was becoming an expensive anachronism, which led the British government to declare that Kenya would become an independent nation, much to the surprise of the settlers and nationalists alike.

Kenyan independence was to be a "bargain" negotiated between the African nationalists, the British government and the European settler community. It should be noted that since the beginning of colonialism the interests of the European settlers and the British government had significantly diverged. The settlers were primarily interested in extracting as much economic surplus from the Kenyan economy as possible and in this way they had become a parasitic entity; a deadweight on the Kenyan economy. The British government's interests in the Kenyan political economy were increasingly independent of the European agricultural economy. Because the land issue threatened the political stability of the Kenyan economy, the British government was open to compromise in the independence negotiations. The African nationalists were also willing to make significant "constitutional and economic concessions to European settlers in

exchange for speedy transfer of political power”.⁷⁶ This atmosphere of cooperation made the negotiated decolonization feasible.

Zimbabwe like Kenya came to independence through a “combination of armed conflict and [...] negotiated compromise”.⁷⁷ Unlike Kenya, the British presence in Zimbabwe was negligible at the time of independence in 1980. In Zimbabwe the British government granted the settlers effective control over the government in 1923 and in 1965 the settlers unilaterally declared independence from Britain. It was the white commercial farmers who controlled the colonial government at independence. Additionally there was bad blood between the European settlers and the British government, which made the government less inclined to “buy-out” the white commercial farms.

Another contrast between Kenya and Zimbabwe is the development of African small scale agriculture. In Kenya leading up to independence a class of relatively well educated commercial farmers had started to compete with large-scale white commercial agriculture. These educated middle class native Kenyans politically dominated the post-colonial economy. In Zimbabwe white commercial farmers “totally dominated”⁷⁸ African small scale agriculture. At the time of independence white commercial agriculture produced 75 per cent of Zimbabwe’s total agricultural product. This suggested that an extensive land redistribution program might lead to the collapse of Zimbabwean agricultural production. The collapse of agricultural production would have a devastating effect on Zimbabwe’s economy, because although agriculture comprised

⁷⁶ Okoth-Ogendo 1981

⁷⁷ Hall 1981, p. 37

⁷⁸ Hall 1981 p.37

only 12 per cent of total production, it accounted for over 40 per cent of foreign exchange earnings and employed approximately 70 per cent of the population.^{79 80} In Zimbabwe agricultural surpluses represented the fuel for the engine of industrial growth; thus the loss of agricultural income would lead not only to the collapse of domestic demand, but also the stagnation of industry.

Segregation in South Africa continued long after the independence of both Zimbabwe and Kenya. Apartheid was stable for so long because it was successful at marginalizing and fragmenting the indigenous people. ANC guerilla activity was on the rise during the last decade of apartheid (from 23 attacks in 1977 steadily increasing to 281 attacks in 1989)⁸¹; however the National Party “possessed the military capacity to remain in power for decades to come”⁸². In this way apartheid could likely have continued for much longer, but for the external pressure from the international community and intrinsic economic inefficiencies which caused the apartheid system to collapse from within.

The external economic pressure on the regime emerged in the form of economic sanctions from OECD countries, an OPEC oil embargo and from civil society movements in developed countries. In 1973 the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) imposed an oil embargo on South Africa; however the embargo was not enforced and Iran continued to supply oil to South Africa until 1979.⁸³ In 1985 Commonwealth countries prohibited the import of South African coal, iron, steel and

⁷⁹ Bratton 1990, p. 267

⁸⁰ Weiner 1985, p.252

⁸¹ Louw 2004, p.135

⁸² Ibid 159

⁸³ Eades 1999, p. 83

uranium. International banks, in the same year imposed financial sanctions on South Africa, which caused a financial crisis in South Africa as the government was forced to curtail its budget deficit. The role which civil society played in ending apartheid was through successfully lobbying of “state governments, municipalities, pension funds, and universities”⁸⁴ to boycott investments in South Africa, which led to rapid disinvestment in South African enterprise. Civil society also impacted the regime through a widespread cultural protest. South Africans were prohibited from participation in sports, music, academia, which would have had considerable psychic effects on white South African national identity.

The degree to which sanctions were effective in ending apartheid is not entirely clear.

The effectiveness of economic sanctions in general has been questioned.

“The link from economic sanctions to economic dislocation in the target is weak and the link from economic dislocation to a desired political response is even weaker.”⁸⁵

Economic sanctions create strong incentives for evasion as countries which evade the sanctions are able to earn monopolist profits. Evasion is even more likely in an increasingly globalized world where it is almost impossible to determine if a t-shirt imported from Mexico was originally manufactured in South Africa. In the case of financial disinvestment multinational corporations generally did not close their facilities; rather they sold stock in excess of 51 percent so they would not be listed as owning the enterprise. This likely led to windfall profits of white South Africans who were able to

⁸⁴ Lowenberg 1998, p.120

⁸⁵ Lowenberg 1998, p.107

purchase the enterprises at below market prices. Overall external pressure on the apartheid regime was significant, but insufficient to end the regime.

The actual cause of the collapse of apartheid was the growing economic cost of segregation. The purpose of segregating and dominating native Africans was to secure a plentiful supply of cheap labor for the agricultural and mining sectors of the economy - through restricting native access to the urban sector, thus raising the wages of white unskilled and semi-skilled labor.⁸⁶ While segregation was beneficial to the agricultural and mining sector it was strongly opposed by industrial capitalists. Furthermore the segregated education system ensured a shortage of skilled labor in manufacturing. In the 1940s and 1950s the economy of South Africa rapidly industrialized to the point that by 1960 manufacturing contributed more to GDP than agriculture and mining combined.⁸⁷ It was the industrial lobby which led to the removal of the statutory color bar in 1981 and the repeal of pass laws in 1986.⁸⁸ Additionally under pressure from industrial lobby groups and reinforced by riots within the indigenous areas government expenditure on indigenous education rose “sharply”.⁸⁹ Over the next two decades as black South Africans became more educated and integrated in South African society their exclusion from the political realm became unsustainable. In 1994 the African National Congress formed the government and apartheid was formally abolished.

Part 2: Colonial Legacy in the Post-Colonial Era

⁸⁶ Ibid, p.196

⁸⁷ Lowenberg 1998, p.197

⁸⁸ Ibid, p. 201

⁸⁹ Ibid

Section 2.1: Land Redistribution in Kenya

Section 2.1.1: Yeoman Schemes

The renowned Million Acre Scheme, which occurred in 1962, was not the first attempt at agrarian reform. Its precursors, known as “yeoman” schemes, were characterized by settler panic and attempts by certain groups of Africans to seize European land by force. Naturally under these conditions reforms occurred sporadically; in one case the government resettling “nearly 3,000 families on the Kinangop in twenty-one days”⁹⁰. In total the “yeoman” schemes encompassed 180,000 acres; however they were insufficient to defuse the political pressures for the redistribution of land to landless Africans. It was this African hunger for land and settlers’ fear of unlawful expropriation that led to the formulation of the Million Acre Scheme.

The purpose of the “yeoman” (and after 1961⁹¹ “peasant”) schemes was to resettle entrepreneurial African farmers in the traditionally white, highlands. Under the schemes land was, in theory, to be purchased from European settlers by the Land Development and Settlement Board (L.D.S.B) at the prevailing market rate. Land would subsequently be divided into two types of holdings: “yeoman” which consisted of approximately 50 acres; and “peasant” which consisted of approximately 15 acres. The L.D.S.B was scheduled to “settle 1,800 yeomen and 6,000 peasants on 180,000 acres of land by September 1963”⁹² Both of these schemes were intended not for the truly landless but for entrepreneurial African farmers. These individuals were selected by the constraint that a

⁹⁰ Okoth-Ogendo 1981

⁹¹ Hazlewood 1985, p.446

⁹² Leo 1984, p.211

candidate for resettlement needed sufficient assets to qualify for the loan. The capital requirement was 10,000 Kenyan Shillings for “yeoman” schemes and 1,000 Kenyan Shillings for “peasant” schemes. The average agricultural wage at the time being approximately 60 Kenyan Shillings per month, effectively denied landless farmers access to the program.

The purpose of the ‘yeoman’ schemes was to “placate Africans by providing genuine and conspicuous interracial land transfer”.⁹³ It was believed that this could be done without destabilizing the commercial land market through illegal appropriations. It was also believed that the program would be highly profitable for its entrepreneurial African participants. Profits were obtainable, it was argued, through the adoption of cash crops for export. The majority of the lands to be resettled had been used, during colonialism, for animal husbandry. Given annual earnings of an acre of grassland utilized for animal husbandry was less than £5 while the same acre producing coffee might be capable of yielding £130⁹⁴, the World Bank estimated that “the annual gross value of production on land to be settled may be increased from an estimated £900,000 to £3.6 million”⁹⁵ Given this appraisal and the bounty of underutilized land it would seem a simple task to find buyers and sellers for the programme. The reality, however, was to the contrary: the reforms failed, not on the grounds that they did not address the fundamental problem of landlessness, but due to the inability of the L.D.S.B. to match willing buyers and sellers.

⁹³ Leo 1984 p.211

⁹⁴ Ibid, p. 210

⁹⁵ Ibid, p. 213

On the supply side the failure of the programme was largely due to the L.D.S.B.'s failure to "hold the line against pressures to inflate land purchase prices".⁹⁶ The fact that rent seeking settlers were capable of extorting inflated land prices from the L.D.S.B, in turn led to the speculative purchasing and development of land. In fact some policies of the L.D.S.B. encouraged speculation, for instance the L.D.S.B. stipulated that individuals who had purchased land since 1960 were to be paid not just what they paid for the land and the value of improvements to the land, but also up to 10 per cent for "risk involved in buying the farm".⁹⁷ This stipulation essentially nullified the very risks it was compensating.

On the demand side, the reforms were boycotted by tribal organizations (who saw the reforms as "selling out" to European interests). African participants in the program were reluctant to migrate to where the land was made available, preferring access to lands nearer their respective tribal authorities. In fact, the assumption that the African middle class needed government assistance to purchase commercial agricultural land was fundamentally flawed. Many Africans did purchase and manage tracts of commercial agricultural land during the period of the program with little or no government assistance.⁹⁸ The settlement program likely impeded the purchase of land by Africans due to the inflation of land prices that it caused.

The failure of the "yeoman" and "peasant" schemes was largely due to the overrepresentation of the interests of European settlers, which led to rent seeking

⁹⁶ Leo 1984, p.216

⁹⁷ Ibid, p.214

⁹⁸ Ibid, p.221

behavior and limited African interest in the program. The failure of the initiatives to address the growing problem of landlessness also contributed to the downfall of the early schemes. As dissent amongst the landless class peaked, squatters began to “take over European farms” even “while their owners were offering them for transfer”.⁹⁹ For these reasons the program was eventually scrapped in 1963 in favor of settling the truly landless under the “Million Acre Scheme”.

Section 2.1.2: The Million Acre Scheme

The government launched the Million Acre Scheme as a program to address the rising demand for access to land and indigenization of agriculture, subject to a number of key constraints. It was important to the nationalist party that the confidence of European commercial farmers not be shattered by uncompensated expropriation of land. The confidence of European settlers in the land market was crucial to avoid the dramatic flight of capital, which would have destabilized the post colonial government and weakened the nationalist political party. For this reason the willing-seller, willing-buyer principle of market-led agrarian reform was adhered to for the most part throughout the scheme.¹⁰⁰ A second constraint on the program, which became increasingly binding over time, was that settlers were to be expected to pay for their land. This stipulation, negotiated at independence, reflected the strong bargaining position of European settlers at the time of independence.

⁹⁹ Hazlewood 1985, p.446

¹⁰⁰ Ibid

Given that the settlers were expected to eventually repay the majority of the purchase price of the land, “demonstrable ability to repay the loan”¹⁰¹ became an increasingly important criterion in settler selection. Because squatters had negligible access to capital this meant that they were increasingly denied access to the program. Those who were settled were generally far from being landless; rather they were members of the emergent middle class. The policy of favoring ‘progressive farmers’, who had demonstrated their ability to successfully manage enterprise, essentially amounted to a policy favoring an already ‘privileged minority’, to the detriment of those truly suffering from landlessness.¹⁰² Additionally there is limited empirical evidence that the class of ‘progressive farmers’ is in any way more productive than the landless squatters.

Despite their advantages, even these middle class farmers found repayment of loans to be exceptionally challenging (sometimes being expected to begin making payments on the loans before the first crop had been harvested) and these parties were often “pushed out by larger farmers, business men, or the urban political class”.¹⁰³ Twenty years after the million acre schemes commenced it remained “doubtful whether more than 35 per cent of the settlers”¹⁰⁴ had repaid their loans and received title deeds to their land. A cause of the poor performance of settlement loans was that, due to the fragile political climate, the nationalist government was unlikely to evict settlers¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ Okoth-Ogendo 1981, p.331

¹⁰² Leo 1978: 619

¹⁰³ Okoth-Ogendo 1981, p.332

¹⁰⁴ Ibid

¹⁰⁵ Ibid

By 1965 it had become clear once more that “political and economic factors [...] combined to thwart the original *raison d’être* of the Million Acre Scheme”. Given persistent land hunger the Kenyan nationalist government launched a final series of settlement schemes referred to as the ‘Shirika’ and ‘Haraka’ schemes. These schemes were intended to target specifically the landless squatter class and involved average holding sizes of about 10 acres.¹⁰⁶ In total these schemes settled 46,000 squatters on 416,000 acres of mid-potential land. For the first time throughout the settlement process, “no purchase money [was] required of the settlers”¹⁰⁷. These plans represented the first real programme to address the needs of the growing landless class.

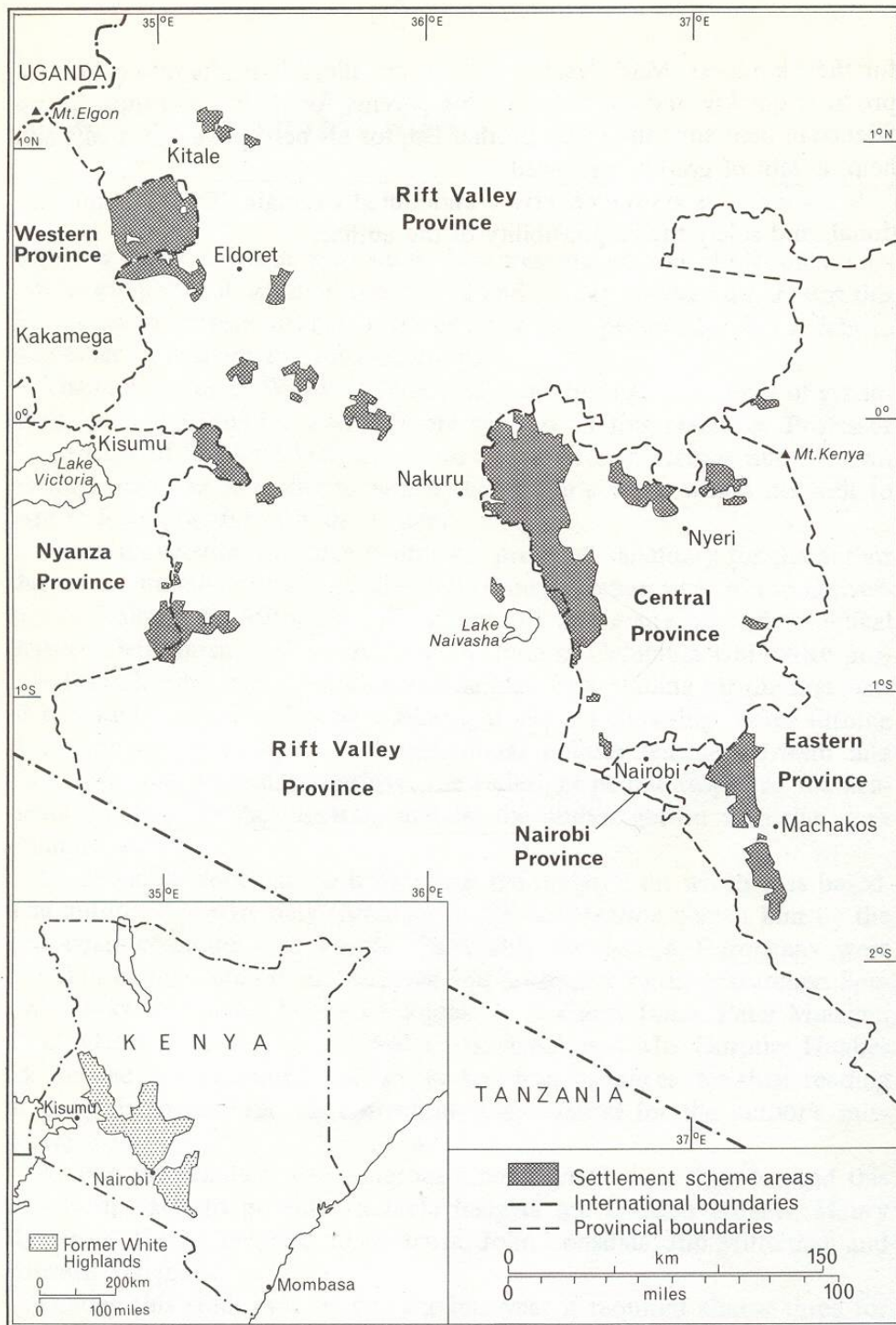
By the end of the settlement schemes, more than 71,000 families had been settled on almost 2 million acres of land.¹⁰⁸ The area resettled under the various settlement schemes is shown in Map 7. While only representing 17 per cent of European commercial farmland, it represented the majority of white mixed commercial farmland. The remainder of white commercial farmland was primarily large plantations, which were deemed unsuitable for settlement because of exorbitant land prices and the importance of the plantations for the generation of government revenue and foreign exchange.

¹⁰⁶ Okoth-Ogendo 1981, p.333

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, p.334

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, p.332

Map 7: Kenyan Settlement Scheme Areas¹⁰⁹



¹⁰⁹ Wasserman

Plantations were also deemed unsuitable for the program because their subdivision could lead to a fall in productivity due to lost economies of scale. Overall the program had a marginal impact on the skewedness of land distribution. In 1976, more than a decade after Independence, 2.4 percent of holdings contained 32 percent of the arable land.¹¹⁰ The total cost of the land purchases was K£21 Million, the majority of which was financed by the British government as a bail-out for settlers at the abrupt and unexpected end of colonialism.

The important question, which must be asked is: to what degree did Kenya's resettlement program resolve the 'land issue' in Kenya? In many ways all that changed for the rural poor was the mechanisms of their oppression. Prior to independence native Africans were withheld the benefits of economic development through colonial administrative mechanism. Indigenous people were not permitted to own land outside of the indigenous areas and they were not permitted to cultivate the most profitable crops. In the postcolonial era the oppression of the rural poor occurred through capitalist mechanism. Kenyans without capital cannot obtain capital, they are denied access to land, they cannot invest in education and they are denied access to government.

¹¹⁰ Hunt 1984 p.160

An additional concern with the Kenyan land redistribution program is that a significant quantity of land was transferred to economic and political elites. In the Nakuru district in the late 1970s, Hunt (1984) found that of 38 individuals who owned farms larger than 500 hectares only 14 were agriculturalists. The professions of the remaining 24 individuals are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Profession of Large Farm Owners¹¹¹

| Profession: | No. |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| MPs | 6 |
| Senior Government Administrators | 5 |
| Senior Police Chiefs | 5 |
| Land Board Members | 2 |
| County Council Officials | 2 |
| Ambassadors | 1 |
| Former Chiefs | 2 |
| Company Executives | 1 |

Landlessness was far from eliminated by Kenya's land redistribution program. In 1983 the "settlement officers and administrative offices were besieged by land seekers".¹¹² Furthermore the inefficiencies of absentee landlordism remain prevalent on settled farms, especially in cases where the beneficiaries had white-collar backgrounds.¹¹³ If Kenyan agricultural productivity is to improve intervention will be necessary to ensure that plots are fully utilized. Hunt (1984) recommends a renewed program of land redistribution: she estimates that a land redistribution program based on a 3 hectare ceiling¹¹⁴ could create as many as 779,520 jobs.¹¹⁵

¹¹¹ Hunt 1984, p.287

¹¹² Leo 1984, p.180

¹¹³ 40 percent of beneficiaries with white-collar backgrounds did not manage their plots, comparatively only 2.6 percent of beneficiaries with non-white-collar backgrounds did not manage their plots. (Leo 1984 :169)

¹¹⁴ Current owners of land would be forced to sell holdings in excess of 3 hectares.

¹¹⁵ Hunt 1984, p.270 : This figure includes labor-tenants who would be displaced by the land redistribution

The problem of landlessness in Kenya is intimately related to the problem of poverty and its resolution should be one of the top priorities of the administration. If Kenya does not initiate a renewed program of land redistribution as Hunt (1984) recommends or alternatively a general program to improve the opportunities of the landless, it is quite possible that at some indeterminate point in the future, illegal farm invasions could recur.

Section 2.2: Agrarian Reform in Zimbabwe

Section 2.2.1: Commercial and Communal Sectors Compared

In 1980 at the time of independence the average population density on African farms was 28 persons per sq km compared to just 9 persons per sq km on white commercial farms.¹¹⁶ Higher population densities farming marginal lands intensively has led to “soil erosion, deforestation and desertification”¹¹⁷ in the indigenous areas of Zimbabwe. Commercial farmland on the other hand operates relatively extensively on much larger tracts of high potential land. In 1981 commercial farms were responsible for 75 per cent of total agricultural product, and were generally seen as highly productive relative to peasant-operated farms within the communal areas. Table 4 shows that even on comparable land large commercial farms still outperformed producers in the communal area.

Table 4: Maize yields (kg/hectare): Commercial Farms vs Communal Areas¹¹⁸

| Natural Regions | Commercial Farms 1974-1978 | Communal Areas 1981-1983 |
|-----------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| IIA | 5827 | 3913 |
| IIB | 4164 | 3913 |
| III | 2791 | 1610 |
| IV | 2310 | 824 |

Total agricultural product does not necessarily reflect agricultural productivity, because it does not capture the input-output ratio, agricultural intensity, or the exogenous advantages, which the commercial farms enjoy over the communal sector. The assumed superiority of white commercial farmers was first rigorously tested in 1985 when Weiner et al demonstrated that under equitable conditions peasant agriculture can outperform commercial agriculture. In terms of inputs per unit of output (Table 5) the communal

¹¹⁶ Lado 1999, p.154

¹¹⁷ Ibid, p.148

¹¹⁸ Weiner 1985, p.278

sector produces much more per dollar of inputs than the large-scale commercial sector. In 1982 the farms in the Communal Areas produced \$8.80 of output for every dollar of input, compared to an average of \$1.83 of output per dollar of inputs on the commercial farms. This difference is potentially reflective of more efficient means of production within the communal reserve and it certainly suggests a much higher marginal productivity of land and capital within the reserves. It is not conclusive, however, since the productivity differential may simply be the overexploitation of available resources as families mine both land and labor, in order to eke a subsistence income from marginal lands.

Table 5: Input/Output Ratios for Commercial and Communal Farms¹¹⁹

| Year | Commercial Areas | | | | Communal Areas | | | |
|------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| | Total Output (Z\$) | Total Inputs (Z\$) | Value-Added (Z\$) | Ratio of Outputs to Inputs | Total Output (Z\$) | Total Inputs (Z\$) | Value-Added (Z\$) | Ratio of Outputs to Inputs |
| 1974 | 369 | 145 | 224 | 2.54 | 108 | 7 | 101 | 15.43 |
| 1975 | 385 | 165 | 230 | 2.33 | 106 | 8 | 98 | 13.25 |
| 1976 | 415 | 178 | 237 | 2.33 | 107 | 8 | 99 | 13.37 |
| 1977 | 404 | 197 | 207 | 2.05 | 108 | 9 | 99 | 12.00 |
| 1978 | 430 | 210 | 220 | 2.05 | 75 | 8 | 67 | 9.37 |
| 1979 | 452 | 231 | 221 | 1.96 | 104 | 8 | 96 | 13.00 |
| 1980 | 607 | 298 | 309 | 2.04 | 147 | 11 | 136 | 13.36 |
| 1981 | 817 | 428 | 389 | 1.91 | 266 | 19 | 247 | 14.00 |
| 1982 | 871 | 475 | 396 | 1.83 | 272 | 31 | 242 | 8.80 |

Even if it is assumed that European agricultural techniques are superior to those of indigenous Africans there is still potential for land redistribution on the basis of agricultural intensity. On average only 10.2 percent of the commercial farmland was under crop in 1982.^{120 121} This demonstrates how underutilized European agricultural

¹¹⁹ Weiner 1985, p.283

¹²⁰ Ibid p.257

¹²¹ Hazlewood (1985, p.457) estimated 21 per cent of European land in Zimbabwe was utilized

land was at the time of independence. The World Bank in 1983 noted that it was “unrealistic to expect” the large scale commercial farmers to fully utilize their lands.¹²²

Even if commercial agricultural techniques were twice as productive as indigenous ones the gap in total production could easily be overcome by bringing more land into cultivation. In 1981 there was certainly no shortage of underutilized lands: as much as 17.8 per cent of commercial farms in Mashonaland did not cultivate any land at all.¹²³ These farms had been abandoned by their owners during the civil war. It was difficult to accept that redistributing these farms would have a negative impact on agricultural production.

Section 2.2.2: Non-Redistributive Agrarian Reforms

After independence the Mugabe government made significant progress towards improving the conditions within the indigenous areas. With the removal of colonial restrictions on farming in the indigenous areas, small scale African farmers could cultivate cash crops and the dual price system for maize was reversed. The government offered \$180 per ton of maize to peasant farmers compared to only \$100 per ton to commercial farmers. The government also extended extension and credit services to peasant farmers and made considerable improvements to rural infrastructure. The most significant infrastructure program was the construction of many marketing depots for the collection maize.¹²⁴ The effect of these ‘soft’ policies of eliminating colonial restrictions led to the rapid growth of peasant agriculture. The peasant sector’s share of maize

¹²² Weiner 1985, p.275

¹²³ Ibid p.257

¹²⁴ Dashwood 2000, p.50

production grew from 3.6 percent of total output to 36.5 percent between 1979 and 1984.¹²⁵

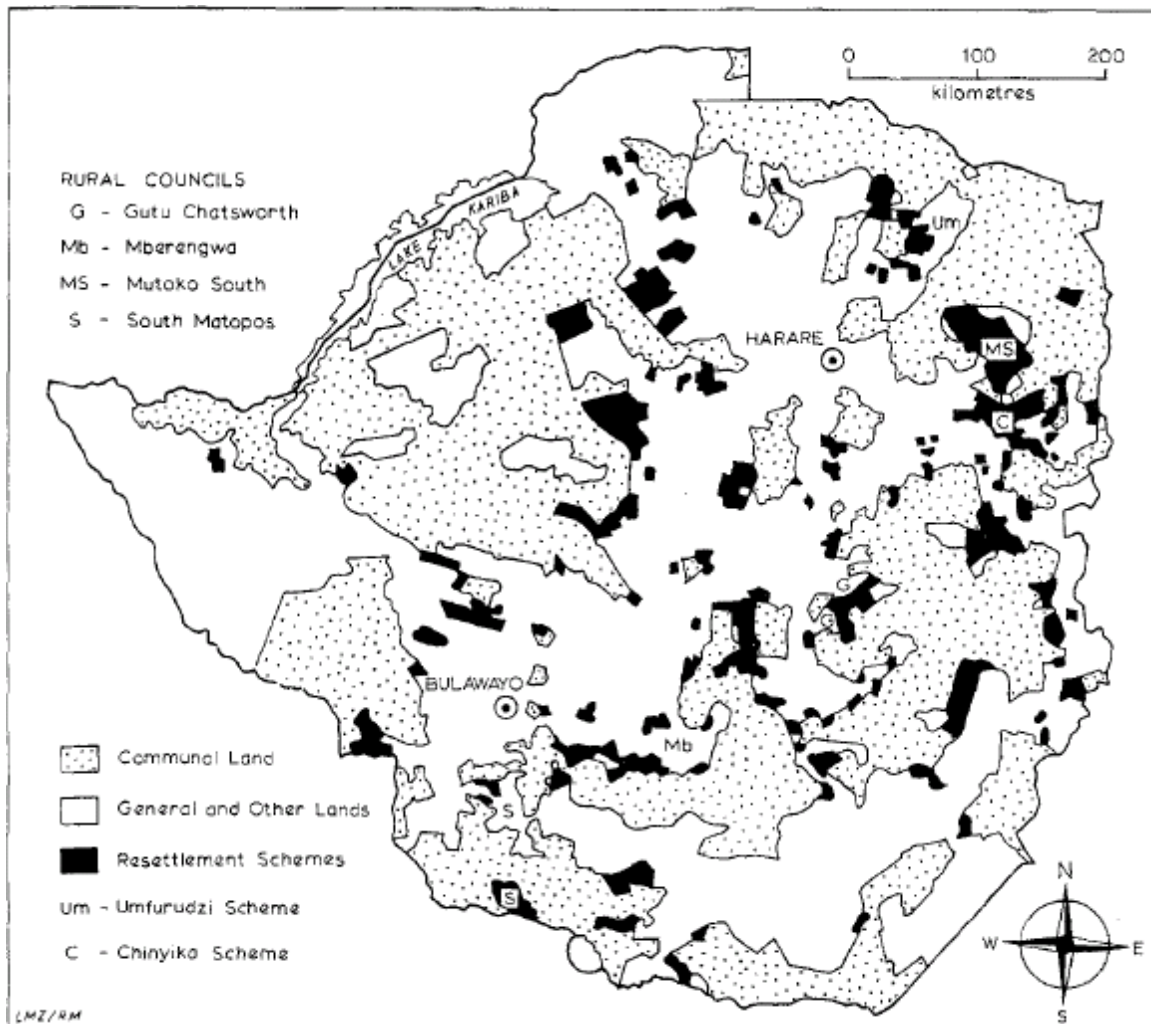
The growth of peasant agriculture was exceptional and the economic conditions within some indigenous areas significantly improved. The benefits from the removal of colonial agricultural restrictions were not spread equitably across the country. Zimbabweans in the fertile Mashonaland and Midlands provinces on averaged fared much better than peasants in Matabeleland.¹²⁶ Much of the land in the Gwaai and Shagani reserves was never suitable for agricultural cultivation or human habitation. The poverty and overpopulation in these areas could not be resolved through increased expenditure, land redistribution was necessary. Furthermore the success of peasant agriculture in other regions of Zimbabwe clearly shows the ability of the peasant farmer to compete with large commercial farms.

¹²⁵ Dashwood 2000, p.50

¹²⁶ See Map 1

Section 2.2.3: From 1980-1997 Phase I of Land Redistribution

Map 8: Distribution of Resettlement Schemes Implemented by 1984



Following independence there was considerable demand for the immediate redistribution of land from European settlers to African peasant farmers and war veterans living in crowded communal reserves. The newly elected nationalist African leadership was expected to move quickly on the land issue, because a majority of the government was formed from the leadership of the ZANU nationalist military movement. Before

independence the ZANU(PF)¹²⁷ had relied heavily on the land issue to mobilize and to give a national identity to the African peasants. President Mugabe himself declared in 1989 that “the land question was at the center of the factors that propelled us to launch our war of national liberation”.¹²⁸ Naturally the European farmers were apprehensive towards their security of tenure within the newly independent Zimbabwe.

Surprisingly, however, Mugabe’s first action, as President of Zimbabwe, was not to alienate the rights of European farmers; rather he guaranteed them. The Lancaster House Agreement of 1979 stipulated that all land redistribution for a period of ten years following independence would occur voluntarily on a “willing-seller”, “willing-buyer” basis. In return for this concession the British government agreed to cover half of the costs of the program.

It is often assumed that the Lancaster House Agreement was the binding constraint on the redistribution of land. For instance in an article on land redistribution, Robin Palmer introduces the topic of land redistribution with the sentence: “Given that the constraints of Lancaster House ruled out any significant redistribution of land [...]”¹²⁹. It is not entirely clear however, the degree to which land redistribution was limited by the Lancaster House Agreement. The security of tenure guaranteed by the Lancaster House Agreement, combined with prevalent subsidies, led to speculative inflation of land prices, which in turn constrained the redistribution program. This guaranteed that a limited

¹²⁷ Zimbabwean African National Union (Patriotic Front) the PF was added after the party merged with ZAPU (Zimbabwe Africa People’s Union)

¹²⁸ Palmer 1990, p.165

¹²⁹ Ibid

quantity of land would be available for sale at a “fair” market rate. There were however alternative legal methods of land acquisition available to the Zimbabwean government like “land taxes, reparations or reclaiming historic subsidies”, none of which were ever implemented.¹³⁰

Apart from the Lancaster House Agreement redistribution of land was also constrained by a lack of administrative capacity. The Zimbabwean land redistribution program was organized in a “top-down” highly centralized fashion. The administration was poorly prepared to organize the program because of the inexperience of the nationalist government, poor infrastructure systems that were in the process of recovering from the civil war and the shortages of government surveyors. It is questionable whether the Zimbabwean government would have had the capacity to redistribute additional lands even had they been freely available.

Another constraint on the redistribution of land was corruption. There is reliable evidence that, in the initial years of the land redistribution program, almost all of the scheduled land, which was appropriated under the program, was in fact allocated to some of the poorest of the poor. This does not, however, imply that no land “landed” in the hands of political elites or that there was necessarily a shortage of lands available for sale.

For example:

¹³⁰ Kinsey 2004, p.1671

“Any white farmer wishing to sell his land was legally bound first to offer it to the government, which could then decide to inspect the land. If the government decided, for whatever reason, that it did not want the land, it issued a ‘no present interest’ certificate, which was valid for a year and left the owner free to sell on the private market. A significant number of farms, totaling well over one million hectares, changed hands in this way, many to senior members of the government and the new black ruling elite.”¹³¹

This suggests that there may not have been a lack of either lands or funds available for redistribution, but simply that the funds for land purchases were in the hands of the political elites rather than land redistribution program.

Overall the outcome of the first decade of land purchase is described in Table 6. Table 6 shows that the total amount of land redistributed by 1988 was 2.5 million hectares and that the average price per hectare was Z\$24.45. In addition to the lands purchased, the Zimbabwean government transferred 500 thousand hectares of publicly owned land to peasant farmers, making the total area of land redistributed approximately 3 million hectares. Another important note to be made on Table 6 is that the majority of land purchases occurred within the first three years of independence, after which the land redistribution program stagnated until 1997, by which time only an additional 500,000 hectares had been redistributed.¹³²

¹³¹ Palmer 1990, p.170

¹³² Government of Zimbabwe

Table 6: Land Purchases in Zimbabwe, 1980/81 -1987/88¹³³

| Financial Year | Hectares | Gross Purchase Price (Z\$) | Average Price (Z\$/hectare) |
|----------------|----------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 80/81 | 223196 | 3517198 | 15.76 |
| 81/82 | 900196 | 18803158 | 20.88 |
| 82/83 | 939925 | 22009187 | 23.42 |
| 83/84 | 159866 | 4536168 | 28.37 |
| 84/85 | 75058 | 2966849 | 39.53 |
| 85/86 | 86187 | 4444610 | 51.57 |
| 86/87 | 133515 | 3898335 | 29.20 |
| 87/88 | 20319 | 1874200 | 92.24 |
| Total | 2538262 | 62049705 | 24.45 |

Map 8 shows the lands redistributed by 1984. In the first three years of independence there was uncertainty amongst white commercial farmers regarding their security of tenure and many farmers had abandoned their farms. These farmers were very willing to liquidate their land holdings at a fair market rate. After 1983, however, “the white exodus ebbed” and “the size of the commercial farming population stabilize[d]”¹³⁴ which may have led to speculative land pricing which in turn limited the extent of the redistribution.

An alternative explanation for the rising prices following 1983 is that the government had, after purchasing 2 million hectares in three years, absorbed the majority of underutilized and low potential land and the rising prices were reflective of the rising marginal productivity of commercial agriculture. Concurrent with rising land prices, by 1983 the international community had begun to pressure the Zimbabwean government to reduce its

¹³³ Palmer 1977, p.93

¹³⁴ Bratton 1990, p.280

budget deficits.¹³⁵ Pressured to reduce expenditure, perhaps the Zimbabwean government regarded land redistribution as expendable relative to the importance of education, health care and other developmental programs.

The land redistributed (representing 19% of commercial farmland) was allocated to 52,000 peasant families. Overall, 60 percent of the beneficiaries of the land redistribution program came from indigenous areas the rest were farm workers and war veterans. This is a significant quantity of land, especially given that the majority of the program costs had to be financed by the Zimbabwean government; a “stark contrast [...] with the experience of Kenya, where 95 percent of the financing came from overseas”.¹³⁶ The accomplishments, however, fall far short of the program’s original target. The original target of the program was to redistribute 9 million hectares to 162,000 households.

The size of holdings under the land redistribution program was a binding constraint on the number of families resettled. The average holding size of Zimbabwe’s land redistribution program was 51 hectares compared to an average of 10 hectares per holding in the ‘million acre scheme’. There is some controversy over the benefits of reducing the size of holdings. For example the Indigenous Commercial Farmers Union argued that smaller holdings would “address accommodation needs and some basic subsistence production but [would not] contribute towards significant indigenous economic empowerment”.¹³⁷

¹³⁵ Palmer 1977, p.171

¹³⁶ Bratton 1990, p.281

¹³⁷ Dashwood 2000, p.183

Some criticize the government for insufficient interest in the plight of the landless poor. Lack of interest may not really be a fair criticism, because as with any government program the opportunity cost must be considered. In Zimbabwe after 1985, the government, attempting to reconcile a debt crisis was forced to drastically cut numerous social programs. The Zimbabwean government repeatedly chose to cut land redistribution programs rather than cut education, health or defense spending.¹³⁸ On the other hand if the land redistribution funds were being diverted towards the private interests of political elites (as was the case in the mid 1990s) then the economic development of Zimbabwe may have been impeded

Another factor attributed to the failure of the land redistribution program to achieve its objectives was the centralized administration of the program. There was no local authority in the land redistribution program. Instead the land redistribution was “implemented with the institutional form and structure of land administration from colonial times”.¹³⁹ This centralized and bureaucratic structure of land administration imposed a larger than necessary cost of the program on the already heavily taxed central government. If more aspects of the program had been devolved to local authorities it is likely that more could have been done at a lower cost.

¹³⁸ Bratton 1990, p.281

¹³⁹ Jacobs 2002, p.106

In terms of productivity of the new holdings, they performed acceptably to remarkably with an average return on investment of as much as 21%.^{140 141} There was no collapse in agricultural productivity proving conclusively that organized redistribution of land to landless peasant farmers was economically feasible. The Overseas Development Administration (ODA) concluded that the resettlement program “had made impressive strides towards achieving its principal objectives, in particular the short run political objective of contributing to post-war reconstruction and stability”.¹⁴² Additionally the widespread degradation of redistributed land, which was expected, did not occur. In fact small-scale peasant agricultural techniques have since been deemed exceptionally sustainable.

Corruption was a factor, however in the first decade of independence the majority of land resettled was allocated to landless or nearly landless Zimbabweans. The 1992 Land Acquisition Act redefined the beneficiary selection process. The criterion for selecting families was “no longer based on social need, but on whether potential beneficiaries [could] demonstrated proven farming experience and competency”.¹⁴³ The act was implemented as a response to the poor performance on some settlements where farmers had little or no agricultural knowledge. The act also led to an increase in dubious land transactions; for instance in May 1993, “a clandestine programme to transfer lands with expired leases to persons closely connected to the government was initiated”¹⁴⁴. In total

¹⁴⁰ Government of Zimbabwe, Cusworth and Walker (1998) and Robilliard, Sukume, Yanoma, and Lofgren (2001)

¹⁴¹ Deininger (2004) estimates a more nuanced IRR of 8% to 15%

¹⁴² ODA, 1996 from Sachikonye 2003, p.230

¹⁴³ Dashwood 2000, p.181

¹⁴⁴ Moyo 1996, p.114

98 black farmers were allocated land in this way by 1995.¹⁴⁵ The Land Acquisition Act was a step in the wrong direction; towards the further exclusion of an already marginalized social class.

The number of households with limited or no access to land grew from 330,000 in 1980 to 370,000 in 1990.¹⁴⁶ The increase was caused by a 3.6% growth rate of the peasant farming population per annum between 1980 and 1990. This continued into the 1990s as the land reform program stagnated and populations continued to expand. These statistics show that, for whatever reason, the nationalist government failed to resolve the 'land issue'.

Section 2.2.4: Phase II 1997-Present

For a number of reasons the first two decades of land redistribution in Zimbabwe failed to resolve the land issue, which for two decades festered in the background of Zimbabwean political rhetoric. An increasing number of landless peasants were becoming increasingly frustrated with the slow progress of the decolonization of the white commercial agriculture. In 1997 the government renewed its interest in the 'land issue' and passed the "Land Reform and Resettlement Program: Phase II" legislation which planned the expropriation of an additional 2.1 million hectares of land for redistribution.

The program floundered in the inception phase as white commercial farmers contested the expropriations in court and financial support from international financial institutions

¹⁴⁵ Moyo 1996, p.114

¹⁴⁶ Bratton 1990, p. 289

did not materialize. The donor community was reluctant to provide financial support for the program because in the last decade the land redistribution program had become an opaque process. There was little reason to believe that the beneficiaries of the new phase of land reforms would be either poor or landless. During the two years of the ‘inception period’ of the Phase II land reforms only 144,991 hectares had been acquired and redistributed to 4697 families,¹⁴⁷ making this period one of the slowest periods of land redistribution since independence.

The government of Zimbabwe could be described as ‘frustrated’ when, in February 2000, it launched a series of “land invasions”. It was frustrated at the increasing international pressure for increased accountability and transparency. This pressure was manifested by economic sanctions and the evaporation of financial support for the programs. The combined influence of economic sanctions and the government’s invasion of the Democratic Republic of Congo further weakened an already fragile economy.¹⁴⁸ It was also frustrated by the remaining white commercial farmers who were successful in legally obstructing the new land redistribution program and who had successfully mobilized peasant workers to reject a recent referendum to expand the powers of government.¹⁴⁹ Additionally at this time there was “renewed agitation for land ‘from below’”¹⁵⁰ for progress in land redistribution. It was in this atmosphere that the government launched its “fast-track” program of land redistribution.

¹⁴⁷ Government of Zimbabwe

¹⁴⁸ Sachikonye 2003, p.234

¹⁴⁹ This perspective is questioned by Power (2003) who comments that the white farm owners and their workers constitute a mere 15 percent of the electorate

¹⁵⁰ Sachikonye 2003, p.234

The “fast-track” resettlement program essentially involved the transport of war-veterans, peasants and party youth¹⁵¹ onto white commercial farmland where, through violence or the threat of violence, they drove out the white land-owners. Originally intended to redistribute 5 million hectares of land over 5 years¹⁵², two years later, however, a total of 4,000 large-scale white commercial farmers had been driven from a total of 11 million hectares of land. While some of the farmers left the country the majority fled towards urban areas where “several hundred”¹⁵³ continue to legally contest the expropriation of their lands. While originally the ‘land invasions’ allocated land to peasants, war veterans, and recent graduates of agricultural universities (institutions which have been described as “paramilitary and indoctrination enterprise[s]”¹⁵⁴), it was not long before the ruling political elites began an extensive land grab.¹⁵⁵

“A related issue is what can already be perceived as almost certain conflict between the early farm occupiers sent onto the land as shock troops and the politically powerful accumulators who are ejecting them now that they have served their political purpose.”¹⁵⁶

Initially the ‘land invasions’ were regarded with a degree of sympathy from the international and regional community:

“Many who once stood in solidarity with the anti-colonial struggle to recover the land lost to British and South African imperialists and settlers at first found it difficult to condemn the invasions outright.”¹⁵⁷

This perspective was swiftly dominated by the consensus that the ‘land invasions’ were essentially a ‘land grab’ by the political elite¹⁵⁸ with the secondary objective of

¹⁵¹ Sachikonye 2003, p.235

¹⁵² Ibid, 227

¹⁵³ Ibid, 227

¹⁵⁴ Power 2003

¹⁵⁵ Ibid

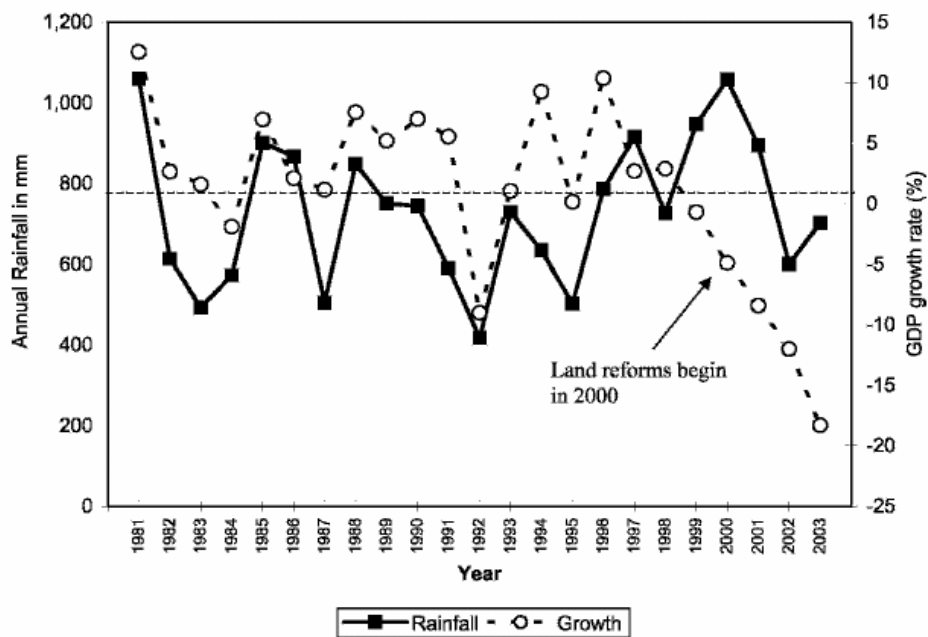
¹⁵⁶ Kinsey 2004, p.1681

¹⁵⁷ Worby 2001, p.477

undermining the political influence of the remaining white commercial farmers and the MDC, ZANU-PF's opposition party.

The economic outcome of the 'fast-track' land redistribution has been the implosion of the Zimbabwean economy. Initially officials attributed the collapse to natural causes because a drought occurred over the same time period. A study by Craig J. Richardson, however, discredited the myth showing clearly that the collapse in agricultural productivity was uncorrelated with the low rainfalls. Figure 2 illustrates Richardson's findings. Since the launch of the 'fast-track' resettlement program the Zimbabwean economy (already in the midst of a recession) has plummeted. In two years, all of the economic progress since independence evaporated as GDP per capita fell to three-quarters its 1980 level.

Figure 2: Annual Rainfall and GDP Growth¹⁵⁹



¹⁵⁸ Worby 2001, 477

The first catalyst of collapse came from the disruption of agricultural production. Maize production dropped by two-thirds during the 2001-02 droughts.¹⁶⁰ Given the imminent threat of land seizures, white commercial farmers were reluctant to plant crops and many fields lay fallow. Following the land seizures, tenure security was held by the state, which led to serious “problems of the commons”, as farmers pillaged irrigation systems for scrap metal. Twenty years of investment was liquidated at a loss for the purposes of immediate consumption.¹⁶¹

Any program of land redistribution should include a complementary program of extension and training services to ensure the necessary human capital resources are available to the settlers to be productive. The ‘fast-track’ resettlement reallocated 11 million hectares of land to 300,000 peasant families, with varying degrees of agricultural capabilities. The total cost of infrastructure and credit to make these farms viable was estimated to be more than US\$3 billion over five years.¹⁶² This drain on government resources, due to the over extended land redistribution program, was in turn a catalyst for the decline of government spending in other areas vital to the health of the economy.

The provision of extension services is a less vital feature of agrarian reform programs in which owners of land are essentially absentee landlords whose only function relates to the collection of rent. In Zimbabwe, however, the human capital accumulated by the

¹⁵⁹ Richardson 2003, p.553

¹⁶⁰ Ibid

¹⁶¹ For satellite photographs of the impacts of land invasions see:

< http://www.cgdev.org/section/initiatives/_active/zimbabwe/landreform >

¹⁶² Sachikonye 2003, p.236

white commercial farmers, represented a valuable input in agricultural production. The alienation of the white farmers from agricultural production further depressed agricultural productivity in the following years. In terms of the ongoing accumulation of human capital the 'land invasions' were responsible for the deconstruction of the society of farm workers, which left a void that was not properly filled by government institutions. This impact of the invasions manifested itself in the closure of numerous schools and hospitals, which were run by the white commercial farmers for the benefit of their workers. No formal institution arose in their place and economic development was further arrested.

The effect of the land seizures on domestic credit markets was profound. The land seizures effectively abolished free-hold (titled) rights to land, replacing those rights with absolute state ownership of land. Since the majority of loans used land titles as collateral, the new farmers under the resettlement could not "obtain loans from banks for seeds or farm equipment".¹⁶³ This obstructed the efforts of settlers to make their newly allocated lands viable.

The welfare of the workers on white commercial farms is another factor that was largely neglected in the 'fast-track' resettlement. Rather than transferring lands to the black managers and farm workers, the 'fast-track' resettlement program specifically alienated this group. The alienation of farm workers was in part a political maneuver because they were seen as supporters of the MDC.¹⁶⁴ In total more than a million farm workers and their dependents, individuals who, based on income, should have been beneficiaries of a

¹⁶³ Richardson 2003, p.550

¹⁶⁴ Power 2003

redistributive reform, were displaced. The rhetorical rationale behind the neglect of the farm workers has been largely based on the colonial era policy of recruiting extra-territorial labor. In 2000 at the outset of the farm invasions, however, only a fifth of farm workers on commercial farms were foreign born.¹⁶⁵

It did not take long for the impact of the 'fast-track' resettlement program on agricultural production to ripple across the industrial sector. In Zimbabwe there is a very intimate relationship between agriculture and industry. Traditionally agricultural exports generated foreign exchange needed for industrial investment. Additionally agricultural output represents about 40 percent of the raw inputs for manufacturing.¹⁶⁶ The collapse of agricultural production presaged the immediate decline in industrial production, which in 2001 contracted by 10.5 percent and in 2002 contracted by 17.5 percent. The collapse of agricultural production also caused a decline in government revenue, crippling its ability to finance its existing debts or access additional credit.

The future of the Zimbabwean economy remains largely uncertain. It is doubtful, however, that a significant recovery will occur under the presidency of Robert Mugabe. Corruption is too entrenched and the international donor community is unlikely to respond favorably to reform programs initiated by the current regime. What is certain is that for better or for worse there is no going back to the way things were: the bridges have been burnt, literally.

¹⁶⁵ Worby 2001, pp.484 and 492

¹⁶⁶ Richardson 2005, p. 555

Section 2.3: Deconstructing Apartheid in South Africa

Section 2.3.1: The Legacy of Apartheid

South Africa's first nationalist government, the African National Congress, inherited one of the most skewed distributions of land in sub-Saharan Africa. Indigenous reserves constituted only 13 percent of South African agricultural land and 6 percent of white farms produced 40 percent of total income in the white commercial sector.¹⁶⁷ Furthermore the compulsory migration of 3.5 million people into the indigenous areas led to severe overpopulation. Apartheid legislation, intended to ensure the plentiful supply of cheap labor for the mining sector, directly attacked the viability African subsistence and commercial agriculture.

South Africa, by the end of apartheid, had become the most industrialized country in sub-Saharan Africa. In 2006 industry accounted for 30.3 percent of GDP, compared with an output share of 2.6 percent for agriculture.¹⁶⁸ The small share of agricultural production in total output seems to suggest that perhaps the 'land issue' was resolved through urbanization and industrialization. This conclusion would be incorrect. While agriculture represents only 2.6 percent of total output, it employs 30 percent of the South African Labor force. Comparatively industry employs only 25 percent of the labor force. This was the legacy of apartheid policies which maintained high wages in manufacturing. High industrial wages led to "substitution of capital for labor in manufacturing" despite

¹⁶⁷ Weiner 1990, p.294

¹⁶⁸ CIA World Factbook: South Africa

“rising levels of black unemployment”.¹⁶⁹ In 1994 28.6 percent of indigenous South Africans were unemployment.¹⁷⁰ Hunger for land and jobs was strong in South Africa at the time of independence and expectations of the South African people were high.¹⁷¹

With the official end of apartheid in 1994 it was expected that the first task of the newly elected ANC would be to implement legislation for the deconstruction of the economic structures of apartheid. This would involve an extensive program of land redistribution and restitution. Following the advice of the World Bank the ANC committed itself to a program of market led agrarian reforms, despite the relative failure, which was then coming to light, of similar reforms in Zimbabwe during the 1980s. The official program of agrarian reform was to consist of three categories: restitution; land redistribution; and land tenure reform. In total from 1994 to 2004 3.5 hectares of land were redistributed

Section 2.3.2: Land Restitution

The land restitution program was designed to provide compensation to Africans who were forcibly removed from lands since the legislation of the Natives’ Lands Act of 1914. Approved restitution claimants would be offered either the return of their lands or an equivalent cash settlement. By December 1998, the registration deadline, a total of 68,878 restitution claims had been registered. Initially legal progress on the restitution claims was slow (See Table 7), however when the government legislated an administrative rather than a judicial approach in 1999 there was massive increase in the

¹⁶⁹ Lowenberg 1998, p.198

¹⁷⁰ Louw 2004, p.179

¹⁷¹ Ibid, p.176

number of claims settled to a total of 57,257 by 2004. These claims have been settled on a total of 812,315 hectares.¹⁷²

Table 7: Land Claims Settled from 1995 to 2003¹⁷³

| Fin Year | Claims | Households | Beneficiaries | Hectares | Total Awards Cost |
|-----------------|---------------|-------------------|----------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| 1996/1997 | 1 | 350 | 2100 | 2420 | 5,045,372.00 |
| 1997/1998 | 6 | 2589 | 14951 | 31108 | 15,568,746.00 |
| 1998/1999 | 34 | 569 | 2360 | 79391 | 2,988,577.10 |
| 1999/2000 | 3875 | 10100 | 61478 | 150949 | 155,045,907.00 |
| 2000/2001 | 8178 | 13777 | 83772 | 19358 | 321,526,061.00 |
| 2001/2002 | 17783 | 34860 | 167582 | 144111 | 994,168,313.25 |
| 2002/2003 | 6809 | 21416 | 111759 | 89573 | 402,717,408.17 |
| Total | 36686 | 83661 | 444002 | 516910 | 1,897,060,384.52 |

While the restitution program has made great progress in settling most of the claims, it is not without constraints. Many potential claimants who did not register their complaints by the official deadline are now calling on the government to reopen the lodgment process. Some of these individuals did not believe the government would fulfill its promise and others were not sufficiently aware of the program. In either case now that visible progress is being made on the existing claims, there are calls for the government to reopen the lodgment process.¹⁷⁴ Additional difficulties in adjudicating restitution claims have arisen in rural areas where most of the land is un-surveyed and unregistered.

Overall the restitution program has been successful; however the success of the restitution program will have a limited impact on the 'land issue'. In total the land

¹⁷² Government of South Africa Strategic Plan

¹⁷³ Commission on Restitution of Land Rights

¹⁷⁴ Commission on Restitution of Land Rights

redistributed under the restitution program represents a small fraction (3.12 percent)¹⁷⁵ of the total lands scheduled for redistribution under the land reform program. Even if settlements for all of the existing claims were successfully negotiated, it would not constitute a significant redistribution of land. Additionally many of the claimants now reside in urban areas and they often opt for financial compensation over the return of expropriated lands. This further reduces the impact of the restitution program on the distribution of agricultural land.

Section 2.3.3: Land Redistribution

The Land Redistribution for Agricultural Development program was initially intended to redistribute 30% of commercial farmland from white to black commercial farmers over the course of 5 years.¹⁷⁶ This target was later revised to 30% of commercial farmland over the course of 15 years; however progress has continued to fall far short of the targeted 2.1 million hectares a year. The program suffered from numerous constraints and in total by 2000 only 821,134 hectares¹⁷⁷ had been redistributed; and by 2004, the total had risen to only 1.7 million hectares¹⁷⁸. Two principle reasons for the slow progress of land redistribution have been identified to be: the unwillingness of the state to directly purchase lands; and consistent shortfall of administrative capacity¹⁷⁹.

¹⁷⁵ Relative to the other land reform programs this represents 13.4 percent of the total land redistributed thus far

¹⁷⁶ 30 percent represents 26 million hectares of a total of 86 million hectares of commercial agricultural land

¹⁷⁷ Department of Land Affairs, Annual Media Briefing, November 2000 from Adams 2001

¹⁷⁸ Government of South Africa Strategic Plan

¹⁷⁹ Adams 2001, p.6

The reliance on matching grants rather than state purchases and sales has exacerbated the coordination inefficiencies of the program. If the state were to be permitted to temporarily purchase lands for redistribution, it would be able to eliminate some of the difficulties associated with matching “willing-buyers” to “willing-sellers”. The way the program currently functions is that potential beneficiaries must match themselves with a potential seller of land, whereupon they become eligible for government matching grants of between R20,000 and R100,000 depending on the individual’s contribution.¹⁸⁰ The small size of the matching grant, relative to the land purchase price, “encouraged people to form dysfunctional groups to purchase land”¹⁸¹. The program would function better if the government were able to purchase large farms and then subsequently fragment them for individual redistribution or administer the formation of a cooperative.

The second cause of the failure of the land redistribution program to achieve its objectives was the lack of government capacity to administer the reforms. The budget for land reform programs throughout the first decade of democracy has remained at or below 0.5 percent¹⁸² of the government’s budget. Additional shortfalls have been prevalent in surveying and land registration which have further delayed the process of transferring land. There is currently significant progress being made in administrative efficiency and surveying capacity. The average turnaround time for land registration has fallen “from

¹⁸⁰ Hall 2004, p.216

¹⁸¹ Adams 2001, p.6

¹⁸² Hall 2004, p.219

three months to three weeks”¹⁸³ over the last few years. With the development of an electronic cadastre, turnaround time is expected to fall further to 13 days by 2009.¹⁸⁴

Criticisms have also been leveled at the land redistribution program on the grounds that even if it were to achieve its objectives it would have negligible or detrimental impacts on poverty and income inequality. The capital requirement (similar to the yeoman and peasant schemes of the Kenyan land redistribution) denies the poorest of the poor access to the program and suggests that the real impact of the land redistribution would be the creation of a class of “black male capitalists”¹⁸⁵. These claims may be refuted however by claims of the government to have redistributed land to a total of 1 million households. If this statistic is accurate then the average farm size allocated would be just 3.5 hectares, far lower than holding sizes in either Kenya or Zimbabwe. Shown in Table 8, the Nukzi Organizations “Evictions Survey” estimates indicated that only 165,185 households had gained land through the land reform program by 2005, casting serious doubts on the validity of the government’s statistic.

¹⁸³ Government of South Africa Strategic Plan

¹⁸⁴ Government of South Africa Strategic Plan

¹⁸⁵ Sender 2004, p.156

Table 8: Households that have Benefited from Agrarian Reform¹⁸⁶

| Program: | No. of Households |
|--------------------------|-------------------|
| Restitution | 90,282 |
| Redistribution | 66,360 |
| Tenure for farm dwellers | 7,543 |
| Total | 164,185 |

These criticisms and the general slow progress of the land redistribution program led to Minister Didiza imposing a moratorium on further Settlement Land Acquisition Grants in July 1999. The moratorium was then lifted in February 2000 with the resurgence of demand for land redistribution following the Zimbabwe land invasions. Government officials have pledged to redistribute 15 million hectares in five years however given the “fundamental administrative constraints that have hampered land redistribution remain in place”¹⁸⁷ it is doubtful how much progress will be made.

Section 2.3.4: Land Tenure Reform

The purpose of land tenure reform in South Africa has been primarily to promote, support and coordinate land rights for labor tenants. Labor tenants on commercial farms are the most marginalized class in South Africa.¹⁸⁸ Despite numbering over 940,000¹⁸⁹ in 2002, they are generally poorly organized. This is because many farm workers: were born on the farm and have limited links or economic opportunities outside of the farm; are illiterate¹⁹⁰ or ignorant of their constitutionally guaranteed rights. Additionally the

¹⁸⁶ Wegerif 2005, p.38

¹⁸⁷ Adams 2001 p.6

¹⁸⁸ Ntsebeza 2007, p.34

¹⁸⁹ Wegerif 2005

¹⁹⁰ Commission on Restitution of Land Rights

minimal wages which they are paid leave little surplus “to pay subscriptions that would employ organizers”.¹⁹¹

The poor organization of the farm workers has led to their being marginalized in the land redistribution programs having received only 5% of the total land redistributed.¹⁹² The land tenure reform program which was largely intended to increase the tenure security of farm workers has not been shown to have had a significant effect. A 2005 survey of evictees by the Nkuzi organization illuminates the social crisis of farm workers in South Africa. Table 9 shows the eviction trends from 1984 to 2004 with clearly little or no structural change in 1996 with the legislation of the land tenure reforms. Evictions also occurred prior to the 1984 cut off date of the Nkuzi survey. The Surplus People’s Project found that between 1960 and 1983, 1.1 million people had been forcibly removed from white farms.¹⁹³

¹⁹¹ Ntsebeza 2007

¹⁹² Wegerif 2005, p.38

¹⁹³ Ibid, p. 28

Table 9: Eviction Trends from 1984 to 2004¹⁹⁴

| Year | Evictees | | Displaced farm dwellers | | Significant Events |
|------|----------|---------|-------------------------|---------|-----------------------------------|
| | % | No. | % | No. | |
| 1984 | 9.5 | 159,996 | 4.5 | 188,254 | Protracted drought from 1982-84 |
| 1985 | 3.3 | 53,153 | 4.2 | 175,704 | |
| 1986 | 5.9 | 97,684 | 4.5 | 188,254 | |
| 1987 | 2.1 | 35,463 | 2.8 | 117,136 | |
| 1988 | 2.9 | 48,918 | 3.6 | 150,603 | |
| 1989 | 3.8 | 63,591 | 5.2 | 217,538 | |
| 1990 | 4.1 | 68,435 | 5.6 | 234,272 | |
| 1991 | 1.1 | 16,513 | 3.6 | 150,603 | |
| 1992 | 10.7 | 179,575 | 6.9 | 288,656 | Severe drought from 1991-92 |
| 1993 | 0.4 | 6,784 | 2.9 | 121,319 | |
| 1994 | 7.4 | 122,626 | 5.1 | 213,355 | End of Apartheid |
| 1995 | 5.0 | 83,575 | 5.1 | 213,355 | |
| 1996 | 6.8 | 111,651 | 4.5 | 188,254 | Land Tenure Act legislated |
| 1997 | 7.7 | 126,196 | 4.3 | 179,887 | |
| 1998 | 3.8 | 63,771 | 4.4 | 184,071 | |
| 1999 | 5.4 | 87,503 | 4.2 | 175,704 | |
| 2000 | 3.4 | 57,030 | 4.4 | 184,071 | |
| 2001 | 1.5 | 22,924 | 7.2 | 301,207 | |
| 2002 | 3.6 | 59,878 | 4.7 | 196,621 | |
| 2003 | 8.2 | 138,308 | 7.0 | 292,840 | Introduction of minimum wage laws |
| 2004 | 3.4 | 56,813 | 5.3 | 221,722 | |

The key reasons for the evictions cited by white commercial farmers surveyed by Nkuzi were the drought, mechanization of agriculture, trade liberalization and the changing status of labor tenants. The mechanization of agriculture has occurred due to the lifting of an embargo on the importation of heavy farming equipment as a condition of entering GATT. This has led to capitalization of agriculture and a fall in the demand for farm labor. Another consequence of joining GATT was the removal of subsidies and protections from the agricultural sector, which has led to a reduced demand for labor due to an overall contraction in the industry. Lastly the status of labor tenants has changed

¹⁹⁴ Wegerif 2005

since the end of apartheid; new minimum wage laws and enhanced worker rights laws have reduced the commercial farmers demand for labor.

The majority of evictions have occurred without legal sanction, which makes administrative intervention considerably more difficult. Only an estimated 1.15 percent of the total evictions involved a court order. One reason why evictions are going unchallenged is the “lack of awareness amongst farm dwellers of their rights”.¹⁹⁵ Additionally even when farm workers attempt to enforce their rights they are generally unsuccessful. The police force either did not take their eviction claims seriously or the farm workers did not have the resources to successfully contest their evictions in court. This suggests that for the land tenure reform to achieve its objectives the government must implement a policy to: raise awareness of farm workers legal rights; make available legal aid for farm workers seeking to contest their evictions; and enforce stricter penalties for evasion of land tenure laws.

Section 2.3.5 The Land Summit:

Progress on land redistribution in South Africa for the six years following democracy was regarded as insufficient to defuse impending land conflict. In 2000 when Zimbabwean war veterans and peasants invaded white commercial farms, there was a resurgence of demand for an accelerated program of land redistribution. In 2001 the Landless Peoples Movement (LPM) was formed. The LPM is a grassroots movement which, due to prevailing inequality of land, slow progress of land redistribution and deteriorating conditions of farm workers, was able to mobilize peasants on the issue of landlessness.

¹⁹⁵ Wegerif 2005, p.41

The LPM praised the Zimbabwean farm invasions and “called on the government to urgently hold a land summit”.¹⁹⁶

In 2005 the National Land Summit was held to discuss the progress of agrarian reform in South Africa. The Land Summit bore a symbolic significance taking place in the year of the 50th anniversary of the freedom charter, which in 1955 declared that: “the land shall be shared amongst all who work it”; “the people shall share in the wealth of the country”; and “there shall be houses, security and comfort”. The resolution of the National Land Summit was that the state should “reject the principle of ‘willing buyer – willing seller’” by actively intervening in the land market through use of expropriations, regulation of foreign land ownership and the imposition of a land tax. These policy recommendations, if implemented, would represent a radical shift from the neo-liberal policies of the 1990s. In President Mbeki’s 2006 state of the union he pledged that the administration would “review the willing-seller willing-buyer policy”, although it is not yet clear to what degree land acquisitions have been accelerated.

Overall the South African economy remains incredibly dualistic. While South Africa remains the richest state in sub-Saharan Africa equally notable is the indigenous unemployment figures, which since 1994 has grown from 28.6 percent to 41.5 percent in 2001.¹⁹⁷ It is unclear to what degree land redistribution will be capable of resolving the problem of landlessness in South Africa, however what is clear is that fear of eviction is significantly reducing the welfare of the poorest South Africans. The two key priorities

¹⁹⁶ Ntsebeza 2007

¹⁹⁷ Louw 2004, p.179

of the South African government in the near future should be strengthening the tenure security of South African farm workers and urban dwellers and creating opportunities through investment and education for the millions of unemployed and underemployed South Africans.

Conclusions:

In this work I have carefully analyzed the economic history of three sub-Saharan countries, which have in the past suffered from serious conflicts over rights to access land. Thus far I have developed an understanding of the origins of the conflict and analyzed the various administrations' attempts at conflict resolution.

The origin of the conflict in all three countries has been shown to be the ignorance of the colonial government and the greed of the European settlers. At the beginning of colonialism, European settlers accumulated vast tracts of high potential land and then, once settled, through segregation laws began to alienate the indigenous people inhabiting it. This process continued throughout the colonial era as increasing numbers of Africans were either forced from their lands or into exploitative labor-tenant relations. The plight of the indigenous people was exacerbated by poorly planned colonial solutions, which attempted to fix the symptoms of landlessness without addressing its causes. The peace and prosperity of the colonial era eroded the position of the indigenous people further through rapid population growth and the expansion and capitalization of white commercial agriculture.

Eventually across Africa the colonial administration became too impolitic, too unstable or too non-profitable to the point that independence was unavoidable. Independence occurred first in Kenya (1960), then in Zimbabwe (1980) and finally in South Africa (1994). The independence achieved in each country was not the absolute victory it was

hailed to be; rather it was a negotiated transfer of authority. The nationalist leaders were willing to compromise with the settlers and the British partially to achieve independence as soon as possible and partially because they recognized the integral role of the Europeans in the African economy. To alienate the Europeans entirely would have caused an economic implosion. The African people had unrealistic expectations of the decolonization process so, naturally, they felt disappointed and betrayed when progress on reforms was slow.

It is necessary to carefully analyze the constraints imposed on the post-colonial governments to determine if land reforms could have achieved more. The single largest constraint on the land reform programs in Kenya, Zimbabwe and South Africa was the principle that land redistribution should occur on a 'willing-buyer' 'willing-seller' principle. The economic argument in support of market-led agrarian reform is that the most productive farmers and least productive farms should self-select through the market mechanism. Additionally the policy of 'willing-buyer' 'willing-seller' ensures that land redistribution occurs in an organized fashion without massive capital flight.

The first argument that market led agrarian reform efficiently matches productive farmers with underutilized land is fundamentally flawed. The argument is implicitly based on the assumption that land is only valuable as a factor of production. Many individuals desire to own land for non-productive purposes. Non-production benefits of holding land include: political status; access to credit markets; and the value of land as an investment. From the supply side the non-productive value of land ensures that the market price for

land will exceed the capitalized value of agricultural production. Additionally owners of non-productive farms may choose not to sell if they believe that land prices are rising or they may choose to sell only land which is of low-potential. Given the limited administrative surveying capacity the likelihood of this form of abuse is high. Furthermore the commitment to market led reforms meant that the administration could have little influence over the location of resettlement land, which was a key concern of the settlers.

The importance of assuaging the fears of the European community and preventing an exodus of capital should not be understated. The recent experience of Zimbabwe exemplifies the significance of the threat. The Europeans fled the country because the land redistribution program had become disorganized and violent, and because it appeared that they would receive no compensation for their lands. This work does not suggest that no compensation should be granted for expropriate lands and it emphasizes strongly the importance of organization and clarity in any land redistribution program. Uncompensated expropriation of European land would be no less morally contentious than the initial European expropriation of African lands. The lands which were expropriated at the end of the 19th century were, for the most part, non productive. European settlers made real investments in the land, for which they should be compensated; however it is not unreasonable to expect that the European settler community accept a share of the cost of land redistribution. While it would be unfair and unproductive to blame the settlers entirely for the injustices of the colonial era; neither are their hands perfectly clean.

The question of optimal farm size for a land redistribution program is far less cut and dry. Excessively large farm units limit the number of potential beneficiaries and have been shown to be economically inefficient.¹⁹⁸ Despite this general concurrence towards the benefits of smaller farms, land redistribution programs in the three sub-Saharan African nations each allocated relatively large farm units. I feel that the strongest logical argument in favor of large farm units is one that did not appear significantly in the literature. If the land redistribution programs allocated small holdings, of only 1 or 2 hectares, perhaps the problems of landlessness could be alleviated temporarily however as populations continued to grow the problem of landlessness would reemerge. Perhaps government expenditure is better spent on improving the economic opportunities of the landless rather than guaranteeing them a subsistence lifestyle with no hope of advancement. On the other hand if markets for land function properly then the equitable distribution of land would accomplish the same distribution in the long run and the landless class would be given a foothold on the ladder of capitalist accumulation.

¹⁹⁸ Except in the case of plantation crops, although Hunt (1984) recommends the redistribution of tea plantation

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