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**Development Strategies for Poverty Reduction in
Zimbabwe's Communal Areas: Change or Continuity?**


By

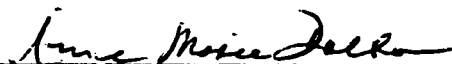
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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
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Development Strategies for Poverty Reduction
in Zimbabwe's Communal Areas:
Change or Continuity?

Edmund Mhizha Chifamba

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Arts
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.
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ABSTRACT

Zimbabwe was under British Colonial rule for more than 90 years. Economic disparity between the ruling minority whites and the African majority was linked to access to land, allowing minority whites to control agricultural wealth, one of the mainstays of Zimbabwe's economy. Therefore, lack of access to land is one of the key factors leading to poverty, especially in the communal areas. More than 71 percent of Africans live in the rural areas, mostly in the communal lands where poverty is argued to be the underlying reason for conflict in that country. Two decades after the country gained political independence in 1980, the disparity continued to spread and further marginalise the Africans especially in the communal areas.

This thesis undertakes to discover if poverty in the communal areas in Zimbabwe is the fallout of the unjust colonial land distribution policies alone. It begins by examining the policies that established the original land division put in place during the years of colonial government. It is followed by an analysis of policies towards communal areas implemented by the new independent government after 1980. The thesis seeks to uncover the limitation of those post-independent policies directed at reducing poverty in the communal areas.

It finds shortcomings in these policies and demonstrates that they are due to the continuity in government's top down approach, continuing an approach that had been introduced under colonialism. It also shows a continuity in the emphasis on market-driven policies that continues to direct agricultural production and agricultural resources towards the export market in the name of economic growth. This continuity prevents change and is undertaken at the expense of poverty alleviation in the communal areas.

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It would have proved an almost impossible task to complete this project of this thesis without the help of many people

I would like to thank Dr David Black, my supervisor, for the help he has given me in drawing out the nuances and salient themes in this thesis. These would not have been as evident without his skills, leadership and the friendly manner with which he approached the task. His skills were invaluable to me.

I am very grateful to Dr Anne Marie Dalton for reading the thesis and for helping me to remain focussed. She taught me to pay attention to details and the importance of the way in which thoroughness contributes to the quality of academic work. I shall always try to emulate her calmness that made the daunting task of completing this project seem simple.

I could not have gone much further in writing this thesis without drawing from Dr Blair Rutherford's extensive work on many subjects and issues in Zimbabwe and Southern Africa. He played a key role in helping me gain new insights concerning the comparative difference and plight of commercial farmworkers and the people in the communal areas in Zimbabwe. His commitment to academic work provided a great source of inspiration.

During the summers 2000 and 2001, I benefited greatly from working as research assistant on a SSHRC-sponsored project under the direction of Dr Suzanne Dansereau as we sought to uncover the issues of sustenance and survival strategies impacting mineworkers and the people in communal areas in Zimbabwe. The experience also allowed me to discover many important academic references. From this experience, I also gained important research skills which contributed immensely to the writing of my thesis and added practicality to my skills and understanding of academic research methods.

Last but not least, I am very thankful to my family for their patience and support during the entire period of study and thesis writing. It was invaluable in encouraging me to complete the project.

CHAPTER ONE

POLITICAL ECONOMY OF COMMUNAL AREAS

Introduction

There are ubiquitous accounts in the history of Zimbabwe that link the policies and strategies of settler colonial regimes in that country to the origin of most of the current economic, social and cultural hardships and the poverty of the people living in the *communal areas*.¹(Arrighi, 1970; Palmer & Parsons, 1977; Bretton, 1960, Harris, 1974) In 1930, the colonial government in Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) legislated the Land Apportionment Act to dispossess Africans of their land, followed in 1951 by the Animal Husbandry Act to dispossess them of their animal wealth. As a consequence, new forces, not traditionally part of the reality of the rural economy began to take effect including the introduction of cash crops and the exchange of labour for wages as the means for survival.

Since then, these forces have permeated the rural communities like a cancer causing massive disruption to the rural societies and their economy. Since 1980 the poverty of rural communities, forming 71 percent of the population has been the subject of much concern and debate between policy makers and scholars in the region (Bates, 1981; Alexander, 1991; Rukuni Commission, 1994). While these accounts of history and the analyses of the causes of poverty have been linked to the development strategies that were influenced by colonialism,

¹See Appendix for definition of terms in italics.

the challenge is to explain the impact of the post independence development strategies in relationship to the continued state of poverty in the communal areas. The issue is whether poverty in communal areas is merely the fallout of historical colonial development strategies or whether the role of the development strategies of the post independence political regime played any part regarding the outcome and current level of poverty in the communal areas. Since 1980 when Zimbabwe gained political independence from Britain, the expectation was that the social and economic relations of the people in the communal areas would progressively improve, but to the contrary these relationships have significantly worsened.

Objective of the Study

This thesis seeks to determine if the development policies that were formulated and implemented by government regimes at the macro level, before and after independence, improved or worsened the level of poverty in Zimbabwe's communal areas any more than the impact of the strategies of the majority Africans at the micro level. The findings will add to the existing knowledge regarding how the top down macro economic development strategies in Zimbabwe's agriculturally based economy alleviated or worsened poverty in the communal areas. The study will also determine if the strategies paid too much attention to economic growth at the expense of development at the micro level. This will thus inform future policy makers about the validity of defining alternative development solutions that include and involve the rural people in alleviating poverty. This will also strengthen the argument for promoting the need for

increased investment in strong human and social capital and the capacities of urban workers in order for them to maintain their links with the rural communities to alleviate poverty. This would also help to consolidate the strong ties between labour in the urban centres and survival strategies in the rural economy. In the past such ties sustained rural households, especially during the periods of drought, when agricultural production in the communal areas was severely threatened (Hanmer, 1996).

The outcome of this study will also provide the basis for formulating development initiatives that avoid the apparent pervasive poverty-caused violence that poverty appears to frequently threaten the dignity and capacity of the rural people as they seek alternative development solutions in Zimbabwe's communal areas. The study will also explain what underpins the failure to create employment opportunities to benefit people in rural communal areas that prevail in Zimbabwe in spite of the promotion of macroeconomic growth through the agricultural industry, one of the mainstays of the Zimbabwean economy.

The people in the communal areas depend mainly on subsistence farming, but they have not been able to earn sufficient income from subsistence agriculture to change their livelihoods or to come out of their poverty. The study will examine the potential to reduce poverty and improve their social and economic relations as key players among the stakeholders in the current development process. Their contribution is perceived to be crucial in addressing both land tenure and accessibility issues that are perceived to empower women. Mostly women among the rural communities are affected by such issues.

Women in Zimbabwe form the majority of heads of households in communal areas that survive by tilling family land available to them through some usufructuary or traditional land rights arrangements (Cheater, 1984).

Their dependency on land, both as an economic resource and as an asset, are linked to land accessibility and it is a question whether or not land allocation or at least making it accessible can change their social and economic relations. Land is one readily available resource that is linked to whether or not agricultural production at a micro level can alleviate poverty in the communal areas. At the same time commercial agricultural production on land which is inaccessible to the majority of Africans in communal areas and contributes one third of the national economy, has failed to reduce their poverty level. In part these issues underscore the complexity of viewing land redistribution as a threat to agricultural productivity or commercial agricultural production as a panacea for rural poverty. Therefore this study highlights the problems that the rural people in Zimbabwe's communal areas face, but at the same time, it highlights their potential to contribute to the national economy in order for the economy to alleviate their poverty.

In Zimbabwe, economic growth and poverty reduction remain theoretical concepts and rhetorical development objectives unless the strategies to achieve them are focussed on improving the well being of the rural communities. Therefore, the real question is whether or not 'market forces' that drive the agricultural economy in Zimbabwe to propel the country's economic growth can make an alliance with the state and the rural people to achieve prosperity and

alleviate their poverty. Poverty among rural communities in the past resulted from many different factors including those that were external to the social and political dynamics of the rural communal areas.

At the same time the history of the development of the agriculture industry, scarcely recognised the potential of involving the people in communal areas in the formulation of the development policies to alleviate their poverty. These factors were driven by the state development agencies. Therefore the other question that remains is whether future development strategies can continue to predominantly depend on the efficacy of the state and the benevolence of market forces to successfully reduce the poverty of the majority of the citizens that live in communal areas. Since these forces are external to the communal rural areas, it is expedient for those in power to ignore or to exclude the rural people from playing significant roles. To the contrary, they underplay the power of the internal forces in the communal areas that contribute to the solutions that in turn may reduce poverty. Alternatively, they exaggerate the importance and need for profit making by underlining financial capital and political power as the key factors to ensure poverty reduction. Therefore this study will examine the extent of the impact of the national development strategies on the economic and social relations of the people in the communal areas before and after independence. The strategies of the settler colonial regimes not only excluded the people in communal areas from the planning process, but they dispossessed them of their land and assets. They also curtailed the formulation of any development of strategies for the advantage of communal areas. This is why it is relevant and

that are emphasized in the debates on these strategies.

The debates do not take into account the fact that the development processes have since independence been enmeshed in the power that influences the geopolitical and global economic development strategies more than in poverty reduction strategies at the micro level in communal areas.

In the last twenty-one years of Zimbabwe's political independence, the country sought to remedy the problem of poverty among its population that lives in the communal areas. However, emphasis on the development policies and strategies at the macro level has continued to be the main focus of development and thus has had a serious impact on the process of formulating any new policies that address the issue of poverty in the communal areas. As a result, any further delay in addressing the impact of that poverty may be analogous to delaying surgery on a malignant cancerous tumour on an organ that sustains life. Often the result is loss of life or finding complicated and expensive solutions. This study analyses the impact of the new strategies, that were implemented in both the colonial and the post independence periods, on life in the communal areas. In spite of the different levels of development within southern Africa, poverty has devastated the social and economic fabric of society, but most of all the rural communities in each of these countries. The similarities in the rural economies result from the common colonial history that the countries in the region share. That history defined the basis of the formation of the region's rural communities. In specific terms the issues that drive the political economy of their rural communities are a result of their being marginalised.

Therefore, the rationale for the analysis in this study is that the people's common experience will elucidate the relationship between land use for agricultural production and the country's economic growth. These factors reflect the causality of poverty in Zimbabwe's communal areas and will help set the parameters for the study as a basis for development alternatives that reflect a difference between the historical and currently operative strategies.

The current development process in Zimbabwe is driven by the market forces that are external to the communal areas. The market forces pay little, if any, attention to the power relations, local knowledge and skills in the communal areas. The process is constricted by the need for agricultural production on a large scale which forces the speeding up of the mechanisation of agricultural production requiring efficiency and large sums of capital input to be profitable. In the communal areas, human labour was used to sustain and maintain agricultural production. While human labour was also used as a means to generate wealth, recognition was paid to the importance of maintaining good social relations, the health and welfare of those who provided it, thus ensuring that subsistence agricultural production did not allow poverty to occur. However, the process of using labour for agricultural production to make profit was exploitative ensuring that workers from the communal areas were poorly paid thus worsening their poverty (Cliffe, 2000).

To underline this point, Cliffe argues that such a development process worked against the people that lived in poverty conditions especially in the communal areas. It compromised their social relationships and their power to

negotiate themselves out of that poverty. Therefore, the question is whether or not it is possible to find development approaches that create sufficient political space for the rural people to participate in the formulation of alternative processes that alter the conditions that are perceived to have led to their poverty. The poverty problem highlights the fact that the varied issues and conditions that are perceived to have led to its manifestation during the period when the country was under colonial rule have persisted in the period after the country gained political independence in 1980. The significance of the decade and half that followed is that it marked the era of both political and developmental change in that region of Africa during which the last vestiges of settler colonialism were dislodged in Zimbabwe in 1980 and in South Africa in 1994. Also significant is the need to examine if the reasons for continued poverty in the communal areas are only limited to the past top down colonial strategies or to other factors beyond the power of the grassroots to change even if the strategies were made participatory.

One of the great challenges of the post independence political regime in Zimbabwe was to come up with effective policies that would bridge the poverty gap between the different sectors of the population or risk being perceived to pursue the same development policies of the colonial regimes. Thus, the rationale for examining this issue in this study is to analyse the achievements and/or failures of the strategies that guided the development activities and processes during the reign of both the colonial and post colonial regimes. This has special significance concerning what contributed to the creation of wealth, for

the benefit of the ruling class or poverty of the people in communal areas.

Among other objectives the focus of the colonial regime in Zimbabwe was that agriculture was to play a significant role in macro economic growth through participation in the global economy (Munslow, 1985). This focus was rife with injustices against the majority of Africans in the communal areas as discussed above. In contrast, the political regime after independence adopted policies of growth with equity that sought to correct the injustices created during the colonial period while at the same time also seeking to achieve economic growth and maintaining an important role in the regional and international economic and political affairs (Government of Zimbabwe, *Growth with Equity*, 1981). Therefore this study analyses how the different development policies and objectives, of the political regimes in the different periods of history in Zimbabwe, contributed to the social and economic conditions that led to poverty in the communal areas.

To achieve this objective the literature review below examines the analyses and debates by scholars in development literature concerning the feasibility of development initiatives and their impact on the formulation of new development initiatives to reduce poverty in the communal areas in Zimbabwe and other regions with similar background to Zimbabwe. This paves the way for the analysis of the two periods of history under review in this study.

The Poverty Problem

In Zimbabwe and the countries in southern Africa, poverty is an issue that has the potential to create political instability and conflict between the ruling class

elites and the poor majority. The government regimes in this region are often lost between defining and formulating good management of the development policies and implementing processes that sustain their national economies. They also struggle with the management of the geopolitics of the region as a way of successfully addressing the issue of poverty. Poverty undermines the potential capacity of the structures of both the state government machinery and the organisation of rural communities to develop policies that improve the social relations of the general population. Poverty can permeate both the rural and urban communities within a short period. It can significantly reduce the potential capacity of the people to meet their basic needs at the micro level. The experience of the impact of poverty in Zimbabwe within a short space of time was illustrated during the 1991/2 period when there was severe drought at the same time that economic structural adjustment programmes were implemented. At that time the country experienced,

. . . a negative economic growth (-7.7%) as inflation reached 46%. By 1993, real growth recovered to 2%, below the country's 2.9% population growth rate and inflation fell to 20% (Bijlmakers, 1994).

The two factors, drought and ESAP, disrupted the level of agricultural production in the communal areas in one growing season and reduced the level of the stocks of maize leading to a situation of near starvation among many households. At that time, poverty severely burdened the national economy, making it difficult for the government to achieve economic growth at the same time that it was seeking to conceive or come up with workable solutions to reduce that poverty. Therefore, it is curious which of the conditions, drought or the

impact of ESAP programmes, made it more difficult for the government to develop policies and strategies to reduce poverty or to empower people who were already overwhelmed by poverty to improve their capacity to regain control of the change process. It is also a question whether or not centrally organised government development strategies could create an enabling environment for communities to recover from poverty. In the next two chapters I will examine the trajectory of the formulation, implementation and impact of the development policies before and soon after independence. Since 1990, poverty has continued to worsen, severely affecting its citizens across the board. As a result the country is now under economic and political pressure to remedy the problem. This was first demonstrated at the end of the 1990s when the country experienced expressions of anger and discontent by the masses resulting from the impact of this poverty (Bond, 1999).

According to the 1990/91 government of Zimbabwe assessment of income consumption and expenditure survey (ICES) to assess the extent of inequality between rural and urban populations, the data reflects the level of dependence on unstable sources of income per household in that country. The data confirmed that, urban dwellers, and those on the *large- and small-scale farms* were on average, better-off than those in the communal lands (Government of Zimbabwe, 1995). The report also showed a higher dependency of people in communal areas, on remittances, pensions and social welfare, reflecting that 82.8 percent of households in communal areas receive remittances while only 54.3

percent of those in urban areas receive these same remittances. This meant that 8.6 percent of families in communal areas received pension and social welfare transfers, compared only to 6.4 percent in urban areas. In addition only 12.9 percent of households in communal areas had access to employment, while 76.4 percent in urban areas did (Ibid.) In fact, households in communal areas showed the highest rate of dependency in the form of remittances and transfers of all categories studied, such as small scale farmers, commercial farm workers and those in resettlement areas. This dependency reflects low income, however, many in these categories depend on agriculture for their survival. The report also showed that the greatest inequality was in the commercial farming areas but was significantly reduced when white households were excluded from the sample. This reflected that the level of inequality in communal areas was higher than other sectors.

The assessment also found less inequality in households in *resettlement areas*, which was explained by households having been allocated pieces of land of similar size. However, the assessment assumed that only households that were actually engaged in farming, incurred farm expenses, although they were receiving no farm income from the land. It implies that all households incurred farm expenses but some received only food and no cash income from farming. The assessment argued that a zero income recorded for a household was made up for by the seasonal income in the rural communal areas that was not possible to record. The data was collected from *Large Scale Commercial Farms (LSCF)*,

Small Scale Commercial Farms (SSCF), Communal Lands (CL), Resettlement and Urban areas. It explained that the net income was calculated for each category of seasonal or irregular income and that every household with a non-zero entry under each category of income was considered as deriving income from that source. The ICES Data Notes included subsistence and marketed output, pensions and social welfare. Therefore the survey concluded that, farming (including subsistence) was an income source for nearly all rural households. Even on the Large Scale Farms, nearly three quarters of households derived some income from their farming activities although most families would be labourers on these farms, and their primary revenue was from wages (Ibid). They conclude that several conditions exacerbate poverty in Zimbabwe's communal areas. These include: inequality; dependency of those living in communal areas on subsistence agriculture, with no access to other income; thus over 80 percent of households in communal areas depend on external transfer; over 50 percent of commercial farmworkers and urban area workers receive income in cash and kind from non-agricultural activity of family members. As a result, the study conclude that those in wage employment and those in communal agriculture subsidize each other.

It can be deduced from the above summary of the findings therefore that a reduction in employment in urban work places or commercial farms will most likely adversely affect the economic and social relations of the population that has no access to land or has no formal employment. Equally, a reduction in

agricultural production levels in the rural communal areas due to lack of inputs will do the same. This creates a dependence on paid employment to reduce rural poverty that is unfeasible in the immediate term because of the shortage of job opportunities. It can also be argued that improving the capacity of the rural communities to generate resources in order to improve their capacity to sustain themselves may reduce their dependence on wage labour, which they currently do not control. This dependency on remittances from wage labour therefore seems to exacerbate the level of poverty and inequality in the rural areas.

By the same token, improving the capacities of these rural communities to increase their potential to control both the means to generate resources and the resource base itself, i.e. the land, may subsequently enhance the potential for improving their social and economic relations and thus reduce the incidence of poverty and inequality.

The 1999 Human Development Report, published in March 2000, showed that among the rural people, more than 71 percent of Zimbabwe's population of 12.5 million live in what the report termed 'a high level of poverty'. The report also argued that, of the population in poverty, 61 percent were living in households with income per person that was below a level that was sufficient to provide food and non food basic needs and about 45 percent of the households were not able to meet basic nutritional needs. This highlights the level and intensity of inequality reflecting that,

. . . poverty was more prevalent in the rural areas with 75 percent of the households in the total poor category compared with 39 percent of urban households. Nationwide, the sectoral distribution of poverty was 84

percent total poor in the communal areas, 70 percent in the small-scale commercial farms and resettlement areas, 57 percent in large-scale commercial farms and 39 percent in the urban areas (UNDP, 2000)

The report concluded that the political history of Zimbabwe is perceived to largely account for poverty that is prevalent in the rural communities. The events in that history also set the pace for the country's economic activities that excluded or marginalised large sectors of the population (Ibid.)

The next chapter of this thesis explores how that history and the strategies to achieve development and economic progress, by those who made that history, support this perception. However, suffice it to underline at this stage of the study, that poverty in the rural communal areas is a real problem that merits study and analysis, both as an injustice in itself and because of the potential danger of its impact to spread beyond the rural sectors to the urban sectors in Zimbabwe and within the economies of southern Africa. As a result, the Zimbabwean and the Southern African economies are overwhelmed by the pressure exerted on them to survive within the global economic order (ibid.) As a result of these economies being enmeshed in economic issues at the global and regional levels, less attention is paid to the effects of poverty at the micro level, especially in the communal areas. This will partly lead to the worsening of the poverty level and discontent expressed through industrial action in the urban centres as was experienced in the period leading up to the elections in 2000 (Dansereau, 1997). Poverty will make it difficult for rural communities to recover because the people in these communities require assured means for daily

survival before they can engage in strategies to plan for the future. As already discussed, any further delay in reducing the intensity and level of the poverty in the rural communities has negative political and economic ramifications. This underscores the merit of averting the spread of poverty by making room for the rural population groups, both in Zimbabwe and the region, to participate in the national economic activities to their advantage. This can be perceived as a way to start their involvement at regional and global levels at this early stage of the twenty-first century. It also underscores the reason why bridging the poverty gap by involving the rural people, maximises their potential to create some new initiatives and economic activities for their advantage. It challenges the development approach that relegates them to being only the recipients of the development process and its economic activities. In response to the question of the validity of empowering the grassroots in the communal areas to achieve this objective as a way that can slow down the impact of poverty among them, reference to the history of poverty alleviation strategies among rural communities that excluded them from active and direct participation in policy formulation as well as control of these processes is relevant. The argument is that their involvement in the development processes is not only possible but achievable. It also makes them stake holders in their own development with resources such as fertile land as a means of production that is readily available to them. However, the question is whether or not making these resources accessible to them is all that is required to achieve that objective.

Literature Review

In this section I will examine what scholars have said about the impact of colonial and other development strategies on the socioeconomic relations of the people in the communal areas in Zimbabwe. Reviewing what scholars have said has significance in laying a basis for further discussion of the outcome of development processes and serves to underscore the role that such development policies and strategies played in creating or altering poverty conditions. I will also use this review to compare the impact of development strategies in communities in the different countries that share similar conditions of poverty and depend on subsistence agriculture for their survival. The literature review then lays out what scholars have said about the root causes of the poverty among the rural communities in Zimbabwe, especially as they relate to state managed, top down development strategies. The review will also help to identify both the positive elements and the flaws in the development processes and their impact on rural communities. Many scholars contributed to the pool of existing knowledge regarding the causes of poverty in the communal areas in Zimbabwe and other countries with similar conditions. The discussion will also inform my analysis in this thesis and form the basis of my critique of the development policies that sought to alleviate poverty in the situations that this study is examining. I will then review some cases in development literature that scholars have undertaken in different rural situations in countries within southern Africa as well as in the Philippines, Russia, The Sudan, Tanzania and Egypt. The cases outline different development processes that were applied to support the arguments that I make in

this thesis. Some of the countries examined may not share a similar colonial history with Zimbabwe or other countries in Southern Africa. However, they share similar circumstances regarding the poverty conditions among their rural populations. They have in common a rural population surviving largely on subsistence agriculture, on land that is overpopulated, and marginal to more fertile land used for commercial purposes. There also exists differences in the level of poverty in these countries that can provide a fruitful basis for insightful comparative analysis.

The variety of the countries from which the examples are taken also enables the review to highlight the role and impact of International Financial Institutions on land use for agricultural production methods in relation to alleviating rural poverty. The similarity of the above conditions as well as the variety referred to above offer a good opportunity to examine the role that the communities that are affected by poverty can play as they seek their own solutions to that poverty without confining the applicability of the findings to Zimbabwe's communal areas. On the basis of what I shall find in the literature, I will develop a hypothesis that determines the theoretical framework for my thesis leading to a critical analysis of poverty in the rural communal areas in Zimbabwe.

Access to Land and Poverty

In his examination of the significance and the way the land question has been addressed as one of the causes of poverty, Sam Moyo (1999) compares Zimbabwe's economic and political history to many sub-Saharan African

countries. He argues that, although the length of the colonisation period of many countries in this region varies, the countries share a similar history of settler occupation and subjugation. That history underscores how the settler colonial regimes championed the land dispossession of the rural communities following military conquest at the end of the 19th century. He also argues that land dispossession has continued to form the basis of poverty in most of these countries a century later, especially in the southern African countries where settler colonialism became more entrenched than elsewhere in Africa.

He also argues that,

. . . this process led to the rewriting of local customs and legislation, and the reshaping of local institutions and resource management practices among rural households, . . . these communities were located (by the colonialists) into land units that depicted the ideological, political and a historical struggle for the formation of the peasantry. The process enforced and maintained an artificial separatist order of stability (Ibid.)

James Putzel (1992) conducted a formidable study on the land question and its relationship to poverty in the Philippines where the process was not a direct result of colonialism. In the context of the Philippines, there were neither equal opportunities nor a level playing field to allow both the urban and the rural players to compete fairly in the market economies to achieve economic growth that would benefit the majority of the people. Putzel also argues that,

. . . development that was modelled on the basis of economic growth formed the basis of the spatial differentiation and the disparity in economic levels that continued at the time the study was conducted to disadvantage people in rural areas in the Philippines (Ibid.)

Arguments such as Moyo's and Putzel's, give rise to the question as to whether

or not alternative development approaches are in a better position than orthodox approaches to alleviate the poverty in which the communities find themselves in countries like the Philippines and Zimbabwe. It also questions the relationship between strategies for achieving economic development per se and community economic development. In this connection, the arguments by both Moyo and Putzel concur that such national economic development places exaggerated importance on the strategic issues that seek to achieve economic growth at the macro level or the assumption that they improve the well being of people at the micro level. Thus the weakness in the strategies to achieve such economic growth and development is that these strategies have not alleviated poverty among rural communities even though they may have a significant impact on the way poverty is either worsened or reduced. Moyo (1999) highlights this as the reason why the issues of access to land and land tenure in Zimbabwe continued to dominate the development debate in the decade leading up to the 1990s.

Agricultural Production and Productive Capacities to Reduce Poverty

Moyo (1999) expresses scepticism about the intentions of those whose focus on agricultural production is limited to seeking to alter the focus of the debate on access to land so that it pays attention only to the modalities for agricultural production without addressing the issue of poverty reduction. He argues that the way agricultural production is currently promoted is geared for the export market as a means to generate wealth at the expense of reducing the poverty of the rural people. To this end he views agricultural development

strategies that mainly focus on land productivity to be responding to the consumption patterns that only focuses on efficient agricultural production. He argues this to be the reason for excess food production levels in the agriculturally advanced countries, which in turn have bred consumerism. The argument here is that agricultural development strategies that focus only on production have in the past played havoc with rural communities by enforcing an interpretation of the rural communities' frugal tendencies for survival to mean poverty. The strategies have ignored the wealth of experience and social relations that have made it possible for the people in the communal areas to survive without much in the way of food surpluses beyond those that are necessary for immediate family needs. Furthermore, Moyo argues that some of the results of having abundant food, resulting from efficient agricultural production strategies, led to urbanization and dependency of both the urban and rural populations on the output of commercial agricultural production as opposed to subsistence production. Over the years this led to unemployment and underemployment in urban and rural areas respectively. To this end Moyo challenges the notion of such development policies alleviating poverty. Making the same challenge about the need to examine the implication of land reform in the context of the Philippines, Putzel argues that the debates on land reform that only emphasize production, hide the divergence over the meaning of reform. He argues that land reform often does not connote reform of the agricultural production structure, nor does the reform make clear the theoretical framework of the reform and the alternative definitions of the reform itself. Putzel argues from the perspective of peasants who are landless who see

land reform as a way to address issues of population concentration on land including the kind of land reform that seeks to influence political economy and state policies. He challenges the validity of development policies that seek to make land accessible for agricultural production in order to contribute to economic growth while simultaneously seeking to reduce hunger and poverty. He argues that both are aspects of the same development objective. While both strategies purport that land accessibility ensures agricultural production and that production acts as a panacea to poverty among rural communities, the two aspects of development do not respond to the question of who must be involved in the production process to achieve the best results nor to the conflict that arises as a result of the hegemony of market forces that control the agricultural production processes. They do not respond to the need for the people at rural community levels to participate in the processes that ensure a change or an improvement in their current state of poverty.

In some cases the struggle to get access to land to improve production levels has manifested itself in violent reactions against regimes that controlled land and the oppressive nature of poverty, leading to loss of life and causing political instability. For many peasant groups in communal areas in Zimbabwe, access to land is *a sine qua non* to their survival. Land was the reason for their involvement in the liberation struggle that led to political independence in 1980 (Moyo, 1999). They saw access to land as an assured means of production that was within their reach. Tilling the land offered them the opportunity to change their poverty conditions without much outside help as opposed to seeking

employment in industries that they could not control. Gavin Kitching (1998) challenged the implication that wage employment for peasants reduced their poverty in Russia. He argued that the wages for work on farms reduced their potential to improve their own well being because they earned poor salaries working as peasant labourers on large-scale state farms in Russia. Their small-scale production on family farms was compromised because it was put in competition with that of large-scale producers. Kitching also highlights the importance of the separation between the impact of the introduction of guaranteed minimum wages for collective and state farm workers in Russia when the collectivisation was implemented against the role of rural people in solving their economic plight. He also argues that,

. . . paid wage labour reduced the significance in the equation of both income and 'labour time' against production costs in the private or peasant plots of rural families (Moyo, 1999).

In the same vein as Kitching's argument, about the peasant labourers working on large-scale state farms, Lovemore Zinyama examines the complexity of the agricultural production problem of the African families that were resettled from communal areas on fertile commercial farms that were formerly owned by white farmers in Zimbabwe soon after independence in 1980. He argues that the production levels, in the communal areas and the resettled areas, significantly increased Zimbabwe's national agricultural output when 35 thousand African families were resettled.

. . . these farmers increased their annual sales of maize from 90 thousand tones before 1980 to 390 thousand tones by 1984-5 season, demystifying

the legacy that commercial agricultural production could not be substituted by small-scale production as an answer to food security in Zimbabwe (Zinyama, 1986).

However, while this increase in production represented a significant contribution of the farmers in both the communal and resettlement farms to the total increase in the national production levels, it did not signify an improvement in the lives of the people in these farms nor the labourers working on commercial farms.

Therefore, the provision of labour on commercial farms is no more able to reduce poverty as subsistence agricultural production in the communal areas. The increased production also did not show its impact in relation to their capital and human costs that made that increase possible in comparison to the costs of production of the commercial farmers that utilised most of their cheap labour.

Access to Capital for Agricultural Production

The interest of foreign financial institutions and agricultural groups, played an important role in the formulation of agricultural production policies and development strategies in Zimbabwe. The World Bank and IMF were some of the foreign institutions that openly declared their interest in the resolution of the land question, as a precondition for their financial assistance to that country.² They opposed the reduction in the size of commercial farms to be done through land acquisition for redistribution and the imminent change from this process arguing that this would impinge on agricultural production, threatening food

²“World Bank, IMF reject Aid for Zimbabwe”, *The Star* (SA), 02/09/01.
<http://www.mdczimbabwe.com/arcievement/other/sta010209txt.htm>

security and the capacity to earn foreign exchange for the country. Consequently this threatened the capacity of the state to implement policies that sought to strike a balance between agricultural production for export and enhancing the country's ability to meet the needs of its own population. This is also closely linked to the question of the division between land for commercial agricultural production and any land that was to be made available to the people in the communal areas to sustain their livelihoods (Moyo, 1999). It was also linked to the relationship between financial capital and the elite ruling class who formed policies to reduce poverty. The financial institutions as interest groups, provided the impetus and basis to form and entrench the bourgeois class that began the departure from the early policies to reduce poverty after independence.

Similar to the argument made earlier by Putzel, Moyo underlines here the importance of the power and hegemony of foreign interest groups that set the development agenda and what was allowed on that agenda. According to Moyo, the interest of these institutions in the land question promotes privatization that underscores the protection of land as private property to be the basis for providing incentives for greater agricultural productivity. However, they do not specify who the beneficiaries of the incentives or the production are. The groups do not refer to the level of production costs nor to who bears these costs. The answers to these questions are left to conjecture. In addition, the hegemony of the foreign financial institutions underscores their reason to promote the importance of this individual title and private ownership of land to be linked to their guarantees for financial support. According to Putzel such institutions argue

that this link safeguards the development programmes on the agenda of agriculturally based developing countries (Moyo, 1995). At the national levels, this was further complicated by the claim by some petty bourgeois politicians who claim that land reform created an environment conducive to reducing poverty. It also underlines the emptiness of the rhetoric of such politicians as a strategy for seeking personal gain and self-aggrandizement (Putzel 1992). Their claim does not address the issues of production costs and human capital costs for rural communities. It is noteworthy that land reform programmes in the Philippines, Russia, Tanzania and Egypt, have not alleviated poverty at the micro level (Abramovay, 1996). Putzel (1992) argues that in the Philippines, while domestic interest groups had a political obligation to change the legal position of the community institution of *property rights* that defined those who owned or used agricultural land, the state sought to alter the structures that impinged on the distribution of any or all of these rights. His point is that the priority to land rights precedes the production question. This therefore, questions the political objectives of land reform if it only seeks to take the focus off land redistribution and concentrate on land settlement and productivity programmes without changing the implications of the existing property rights and institutions.

Grassroots Participation

According to Putzel the agrarian reform question reflects concerns that place higher priority on human relations than on the redistribution of property rights because such land reform implies not only physically making land available.

It also emphasises the changes in the agricultural production structure, particularly access to capital and credit programmes, the provision of extension services and the reform of farm inputs and produce-markets. The argument is that these encourage beneficiaries to engage profitably in farming activities. However, he recognizes the role of local power relations that often influence the creation of some agricultural infrastructure, which often reflects the control of land. Thus he underlines that access to land to alleviate poverty among those who are landless implies making a tacit alliance between an approach that seeks to achieve economic growth and those that address local needs. In the Philippines, these other approaches were based on the success of the grass-roots movement in demonstrating that rural poverty was a more pressing problem in that nation than economic growth. Any efforts that were aimed at addressing the causes of poverty at the level of rural communities were obliged to involve the rural people in defining what that poverty meant. Their efforts offered them the chance to negotiate how that poverty was to be reduced. In the Philippines this realization strengthened the organization of peasants into a potent political force. While land reform was one important way to obviate the poverty of the landless rural communities, Putzel recognises the flaws of the perception that land reform was the only answer to reducing poverty.

According to Putzel (1992), such a perception is open to political manipulation and the treachery of politicians. Some politicians promise land reform without defining its meaning in order to accede to or to stay in power. Moyo (1995) makes a similar argument in relationship to Zimbabwe linking

productivity to reduce poverty and productivity that accentuate rural agrarian development methods to solve mostly macro socio-political problems. He argues that such development methods do not solve the actual problems at the micro level. He also argues that land reform is the process of seeking to alleviate poverty that promotes local interaction with policies that support the rural poor in meeting their demands for change. In Zimbabwe it was perceived that such an approach to development,

. . . puts in perspective the communal areas as an economic sub-sector in the region that plays an important role in rural development. It spells out the economic position of communal areas regarding the overall pattern of poverty, environmental degradation and economic marginalization. (Moyo, 1995).

However, both Putzel and Moyo stress that the way to reduce poverty in the communal areas is to ensure that households have not only access to land for agricultural reproduction but access to livestock resources and capacities to maintain them. These include having relevant farm technologies, the management of labour practices and healthy relations that bridge the social differentiation of communal households. Therefore, the argument is not only to address the question of households that do not have access to land but to ensure that technology is affordable in order to enhance the effective use of land and labour. This implies that the alleviation of poverty also requires the need to address issues of water development to improve the prospects of land intensification in drier regions. It also implies the need to offer special incentives for improved efficiency, to those in the communal areas, that already own land.

Among the people in the communal areas are those that have the capacity to use labour-saving technologies that are already available to them to maximise the land productivity. According to Moyo, such resources are important to ensure local control of land administration and the understanding of the heterogeneity and variations in the agricultural ecology of the land systems. The systems are currently affected by social differences including that young women and men are not given the same opportunity to have access to land, skills and technology to work the land as a way of alleviating poverty.

Rural / Urban Linkage

Ray Bush (2000) and Morris Szeftel (2000), also consider the importance of the question of land rights and especially the struggles over access to it. Equally important to the issues noted above, is the economic relevance of the link between urban and rural populations that often translate into a class conflict arising out of the spatial and economic differentiation between the two sectors of the rural and urban populations. Consequently, when considering rural development as an exclusive issue, it is important to note that there is a continued threat to the security of rural work because land continues to be overpopulated and overused. This limits the accessibility of land that would provide employment, causing tension as a result of underemployment in the rural areas and unemployment in the urban centres. In addition the development of rural infrastructures suffers because of the unavailability of cash resources to the rural populations to afford the cost of inputs for agricultural production that would

contribute to rural growth. Moyo, Putzel, Bush and Szeftel see merit in making these issues, aimed at enhancing rural development, run concurrently, rather than allowing any one of them to take precedence.

Poverty and Food Security

In sub-Saharan Africa food security depends on population size and land balances. Mahretu (1995) argues that within sub-Saharan African nations, there is a mismatch between population density and the quality of arable land that is available to rural communities to farm. He cites Zimbabwe, Sudan, Ethiopia and Tanzania as typical examples of countries in which land with superior potential is sparsely populated or reserved for commercial farms or national parks while subsistence households who live in relatively high-density settlements populate land of deficient potential. He also argues that tropical diseases, cultural phenomena and the need for the peasant groups to defend themselves against enemies or to ensure ecological suitability for traditional staple varieties and livestock stewardship, influenced traditional settlements. Often the development agenda, including explanations for environmental instability of lands with immense environmental damage possibilities, which are being worked by small holder operators, and the tilling of marginal lands with low utilisation potential, the agenda ignores that these are the critical issues that lead to this mismatch. The lands have been settled at high densities for too long. Mahretu argues that the spatial mismatch also results from colonial and post colonial structures which created artificial land frontiers for small holder agriculture limiting such agriculture

to marginal lands of inferior quality and thus threatening the food security that is produced at local levels.

He also argues that the post colonial agribusiness schemes in various sub-Saharan African countries, often in association with government run agencies, has led to appropriation and consolidation of large-scale land mass with high potential for use in commercial estates. This has caused pressure on fragile lands by small holder food producers, again threatening food security. High potential lands have gradually shifted from food crops to non food cash crops and plantations, thus creating a spatial mismatch and pressure on land in the small holder sector. Mahretu argues that the solutions to this have to include comprehensive and integrated strategies that are suitable for small holder agriculture as well as the stewardship of existing land resources in the same way that production technology and social infrastructure and the advancement of the urban sector options, work.

In another argument, Rupak Chattopadhyay (2000) examines the persistence of hunger and analyses of food security in Zimbabwe during the 1990s. He concludes that the Zimbabwean structural adjustment programme was the point of departure that greatly contributed to hunger and 'persistent starvation' resulting from intermittent droughts. He also explored the extent to which the structural adjustment programmes and increased food production costs contributed to food insecurity and dependence on welfare handouts leading to destitution. The structural adjustment policies increased food insecurity by eroding the purchasing power of large sections of the population at the same time

weakening the production capacities in rural communities.

Chattopadhyay writes:

. . . Economic Structural Adjustment programmes failed to create economic change because these programmes neglected the demand side of the economic equation in which government policy failed to create a solid consumer class to sustain economic growth.

Structural Adjustment Programmes, Unemployment and Poverty

In the debate about how the neo-liberal development models and globalization have become permanent additions to the African political and economic landscape, Scott Taylor (1999) argues that the emergence of structural adjustment programmes as the remedy to the failure of previous approaches to development lacks feasibility. He argues that Africa as a developing region is affected by the contemporary national and international conditions under which development takes place. The neo-liberal economic imperative benefits from the impetus of structural adjustment policies that call upon states to devolve power and cede some economic functions to the long neglected private sectors. Taylor also argues that this viewpoint assumes that the success of the state apparatus in southern Africa depends on the acceptance of the benevolence of capitalist institutions by the state and business associations and on modelling the state's development strategies along the lines of these benefactors. It also presupposes that the private sector and its institutions have a growing significance as actors in development. Taylor does not visualise these economic groups seeking collective gains, but rather, their own narrow strategic goal of profit making, often at the expense of productive enterprise.

The outcome is increased in the number of such groups and business associations that promote profit making and not increase in growth, resulting in further economic decline. The commercial farmers in Zimbabwe are one such interest group. According to Taylor,

. . . these business associations may pursue productive strategies including lobbying government for policies that promote private capital accumulation and export expansion, but they affect national growth negatively.

Taylor argues that their activities may broadly be to produce and concentrate wealth, but they generate economic and political gains for their external business counterparts. Thus, the function of institutional strategies of business associations in the commercial agricultural sector in Zimbabwe cannot only be limited to “productive” or “distribution” functions. His argument is that,

. . . the Commercial Farmers Union (CFU) has remained highly supportive of most liberalization initiatives while at the same time advocating for a set of policy strategies that seek to preserve its members' hegemony over agriculture and the economy through the sale of cash crops on the export market. (Ibid)

In general, this has contributed to the high levels of Zimbabwe's GNP and GDP. Sam Moyo notes that the Commercial Farmers' Union (CFU) asserts that any radical realignment of land tenure and ownership is likely to result in a decline in agricultural production. Having access to land and financial capital have always formed the basis of the strength of the members of the CFU. They have for a long time benefited from unjust cheap labour practice supported by laws that were enacted by past political regimes. Thus this group of minority white farmers, who control the best agricultural land in Zimbabwe has always been able to

influence the role of the state both before and after independence in its approach to using agriculture for economic growth. Moyo argues to the contrary that if the realignment was carried out properly, the decline if any, would most likely be temporary (Ibid)

The Zimbabwe Farmers Union (ZFU) on the other hand, has sought to give Africans access to agricultural skills that would allow them, through agriculture, to play a meaningful part in the economy of the country. Africans do not have fair opportunities for access to both the land and financial capital.

The Africans' role has in the past depended on the ability of the Zimbabwe Farmers Union to put pressure on the government to address the imbalances in the land question before it could address production issues and the role that its members can play in agriculture. However, its size and capacity have not enabled the ZFU to play a part in enabling its members to participate in the agricultural economy of the country. This had in the past reduced the potential of the people in the communal areas to alter their economic circumstance and left them to be mired in poverty at the mercy of commercial farmers, International Financial Institutions and the state and its quasi state organizations to provide agricultural extension services. Consequently the ZFU is seen not to be involved in the commercial sector. (Taylor, 2000:185).

Hypothesis

The above arguments disclose the complexity of the problem of poverty in communal areas in Zimbabwe. My hypothesis regarding poverty reduction in

Zimbabwe is that the absence of the participation of the people at the grassroots created policies and strategies for the rural people that did not help to meet their needs or reduce their poverty. The active participation of the people in the communal areas in the formulation of the policies and strategies to reduce the impact of poverty might be the option for future exploration to guide the formulation of development policies that alleviate poverty in the communal areas. The basis of this thinking draws from a theoretical framework that underscores grassroots participation as an alternative development approach to the neo-liberal approach emphasizing economic growth facilitated from the centre. It requires a critical analysis of the method of representation of the peasantry in hierarchical structures that make policies and decisions on the solutions to rural poverty. It also implies a critical review of rural agricultural production in Zimbabwe to obviate poverty given the diversity of economic and social differentiation of the households in communal areas. I argue that the complexity of the poverty issue requires more than a universal solution like achieving economic growth. This emphasises the necessity for alternative development approaches that include consultation with the rural people themselves in the formulation on new policies that will use local power relations and the social capital that have sustained the rural economy for many years. These factors were based on the dynamics of the local reality that sought to change the state of poverty in the communal areas.

The rural people's dependency on a peasant mode of production as a means by which they have maintained their survival since the penetration of

colonialism in Zimbabwe makes their case for becoming participants in an alternative development process. They are competent to take their role as stakeholders in a development process that might offer an alternative development strategy to the orthodox development process, given its dismissive approach to the rural people as peasants that have no capacity to engage in wealth-increasing economic activities. The orthodox strategies, as a result of their being entrapped in the capitalist development strategies that focus on modern technology and financial capital, have not helped the rural people. The strategies are a social and political force that has, since political independence, held the balance of power between political persuasions and the urban rural divide.

The question is if this would achieve an economic, social and cultural transformation in the communal areas to contribute to an economic growth that accounts for the rural population in the nation's GDP and GNP, or for the reduction of the level of the disparity between the different households in the different sectors of the population.

Therefore, in the next chapter I will examine both the historical and theoretical framework of the colonial strategies that speak to these issues in order to develop the argument that supports my hypothesis about the poverty situation in rural communal areas in Zimbabwe.

Conclusion

The literature that I have reviewed above reflects the role of political and economic forces that historically caused poverty in the rural communal areas in Zimbabwe. However the solution to the poverty of people in the communal areas in Zimbabwe may not only lie in the need to have access to land to reduce their poverty because agricultural production is enmeshed in issues such as, food security, market control, and the justice of paid labour. The literature referred to above also showed the need for a tacit agreement between the structures that drive economic growth and rural people in the communal areas. Rural people seem to be the most promising source of an agency for achieving that objective lest development becomes an instrument of exploitation by those that control power and resources. The first chapter has also argued that the contribution of historical strategies in addressing land tenure issues was linked to land being inaccessible. This was why women, who form the majority of heads of most households in communal areas, survive by tilling family land and as a result, are victims of poverty. Therefore, changing their conditions of poverty entails altering the development structures that hinder the progress of those for whom progress is intended. This will unfold as the thesis proceeds.

Methodology

In this study I use library research and case studies to uncover some of the issues that affect the economic, social and cultural conditions of rural communities in Zimbabwe. My thesis benefited from my involvement as a

research assistant to a study on the link between the survival strategies of mine workers in Zimbabwe's mining industry and their connection to the communal areas, conducted in the summer of year 2000 and 2001 in six mines. I also draw from personal experiences. I lived most of my life in communal areas in Zimbabwe and worked as director of a community-based development agency in Zimbabwe for a decade leading up to 1998.

CHAPTER TWO

COLONIALISM AND POVERTY IN THE COMMUNAL AREAS

Introduction:

This chapter provides a snapshot of the trajectory of the development policies and strategies of successive colonial governments in Zimbabwe and what impact they had on the economic and social relations of households in the communal areas. The analysis of the policies and strategies seeks to explain the relationship between wealth accumulation and the nature of the problems and the *poverty* of the people in communal areas in Zimbabwe. The contention is that the insidious and disruptive nature of the development strategies during the colonial period of Zimbabwean history on the economic and social well being of the people in the communal areas, extends beyond independence in 1980. The chapter deals with the nature of the link between the poverty of the people in the communal areas and colonial development strategies. The findings should add to the knowledge that guides future processes to go beyond achieving economic growth to reducing poverty in these areas. The chapter thus lays the foundation for an argument about the role that political institutions in Zimbabwe and international capital played in relationship to where these regimes placed poverty alleviation strategies on their development agenda. The regimes almost always trivialize the importance of the prevalence of poverty among the rural people.

It ill behoves the current or any future political or other regimes in Zimbabwe to continue to be complacent regarding rural poverty. Often such

regimes perceive poverty to be an issue that requires only local solutions while the same regimes are often the chief actors in development at macro level holding the balance of power through which human development may or may not take place. Such power operates as if it were independent and free from strategies that have the potential to alleviate the constraints of social structures at the grassroots that create poverty. In this regard, the purpose of my analysis of colonial development strategies in Zimbabwe, is to discover from their impact, what the current and future political regimes, including financial institutions, can recognize as relevant and significant factors between the power and knowledge within the structures at the grassroots in the communal areas. Such factors are useful in the search for development strategies to curb poverty. Recognition of that power and knowledge speeds up the process for changing the current poverty situation in communal areas. Normally the colonial regime when it was in power was dangerously naive in the way that it underrated the reality of local power to reduce poverty. Since the majority of the population in Zimbabwe lives in the communal areas, it does not appear to be normal for them to remain in poverty, especially in a country that is endowed with rich natural resources. The population at the micro level in the communal areas, is one legitimate agency through which strategies to address issues of poverty should be generated. My personal experience and knowledge, having grown up, lived and worked with communities at the grassroots in the communal areas adds to my understanding of the impact of colonial development strategies on the grassroots in Zimbabwe. The colonial government and all its institutions, excluded the grassroots

communities from the process of determining the policies that changed their economic situation. The inclusion of the people that are affected by poverty in the communal areas when developing and implementing poverty alleviation strategies strengthens such strategies. Therefore, the poverty of the rural communities was linked but not limited to the lack of access and ownership of land as the means of production. However, the solutions to poverty in Zimbabwe were by default manufactured at the macro level through the development of the strategies and policies as discussed above. According to Michael Bratton,

. . . laws make room for enforceable title to land, and access to support services for meaningful agricultural production and development of rural areas (Bratton, 1990).

The colonial development laws coerced the existing power structures in the communal areas to support their development strategies. Some leaders among the grassroots in the communal areas took part in the formulation of development processes that sought to generate wealth at the expense of strategies to address poverty. According to Lawrence Tshuma (1997), most of the colonial development approaches consciously made concessions regarding poverty alleviation to some of those that were economically advantaged among the poor over the rest of the population. Many of those that were socially and politically well placed in positions of power and advantage were often co-opted into the power structures to endorse policies that were not based on inputs from the grassroots and that offered band-aid solutions to poverty.

. . . chiefs became minor state functionaries appointed by, and answerable to, the administration with their tenure contingent upon good behaviour as defined by the colonial state (Tshuma, 1997).

This argument underscores the necessity for the synergy between the roles played by beneficiaries of development policies and strategies and the roles played by those, who formulate policies and enact laws such as the land-tenure laws in Zimbabwe.

The co-optation of such leaders was taken to imply participation by the people at the grassroots. According to Sam Moyo (1995), the voices of some of the conservative stakeholders, including those considered by the policy makers, to have traditional leadership roles or the capability and legitimacy to be considered as leaders were part of the policy formulation process that sought to reduce poverty.

Moyo argues that such leaders were likely to oppose the landless people in communal areas. Thus the colonial policies that were developed from this process put high on the agenda of state institutions, the state's ability only to meet its balance of payment obligations or achieving high profit margins from agricultural business and mainly to benefit the business sector and settler interests. Moyo also argues that this approach supported the neo-liberal political and economic practice and rationality for enhancing the development process that negated economic advancement at the micro level (Ibid.) In spite of this, and as already discussed, the rural people in Zimbabwe made unabated efforts to improve their own well being against all odds with little or no significant support from the colonial state regime and financial institutions. The rural people built their own schools and clinics, grew their own food and provided their own

water and energy sources.

Historical Overview

The major impetus for the colonization of Zimbabwe by the British in the 1890s, was for British commercial interests to benefit from the country's mineral wealth and natural resources and not the colonialists' benevolence to improve the economic and social conditions of Zimbabweans (van Onselen, 1980). However, in spite of the abundance of these resources even one century after that colonization, it is not difficult to explain why the indigenous African people in Zimbabwe who form the majority of the population and are still living in rural communities continue to be mired in poverty. The colonial history is rife with ubiquitous evidence of strategies for creating wealth for Britain and its settlers and not for Zimbabweans. The process of colonization and wealth accumulation gives evidence of the importance that colonialists placed on access to land in order to promote "development" and "political stability" in their newly found colony (Moyo, 1995). The colonialists penetrated into the pristine rural hinterland to create markets to sell goods where the population, as far as income was concerned, continued to be marginalised. However, over the years, the wealth that this process has generated has least benefited the indigenous African people in the country. Services such as health care and education continue to be unaffordable. Therefore, it can be argued that inequitable distribution of that wealth has contributed to significantly form the basis of rural poverty in that country.

The 1898 British Government's *Order in Council* which required that the *British South Africa Company* create *Native Reserves* testifies to this fact.

Through this order, Africans were evicted from their fertile land by force and without any compensation (Rukuni, 1994). Since then, whites have owned land as private property, while Africans have land available for their use based on usufructary or traditional tenure rights. Furthermore, the colonialists defined what those traditional rights were to be. To this day, this has meant that,

. . . the whites have maintained a monopoly of economic and political power through land allocation, research and technology, marketing and service institutions and pricing policies (Herbst, 1990).

In preference to mining, British colonialists chose agriculture as the one chief means through which they could accumulate wealth in Zimbabwe. Therefore, they divided land for commercial and subsistence purposes on racial lines. This was to be legally entrenched by a series of statutes that formed the basis of economic and rural development. The policies were formulated without involving in any way the people in the communal areas. The following table shows a summary of these statutes, their intended purpose and impact on the life of the people in the communal areas (Chachage, 1999).

Zimbabwe History of Land Policy, 1891-1994

Year	<u>Land Act</u>	<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Result</u>
1889	The Lippert concession	White Settlers to acquire land rights from native Zimbabweans	BSACo moves Africans into poor agricultural areas
1898	Native Reserves Order in Council	To create Native Reserves in the face of mass land appropriation by white settlers	Native Reserves created haphazardly in low potential areas
1930	Land Apportionment Act	To legalize land division	Best land held commercially by white settlers; poor land by Africans, now organised into communal ownership
1951	Native Land Husbandry Act	To enforce private ownership of land, to destock and enforce conservation practices on black small-holders	Mass resistance to legislation fuelling nationalistic politics. Law abolished in 1961

<u>Year</u>	<u>Land Act</u>	<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Result</u>
1965	Tribal Trust Lands (TTL) Act	To change the name of Native Reserves and create land trustees	Limiting African farming to TTLs, with population pressure and degradation
1969	Land Tenure Act (LTA)	To replace LAA (1930), divide land - 50% to whites 50% to blacks	Further overcrowding and land restriction
1981	Communal Lands Act	To change Tribal Trust Lands to Communal Areas	Change of land authority from traditional leaders to District Councils
1985	Land Acquisition Act	To give Government first right to purchase large scale farms for resettlement	Limited impact on resettlement programme
1990	Land Acquisition Act Amendment	To acquire 5 million ha. of land for resettlement	Programme underway
<hr/>			

Listing the above events reveals the monopoly by the minority population of whites on the economic and political power through land allocation, research and technology, marketing and service institutions and pricing policies (Herbst, 1990). As already discussed, choosing agriculture in preference to mining, meant that the British colonialists could accumulate wealth in Zimbabwe through the exploitation of the land and its people, hence the protection that these policies provided for the commercial farmer. The policies laid the basis for entrenched rural poverty. It is little wonder that after twenty-on years of political independence following more than ninety years of colonial rule, poverty has continued to exist in the countryside.

The Rural Urban Linkage

A new chapter in the story of rural poverty was opened in 1951 when the Native Land Husbandry Act was promulgated for the sole purpose,

. . . to control the land use practices and ownership tenure norms, with the hope that the landless would be employed by the expected industrialization, . . . the two decades following the 1950s were to see a decline in African output . . . (Moyo, 1987).

Effectively the economic base for the Africans in the communal areas was curtailed at this time. In addition to displacing them from their rich fertile lands and resettling them in marginal lands this legislation prescribed the number of cattle that each household could own, thus reducing significantly the Africans' potential for accumulating capital or any meaningful wealth. Africans had always used cattle as a basis of their wealth and as insurance against poverty or any unforeseen hazards that threatened the change of fortunes in their lives (Ibid.) In addition to being

economically marginalised, Africans were forced to pay in cash to the colonial government a *head or poll tax*. They also paid tax for each animal that they continued to own (Ibid.) This forced those without the means to earn cash to sell or kill their animals. Cattle were sold at prices that were determined by the colonial state officials to benefit the newly settled foreign agricultural settlers (Tshuma, 1997). The newly settled colonialists were privileged to access bank loans which Africans did not have.

Similar to the experience in Northern Rhodesia, now Zambia, the people in the rural communal areas began to succumb to migration to the mines and urban centers where they offered their labour for cash in order to pay taxes. Urban employment also helped them to meet other economic needs. However, scholars such as William Watson have argued that this rural labour migration in pursuit of paid work created demographic imbalances between towns and the rural countryside and severely hurt the subsistence economy and impoverished rural family life (Watson, 1958).

Tshuma also points out arguments to the contrary by scholars such as Van Velson who argued that this rural migration,

. . . contributed to the 'cohesion of African tribal life and to the perpetuation of certain forms of 'traditional' cultural values and practices (Ibid.)

This latter category of scholars also argued that rural-rban labour migration did not hurt the rural subsistence economy. Instead, 50 percent of the men constituted the migrant labour, but they,

. . . maintained ties to, and invested in, rural economic and social relations, reinforcing the values placed on agricultural endeavour and the extended

family (Ibid.)

These arguments portray the nature of the conflict that pervades the debate on the subject of rural poverty in Zimbabwe's communal areas. It emanates from the colonial strategies that set in motion a new economic relationship between rural and urban populations. The arguments emphasize the importance and logic of the values of economic production, but what is more important is that they form the justification for the low wages that Africans were paid and the lack of stability that the African workers and their families in rural communal areas experienced. These experiences are the basis of the early stages of rural poverty in Zimbabwe. The migration of the labour force, as well as the whole complex set of forces that were unleashed by capitalist development, substantially explain the early stages of the rural decline. The same forces seem to explain the underdevelopment that has continued to be experienced in the rural areas in Zimbabwe and in southern Africa as a region. Urban employment was now to support rural production through cash remittances from family members who were successful in securing mostly unskilled work in the cities, mines and commercial farms until independence in 1980.

In the next chapter I deal with this rural urban linkage as a means of sustaining the economy in the communal areas until its demise due to structural adjustment in the 1990s.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have highlighted the major historical events that formed critical turning points in the shaping of the rural economy and the livelihood of the majority of the people that live in the communal areas in Zimbabwe. That history reflects on how development policies and the strategies to achieve them, including the expropriation of land, are linked to the crisis situation of poverty that obtains in the communal areas in Zimbabwe today. The chapter has also shown how in the process of dispossessing the rural communities of their land rural unemployment and underemployment grew dramatically. In turn this created desperate economic conditions in the rural areas.

Dependency of the rural economy on industries that were externally based in towns created conditions for cheap labour and the migration patterns into urban centres thus further impoverishing and destabilizing the communal areas. The chapter has argued how deliberate wage policies were set up to assist the agriculture industry to the advantage of settler colonialists at the expense of the majority of the Africans in the communal areas. This was made possible by laws that made it difficult for the African labour force to stay in work places and thus encouraged migration to sell cheap labour in the urban centers.

Other factors that contributed to the early impoverishment of the rural areas included the control and monopolization of the sale of maize on the same commercial market by farmers in the rural communal areas. This gave unfair advantage to the settler farmers. The domestic animal herds that belonged to Africans that had always served as their assets were forcibly reduced.

I have therefore argued that these and other factors are the basis upon which poverty in the rural communal areas is linked to the settler colonialists' periodic policy changes to accumulate their wealth. I have also argued that the laws that the colonialists put in place validated the curtailing of the African people's access to land as a means of production. This marginalised the majority of the people in the countryside. To this end the absence of policies that accommodated the input of the people in the communal areas in shaping the development policies affecting these areas and exacerbating the impact of the development strategies on their intended beneficiaries, suggests that there are possibilities for different outcomes if the people in the communal areas were involved. Hence it is important and necessary to incorporate the roles that are to be played by those that make development policies or benefit from them in the policy formulation process. The hindrance by colonial regimes on the participation by people in the communal areas in the formulation of policies to alleviate their own poverty created dependency on the state and thwarted their initiative to build resources to contribute to economic activities at the macro level.

This explains the link between the formulation and implementation of development strategies that involve or exclude the beneficiaries of the development process to determine if that development causes or reduces poverty. I have argued that the impact of taking away land from the people in the rural communal areas, which was their most reliable means of production, seems to point to the negative results of an eroded rural economy that created rural poverty in Zimbabwe. I have argued that poverty in the communal areas left little or no recourse for the people in

the communal areas and therefore created a dangerous potential that threatens the political and economic stability of Zimbabwe today. The question is whether or not this can be reversed by a solution that involves the same rural people. It would appear that there is a spiral that was set in motion by settler colonialism. Policies that are formed as a result of the way international capital works, buttressed the hegemony of the global economic order at the expense of development at the grassroots. The economy in the communal areas was based on subsistence agriculture. Therefore, it was unsustainable at the macro level. It could not go beyond the survival of households at the micro level.

The analysis in this chapter has laid the foundation for an argument that supports the role that the colonial political regime in Zimbabwe supported by financial capital played and where they placed poverty alleviation strategies on their agenda.

In the next chapter I explore the question of the role played by the post colonial regime from the 1980s to see if this regime incorporated the social and political structures in the communal areas given their experience as a newly formed government at that time that benefited from the dynamics or local participation during the struggle for political independence. I will also examine how that role played out in the context of global forces to change the poverty situation of the people in the rural communal areas. I argue that the poverty of the people in the communal areas in Zimbabwe goes beyond the politicization of the issue. As a result, the enormity of the issue requires recognition of new challenges that seek to alleviate poverty before it devastates any further the majority of the population that is locked in the communal areas without any recourse. Their reliance on the sale of

their labour is controlled by the market. Their traditional means of production, the land, was expropriated and is a politically contentious issue that has bedevilled the development process.

CHAPTER THREE
POST INDEPENDENCE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES
AND THE COMMUNAL AREAS

Introduction

This chapter analyses the development policies and strategies of the post-independence regime in Zimbabwe after 1980, first to establish the role and impact of these policies on the economic and social relations of people in communal areas. The second objective is to discover through analysis of the content of the policies, the process of their formulation if they worked in accordance with the perception that entails the grassroots playing a significant role in reducing rural poverty that the regime purported to address. Thus through the study we shall discover why poverty has continued to be the outcome of the same policies and strategies that it sought to reduce.

The focus of the political regime after independence in Zimbabwe was to formulate and implement development policies and strategies that among other things were driven by the desire to transform and redress the socioeconomic imbalances which were created prior to 1980. That objective provided the rationale for the redirection of resources to provide primary health and education services to benefit the majority of the population. (Government of Zimbabwe, 1990) It was envisaged that achieving that objective was in turn to change the economic and social relations of people in communal areas and to obviate their poverty.

At the same time, the policies and strategies sought to foster the

consolidation of both the national economy and the power base of the new political regime (Mandaza, 1987). Therefore, it is a question why poverty could be the outcome of such egalitarian development strategies twenty-one years after independence.

This chapter compares the impact of the development strategies implemented in the post independence period to the strategies in the colonial period examined in the previous chapter. It offers the opportunity at the end of the study to explain the reasons for continued poverty in communal areas in Zimbabwe. The study will provide some basis for suggesting alternative approaches for poverty alleviation in communal areas in Zimbabwe that are based on the involvement of the grassroots at both policy formulation and implementation stages of the development process.

Growth with Equity

Soon after independence the government of Zimbabwe put a new policy in place to achieve growth with equity. The policy reflected some of the early set objectives of the post independence regime to redress the injustices created by the colonial regimes. Through this new policy the post independence regime sought to reorganise and remobilise the exploited classes of Zimbabwean society as much through the threat of repression as through granting of limited actual or expected benefits and promoting and sustaining the regime's ideology (Ibid.)

To this end, the policy impetus was based on,

. . . egalitarian and democratic principles to change conditions of rapid economic growth, full employment, price stability, dynamic efficiency in resource allocation and equitable distribution of ensuing benefits of

development (Government of Zimbabwe, 1981).

In relationship to rural development and agriculture which directly affected the majority of the population in communal areas, the policy sought to create opportunities for efficient and productive employment of capital and labour in agriculture, the lack of which had led to unacceptably low productivity and *per capita income* in the communal areas in the years preceding independence (Ibid.)

One key strategy of the growth with equity policy was its focus on the people in the communal areas to establish communal and cooperative farms. The state was to provide assistance to ensure that the farms were economically viable (Ibid.) The policy was to address the rural people's limited or lack of access to credit, extension and marketing services and land inequality that had in the past been based on racial division. These inequalities had for a long time deprived peasants of their participation in the process. The growth with equity policy also envisaged the setting up of small and medium scale manufacturing and commercial enterprises around small centres so as to provide productive employment. Part of the regime's strategy in developing this policy was to reverse the strategy promoted by colonial regimes before independence to create workers out of the peasantry. The policy was aimed at stemming migration to large towns by creating opportunities for raising incomes and living standards in rural areas and thus decentralising the economic pressure in urban centres to rural areas.

To ensure success, the fulcrum around which the policy was to be implemented was the transformation of the land system. This was to be done

through land acquisition, redistribution or resettlement and development, albeit limited by the need to mobilise external and internal resources to achieve that objective (Ibid.) The reality was that cash was just not available in communal areas as a mode of payment for procuring land. Besides, expecting the resources in cash from the communal areas to be available would have been a contradiction in terms. The objective to redress the land inequity was based on the lack of internal resources except the land. The growth with equity policy was critical of the rapid industrialisation process of the past colonial regimes that saw industrialisation as a panacea for the unemployment and underemployment problems of people in communal areas. To this end the post independence regime promoted research on the impact of the informal sector and the poor socioeconomic relations that were pervasive in the communal areas and urban centres. The purpose was also to better understand the role and importance of this sector in the economic and social development of the country.

The policy also aimed at creating more educational opportunities in the rural areas where it was hoped that a general increase in the level of education was to contribute to more rapid adoption of new agricultural methods and higher productivity of the rural people. Free primary education was introduced and the primary school population topped the one million mark during 1980 and was expected to increase to two million within the first decade of independence. The policy also envisaged the building of health clinics at village levels that were to be manned by suitably trained personnel in order to increase access to health services in rural areas. Such services were to provide an integrated and comprehensive

National Health Service that was to be financed by the taxation and individual contributions of the citizens gainfully employed (Ibid.)

This policy assumed that the taxation base was to grow proportionately and at the same rate as the required contributions to meet the set objectives. The weakness of the policy strategies was that while they purported to provide the basis for creating an egalitarian and democratic society in conditions of sustained growth with equity, its success relied on the efficacy of the state. The government was not only to plan the policy and its strategies. It was also to demonstrate its ability to centrally control the policy implementation process as well as to generate the necessary resources to achieve its objectives. The growth with equity policy was justifiably drawn and driven within the framework that was guided by nationalistic processes that had led to the achievement of Zimbabwe's political freedom.

Arguably it is possible that the policy planners at this time took for granted the benevolence and goodwill of the external regimes to support the new policy objectives and its strategies. They assumed to benefit from external support unlike the colonial regime that had international sanctions imposed against it. The new policy overestimated the government's capacity and speed to develop the necessary technology and skilled human resources which colonial regimes had strategically and deliberately neglected and even sabotaged. Successive colonial governments formulated educational policies that conformed to assumptions of racial supremacy as a way to consolidate white control of key positions in the socioeconomic and political spheres. The education system was set to produce Africans at no more than middle-level management positions and workers only

literate enough to take instructions, thus ensuring no competition for positions of power from Africans (Zvobgo, 1987). It is highly likely that the optimism inherent in the post-colonial policy emanated from some experience in organising production by the party, which now formed the government, during the liberation struggle. However, while the choice to establish communal and cooperative farms was important, it would appear that it assumed and took for granted the understanding and implications of cooperative production at the grassroots. The setting up of small and medium-sized manufacturing and commercial enterprises, which had been planned for, assumed the availability of financial capital, skills, expertise and technical knowledge in the communal areas to achieve the objective of the plan. Consequently, the process risked these enterprises being controlled by 'experts' from outside the rural areas, but ignored or paid little attention to the already existing knowledge and the resilience of the people in the communal areas whose survival strategies had sustained the rural economy through more than half a century of molestation by colonial regimes. The policy also overestimated the capacity of the government to jump-start the performance of peasants in national economic growth processes before addressing their basic needs.

The Five-year National Development Plan

The post independence transition plan and the first Five-year National Development plan announced in early 1982 were sequels to the previous policy to achieve growth with equity. From the onset, the development planners recognised the disparities inherent in the agricultural sector. The implementation of these plans

created daunting challenges if it was to correct the root causes of poverty in the communal areas. Significant among the disparities that the plan sought to correct was that the sector's contribution to the national economy was more than 14 percent of GDP and 32 percent of formal national employment figures. At the same time more than 70 percent of African Zimbabweans (seven hundred thousand families) lived off land in the worst ecological zones that constituted 42 percent of the total land area (Ibid.) As already noted in chapter one above, 44 percent of the total land area of 40 million hectares was at that time owned by approximately six thousand (largely white) commercial farmers. However according to Sam Moyo, the number of white owned farms has over the years since independence been reduced to four thousand five hundred farms (Moyo, 1999). Thus, in seeking to revamp this sector of the economy, the policy makers and development planners recognised that they faced one of the most intractable issues of development at the dawn of that new era (Government of Zimbabwe, TNDP, 1982:64).

Similar to the growth with equity plans, the development plan focussed on redressing the land disparity and inequity, providing greater economic security and welfare for the rural population and increasing both labour capacities and production levels in the systems of agriculture. These were subsequently expected to lead to food self sufficiency, and security. The long term objectives of the development plan included guaranteeing the role of agriculture as a significant foreign exchange earner and source of inputs to industry, the integration of the two disparate commercial and small scale agricultural sectors into one national agricultural system. The policy objectives also sought to safeguard the land and ecological

conservation practices, to protect the markets and trade, and to improve the human resource capacities with the hope that it would benefit the rural communities.

To a large extent the basic principles inherent in the objectives of the development plan and its strategies to reduce poverty were top down and limited. The policies took little account of the input of and what impact the plan was to have on the day to day survival needs of the rural communities. Therefore, the overarching tendency of the plan made no provision for contingent alternatives in the event of the plan not succeeding. As a result, its failure created sufficient grounds and space for festering criticism directed at the regime for not reducing poverty in the twenty-one years of its reign. Thus it played into the hegemonic hands of the global powers who towards the end of the second decade of political independence were challenging the regime to abandon its poverty reduction strategies related to the land question. This left little or no room for any recourse for the rural communities, but to challenge the validity of the efficacy of the regime that had been promised during the liberation struggle. The essence of that promise had created high hopes in the capacity of the state to reduce poverty in the communal areas or at last to minimise the gap between the rich and the poor. Except for the plan expressing the desire to reform and expand structures of complementary services that were to include credit, marketing research and extension, the strategies to achieve these objectives did not provide for the input of its perceived beneficiaries in the rural areas nor the generation of resources to meet those objectives.

Economic Structural Adjustment Programme

In 1991, the first Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) in Zimbabwe was implemented to provide an opportunity for the government to take loans from the IMF and the World Bank. The purpose was to increase and improve economic activities in order to achieve economic growth (Raftopoulos, 1992). This policy change from the distributive egalitarian approach adopted earlier implied cuts to reduce deficits in the budget that had in the past few years made it possible for the government to finance social services to the majority of the people, especially in communal areas. As a justification for the policy change, the policy statement for structural adjustment argued that up to that point the social sectors grew at the expense of the productive sectors (Government of Zimbabwe, 1990). The new policy focus and emphasis were to progressively focus on increasing the rate of economic growth. The consequences of the budget cuts included the removal of subsidies and increases in the cost of basic food commodities, education and health care services. The introduction of the privatisation of competitive service provision implied increased and severe vulnerability of rural communities. Without state protection the threat to revert to conditions and experiences of economic hardship existing before independence became the new reality of the people in the communal areas. According to the policy statement, the planners acknowledged that the problems of low investment, shortages of foreign exchange and commodities, high expenditure and large budget deficits as well as unpredictable spells of drought and unstable world commodity prices severely affected the economy (Ibid.) Implicit in this acknowledgement is the acceptance of the negative impact of this policy on the

majority and most vulnerable sectors of the population, especially in the communal areas. At the same time the adjustment was focussed at addressing economic problems at the macro level assuming that the dependency at the micro level in the communal areas on government support that had been created since independence would fall in place once the economic growth improved.

Although the government of Zimbabwe denies it, Brian MacGarry (1994) argues that structural adjustment was implemented at the behest of the World Bank and the IMF. On the other hand, it is arguable if the government was obliged to implement the structural adjustment programme at that time because the economy was healthy and did not need borrowed capital to achieve its objectives. However, it is possible that this was the expedient moment for the Bretton Woods Institutions to offer its loan facilities and influence the government to change its stance that was pervasive in its development strategies to redistribute wealth since independence in 1980. At that time of Zimbabwe's development history it appeared expedient that the government was offered an opportunity to have access to financial resources to implement its new policies but on terms that were to be dictated by the World Bank and IMF (Ibid). It is also possible that the government perceived the implementation of the structural adjustment programme at the government's own pace at that stage as a preemptive strategy to soften the severity of its inevitable impact on the economy and the poor sectors of the population if it was forced upon them later by the World Bank. At that time, the government explained the timing of the policy change during this period to be the expedient moment for the government to move into issues of generating resources.

The Zimbabwe Minister of Finance at that time argued that,

. . . it was time to move away from the redistributive policies of the 1980s and concentrate on encouraging investment in the country's lagging productive capacity (Government of Zimbabwe, 1990).

The Impact of Structural Adjustment in the Communal Areas

In response to the above argument by the government, MacGarry argued to the contrary that the structural adjustment programme was devastating on the national economy and to the well being of most Zimbabweans, especially workers and peasants in the communal areas (Ibid). While the growth with equity policy was beginning to show signs of improvement regarding the role of peasants in agricultural production in relationship to other economic activities in the communal areas and in meeting the people's survival needs at the micro levels, subsistence agriculture had largely depended on the cash remittances of those in gainful employment in other sectors of the economy who could afford to maintain ties with the rural areas (Worby, 1995). In most cases only families with some members in gainful employment could afford to maintain ties with the communal areas and to support agricultural production in rural areas through their cash remittances. In general terms this meant that rural communities benefited little from the development strategies at the macro level. Women through use of their local knowledge and strategies such as making handicrafts to sell for cash or in exchange for labour, buying manufactured goods in towns and selling them in rural areas and skills to negotiate the economic value of these goods, now defined the survival strategies of households in communal areas.

According to Jennifer Adams, much research in Africa has emphasized the perception that rural women were confined to subsistence production and unpaid domestic work, with their income viewed as a secondary source of family support. This perception portrays rural women as economically dependent on husbands and fathers (Adams, 1991).

Such perception leads to the formulation of unhelpful policies regarding the strengthening of rural women to improve their agricultural productivity as a contribution towards a strong economy. Adams argues that this view is an oversimplification of the role of rural women that often assume them to constitute a homogeneous social entity. On the contrary women have played a significant role in the rural economy in Zimbabwe. In support of this argument Adams also argues that there is a dynamic market in rural Zimbabwe where women predominated among wage workers, particularly those in low-paid casual agricultural work. Female headed house holds were more likely than male headed house holds to engage labourers (Ibid.) To this end they were severely impacted by inflation and the rise in cost of commodities as any sector in the economy as a result of the structural adjustment programme.

Structural Adjustment and Unemployment

The end of the colonial era in 1980 in Zimbabwe also marked the end of all forms of legal and institutional constraints on movements to and within urban centres. This altered the nature of migration between rural and urban areas affecting employment and unemployment as they adapted to rural and urban

economic strengths (Potts, 2000). Young people, because of their physical and robust capacity to move freely between rural and urban areas in spite of lack of regular, reliable and affordable transport between these areas, increased the migration patterns from rural to urban areas.

They sojourned in cities and towns to look for employment opportunities in both formal and informal sectors to earn cash to supplement food production strategies in rural areas. According to Deborah Potts, the economic decline in Zimbabwe that started in the 1990s, resulting in part from the structural adjustment programme, seemed to suggest a reversal in some of the earlier trends of labour migration from rural to urban areas that was encouraged by the excitement of political independence in 1980. However, Potts' surveys conducted between 1985 and 1994 suggested that migrants in Harare, the capital city, registered a high unemployment rate. She concluded that those who lost employment moved to something new or left the cities (Ibid). The informal sector and the communal areas respectively were the strongest plausible alternatives that they turned to. The government at that time was cutting subsidies on food and social services creating harsher economic conditions than had ever been experienced since independence, except for the conditions experienced during the drought periods. Therefore, it seems plausible to suggest a solution to poverty that is based on participatory action that has its base at the grassroots in the rural areas. I submit that communal areas in Zimbabwe seem to be strategically well positioned for the grassroots to participate in a process that has possibilities for bringing about long term solutions to the current rural poverty in Zimbabwe. As already argued above, the communities

in the communal areas in Zimbabwe depend less on external support than any other sector in the economy and are therefore better able to sustain themselves. They grow their own food and create their own jobs through agricultural activities as well as thriving on the informal sector.

Therefore, it seems reasonable to assume that the pressure that results from the size of the population in the communal areas, in relationship to other sectors, provides opportunities for the rural communities to come up with relevant and better focussed solutions to poverty than are contrived by the government from its central position. The rural-urban economic interface was marred by the failure to assist rural communities to sustain the rural economy resulting from unemployment within industry in the urban centres. The pressure on the communal areas was to find solutions to poverty that auger well for grassroots participation.

Both economies have a better opportunity to benefit from the input of the rural population than from externally sourced capital to drive economic development. In the post independence period, some sanguine economic activities became possible through the political structures in communal areas. These included the organisation of food for work programmes by village development committees under the tutelage of village headmen. Others were organised through the family structure in which members took responsibility for orphans, the aged, the sick and infirm.

The rural economy was also sustained by the social relations in rural communities because families and neighbours exchanged labour services. Many men and women who in the 1990s were disillusioned by the promise of

independence, because they could not find jobs in the cities, resorted to agriculture activities in the communal areas. They began to intensify the growing of cash crops like tobacco and cotton as well as their own food.

According to Worby, after 1980, rural people changed from the character of . . . a homogeneous mass of subsistence cultivators who exported labour to purchase commodities such as sugar . . . and other manufactured goods from urban centres (Worby, 1995).

In the communal areas in Gokwe District, peasants started to grow cotton, thus reflecting the fact that the demand for labour to work on rural small scale cash crop fields as opposed to large scale commercial farms or city industries,

, , , rose in direct proportion to the extent to which the cash crop activity was diffused into that rural district (Worby, 1995).

In this connection, the labour and chemical fertiliser input costs which were increased to prohibitive levels by inflation and as a result of the structural adjustment programme among other reasons, affected agricultural production for both the rural peasant and commercial farmers. In contrast to this, the commercial farmers had access to bank loans and better arable land than the peasants in the communal areas. Therefore, the need for survival strategies in communal areas held communities together in spite of the adverse effects of many forces that worked against them. The people in the communal areas have for a long time suffered from the unjust hegemony of past colonial land distribution policies, post independence development strategies, regional geopolitical strategies and global economic trade practices.

These forces mainly protected the survival of macro economic development projects at the expense of the well being of the grassroots in the communal areas.

While the grassroots strategies cannot claim to obviate the impact of poverty in the communal areas in Zimbabwe, they increased the rural people's power to organise themselves at local levels and to share information in order to create conditions for the acquisition of power to access resources and control their allocation (Mararike, 1999).

This is different from the perception of survival strategies that assume rural people to be only concerned with activities that help them to meet their physical needs such as hunger or receiving food handouts (Devereux, 1993). While the benefits from the development strategies in the early years of political independence in Zimbabwe were substantial, they could not be sustained or overemphasised because they were short lived. The efforts of the peasants played a significant role in sustaining family life at the micro level in the communal areas. However, implementation of such strategies remains a great development challenge for policy makers.

The economic structural adjustment programme was one new post independence development strategy that did not advance progress in the communal areas. Rather, without it being intended, the programme ensured that people in communal areas remained at subsistence production level. At that same time Zimbabwe was an important food producing country in southern Africa. From the time of the implementation of the structural adjustment programme, the availability of foreign capital to feed into agricultural production was now to be limited mainly to

the sectors that responded favourably to the demands of economic growth at the macro level at the expense of the demands of the people in the communal areas. Contrary to what was envisaged, the implementation of the structural adjustment programme at the macro level, which turned out to be the last straw on the back of the rural economy at the micro level, exhausted the people's patience and decreased their ability to sustain economic activities that had acted like band-aid for them in the rural areas. It was now clearer that the formulation of development processes in which they did not participate, negatively defined their survival strategies in the rural areas and did not improve the economic and social relations in communal areas any more than development strategies resulting from their local initiatives.

The economic implications of the management of natural resources using locally developed skills for food production had over the years supplemented their meagre cash resources to produce food locally. They barely succeeded in slowing down the impact of the increased cost of production and external inputs such as fertilisers. While the economic structural adjustment programme had possibilities for improving agricultural production at the macro level, it could not put in place the kind of development that was sustainable. To this end, it can be argued that while the outcome of implementing the structural adjustment was made possible by the management of resources at the micro level, it did not account for the input of people in the communal areas. The above underscores the importance of the incorporation of development strategies that are grassroots based to generate resources if those strategies are to stem poverty in communal areas before

achieving macro economic growth. It also highlights the difference in impact of the major paradigm shift that took place from the economic policies of past colonial governments in Zimbabwe at independence and the impact of the second shift at the time of the implementation of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme. However, the implementation of such programmes remains the challenge of development policy makers.

On the one hand, the colonial policies destroyed the economic and social structures that had existed in the rural countryside for a long time. On the other hand, the attempts to change the economic structures at independence to benefit the majority of the people in the country were benevolent, but, they were fraught with numerous problems, especially the timing of the adoption of reforms. The reforms had to operate according to the dictates of global economic forces that in turn dictate the way the Structural Adjustment Programmes work. The development policies in both periods of history used overarching and top down development strategies which were not sustainable. The second policy shift undermined the capacity and potential of families in the communal areas to transform the basis of their economy from subsistence agricultural production to a cash economy. It is arguable that the rural economy was not based on cash economy. However, the second policy shift created no political space to reform the modalities that would allow the transition to a cash economy to take place locally. Instead the shift to take part in global economic activities and strengthened the beginnings of the waning of the rural communities' reliance on state interventions to stimulate production that strengthens the local economy.

It weakened the linkage between the urban African population to their rural communal areas. The gains of political independence, which include the workers in urban centers overcoming the legacy of cheap labour that in the past had been made possible by migration of workers from rural subsistence production was now threatened by the structural adjustment programme because it caused unemployment. Many workers were now being retrenched. Up to that time, industry's prosperity among other factors, had been based on the exploitation of the cheap migrant workers most of whom came from the communal areas. This process was insidiously buttressing rural poverty.

While rural communities were subsidized by the meagre wages of some family members that were employed in urban centres, this made it possible for rural families to buy food, which they had always grown and to pay for health services and their children's education. This created a dependency on the government which was no longer providing these services free, on the grounds of austerity and national cost recovery measures. Among other costs, transport cost was hiked as a consequence of the increase in commodities like fuel. This worsened the impact of the structural adjustment programme on the rural communities who could not afford the increases in transport cost (Macgarry, 1998).

Prior to this period, production in the communal areas had always provided food and safety that served to subsidize families in urban areas who could not afford the cost of urban accommodation and health services any longer. These services were provided by government through the local city health system only since independence. Curtailing urban employment through retrenchment, resulting from

economic structural adjustment, severely weakened this urban rural linkage, further impoverishing rural communities. The new policy offered little opportunity to improve rural life. As a result of the land inequality issue remaining unresolved at this new stage of development, there was an urgency to find a solution to the problem. It is possible that rural communities had great potential to make inputs to develop meaningful strategies to achieve lasting answers to poverty in the communal areas. However, it would appear that policy makers continued to evade the rural communities' input into the development of strategies for poverty alleviation in preference for macro economic growth strategies.

Land Commission

Among other factors, the pressures resulting from the structural adjustment programmes outlined above led the government of Zimbabwe to set up a commission of inquiry into the appropriate agricultural land tenure systems in 1993. This was noticeably after the implementation of the structural adjustment programme. The commission was to seek the input of stakeholders and to consult the population in order to find solutions to economic issues related to the land and the poverty of the majority of the citizens in the communal areas.

This was done in recognition of several factors including,

1. The need to formulate a policy with long term solutions that redressed the historical inequality because of the finiteness of land as a resource, and therefore the need to utilise it efficiently for overall economic growth, employment creation and societal betterment,
2. To increase the role of stakeholders among the categories of land owners and users to efficiently utilise land for overall economic and social development,

3. To ensure that effective and appropriate land tenure systems were put in place and were enforced so as to ensure accessibility to the land and other natural resources on that land by the majority of people. (Government of Zimbabwe, Rukuni Commission, 1994)

The commissioners recognised the cumulative effect of the pressure and demand for access to resources and rights as determinant factors that made it imperative to call for change in the land tenure systems. However, the inquiry was confined to the narrow concerns of productivity maximisation, with marginal regard for the subsequent requirement for equitable access to the output of that productivity (Ibid.) This fact underlines two important issues that were highlighted in the conclusion of the commission's report referred to above.

First was the highly centralised level of governance and second was the bureaucratic top-down decision making system that tended to impose decisions at the grassroots levels during the planning and implementation of the development strategies aimed at alleviating poverty in Zimbabwe in the post independence period (Ibid.) These issues reflect the weakness of this system of governance and development strategy formulation in terms of effectiveness, impact, accountability and transparency.

The system denied the people at the grassroots in the communal areas the opportunity to be innovative (Ibid.) Concomitant to this are key arguments that call for the empowerment of people in the communal areas for local decision making, resource management and systematic training at community levels. This is seen to be an essential prerequisite to the broadening of capacities for both development and poverty reduction (Ibid.) The timing of the findings and recommendations of

the commission of inquiry coincided with the period when the pressure and hardships resulting from the impact of the economic structural adjustment were severe. That pressure contributed significantly to the land crisis in the period leading up to the election process in Zimbabwe in the year 2000.

Conclusion

After independence, Zimbabwe's development policies and strategies to improve the economic and social relations of its people in the communal areas was hamstrung by many major factors. The role of the state in controlling resources and distributing services, before gaining the capacity to control the way the resources are generated, was weakened. This minimized the state's capacity to achieve its goal to reduce the poverty gap. The overarching nature of the state's development policies exaggerated its own capacity to reduce poverty in the communal areas. Its policies exacerbated dependency on limited government resources without separating the levels of need between the gentry and the peasantry. This also weakened the initiative, resourcefulness and use of skills at the grassroots among the rural communities that had sustained the rural economy for a long time. In the process this created new pressure on the government from the sectors in the population that were socially and economically differentiated and were now calling for justice in the distribution of wealth promised at independence instead of the sharpening of skills to reduce poverty. The impact of a structural adjustment programme slowed the state down addressing issues of land equity that affect the majority of its citizens. When the state responded to poverty issues, it was now

focussing its attention on regional and global economic relations at the expense of addressing rural poverty and reacting to pressure as opposed to being proactive. Subsequently, the balance between the two forces forced the state to respond more and faster, to the hegemonic power of the market than to issues of poverty at the micro level in the communal areas. Therefore, the question remains about the difference in development strategies for economic growth that were put in place by the colonial regime and the strategies by the post independence regime which excluded participation by the grassroots as to which answers to the peoples' daily economic and social needs at the local micro level, if both do not alleviate poverty.

CHAPTER FOUR

THESIS CONCLUSION

At the beginning of this thesis, I set out to discover whether policies that were formulated and implemented by government regimes at the macro level, before and after independence, alleviated or worsened the level of poverty in Zimbabwe's communal areas any more than the strategies of the majority Africans at the micro level. I set out to explain if this was linked to the failure to create employment opportunities for the people in rural communal areas by the promotion of macroeconomic growth that was to be achieved in part through the agricultural industry. Agriculture is one of the mainstays of the Zimbabwean economy. Therefore the central nagging question was to determine whether future development strategies can continue to predominantly depend on the efficacy of the state and the benevolence of the market forces to successfully reduce poverty among the majority of the citizens that live in communal areas in Zimbabwe.

Answers to these questions add to the existing knowledge on the role and attention that the top-down macro economic development strategies in Zimbabwe's agriculturally based economy played in determining if too much attention was paid to economic growth at the expense of development at the micro level in the communal areas. I envisaged that the findings may serve to inform future policy makers about the validity of defining alternative development solutions and poverty alleviation strategies that include and involve the grassroots in the communal areas.

The study has strengthened the argument for promoting increased investment in strong human and social capital of the people in the communal areas as well as the capacities of urban workers in order for them to maintain links with the rural communities as a way of alleviating rural poverty. The study has also argued the need for strengthening ties between labour in the urban centres and survival strategies in the rural economy to reduce poverty. The assumption is that, formulating development initiatives that obviate the apparent pervasive impact of poverty that appears to be frequently threatening the dignity and capacity of the rural people as they seek alternative development strategies will reduce their level of poverty. Some answers to these issues have unfolded during the course of examining what others have said in development literature in the thesis.

Literature Review

Scholars have highlighted the role that the historical, political and economic forces played, which seem to reflect the cause and effect of development policies and strategies, that are linked to access to land leading to poverty in the rural communal areas in Zimbabwe. However, others have argued that the solution to alleviating the poverty of people in the communal areas in Zimbabwe may not only lie in ensuring that the poor in the communal areas have access to land for agricultural production, because agricultural production is also enmeshed in issues of food security, market control, and the injustice of paid labour. These issues are not controlled at the micro level in the communal areas.

The literature review also showed the need for a tacit agreement between the structures that drive economic growth and structures that help to meet the day to day needs of rural people in the communal areas. It also poignantly underlined the absence of the grassroots as the agency for change that may be involved in formulating poverty alleviation strategies in the communal areas in Zimbabwe. Some scholars challenge the outcome of participatory processes to develop successful policies and strategies as a panacea or to help improve the well being of rural communities. However, the analysis of the issues in the literature, recognized that if the rural people were excluded from the development process, agricultural production would become a development tool to the advantage of those that control land, power and resources to exploit the poor, especially in agricultural communities in the communal areas in Zimbabwe.

Another observation from the literature was that the historical colonial development policies and strategies failed to address land tenure issues by making large tracts of productive land in Zimbabwe inaccessible to rural people. As a result, women among others who form the majority of heads of most households in communal areas, were marginalised because they are not part of the structure that defines development. While the women in the communal areas survive by tilling family land where they are victims of poverty, they are isolated from the development machinery that purports to work towards poverty reduction.

Different contributors in the literature that I have reviewed argued that, changing the conditions of poverty entailed altering the development structures that go against the interest of those who benefit from these conditions and hinder the progress of those for whom development and poverty alleviation strategies are intended.

Colonial Policies

Chapter two outlined the trajectory of the successive development policies and strategies of colonial regimes in Zimbabwe. It highlighted the issues that impacted on the economic and social relations of households in the communal areas. It also explained broadly the relationship between the process of wealth accumulation and the nature and extent of the poverty of the people in communal areas, thus identifying how colonial development strategies formed the basis of the poverty and the nature of survival techniques of the people in the communal areas. Thus it showed that the policies and development strategies of the colonial regime in Zimbabwe disrupted the traditional economic and social well being of the people in the communal areas. It also showed that the severity of the colonial policies and their impact extend beyond independence in 1980. The key policies that addressed the issue of access to land included among others,

- The 1930 Land Apportionment Act, which dispossessed the people of their land as an asset and as a means of production,
- The 1951 Animal Husbandry Act, which curtailed the animal wealth of the people whose economy was based on agriculture,

- The African Purchase Areas Act, that created class differentiation between land owners and the landless among the African people,
- The Land Tenure Act that based the differentiation for land allocation on race and,
- The Land Amendment Act that sought to redress the racial differentiation as a basis for land distribution.

Other policies on agricultural production limited access to inputs, credit and markets but ensured that Africans' cheap labour from the communal areas was available on commercial farms. Such policies included the Maize Control Act, which ensured that agricultural production of this Zimbabwean staple food was grown for the market and that its production was limited to white owned commercial farms while in the communal areas it was confined to subsistence farming. The chapter argued that this process buttressed poverty of the people in the communal areas thus ensured their economic dependence on non-agricultural activities and threatening food security.

The stages in the legislation of the policies referred to above were major historical events that formed critical turning points in the shaping of the rural economy and the livelihood of the majority of the people that live in the communal areas in Zimbabwe. That history reflects how development policies and the strategies to achieve them, including the expropriation of land, were the root cause of the crisis situation of poverty that still obtains in the communal areas in Zimbabwe today. The chapter also showed that the process of dispossessing the rural communities of their land caused rural unemployment and under employment.

These conditions worsened dramatically over the years. The policies also created desperate economic conditions in the rural areas including the dependency of the rural economy on industries in towns, cities and mines, served by cheap labour. This set up new patterns of migration from communal areas to urban centres, thus further impoverishing and destabilizing the communal areas. Other factors that gave unfair advantage to commercial white settler farmers over farmers in the communal areas and contributed to the early impoverishment of the rural areas included the control and monopolization of the sale of maize on the same market by the Commercial Farmers. The colonial wage policies supported the agricultural industry, and were of advantage to the settler colonial farmers at the expense of the majority of the Africans in the communal areas. These factors encouraged migration by Africans from the communal areas to urban centers where they undersold their labour. Cattle always served as assets to rural households in the communal areas. These were forcibly reduced. These factors contributed to the basis upon which poverty in the rural communal areas was linked to the policies of settler colonialists in their effort to accumulate wealth.

The colonial policies validated the curtailing of the African people's access to land as a means of production, and limited the number cattle that they could own. This reduced their participation in economic activities to subsistence agriculture thus marginalising the majority of the people in the countryside. Therefore, Colonial policies could not alleviate poverty in the communal areas because they focused on amassing wealth for economic growth and improvement of the social and economic relations of those who participated and benefitted from the accumulation process. At

the same time the policies hindered the largest section of the population from participating in development and economic activities. However, it remains unexplored, if impact of development policies and strategies, would be different if their formulation were participatory. Currently, absence of policies resulting from participatory processes is conspicuous. The factors that were discussed above show that poverty in the communal areas left little or no recourse for the people in the communal areas to change the level of their poverty. It created a dangerous potential that threatens the political and economic stability of Zimbabwe today. The question is whether or not this can be reversed by a solution that involves the same rural people. It would appear that there is a spiral that was set in motion by settler colonialism. Policies that were formed as a result of the way economic growth is perceived to work, buttressed the hegemony of the economic order at the expense of development at the grassroots.

Post Independence Policies

In the third chapter I analysed the development policies and strategies of the post independence regime in Zimbabwe after 1980 to establish the role and impact of the policies of the regime on the economic and social relations of people in communal areas. I then compared this with the outcomes of implementing the policies of the pre independence period. The analysis was intended to discover why poverty has continued to be the outcome of the same policies and strategies that sought to reduce it after independence. The issue was whether or not the role played by the post colonial regime from the 1980s incorporated the social and

political structures in the communal areas, given the experience of that regime as a newly formed government. At that time, the government benefited from the dynamics of local participation during the struggle for political independence. I then also examined how that role played out in the context of global forces to change the poverty situation of the people in the communal areas.

The poverty of the people in the communal areas in Zimbabwe goes beyond the politicization of the issue. As a result, the enormity of the issue requires recognition of new challenges that seek to alleviate poverty before it devastates any further the majority of the population that is locked in the communal areas without any recourse. Their reliance on the sale of their labor is controlled by the market. Their traditional means of production, the land, was expropriated and is a politically contentious issue that has bedeviled the development process throughout the 1990s.

I concluded that, development policies and strategies to improve the economic and social relations of people in communal areas after independence, was hamstrung by many major factors. The role of the state in controlling resources and distributing services, before gaining the capacity to control the way the resources are generated, was weakened by it having to play the people's advocate by seeking to reduce poverty and responding to the market forces at the same time. This minimized the state's capacity to achieve its goal to reduce the poverty gap. The overarching nature of the state's development policies exaggerated its capacity to reduce poverty in the communal areas.

As a result, its policies exacerbated dependency on limited government resources without separating the levels of need between the gentry and the

peasantry. This also weakened the initiative, resourcefulness and use of skills at the grassroots among the rural communities that had sustained the rural economy for a long time before the regime came to power in 1980. In the mean time this created new pressure on the government from the sectors in the population that were socially and economically differentiated and were now calling for justice in the distribution of wealth that was the promise of independence. It also deflected the regime's attention from spending energy, time and resources sharpening its skills to reduce poverty.

The impact of a structural adjustment programme in this period slowed the state down in addressing issues of land equity that affected the majority of its citizens. At that time, when the state responded to poverty issues, it was concentrating its attention on its regional and global economic relations at the expense of addressing rural poverty. It was reacting to pressure as opposed to being proactive. Subsequently, the balance between the two forces forced the state to respond more and faster, to the hegemonic power of the market than to issues of poverty at the micro level in the communal areas. Therefore, the question about the difference in development strategies for economic growth that were put in place by the colonial regime and the strategies by the post independence regime, which excluded participation by the grassroots, as to which answered to the people's daily economic and social needs at the local micro level remained unanswered.

The challenges to reduce poverty in communal areas in Zimbabwe are linked to the might of financial capital and foreign aid. This link is intensified by the

way commercial agricultural production in Zimbabwe has been given priority over rural small scale agricultural production on the political agenda of both those that propose change in the way land distribution and agricultural productivity addresses poverty and those that are critical of that process. In the period leading to the June 2000 elections in Zimbabwe, there was an outcry against what is perceived to be a threat to commercial agricultural production in Zimbabwe.

It would appear that in reality the outcry was mainly in defence of the argument that the production of commercial agricultural exports, including but not exclusive to tobacco and cotton, generated the important and much needed foreign exchange. The argument is that, foreign exchange is perceived to be more valuable to the country's economy than small-scale rural agricultural production of food for people at the micro level in the communal areas. However, the threat to commercial agricultural production is equal to the threat to the states' balance of payment on the international market. Past experience has not shown how the income from exports in general has helped to alleviate rural poverty in Zimbabwe. The argument against the perpetuation of commercial agricultural production as a panacea to economic hardships of the poor people living in the communal areas before and after independence suggests an inability of the political regimes to free themselves from the hegemony of the forces that manage international capital to change the balance of economic power to the advantage of rural people.

This demonstrates the weakness of the development strategies of the regimes before and after independence in Zimbabwe to reduce poverty in communal

areas.

While it is a plausible argument to change the balance of economic power through the transfer of land ownership to those that are economically disadvantaged especially the rural people, evidence has shown that land ownership alone barely alleviates poverty at the micro level in the communal areas. Evidence has shown that access to land is tied to production capacities, control of the market, the cost of agricultural inputs and the acquisition of relevant and affordable technology to make agriculture viable at the micro level. The experience of the past performance of both the state and private enterprises in the agricultural industry in Zimbabwe has not sufficiently supported increasing capacities of rural people to achieve this objective. In the past these institutions have not demonstrated how their performance can generate sufficient jobs for the benefit of the people in rural communities. The wealth that these institutions and their approaches have generated has not alleviated poverty in the rural communal areas. The political pressure that was built up from this failure in the last twenty years of independence is the reason for the crisis of poverty. Of significance is that fertile land has continued to be inaccessible to the people in the communal areas where land is marginal, overpopulated and over-grazed. This has made it difficult to ease the pressure on it to make room for productive agriculture that feeds the people and alleviate their poverty. At the same time, investment in commercial agricultural production has excluded the population in rural communal areas.

This has thus ensured the continued marginalisation of rural communities. In this

connection, the rural people have remained outsiders, excluded from playing a meaningful role in their own economy. In the past their significant role in the economy was limited to providing unskilled migrant labour in commercial agriculture and industry. In both these industries, they have been overworked and underpaid, when they get jobs. In this sector, they were left to fight on different fora for the justification to earn fair wages. However, small minority groups that were exposed, including chiefs, elite black farmers, aspiring black investors and a limited few that have received formal advanced agricultural training, have benefitted, because they have access to financial resources or political power. Among them are those who have joined the class of people that have been co-opted to own land that is used as the means of production through which they generate wealth. However, this category of people faces stiff competition against established commercial enterprises on the market. Besides, this group of people joined the race for capital accumulation for their own gain and not for the benefit of the people in rural areas nor at least to alleviate rural poverty. At the same time, these processes weaken the capacity of the rural population to reduce their dependency on the state for social and other services. Given that the state had always not provided social services especially to the people in communal areas, its capacity to provide adequate services is often weakened by limited resources. Among other ways, the state generates resources through successful performance on the international trade market.

Its inability to control the economy or its incapacity to meet the basic needs of its citizens fermented discontent among the poor sections of the population. The

cost of technology, infrastructure and manpower that are required for agricultural production in rural communal areas to compete with production in the commercial agricultural sector is far beyond the capacity of the economy of the rural communal areas. Besides, it is uneconomical to invest international capital in agricultural production in rural communal areas because of the marginality of the land there. The contribution of the rural population to the country's GDP and GNP is insignificant. It is rarely made part of the computation of the indicators of well being. The indicators often measure economic progress, but they rarely reflect economic progress of people at the micro level. One of the dilemmas of foreign capital is that, those who provide the capital (mainly the western capitalist nations) only do so on their own terms in order to serve their political, economic, and social interest. Consequently, very little gain accrues to the developing country. The policies of the colonial and post independence regimes in Zimbabwe have maintained similar top down policies and strategies while poverty in the communal areas remains a development challenge.

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DEFINITION OF TERMS

Agricultural Productivity and Poverty

In Zimbabwe, large-scale commercial agriculture is said to ensure a high level of efficient and economical agricultural productivity (Zinyama, 1986). Those in support of the need for efficient production argue that commercial agricultural production offers great potential for producing sufficient food quantities and surpluses to save for lean times (Moyo, 1995). Furthermore, small-scale agricultural production is considered to be slow, labourious, time consuming, inefficient and not cost effective. These arguments militate against small-scale peasant production. The contrary argument is that, one sure way to guarantee agricultural production that reduces poverty within the context of Zimbabwe is to ensure that communal farmers have the capacity to participate in the country's agricultural production. This also highlights the contradiction between the full utilization of potentially good arable land and its actual utilization among the existing sub-sectors (Moyo, 1995). The large commercial sub-sector has not been as efficient as it has always been claimed to be. Besides, ensuring the participation of the people in communal areas in agricultural production would assuage their land hunger and increase the total national agricultural output as demonstrated in the resettlement schemes that were implemented in the period starting from 1980 in Zimbabwe. The agricultural programmes at that time involved a good sample of rural communities' involvement and showed great strides in providing equity and the attainment of the long-term objectives to transform the poverty situation in rural areas (Moyo, 1995). The ecological implications of commercial agricultural production affected the sustenance of the land and the production itself, because of the effect and cost of fertiliser chemicals on the health of the soil, the forests and the river systems. This implied the deterioration of the quality of good land without benefiting future generations of the people that live in the communal areas.

Commercial Farms/ Large Scale Commercial Farms

Commercial farms were initially carved out of the 50 percent of Zimbabwe's best agricultural land that was expropriated and sold or transferred as private property to settlers and soldiers of British or other European descent as compensation for their role in the British army or navy in the First and Second World Wars. These farms formed the beginnings of the early white population in Zimbabwe. The farms are large in size and require labour or mechanisation as well as intensive capital inputs to become productive. The early settler farmers benefited from the cheap labour of the African people which was forced away from agriculture into wage labour. This was made possible by legislation promulgated by the colonial powers at the time. The inequitable land division between African people in communal areas and the white settler commercial farmers on the commercial farms became legal through successive government

legislation to protect European farmers and the agricultural industry. The success of the commercial farms was also made possible by the settler farmers' access to credit, made available by collusion between government and financial institutions. These facilities benefited only the commercial farmers and deliberately excluded African farmers in marginal rural communal areas. Foreign companies and corporations also own some of the best commercial farms in the country.

Communal Areas

During the period leading up to the late 1930s, the settler colonial government first created communal areas in Zimbabwe. These areas were first referred to as Native Reserves and later as Tribal Trust Lands. The African people had their best fertile land expropriated by British settlers, without compensation, to make way for large scale farms for commercial agricultural production. The Africans were forcibly settled on poor marginal lands to reduce competition with the white farmers in the country's newly established agricultural industry. Usufructuary rights were allowed to individual peasant cultivators by chiefs or headmen. Over the years, with the increase in population and intensification of cash cropping, communal areas have become over-populated and over-grazed. In recent years, the ecological potential for the communal areas to be economical and sufficiently productive to meet the basic needs of the households of the population in these rural areas has been severely compromised. The areas were renamed communal areas at independence in 1980 (Cheater, 1984). The term communal lands (cf) is used interchangeably with communal areas as above.

Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP)

ESAP is an acronym commonly used to label Zimbabwe's economic measures aimed at structural adjustment, introduced in Zimbabwe in 1990, and implemented in 1991. It is similar to the structural adjustment packages introduced throughout Africa in response to a debt crisis and commonly includes a set of economic conditions aimed at reforming the national economy through the restraint of government spending, in the name of ensuring economic growth and debt repayment. The concept was developed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Growth with Equity

At independence in 1980, the Zimbabwe government strategically positioned itself to transform society by addressing the inequitable pattern of income distribution and extensive foreign ownership of the country's assets. At that stage, the government aimed at establishing socialist relations by ensuring state control of resources, gradually expanding to assert collective ownership while developing the people's skills and managerial ability.

Poverty

For the purposes of this thesis, I have adopted Macgarry's definition of poverty to refer to the curtailing of social relations that create conditions that reduce both the opportunity and the capacity to satisfy the minimum necessary consumption needs of a family of a given size and composition within a defined environment that is required to meet the basics of physical, health and social decency. These include food, clothing, accommodation, household goods, fuel, lighting, health and personal care, education and transport.

Poverty that measures the people's incapacity to provide the above basic needs based on income only is irrelevant in the context of this thesis because the communities in the communal areas under discussion have no cash income or if they do it is significant, irregular and unmeasurable in cash terms. Poverty indicators often hide the high levels of malnutrition and ill health due to lack of opportunity to grow food or earn cash to buy that food. They often do not reflect the lack of affordable medical services and relevant educational opportunity due to unaffordable high cost of education and educational materials. (Macgarry, 1999)

Property Rights

In the context of this thesis, rights to ownership pertain to the right to possess, use, manage and earn income from the land retaining the right to transfer or sell as well as pass these rights onto their heirs. (Putzel, 1992).

Resettlement Areas

This refers to land that was acquired by government in Zimbabwe to resettle people from communal areas after independence in 1980 to help resolve the land questions.

Settler Colonialism

This describes a specific form of colonialism in which colonizers settled permanently, introducing large numbers of European settlers into the newly acquired colony. This was accompanied by the establishment of governing authorities representing and governing on behalf of the colonizing countries. This is different from the more indirect form of colonialism seen in some other parts of Africa and elsewhere in which local administration was facilitated by the important role played by local chiefs.

Small Scale Commercial Farms (SSCF)

Small scale commercial farms were originally known as African Purchase

Areas when they were first created by the colonial government in 1925 to provide an opportunity for a small number of Africans to buy land under freehold title. In addition to having sufficient funds, such African farmers were required to attain a level of agricultural skills satisfactory to the colonial regime before they were conferred with a 'Master Farmer' status. These two conditions were prerequisite to Africans being made eligible to purchase middle size pieces of land for farms as private property. African Purchase lands were set aside next to communal lands in order to create a buffer between the land for Africans and land that was set aside for white to restrict Africans' potential for land ownership as well as to protect white agricultural producers from African competition or invasion. Before this period, Africans could not buy land set aside for commercial areas held by Europeans. Since independence in 1980, these middle size farms have been renamed Small Scale Commercial Farms. Farmers on these farms create a separate small class of people within the population that often confuses the spatial differentiation between commercial farms and communal areas.

Urban areas

This describes land within and around cities and towns that lie vacant for current and future development or are set aside as green belts for environmental purposes.