

**Zimbabwe's Fast Track Land Reform Programme and the Decline in  
National Food Production: Problems of implementation, policy and  
farming practices**

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## **Abstract**

### **Zimbabwe's Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) and the Decline in National Food Production: Problems of Implementation, Policy and Farming Practices**

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Since the FTLRP of 2000, Zimbabwe's agriculture has been in a quandary, food production has been precarious, and a growing number of Zimbabweans are exposed to chronic food insecurity. This study examines the implications of the FTLRP on Zimbabwe's national food production. The study focuses on the weaknesses in the FTLRP itself, disentangled from the myriad of other complexities surrounding the country. Through library-based research and case studies, the thesis argues that there were key weaknesses in the FTLRP that led to a precipitous fall in food production. Evidence shows that the FTLRP lacked a strong policy framework to oversee proper implementation of the land reform programme, resulting in a lack of planning, administration weaknesses, and failure of the government to ensure adequate post-settlement support and to provide secure farm tenure arrangements for the newly resettled farmers. This discouraged significant farm investments that could otherwise boost production.

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## Abbreviations

Agribank	Agricultural Bank of Zimbabwe
Agritex	Agricultural, Technical and Extension Services
BSAC	British South African Company
ESAP	Economic Structural Adjustment Programme
FEWZ NET	Famine Early Warning Systems Network
FTFs	Fast Track Farms
FTLR (P)	Fast Track Land Reform (Programme)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIEWZ	Global Information and Early Warning System on Food and Agriculture
GoZ	Government of Zimbabwe
Ha (ha)	Hectare (1ha=2.471 acres)
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LSCF	Large-Scale Commercial Farm
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UDI	Unilateral Declaration of Independence
UN	United Nations
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organisation
RBZ	Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SSCF	Small-Scale Commercial Farm
WFP	World Food Programme
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front
ZIMVAC	Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

Land reform has re-emerged on the front burner of the global development agenda for the Global South. This is evidenced by the 2008 World Development Report titled *Agriculture for Development*, in which land reform was identified as a key strategy of alleviating poverty, hunger and growing food insecurity in the less developed countries of the Global South, especially Sub-Saharan Africa (World Bank, 2008. p. 1). These countries share a common history of massive land dispossessions from the indigenous people by foreigners through colonisation. Given that at least 70% of this group of people living in the developing world reside in the rural communities, where agriculture is a way of life and central to both household and national food security, addressing the problem of unequal ownership and access to farming land is vital if all other global development goals are to be achieved (World Bank, 2008. p. 1). Despite the repeated global calls on the need for effective land reforms that improve control and access to land for the rural poor, there is no agreement on the best approach to take in order to assure food security. Within this context, this study seeks to examine Zimbabwe's sweeping Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) of 2000 and its role in the precipitous fall of national agricultural food production that followed.

In Zimbabwe, annual maize production is considered as the general benchmark to determine level of food security within the country. This is because maize constitutes the staple diet for the majority of Zimbabweans. Maize is also considered a strategic grain

crop that can potentially generate household and national income from cash sales (Jayne et al., 2006. p. 526-535). To be sufficiently food secure, Zimbabwe requires a minimum of 2.1 million tonnes of maize annually, including 1.7 million tonnes for human consumption (FAO, 2010). From the early 1990s to 2001, total maize production averaged 1.6 million tonnes, with fluctuations between periods of high or low rainfall (FAO, 2009, June 22). After 2002, national maize production averaged 1.04 million tonnes per year, with a steep sloping negative trend during this period through the 2014 harvest season. Production is projected to stay low in the near future (FAO, 2009, June 22). In 2013, a decade after the official end of the FTLRP, national maize harvest was estimated at merely 800,000 tonnes, a shortfall that exposed more than 2.2 million Zimbabweans to severe food insecurity (NewZimbabwe, 2014, March 4). More recently, the 2015 total national maize harvest was estimated at a mere 742, 226 tonnes, about 50% less than the previous year (following good rains received in that previous year), but about a third lower than the five-year average harvests (FAO - GIEWS, 2015, July 24).

To supplement the food deficit, Zimbabwe's government has had to increase food imports. However, due to a liquidity crisis, the government has still not been able to import enough grain to meet demand. Food aid from local and international donors has had to fill the gap (FEWZ NET, 2014, March. p. 19). Although neighbouring countries are also facing food production challenges, the case of Zimbabwe is especially concerning because production levels are much lower than the regional averages, even though, from the early 1980s through the mid-1990s the country was recognised as the regional breadbasket. Sharp production decline has been noticeable immediately after the



FTLRP was implemented. The question is, “what happened?” Apart from the other socio-economic and political complexities surrounding Zimbabwe during this period, how did the FTLRP contribute to the precipitous fall in national food production that has left millions of Zimbabweans unsure of where to get their next meal?

When the FTLRP was launched in 2000, and effectively ran until 2003 when President Robert Mugabe announced its official end, although it continued thereafter at a much slower pace, the overarching objective was to address a colonial injustice of skewed land distribution and ownership inherited at independence in 1980. This injustice favoured the former white European settlers at the expense of native black Zimbabweans. Having failed to implement an effective land reform programme after a series of land reforms over a period of almost two decades, the expectation was that the FTLRP would finally put an end to the nagging problem of unbalanced farmland distribution between native black Zimbabweans and white commercial farmers, mostly former European settlers. It was also expected that the FTLRP would both enhance food production and contribute to the overall development of the country as massive amounts of land were targeted and actually redistributed under this exercise. In just over two years, more than 135,000 black Zimbabwean families were parceled an estimated 6.4 million hectares of farm land by July 31<sup>st</sup> 2003 (Utete, 2003. p. 5). By 2010, more than 169,000 black Zimbabwean families were resettled on over 8.3 million hectares of farm land redistributed under the FTLRP, making it the most redistributive land reform programme in all of Zimbabwe’s history of land reforms (Hanlon et al., 2013. p. 83; Scoones et al., 2010. p. 3-4; Scoones et al., 2011. p. 970). Before the FTLRP, about 4,500 large-scale

commercial farmers (representing less than 1% of the national population), controlled over 51% of the country's agricultural land, most of it prime land and only about 2-300 large-scale commercial farmers remained after the FTLRP (Scoones et al., 2010. p. 3). In the aftermath, Zimbabwe's agricultural production has plummeted and a growing number of Zimbabweans have been exposed to both seasonal and chronic food insecurity. While the FTLRP was clearly redistributive, it also produced undesired production outcomes that have resulted in a national food insecurity crisis. An investigation into, and subsequent resolution of the food production crisis, is urgently required.

The problem of food insecurity is a key human and economic development issue, not only for Zimbabwe, but world over. The World Health and Organisation (WHO) define food security as to exist "when all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life" (WHO, 2015). Food security is also said to be a complex concept built on three pillars: Availability (production), access (affordability) and utilisation (nutrition value) (WHO, 2015). In 1948, food security was declared as a fundamental human right and the responsibility of every government to ensure that this right is protected for its citizens (UN-Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948). The main reason behind this declaration was that lack of food has far-reaching implications that are retrogressive to one's personal development and that of the whole country. Food deprivation will not only negatively affect people's health and productivity, but can also affect a person's confidence, hope, thinking, energy, mental development, intellect, growth, overall well-being, and may lead to premature deaths (Freedom from hunger, 2015). It can also hinder foetal development and result in stunted

growth for infants below the age of five years (UNICEF, 2014. p. 1). Economically, valuable time and energy that could otherwise be channelled into other productive activities is wasted in constant search for food, leaving less time for the poor to work and make economic gains. Countries with decreased food insecurity are said to not only experience progressive economic growth, but also realise better improvements in agricultural productivity as compared to those that experience challenges or stagnation in reducing hunger (FAO, 2006. p. 8).

At a global level, food insecurity is concentrated in the agro-based rural communities of the Global South, home to at least a third of the world's population (World Bank, 2008. p. 1). A number of factors contribute to this concentration of hunger in the Global South, particularly in African rural communities, where there are higher incidences of extreme poverty (WB, 2008. p. 5). These factors include: poor political decisions, poor policies, armed conflicts, natural disasters such as droughts and floods that affect agriculture, booming population, discrimination and powerlessness (Freedom from hunger, 2015). The positive correlation between poverty and food insecurity shown in the concentration of food insecurity in the most poor agro-based rural communities of the Global South suggest the need for increased investments in agriculture as a mainline towards reducing poverty and food insecurity (WB, 2008, p. 5). One way to achieve this is through effective land reforms that encourage productivity-driven increases in agricultural output, support improved farm income, boost overall growth of the broader economy, and break the poverty trap (FAO, 2006. p. 8).

Like in many other developing countries, the agricultural sector is central to Zimbabwe's national development trajectory. It is central to state politics, pivotal to the economy, and primarily responsible for national food security. The agricultural sector also provides a foundation of collective existence among the local people through rural-urban linkages. At least 15-18% of Zimbabwe's gross domestic product (GDP) and more than 40% of national export earnings are derived from the agricultural sector with unprocessed tobacco being the single highest foreign currency earner (Muir-Lereshe, 2006. p. 99). Zimbabwe's agricultural sector also caters for at least 30% of the formal national labour force and provides a source of livelihoods to over 70% of Zimbabweans through farming and related activities (Muir-Lereshe, 2006. p. 99). There are also direct and indirect inter connections between the agricultural sector and other economic sectors such as industry and service, through backward and forward linkages. As such, the performance of the agricultural sector has direct implications on the entire economy due to these interconnections. Also, within the agricultural sector are various subsectors that include forestry, food crop production (such as cereals, vegetables and small grains), cash crop production (such as tobacco, cotton, flowers), and livestock and animal husbandry section that is dominated by beef, dairy, pig and poultry production (Muir-Lereshe, 2006. p. 99). Given the significance of the agricultural sector in Zimbabwe, it is obvious that any alterations in this sector through the FTLRP would have major implications on the whole economy as well as the social and political landscape across the country.

By nature, land—the primary agricultural resource—is multidimensional, impacting political, economic, social and cultural values (Borras, 2007. p. 4). For this reason, the FTLRP was met by widespread controversy and heated debate in both local and international development circles. It has become one of the most contentious issues among development policy makers and practitioners, a case that cannot be ignored in the global land reform debate. Hence this study. Reflection on Zimbabwe’s experience makes for an immensely important contribution to the land-reform debate and literature, and provides crucial lessons to countries contemplating similar land reforms. Most of all, the Zimbabwean situation has critical implications for the development of the whole of Sub-Saharan Africa, where the land issue largely remains unresolved and has re-emerged as an important political issue threatening social, political and economic stability; and development in the Global South.

To understand a land reform programme, one needs to understand the theory in which the land reform is situated; and the social, political and economic context within which the land reform is implemented. As such, to understand the FTLRP and its influence on the national production outcomes, this study consists of four chapters that detail the theoretical framework of various approaches to land reform, the context within which the FTLRP is situated, the history behind its implementation and its outcomes in relation to national food production. Chapter 1 is the introduction. It reviews the theoretical debate surrounding land reform, the proposed land reform models they suggest, and the underlying concepts of agricultural food production. This, in turn, informs my thesis statement. Chapter 2 explores the history of Zimbabwe’s land-reform

programs and food production in order to provide context. Chapter 3 examines the actual events and processes of the FTLRP so as to underline its key strengths and weaknesses and how these influenced food production. Chapter 3 examines the actual events and processes of the FTLRP so as to underline its key strengths and weaknesses and how these influenced food production. Chapter 3 also provides a synopsis of the current status quo regarding agricultural production at national level, and a summary of research findings based on a critical balanced analysis of one national report and three case studies of landmark empirical research on the FTLRP situated in different agro-ecological regions across the country. Finally, chapter 4 provides the thesis conclusion.

## **Literature Review**

Globally, there is agreement on the need for land reforms in the interest of social justice, enhancing food security, and economic growth through improving agricultural production and productivity in the rural communities of the developing countries. Review of literature shows that there is, however, little agreement on the best approach to take in order to ensure an effective land reform that does not unbalance the lives of the people in the implementing country. Four contending approaches to land reform make up this land reform debate, based on whether the market, the state, peasants or the society should be key drivers of effective land reforms. The debate also engages different approaches to land-tenure systems and how they intersect with the various land-reform models for promoting investments in agriculture, food security, and overall economic development of the country carrying out the land reforms (Borras, 2008. p. 8). This section of literature review looks at all these issues and seeks to underline the production

outcomes influenced by the various approaches to land reform in order to understand the implications of Zimbabwe's FTLRP on national food production.

## **The Dynamics of Land Reform**

By definition, *land reform* refers to changing of land ownership and tenure, often through government initiated modifications of the laws and regulations or customs regarding land ownership - generally of agricultural land – to allow those who did not previously own land to do so (Putzel, 1992. p. 2-3). The term land reform is sometimes used interchangeably with *agrarian reform*, which has a similar meaning to land reform, but is in fact a more complex term that refers to the multi-dimensional and comprehensive package of land reform, involving more than just physical redistribution of land and land rights to also include transforming rural relations in an attempt to balance power relations (Putzel, 1992. p. 2). In essence, agrarian reform supports land reform through providing changes in agricultural production structures such as credit, efficient markets for inputs and outputs, technical support, mechanisation, and extension services that support profitable farming after land reform (Putzel, 1992. p. 3.). Land reform often involves breaking down larger privately owned farms into smaller farms, although there have also been some instances where land reforms involved taking away smaller farms and consolidating them to make larger farms for large-scale commercial production. This study is focused on land reform that involves breaking down large commercial farms into smaller farms in order to redistribute land ownership to small-scale peasant farmers or other land-hungry individuals. Land ownership is here defined as a “‘bundle of rights’ representing varying degrees of control over things: the right to

possess, use, manage, earn an income from, lend, transfer or sell, as well as to pass these rights on to the heirs” (Putzel, 1992. p. 3).

To be effective, a land reform must also be redistributive, that is to say it “must result in a net increase in poor peasants’ and rural workers’ power to control land resources with a corresponding decrease in the share of power of those who used to have such power over the same land resources and production process (Borras, 2007. p. 22). It must not only result in fair land distribution, but must also breakdown power structures that are based on land ownership in order to empower the beneficiaries to secure a place from where they can equally negotiate for their other needs on different platforms – financially, economically and politically (Borras, 2007. p. 4). As such, truly redistributive land reform is essentially redistribution of power (Borras, 2007. p. 22). Effective land reforms are also considered to be those in which affected parties receive very little or no compensation for their losses during the land reform exercise. In cases where compensation is received, it may be just a token amount, instead of full value of the land (Martin and Howell, 2001. p. 2). Borras (2007, p. 23) notes that the amount of compensation offered to displaced farmers helps to determine the degree to which a land reform is redistributive, rather than just the overly simplistic “success” or “failure” comparative divide (Borras, 2007. p. 23). He further notes that to meet these redistributive criteria and to be truly pro-poor, a land reform should also be expropriatory in nature, involving the state as the central agent to drive the land reform.

Historically, during the period of development and reconstruction immediately after the Second World War, and during the independence struggles and new post-



colonial policy discussions of third world countries leading up to the 1980s, land reforms were used by central governments to solidify and legitimise their political power against the elite (Borras, 2008. p. 3; Putzel, 1992. p. 2). Land reforms were also used to drive state agendas, to regulate peasant revolts, and to calm down politically induced social unrest that could result from both local and international forces, especially in the 1950s and 1960s (Ciamara, 2003. p. 5). For example, when the success stories of China's radical agrarian revolution of 1949 spread throughout the world, particularly to third-world countries that were already pushing the same land reform agenda, the propensity for land reforms in third-world countries intensified to a point where land reforms became inevitable (Putzel, 1992. p. 2).

There were also cases where land reforms were carried out for economic reasons. For example, reforms meant to improve people's access to land were supposed to enhance food production and farm productivity, which would translate into economic gains from marketing of the agricultural products. The Green Revolution of the 1960s and 1970s is a classic example of pursuing land reform for economic gain. Here the promotion of large scale commercial production was based on the assumption that larger farms provide ideal conditions for economic development through higher agricultural productivity supported by economies of scale and mechanisation, which eliminates labour costs and land-use inefficiencies, such that more food is produced to feed more people profitably (Dudley et al., 1992). The diversity of land reform types and objectives has been as varied as their individual outcomes, despite often failing to produce expected

results. In the following section, the four main competing approaches land reforms will be discussed in more detail, showing how they influence various production outcomes.

## **Competing Approaches to Land Reform**

### **The State-Led Approach (SLA)**

Under the state-led approach to land reform, the state is the central authority that directs and governs the land-reform processes, usually by changing the law and expropriating land from the powerful elite, usually large-scale farmers, for the benefit of mostly poor peasants and other land-hungry potential beneficiaries (Ciamara, 2003). This approach is rooted in the theory of social capital, which recognizes traditional and communal land-tenure systems as the most efficient systems of production, and that increased productivity can be achieved both individually and collectively (Obeng-Odoom, 2012). Main proponents of this approach to the land reform are the pro-poor development scholars and practitioners, as well as pro-poor peasant movements such as the La Via Campesina— a large powerful international peasant movement established in 1993, and staunch supporter of food sovereignty.

Although market actors are generally shunned in this approach, a selected few market players can be engaged to provide support, depending on their level of influence on the state (Borras, 2007. p. 22). A state-led land reform programme is therefore usually a high-cost exercise that requires strong political will on the part of the government responsible for implementing such land reforms (Borras, 2007. p. 22). Because of their confiscatory nature, state-led land reforms can be “radical” or protracted, but generally result in significant land redistribution, along with heightened political sensitivity and

legal contentiousness among affected parties (Borras, 2008. p. 57). However, when the state is the central driver, it can easily make changes to the law to avoid unending land disputes or related legal expenses, as was the case with Zimbabwe's government.

By nature, state-led land reforms provide for little or no compensation for losses incurred by former land holders and other affected parties, making this approach unpopular with those who promote private property as the foundation of economic development, as well as prone to sabotage and policy failure due to resistance by "the landlords" (Borras, 2008. p. 57). In selected cases where compensation is provided, it is typically extended in the form of "interest-bearing bonds spread over several years, with cash payments hardly ever exceeding 20 percent of the gazette land value" (Ciamara, 2003. p. 4). On the other hand, beneficiaries obtain the land at absolute zero cost or are given a longer time to pay back to the government a small charge that has "sympathetic interest rates" and, "theoretically," the newly settled small farmers are provided with technical support, financial help and agricultural extension support services (Ciamara, 2003. p. 4).

The state-led approach to land reform is considered "pro-poor," because it is progressive and redistributive in that it effectively breaks down power structures connected to land holding, which are potential barriers to rural development and social justice (Rosset, 2006). This approach recognizes land as not only an economic resource, but as multidimensional because for many people in developing countries, land also has social, political, cultural and spiritual value attached to it (Borras, 2008. p. 8). As such, land redistribution is intended as a means of improving the economy, but also a means

for addressing underlying social and political processes that encourage inequality and social injustice that can best be corrected by the state. The multidimensional nature of land also suggests that for effective land reform to occur strong state intervention is required since some objectives, such as “empowerment,” “social justice” and “purposive change,” cannot be reduced to monetary terms. With state intervention, using expropriatory tactics to take away land from more powerful large-scale producers to hand it over to the less powerful small-scale producers, the process can sometimes be radical, as in Zimbabwe’s case. There are also occasions, however, where state-led land reforms are less dramatic, for example, when implemented for purposes of improving land administration, such as in the case of Ghana’s Land Administration Project (LAP) (Okang, 2015, August 20). Also, because of the multidimensional nature of land - cutting across economic, social, political, cultural and spiritual dimensions - land reforms can be a source of intense ideological debate, political tension, and conflict both domestically and internationally, even when implemented at a small scale (Lund, 2008).

The state-led approach to land reform is shared by the radical agrarian populist (RAP) paradigm, which argues that poverty is a relational problem whose solutions require restructuring of social relations through transformative policies and political actions by society and state (McKay, 2011. p. 30). In the absence of state-led land reform, as in the case of market-based land reforms, the risk of land being taken back by the wealthy elite, who can flex their economic, social and political muscle, might push the poor out of the land market. This would be antithetical to the whole land reform agenda. The radical agrarian populist paradigm also promotes smaller-sized family farms

as opposed to larger commercial farms, sometimes dominated by corporations as supported by the World Trade Organisation (WTO), arguing that these are a threat to peasantry (Cousins and Scoones, 2010. p. 44).

The RAP also argues that a food regime dominated by agribusinesses and corporations is not only exploitative to peasantry, but also detrimental to the environment by using manufactured chemicals and fertilizers, whereas the “peasant way is much more ecologically sustainable” (McKay, 2011. p. 36). Under the RAP, an effective and viable land reform must promote “broad-based and inclusive local, regional and national economic development that benefits the majority of the population, as well as ecologically sustainable methods of farming” (IPC, 2006 in Cousins and Scoones, 2010. p. 46). While land reforms should be “by the people, for the people,” the RAP calls for strong state support in expropriating land from large landowners for the benefit of peasants in the interest of social justice, rural development, and economic growth.

State-led land reforms are often associated with seeking and securing political legitimacy on the part of the government involved. For example, during the wave of independence that swept through most of Africa in the 1960s, land reforms were expected to address economic and social injustice problems, through improved access to land for the local people, which also doubled as proof of legitimacy of the new incoming governments after independence (Ciamara, 2003). This suggests that state-led land reforms can be politically “abused” to buttress an unpopular government, which may be found, for one reason or the other, not to be performing to the expectations of the local people. This was a common argument in the Zimbabwe’s FTLR debate.

In a state-led land reform programme, post-settlement support structures are needed to ensure productive use of the redistributed land. Such support includes, for example, extension services, inputs, credit and subsidized loans. However, such support is usually not forthcoming or as extensive as it should be, resulting in economic stagnation and poverty (Borras, 2008. p. 57). On the other hand, state support may to some extent encourage a dependency syndrome by the land-reform beneficiaries, who may develop a mentality that the state should continuously provide for them in their farming activities. Sustainable development advocates warn that these farmers are supposed to wean themselves from state support and make productive and profitable farming activities independent of the state. The dependency syndrome may result in wastage of state resources through inefficient distributions of the state resources and persistently inefficient farming practices of the beneficiaries of state support. Ultimately, the success or failure of land reforms have been fundamentally shaped by historical periods of implementation and their differing targeted objectives imbedded within specific political, economic or social frameworks (Pica, 2003).

### **The Market-Led Approach (MLA)**

The market-led approach to land reform gained traction in the early 1990s in a neoliberal reaction to the perceived failures of the state-led approaches to development (Borras et al., 2008). The reality in many agrarian settings today is that “market-led” means dominated by market actors, landlords, merchants or transnational corporations (Borras et al., 2007. p. 22). Under the MLA, land transactions are negotiated on a market basis under the principle of “willing buyer, willing seller.” Coercion or expropriation is

highly discouraged. In this case, the role of the state is limited to that of administration, and providing grants and loans to land beneficiaries without any undue influence on the land transactions. The market approach to land reform provides for unlimited farm sizes, and encourages privatization or formalization of the allocated land (Borras et al., 2008). As such, in order to be a beneficiary here, one needs to fit into an established eligibility criteria. This criterion normally requires one to present a development plan for the land allocation, evidence of farming experience and expertise, and proof of financial resources to tackle the costs involved in purchasing and running the farm enterprise in a productive and profitable way (Ciamara, 2003).

The MLA receives much support and funding opportunities from the IMF, WB, the American government, the EU and several NGOs that believe this approach is most ideal for a land redistribution programme that safeguards sustainable rural development, viable farm operations, and higher productivity gains that support food security and national economic growth (Logan, 2007. p. 212). Proponents of the market approach to land reform make several claims for its utility. First, they claim that there is fairness in land purchases since the seller is expected to receive full cash compensation and real market value of the property, thus there is less resistance from the landlords (Deininger, 1999). Secondly, the voluntary nature of the transactions is believed to make this approach more efficient and effective because of significant involvement of various parties from both the private and the public sector, which helps to reduce bureaucracy that could otherwise lead to corruption, patronage and cumbersome processes in the land transfers (Deininger, 1999).

Proponents of the MLA argue that it guarantees production efficiency on the farms because private investors are involved in financially assisting the beneficiaries. Therefore, the investors would have most likely done due diligence and vetted the potential beneficiaries for viable production practices prior to any loan advancement (Deininger, 1999). In addition, they argue that most of all, formalization or privatization of land under the MLA safeguards tenure security, through transferable title deeds that allow the landed property to be converted into active capital that can generate more funds when used as collateral in various financial institutions such as commercial banks. This would subsequently boost the farmer's interests to make safe physical and human capital investments on that land, which has direct positive effects on farm production.

Despite the positives of the market approach to land reform, a number of countries that undertook market-based land reforms produced some results that led to criticism of the approach, particularly from the pro-poor land campaign groups who question its feasibility. These pro-poor land movements argue that the MLA is only feasible in a few restricted areas that have surplus land, and to a certain extent, areas that have developed infrastructure and perfect market conditions (Rosset, 2006). They also vociferously challenge the ability of MLA to dismantle the power structures involved in land ownership, and call for a more interventionist approach to land reform, where the government is more involved (Rosset, 2006). This position is also based on the critique that the MLA views land as simply a monetary commodity and fails to recognize the multi-dimensional nature of land (Borras, et al., 2007. p. 391).



A growing body of scholars and texts challenging market-led approaches to land reform has thus emerged. Their evaluations are based on concerns that the approach favors a narrow range of the elite, has a high level of discretion on the part of current land owners, is oriented towards large-scale commercial production, and that land transfers are extremely slow (Lahiff et al., 2011). They also claim that market-based land reform is unable to shift land to the poor as the price of land often exceeds that of their agricultural production value (Binswanger, 1987). In some cases, only infertile and agriculturally poor land may be put on the market while landlords retain the best lands for themselves. “Even in perfect market environments the resource poor cannot access the land because of the fundamental financing problem of the poor” (Binswanger, 1987).

Another challenge with the MLA is the possibility sellers might engage in obstructionist strategies such as unreasonable land-price increases in order to make the land inaccessible to the poor and to discourage interested parties from buying the land. As a result, only somewhat well-to-do landowners are the net purchasers of land and the rather less well-to-do landholders are net suppliers of land. To afford the pieces of land and also be able to pay back loans for land purchases together with accrued charges, the poor are forced to cut back on their already menial basic necessities such as tuition fees, food, health costs, or capital for next season’s farming operations. In the process, this creates a vicious cycle of poverty and food insecurity.

The MLA model of land reform follows the same guiding principle as that of the Green Revolution of the 1970s (Dudley et al., 1992. p. 2). The Green Revolution was a significant period in the history of agriculture and land reforms. Development experts of

that era believed that the Green Revolution would solve the famine equation, where the challenge of exponential population growth in the Global South against a poor agricultural production base would soon lead to famine and other major global problems in the future (Dudley et al., 1992. p. 2). The fear was that land is a limited resource; hence, unchecked population growth would increasingly put pressure on that resource. Therefore there was an urgent need for a technological fix to boost food production through use of early-maturing high-yield crop varieties, sophisticated agro-chemicals such as soluble fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides; heavy machinery, and equipment on large tracts of land (Dudley et al., 1992. p. 2). As such, large-scale mechanized farms and market-oriented land reform approaches were promoted in a conventional attempt to technologically curb a steadily rising world agricultural food shortage, malnutrition, hunger, and famine (Dudley et al., 1992. p. 2). Increasing land productivity instead of increasing labour productivity was seen as a more reasonable initial step towards addressing production relations and economic benefits (Dudley et al., 1992. p. 2).

However, the Green Revolution quickly recorded success in only a few Asian countries, and had drastic effects on the poor farmers in most parts of the developing world, because it overlooked a number of issues that led to unexpected outcomes, which eventually forced complete abandonment of the program. It overlooked wider political, environmental, social and health implications and promoted a net land holding system that favoured the elite over the poor. Due to unsustainable competition from larger scale well-to-do farmers who benefited from the economies of scale as well as better access to expensive technology, the majority of the peasants who are smaller farmers were pushed

out of their land and farming businesses, creating a wide inequality gap (Whitemore, 1981). Meanwhile, wealthier farmers concentrated on producing cash crops for income, leading to even higher levels of food insecurity and political instability as the poor smaller-scale farmers were pushed out of production, causing them to be exposed to problems of food insecurity and to sink deeper into poverty.

The high hopes accompanying the Green Revolution and the hunger equation were soon dashed and a fresh look into the food security problems and possible solutions was undertaken. Population increase and insufficient food supply from agricultural production were not the only explanations for food insecurity. Food security was also explained by the ability of people to have food entitlement through different avenues such as cultivating the food themselves, earning an income to buy the food or through trading, bartering, food aid or food borrowing (Dudley et al., 1992. p. 9-10). The failures of the Green Revolution suggest the importance of land reforms that supports small-scale farm production as the most ideal way boost food security. Such production allows more people to have land to cultivate for their own needs, meaning they won't have to worry so much about buying food elsewhere.

### **The Peasant-Led Approach (PLA)**

The peasant-led approach to land reforms emerged as an alternative to the market-led and state-led approaches following their perceived failures to produce effective land reform. This approach assumes that the “state is too captive to social elite interests, while market forces are basically dominated by elite interests, thus the only way to achieve effective pro-poor land reforms is for peasants and their organizations to

themselves take the initiative to implement the land reform” (Borras et al., 2007. p. 22). Although largely controlled by the peasants and peasant movements, the peasant-led approach shares the same perspectives with the state-led approach. It is mainly aimed at providing secure access and control over productive landed assets to the landless and near landless within a framework of social justice through reforming unequal, inefficient and unjust agrarian structures (Borras et al., 2007. p. 23).

The peasant-led approach to land reform is particularly advocated by international peasant movements like the Movimentos dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra (MST, or Landless Rural Workers’ Movement) in Brazil, La Via Campesina peasant movement, and a number of development scholars like Henry Veltmeyer (1997, 2005) and James Petras (1997, 1998). These groups strongly oppose neoliberal approaches to land reform and agricultural development based on privatization, liberalized trade, and commodification of natural resources such as land. Instead, their ideological and political stance call for small family-sized farms in the interest of food sovereignty, which prioritizes local production of food for local consumption, opposes dumping practices and uses local knowledge for sustainable food production (IPC, 2010).

### **State-Society Driven Approach**

Unlike in the other land reform policy themes, where distinct roles of individual actors are analyzed (i.e the state, the market, the society, and the peasant movements), the state-society driven policy focuses on the interaction between the state and the society (Borras et al., 2007. p. 24). This policy-making and implementation process is founded on recognition of an “interactive” state-society linkage that “determine the character,

content, pace and direction of land reform policy” (Borras et al., 2007. p. 24). This view emphasizes the class aspect of society and advocates for secure access to land for the landless and the near-landless rural poor within a framework of social justice. State-society driven land reform policy has three core features; it is “peasants/beneficiaries-led’, ‘state-supported’, and ‘economic productivity enhancing” (Borras, 2007. p. 24). The policy argues for an agrarian transformation “from below,” but also values the ideas of state actors “from above” (ibid.).

The mutual relationship between the state and the peasants/beneficiaries is thus key to the success of pro-poor land reform under this approach. This relationship is mostly based on the different roles that the players undertake, where the state has autonomy in policy formation and in the ability to make the people in the society do what the state wants them to do through the use of state agencies (Migdal, 1988 in Fox, 1993. p. 12). “During the conflict-ridden process of land reform implementation, the policy is transformed by politics, and vice-versa, as the policy is put in the crucible of state-society relations where changes in the balance of power within the state dynamically interact with the shifting alignments of forces in society” (Borras, 2001. p. 567). As such, the dynamic interaction of the state-society should be viewed from both sides of the two different actors, cognizant of the fact that by nature, the relationship is unstable and constantly changes with time.

Although not in favor of the market taking an active role in the land reform, the state-society driven approach to land reform does not undermine the significance of the market, but views it as an instrument that enables the re-concentration of resources,

which leads to widening of the inequality gap, hence calls for the state to control the markets to ensure an effective and pro-poor agrarian reform (Borrass Jr et al., 2007. p. 24). Considering that Zimbabwe's Fast Track Land reform programme was initiated from below, by the former war veterans with mobilized support from the rural masses, and then later formalized and fully supported by the government, the experience resembles a state-society driven approach to land reform.

### **Land Tenure Systems**

Secure land tenure is one of the fundamental characteristics of a successful land reform programme. There are various land tenure arrangements, based on different land tenure systems, where land tenure systems are defined as an establishment of a set of rules that legally or customarily connects individuals or groups of people to landed property (FAO, 2002. p. 7). This set of rules, which make up land tenure systems, govern land ownership, utilization, management, responsibilities, obligations, and limitations pertaining to land use or ownership (FAO, 2002. p. 7). Simply put, land tenure answers the question of who has access to what land, for how long, and under what circumstances (ibid.). To be considered "secure" the landowner must have assured protection against expropriation, forced eviction, violation or infringement of property rights and guaranteed exclusive control, use and transfer rights over that piece of land (ibid.).

Land tenure systems in the developing countries are drawn from two main theoretical backgrounds: the social capital theory of land tenure systems and the theory of individual land rights (individualism, privatization) (Obeng-Odoom, 2012. p. 162). The social capital theory is informed by communitarianism, a philosophy rooted in the

African traditional land tenure system (communal, collectives, or family), which emphasizes the connection between the community and an individual person. “Although the community might be a family unit, communitarianism usually is understood, in the wider, philosophical sense, as a collection of interactions, among a community of people in a given place (geographical location), or among a community who share an interest or who share a history: with a smaller degree of development being placed on individualism (Obeng-Odoom, 2012). Communitarianism thus believes that an individual’s social identity and personality is shaped more by a community rather than by that individual alone (Avineri, S. and de-Shalit, A, 1992).

The communitarian argument promotes traditional land tenure systems based on the concept of social capital, which James Coleman (1988) refers to as the advantages an individual or group accrues through their social networks (for example clansmen, friends, or family members), usually based on opportunities, commitments and dependency among a group of people (pp. 105-106). Coleman (1988) notes that social capital is usually governed by a set of rules, expectations, obligations and trust among a group of people sanctioned by norms and taboos which tie these groups of people together (p. 105-106). This arrangement carries a number of advantages with it. For example, it provides cost effective quick dissemination of information, which could otherwise be difficult particularly in remote rural communities, allows sharing of ideas, and ready availability of social or economic support networks that are vital for agricultural productivity, which lead to improvements within those communities (Coleman, 1988).

In closed networks among these groups, individualism and selfishness is highly discouraged, instead the rules and taboos that connect these people together encourage actions and behaviors that bond networks of people together for a common good (Coleman, 1988). Where a group member within the network is affected by the actions of another, the rest of the other network members can intervene to sanction or prohibit the member causing problems. This particularly works well in the family network where the social capital is even stronger than in other similar networks of friends or clansmen. Many development practitioners, anthropologists and sociologists argue that a healthy network of trust within societies and communities is fundamental for strengthening economies in the developing world. As such, the key to economic development for economically weak countries, such as those in Africa, is to ensure a deepening of networks of trust in the society (Tomer, 2001. p. 1 051).

When applied to land tenure, the communitarian social capital theory's basic argument is that traditional land tenure based on customary norms provides the most effective and most secure land tenure in the developing world, particularly in Africa. It argues that state directed policies ignore long standing traditional values, while individualised/privatised systems "marginalize rather than empower" the local land owners, hence both approaches have been common causes of insecure tenure and are counterproductive to African rural farming communities (Obeng-Odoom, 2012. p. 162). Katz (2000) also supports this view and notes that "respect for customary law and viable local institutions, based on sustained interactions among resource users over time, can enforce respect for private property boundaries and regulate exploitation of common



property resources [hence] the existence of social capital can substitute for well-defined property rights” (p. 115).

On the other hand, neoclassical economic theory of individual land rights is based on the mainstream economics of privatization and individualism. Economist scholars like Hernando De Soto (2000), a strong advocate of capitalism, and influential neoliberal global financial institutions like the WB and IMF, strongly align to this view. The argument here is that privatized land rights stimulate vital farm investments that can significantly boost agriculture. This is because with formal title deeds under privatized arrangements, the landowner feels more secure and therefore more confident to make technical, mechanical and human investments without any fear of losses that may result due to tenure insecurity. In addition, title deeds can be used as collateral to access credit and loans to further finance farm activities (De Soto, 2000). The WB stresses that individual land rights reduce land-ownership conflicts and allows peaceful land-ownership transitions that also facilitate development in other agriculturally linked economic sectors (WB, 2003). The WB also argues that decentralizing land administration and management rationalizes land policies and helps streamline operational practices to reduce excess public sector management costs, puts into check excess land transaction costs, and promotes transparency in the administration and management of both public and private land for growth and development (WB, 2003 in Obeng-Odoom, 2012. p. 163).

Unlike the communitarian view, the neoclassical economic theory of individual land rights believes that “all social phenomena can best be construed and explained in

individual, rather than collective and structural, terms” (Obeng-Odoom, 2012. p. 162). It opposes communal land ownership systems because it believes that there is limited individual interest in communally owned landed property, which promotes irresponsible actions that harm the common good of the community, a phenomenon that is popularly referred to as “the tragedy of the commons” (The Land Magazine, 2009). The argument is that in general, people are motivated by self-interest and are generally not motivated to engage in effective and productive practices on communally owned property. As such, they are prone to engage in unproductive and irresponsible land use tendencies.

Finally, there is, however, a downside to the private/individual land tenure arrangements. For example, while title deeds allow access to credit and farming loans, in the event of a default, that landed property can be forfeited, leaving the farmer and his family homeless and without the basic productive capital resource in the form of land. Relatives and farm workers who also depend on that land for livelihood and jobs will equally lose out. Also, in the event of difficulties, like sickness or other urgent family needs or an unexpected turn of events that require large sums of money, there is the danger that the farmer may resort to selling land, since he holds title deeds. This action would effectively re-concentrate the land and potentially reverse the land reform policy. For this reason, a number of African countries maintain land as state property, to ensure that the state remains in control of the land to protect the poor and encouraging them to hold on to their land at whatever cost for maximum rural development.

## **The Inverse Farm Size–Productivity Relationship**

One of the main economic arguments in favour of land reform that breaks down larger farms into smaller farms is based on the theory of inverse relationship between farm size (amount of land cultivated by the farmer) and productivity (amount of output obtained by a farmer per unit of land/yield). The theory suggests that smaller-sized farms have higher productivity compared to larger farms (Masterson, 2007. p. 2). The theory dates back to the 1950s after it was observed that in India, both rice and wheat farm production showed a negative relationship between yield and farm size, and that labour input decreased as farm size increased, a relationship that was most noted between small peasant farms and large capitalist farms (Sen, 1966. p. 441). Peasant farms are those that employ more than 50% of productive labour from family labour, while capitalist farms mostly engage paid labour from outside the family circle (Masterson, 2007. p. 4). There are, however, cases where the theory of inverse farm size-productivity relationship showed irregularities in research done in other different parts of the country as well as in wide spread research in other developing countries across the globe. These empirical irregularities have been a source of major debate among development economists, trying to explain the different factors at play in the observed theory irregularities elsewhere. Various researchers concluded that in reality, the differences in the intensity of various factors of production influenced the strength of the inverse relationship. One of the commonly agreed factors is labour. For example, Ajit Kumar Ghose (1979) concluded that small farms with abundant use of labour, less advanced technologies and primitive production practices such as use of farmyard manure for fertilizers were more efficient

than larger farms. However, Ghose (1979) also proposed that this relationship would be completely diluted with increased use of advanced farming technology.

Another typical study, by Byiringiro and Reardon (1996), found that small farms in Rwanda produced three times more yield using four times more labour per unit area compared to larger farms, and concluded that small farms had greater marginal productivity of land. This differentiated use of labour—particularly farm labour—is often attributed to imperfect labour markets that make it difficult to obtain off-farm employment. Sen (1966) notes that *ceteris paribus*, smaller farming households simply had higher labour per hectare ratio compared to larger farms in a high unemployment market environment, typical of the underdeveloped countries, where the labour market is unable to absorb surplus labour, thereby making smaller family farms more efficient and able to produce higher yields. The labour market theory has however been criticised as an inadequate explanation by scholars like Dyer (1996) and Feder (1985) (in Masterson, 2007. p. 5), who argue that family farms both hire and sell labour (though not in a perfectly substitute way), hence family labour is an unlikely explanation for increased efficiency of farm sizes between 6 and 20 hectares.

The second explanation to the inverse farm size-productivity relationship is based on omitted variables in factors of production. For example, studies on this relationship are often not based on precise analyses of soil quality, such as nutrients (nitrogen, potassium) or pH (Bellemare, 2012). In general, however, farmers tend to first select their best arable lands for cultivation, and will expand production into relatively lower quality land, so it follows that larger farms will likely have lower quality soils on

average, in the end appearing less productive compared to smaller farms (Bellemare, 2012). Other omitted variables may also include cropping patterns, differences in agro-ecological zones, and management Bellemare (2012) also argues that smaller farms tend to concentrate on production of high value crops allocated to bigger portions of the farm area and work harder to improve their soils through conservative and effective soil fertilization, while larger farms are more oriented towards extensive crop production (including low value crops), livestock production, forestry, and crop rotation, which sometimes leaves land fallow and unproductive in some years, resulting in production inefficiencies.

In addition, Adesina et al (1994) studied farms in Northern Cote d'Ivoire and found that differential access to inputs such as credit and technology resulted in larger rice farms being more efficient than smaller sized farms. It was noted that this was mostly because of public policy that favoured large farms compared to small farms to access capital, inputs and research information. Also, in less developed countries, which are mostly characterised by undeveloped financial institutions, smaller farmers sometimes resort to local money lenders who charge high interest rates on loans, while the large scale producers have better access to "institutional" credit, which charge lower interest rates (Cornia, 1985). Subsequently, this weakens the inverse relationship.

Finally, measurement error of land size holdings, particularly when that error is in negative correlation with the actual farm size may be another explanation of the empirical irregularity of the inverse relationship (Bellemare, 2012). For example, in the developing countries, where size of land owned is considered a symbol of power and

prestige, people may tend to overstate their land size and this could lead to false measurements of productivity on that land and an irregular inverse relationship of land size and productivity. Other arguments on the irregularity of the inverse relationship put forward include diminishing returns to scale of production, technical efficiency, availability of intermediary inputs such as seed, fertilizers as well as differential access to both input markets and output markets between small scale producers and large scale producers. Although the inverse relationship theoretically holds under a perfect market conditions and control of various other said factors; it is clear that in practice, the relationship may not always hold.

### **Thesis Statement**

The thesis of this study is that the FTLRP clearly successfully redistributed land for the benefit of native African Zimbabweans, but this came along with drastic effects on national food production because of a number of key weaknesses in the programme. First, the FTLRP did not have a strong policy framework to oversee the implementation of the land reform programme. This resulted in lack of planning, problems of administration and failure of the government to adequately provide critical post-settlement support for farmers on the newly acquired farms to ensure sustainable food production that preserves national food security. The government also failed to provide secure land tenure arrangements for the newly resettled farmers, causing a lot of anxiety for the farmers, numerous land disputes that disrupted production, and discouraged vital farm investments necessary to boost production on the newly acquired farms. Unclear and unenforced agricultural policies were also a key constraint on production for the new

farmers as well as severe shortages of key agricultural inputs such as seed, fertilizers and chemicals on the local market. The net result was a precipitous fall in food production.

Literature shows that a state-led land reform model, in this case resembled by the FTLRP, is a high cost exercise that requires adequate planning, substantive funding, and a number of other elements, like adequate state-initiated post settlement agricultural support, and efficient administration to ensure successful implementation. Literature also shows that a state-led land reform is at risk of political abuse by the state, and sabotage by aggrieved parties, such as the former land owners, who may also react to expropriation of their farming land in ways that compromise farm production and productivity for the new land beneficiaries. This is especially the case in a redistributive land reform, like the FTLRP, where very little or no compensation is offered, and laws are in fact changed to legitimize processes that seem unfair to the aggrieved parties. These were issues that were directly linked to some of the major problems in the FTLRP, suggesting how the FTLRP led to a fall in national agricultural production from which farmers have struggled to recover over a decade later.

Weak administration and implementation processes were reflected in the chaotic farm invasions and other disruptive activities also played a major role on the negative production outcomes. In the midst of the chaos, productive farms were abandoned, while important skills and expertise drained out as affected experienced former farm owners and workers evacuated without passing on their expertise to the incoming new farmers. Many new farmers thus had land, but were not fully equipped to produce to levels of the previous commercial farmers leading to major production inefficiencies. There was also

the problem of insecure land tenure, which as shown in the literature review, has serious repercussions on productive farm investments due to increased farmer's uncertainty. However, also shown in the literature on land tenure systems, full secure title has its own set of problems, hence the tenure problem remains a dilemma.

The FTLRP seemed to be a sudden decision made by the government to accelerate the long stalled land reform programme on the backdrop of an underperforming economy and a squeezed financial resource base in the context of strong high-level political tensions. This raised questions about the legitimacy of the accelerated land reforms in the name of development, rather than simply promoting it for political reasons, particularly by the international community and other NGOs that could otherwise support the land reform programme to ensure its success. Although the FTLRP had many of the characteristics of a redistributive land reform program, lack of international support, as well as other unforeseen challenges also contributed to long lasting production problems on not only the fast track farms, but also for all other farmers who relied on the market for inputs such as fertilizers, seed, and chemicals, which were mostly provided by international markets, but were withdrawn following ideological differences in the land reform. For example, the international community reacted negatively to the FTLRP, forcing Zimbabwe to endure crippling economic sanctions, which although were said to be targeted to individual government officials for human right abuses – including the violence involved in farm occupations, every Zimbabwean felt the brunt. Additionally, because the fast track land reform model did not align with the models supported by powerful international financial houses like IMF and WB, all



funding to Zimbabwe from these institutions were suspended, while other sources were also discouraged from assisting Zimbabwe. This was a blow on the agricultural inputs market, and the ability of Zimbabwe to financially support their farmers' post resettlement activities.

## **Methodology**

In order to explore the thesis, the following information is required: the history of land use under colonisation and how it led to the unequal land distribution that resulted in the need for effective land reform to correct the historical imbalance in land ownership later inherited by independent Zimbabwe. There is also need to explore data on the levels of food production before and after the FTLRP to be able to clearly analyse changes in food production after the FTLRP. Given that Zimbabwe is divided into different agro-ecological regions, it is important to also look at the different land reform experiences and production outcomes in these varied agricultural potential regions across the country. As such, this qualitative study relies on secondary data analysis to obtain the required information to support the argument laid out.

One major methodology challenge faced in this study was the problem of limited data and credibility of information on Zimbabwe. The information available was often questionable and largely unreliable, given the contentious nature of the topic of study and lack of empirical evidence to support some of the reported data. The problem was worsened by lack of systematic data from Zimbabwe's official statistical services. There has not been any official national systematic study of the major changes that have occurred because of the FTLRP. As such, there is no clear calculation of the numbers of

the different farm types and sizes that now exist- who owns what land, and the type of lease or ownership status they have. Additionally, there is likely little transparent evidence of who is producing what and how much. To alleviate this problem of access to reliable national data and to transcend time and geographical limitations for analysis of a national issue, the study draws on empirical studies done by scholars and researchers on agrarian studies in general, and specifically land reform in Zimbabwe. This is achieved through critical analysis of three major case studies of the FTLRP.

The selected case studies were carried out at different time periods after the FTLRP and are based in different agro-ecological regions; hence, they help to examine the local impact of the FTLRP on food production across the country's different climatic region, and its progression over time. These case studies include a national audit report at the request of the president to assess the immediate impact of the FTLRP nationwide. This audit was carried out over three years, led by Dr. Charles Utete, and was released in 2003 as the Utete report (2003). The second case study was done in the Masvingo Province, one of Zimbabwe's driest agricultural regions that support mostly extensive agriculture based on irrigation farming. This study was a decade long study aimed at demystifying some of the "non-evidence based" reports on the land reform programme, by providing local based evidence of what actually happened concerning the FTLRP. This study was led by Professor Ian Scoones and published in a book called *Zimbabwe's Fast Track Land Reform Myths and Realities* (2010). The third case study was an in-depth study of the FTLRP, carried out in the Mashonaland Central Province (Mazowe and Shamva Districts) led by Dr. prosper Matondi. This study was located in one of

Zimbabwe's best agricultural regions where most farms are close to the capital city and other urban areas, making it the area with the highest demand for land under the FTLRP. This study also includes another study done by the Ruzivo Trust in 2006, which examined the same land reform issues in the Mangwe district of the Matabeleland South province. The aim of these studies was to obtain empirical evidence of local level transformations brought about by the FTLRP, focusing on changes in livelihoods, agricultural production, development, and the forces that shaped them (Matondi, 2012. p. xv-xi). Together, the studies (Mazowe, Mangwe and Shamva districts) were published in a book called *Zimbabwe's Fast Track Land Reform* (2012).

## **Chapter 2**

### **Colonisation and Early Post-Independence Land Reforms**

#### **Introduction**

The objective of this chapter is to contextualise Zimbabwe's Fast Track Land Reform Programme and the current national food production crisis by tracing the history of Zimbabwe's land issues from the colonial era leading to the various previous attempts at land reforms instituted by the postcolonial government to correct an unequal land holding structure inherited at independence in 1980. The chapter highlights the land situation before the arrival of the British colonisers in 1890, and the constant land struggles throughout the century long colonial era. This history is punctuated by various distinct historical periods ranging from the era of the British South African Company (1899-1992), the period of European colonisation (1922-1980), and the early post-independence era of 1980-1997 leading up to the early stages of the Fast Track land reform programme in 1998 to 2000, as will be chronologically discussed in the chapter.

#### **Pre-Colonial Era**

Prior to colonisation, land tenure systems among the native Africans of present-day Zimbabwe, who were mainly made up of the Shona and Ndebele tribes, were based on the traditional communal land ownership system. Land distribution for the Shona and the Ndebele was based on factors that slightly differed between the two indigenous groups. For the Shona people, the village Head or Chief allocated land to each family

unit based on the size of the family, number of wives in the family, and availability of family labour to effectively utilise the land, while grazing land was owned collectively. For the Ndebele people, who had arrived in the 1800s from neighbouring present day South Africa and settled in the land after conquering the Kalanga and Shona people of that area, all the land was controlled by the King. However, the King then divided the land among Chiefs and Sub-Chiefs, who in turn allocated land to each family unit, based on need and “merit,” which was judged according to the effectiveness of a young man exhibited as part of an age-regiment during war. Brave warriors were awarded cattle, while land use rights were distributed according to the number of cattle a family owned. The more the cattle a family owned, the more the land use rights granted (Exploring Africa, 2015. p. 3).

In pre-colonial Zimbabwe, agricultural food production was mainly based on growing of traditional food crops such as bulrush millet (mhunga), finger millet (rapoko or rukweza), and sorghum (mapfunde) among a variety of vegetables (Tavuyanago, Mutami and Mbenene, 2012. p. 1). Maize was a crop introduced by the Europeans, particularly the Portuguese, to the Shona people in the 16th century trade missions (Wills, 1985, in Tavuyanago, Mutami and Mbenene, 2012. p. 1). Maize only became a more prominent crop later in the early colonial period, because it was highly promoted by the European settlers on the commodity market over the more traditional crops of the Africans (Tavuyanago, Mutami and Mbenene, 2012. p. 2). From an Afrocentric view, the introduction and rapid spread of maize and other European crops as the crops of choice was the main contributing factor to food insecurity and food production problems in the

African rural communities (Tavuyanago, Mutami and Mbenene, 2012. p. 3). This is because Africans did not have much experience in handling non-traditional crops. For example, the traditional crops were drought resistance, had shorter growing cycles, and were easier for the women to pound and quickly make a meal because of the smaller sized grains compared to those of maize, which required high technology like grinding mills to process into powder form for cooking (Tavuyanago, Mutami and Mbenene, 2012. p. 3).

For both the Shona and Ndebele people, population densities were low in their settled territories, leaving them with vast tracts of farming land. This suggests that they were able to maximise production on their best lands to ensure household food security (Mlambo and Raftopoulos, 2009. p. 3). Among the Ndebele, the King was responsible for ensuring that his people were well fed. The King's ability to adequately feed his subjects showed his ability to rule over his people and was therefore one of the ways the King secured his power and authority. Generally the Ndebele people prided themselves in their military prowess. However, it was King Lobengula of the Ndebele people, who later signed the Rudd concession with the BSAC, which led to a major uprising of 1896-97, known as the *First Chimurenga* (war of liberation), after the Ndebele people realised that they were cheated into signing the concession (Mlambo and Raftopolous, 2009. p. 39). However, the BSAC claimed victory and immediately claimed all the land, including that of the Shona people, due to this single victory (Logan, 2007. p. 204).

## **Rule of the British South African Company [1889-1922]**

The British South African Company (BSAC) was formed by Cecil John Rhodes, leader of the British column of concession seekers who had arrived in the land in search of mineral deposits to expand their mining operations from major gold deposits they had previously found in neighbouring present day South Africa (Logan, 2007. p. 204). After discovering that the land did not have as much mineral resources as anticipated, but rather had vast fertile lands suitable for agriculture, they decided to venture into agriculture instead. Britain granted the BSAC sovereign rights to take full control of Southern Africa. In 1890, the BSAC erected its colonial flag on the territory that belonged to the Africans and immediately named it Rhodesia, after Cecil J. Rhodes (Logan, 2007. p. 204).

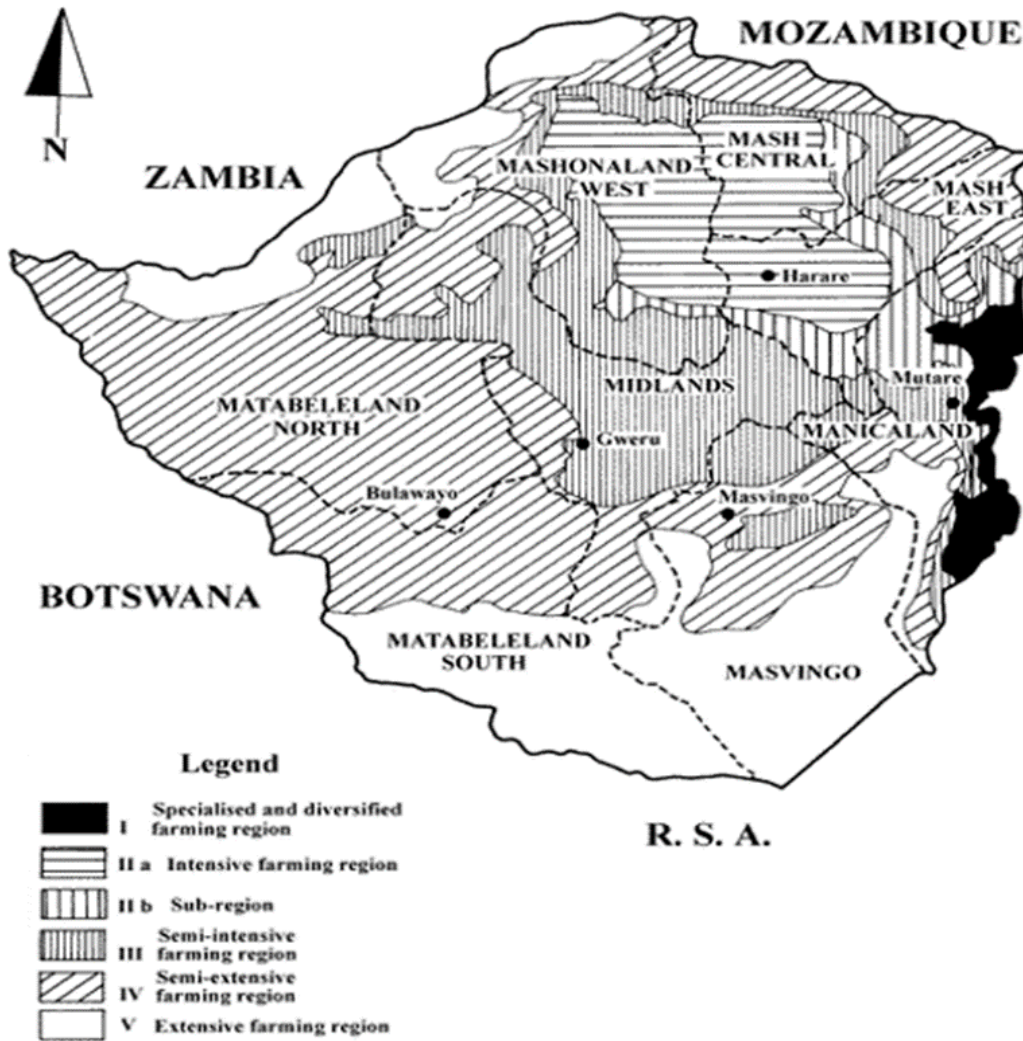
To expand their agricultural interests, the BSAC embarked on massive violent land evictions and compulsory takeovers of the Africans' prime agricultural land, driving them into Native Reserve areas,<sup>1</sup> which later provided a labour pool for the settlers' growing agro-industries (Alexander, 2006. p. 1). Whenever the native Africans resisted they were quickly subdued by military means, and kept confined in the Reserve areas by oppressive and racially segregatory laws (Alexander, 2006). These Reserve areas were mostly located in the country's worst agricultural areas that were characterised by climatic conditions of little rainfall, unproductive soils, and infested with pests like tsetse flies and malaria-causing mosquitoes, making the areas equally unsuitable for human

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<sup>1</sup> Reserves were later in 1951 renamed Tribal Trust Lands (TTLs), and are the present day communal areas in Zimbabwe (Alexander, 2006. p. 1).

habitation (Alexander, 2006). The Africans strongly resented these colonial land dispossessions, but were often defeated in battle by the gun-wielding settlers.

**Figure 1: Map showing Zimbabwe's agro-ecological regions.**



Note. Reproduced from FAOa (n. d). <http://www.fao.org/docrep/x5598e/x5598e07.htm>.

Figure 1 above shows a map of the distribution of Zimbabwe's five different agro-ecological regions and the different agricultural potential of each region, based on



the annual rainfall received in that area. The European settlers used the map to determine the prime agricultural land for themselves, pushing the Africans into the less productive regions. As shown in the map, each agro-ecological region has a particular farming system that best suits the region. Agricultural potential for each region declines from Natural Region 1 (the best endowed region), to region V (the worst endowed region). Agro-ecological region I receives well-distributed highest amount of annual rainfall (greater than 1, 000mm) and is most suitable for dairy farming and horticulture. Region V, situated in the northern part of the country, receives the most erratic annual rainfall of less than 500 mm and is especially prone to drought, making it suitable for cattle ranching, and production of drought resistant crops such as cotton and sorghum, or irrigation farming (Amanor and Moyo, 2008. p. 58-59).

African households were allocated small land sizes in the Reserves, which increasingly came under pressure from growing families and livestock heads. By the late 1920s, the population of Africans confined in the Reserves was five times more than its carrying capacity (Shopo, 1985 in Alexander, 2006. p. 1). After an almost 95% loss of their beef herd in the Anglo-Ndebele war of 1893, where Africans were defeated, most of their cattle were also raided. A few years later in 1896, there was a major rinderpest outbreak, which caused many deaths of cattle that belonged to the Africans. This crippled the ability of the Africans to adequately provide for themselves, resulting in increased cases of food insecurity among the Africans (Alexander, 2006. p. 1). Above all, the settlers introduced forced labour policies, hut taxes and poll taxes whose payment was to be made in foreign currency, leaving the males with no choice but to sell their labour

outside of their compounds in order to feed and fend for their families (ibid.). As a result, mostly women and children were the ones left to work in their family plots while the males sought employment on the commercial farms and industries owned by white settlers. Official control of Rhodesia by the BSAC ended in 1922 due to increased differences between the BSAC and other British settlers, marking the beginning of the European colonialist era (Logan, 2007. p. 203-4).

### **The European-Led Colonial Era [1923-1980]**

The end of the BSAC rule in 1922 introduced a new colonial era led by the European settlers outside of the BSAC. Racially inclined land alienation continued throughout this new colonial era, supported by oppressive laws and legislative instruments specifically established to safeguard the interests of the white settler farmers at the expense of the African peasants. The laws were ideally meant to permanently confine the Africans to Reserve areas and suppress their agricultural production so that they would not compete with European markets, or have a say in any economic decisions, which were increasingly based on agriculture. As a result, native Africans could not make any economic or political contribution despite the fact that the land was originally theirs.

Various repressive legislative instruments were passed to effectively disadvantage the Africans, and permanently take over their land resource. The Land Apportionment Act of 1930 was particularly brutal and evoked a lot of anger among the Africans (Moyo and Matondi, 2008. p. 64). This law exclusively divided all the land into six distinct land classifications solely based on race. Under the Land apportionment act of 1930, 51% of the country's land, most of it prime arable land was allocated to European settlers who

constituted less than 2% of the national population (Moyo and Matondi, 2008. p. 64).

Only 22% was allocated to Africans, most of it located in the Reserve areas, and just 8% was reserved for the few blacks who could afford to buy farms under the Native Purchase Area category (Moyo, 1986. p. 168; Hanlon et al., 2013. p. 32). The Land Apportionment Act of 1930 required all black Africans to immediately vacate land allocated to white Europeans and a strict warning was passed for the Africans never to set foot in any land that was deemed “white man’s land,” while land transfers between blacks and whites were immediately banned (Rukuni, 2006. p. 34).

Apart from repressive legislation, Africans were also denied a number of privileges specifically meant for white farmers and not Africans. For example, Europeans had good access to markets, and efficient transport networks like railroads, bridges, and other roads, while Africans did not. Europeans also had better access to the market and loan subsidies of farming inputs, capital, and technological investments such as irrigation equipment and critical infrastructure compared to their European counterparts (Moyo and Matondi, 2008, p. 64). Also, the main distribution channels of markets, goods and services in the form of roads and railway lines traced along the white European areas while Africans were located further away from the efficient transport networks, mostly in the low rainfall southern parts of the country. This inequality meant that the white large-scale commercial farmers inevitably advanced in production and productivity far better than the Africans did, and they were able to make significant contributions to national gross domestic product (GDP) and national food security. Meanwhile, Africans gradually became more dependent on food assistance from the white farmers in exchange for

labour (Moyo, 1986. p. 169). Overall, national food security was excellent, yet rural household food security remained precarious. Although population movements were restricted, many sold their labour within the commercial farms while others migrated to urban areas in search of jobs as domestic workers in order to send remittances to their rural families (Moyo, 1986. p. 169).

In the 1960s and 1970s, Rhodesia joined the post-World War II reconstruction period and the Green Revolution movement, which was introduced as the main global development agenda of transforming agriculture (Conway and Barbier, 1990). National agriculture activities increasingly concentrated on market based production models based on investments in large-scale commercial farming. There was a major drive in the construction and development of agricultural based infrastructure such as dams, irrigation systems, roads and bridges; and technological improvements, which involved use of high tech machinery and equipment, hybrid seed and fertilizers, supported by commodity diversification and import substitution strategies (Moyo and Matondi, 2008. p. 64; Conway and Barbier, 1990). Production was mainly of cash crops such as tobacco, cotton, horticulture and maize for external markets, resulting in a major agricultural boom in the urban areas. Meanwhile, rural food security remained precarious as many of the rural poor, who constituted the greater population, could not access the food. This became a political threat not only within the African leadership, where their rulers' hold to power was threatened because of continued failure to honour their responsibility of feeding their subjects, but also in the nation as a whole, because the rural masses were increasingly disgruntled and mobilising themselves to fight the European regime.

As large-scale commercial production and productivity expanded against an increasingly declining growth in the reserve areas due to population growth and land degradation, a distinct dual agricultural set up emerged (Moyo, 1986. p. 169). The dualistic production system developed into a widely accepted “myth” that the white farmers had more land-use capabilities compared to the black African peasants, and that the African farmers were “inherently” incapable of producing to the level of the white farmers, nor were they motivated to do so because of their financial and other resource limitations (Moyo, 1986. p. 169). Moyo (1968) notes that in spite of this “mythology,” the various settler regimes also attempted to improve production for the rural Africans through a number of strategies that included a) Establishment of African Purchase Areas (APAs), where experienced African farmers, who could afford to buy extra land could purchase 30 to 300 acres of higher quality farming land. The aim was to produce a yeoman class of successful African “master farmers,” who are the present day small-scale commercial farmers (SSCFs). b) Resettlement of at least 113, 000 Africans, between 1936 and 1960, who were “mostly squatters” and others from the Reserves to help relieve pressure in the Reserve areas after the 1930 Land Apportionment Act. c) Creation of the Land Husbandry Act in 1951, which was aimed at controlling land use practices and norms in land tenure systems in the hope that the landless would also later find employment in the imminent agricultural industries.

However, following the wave of independence, that was sweeping through most of Africa around the late 50s early 60s, and partly because of negative global financial forces that were increasingly making it difficult for Britain to sustain its colonies, there

was growing pressure from Britain for the European settlers to liberate Southern Rhodesia. Nonetheless, the settlers did not succumb to the pressure, leading to the dissolution of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland (present day Malawi) in 1963 and the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) in 1965 (Logan, 2007). In response, the British government imposed immediate economic sanctions on Southern Rhodesia, making it difficult for the settler regime to govern the country. National GDP dramatically dropped under the UDI between 1966 and 1968 and the economy in the next six years depended on import-substitution-led growth (Logan, 2007). Then, in the final period of the UDI, around 1975, there was another sharp fall in national income due to rising political instability and the withdrawal of trade income support from South Africa, which was the main national trading partner (Mlambo and Raftopolous, 2009. p. 141). The political and economic landscape during the UDI period deteriorated quickly and culminated in another more protracted fierce war in 1969, known as the *Second Chimurenga* (Shona name for the second war of liberation). The *Second Chimurenga* ended with the signing of a peace treaty in 1979, known as the Lancaster Agreement<sup>2</sup>. Signing of the Lancaster Agreement became a landmark historical moment for Zimbabwe as it represented the turning point from a protracted period of colonialism to independence. Rhodesia was officially declared free from colonial rule on the 18<sup>th</sup> of April 1980 and was renamed Zimbabwe. The Lancaster Agreement became the new constitution under the new government of black majority rule led by Robert Mugabe under the umbrella of the ZANU-PF political party.

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<sup>2</sup> The Lancaster Agreement was signed at the Lancaster House in Britain, between the Smith regime and representatives of the African liberation movement, led by Robert Mugabe of ZANU-PF, Joshua Nkomo of ZAPU, and the Zimbabwe Rhodesia government represented by Abel Muzorewa (Raftopolous and Mlambo, 2009. p. 165)

## **Early Post-Independence Era and First Phase Land Reform [1980-1989]**

At independence in 1980, the new government under President Robert Mugabe embarked on a national modernization, reconstruction and welfare agenda, aimed at reducing the socio-economic disparities between the Africans and the former European settlers under the former Smith regime (Dansereau, 2005. p. 8-9). President Mugabe's government announced Growth with Equity as the new central national policy. The idea was to shun vengeance against the former colonizers, to accommodate the large-scale commercial farmers, and to support new investments in the smallholder sector by maximizing on the skills and expertise of the colonial government in order to fulfill the government's commitment to a modernization development approach (Moyo and Matondi, 2008. p. 64; Alexander, 2006. p. 186-187). The state was the engine of growth and development. Although the role of the private sector was acknowledged, it was believed that elimination of development constraints and direct benefits of the new development agenda under the 1982 Transitional National Development Plan could only be achieved through the state apparatus (Dansereau, 2005. p. 9). The new agricultural development policy promoted production for both the local and export markets with increased emphasis on improved productivity for the communal farmers (ibid.).

Through comprehensive state support for the rural communal farmers, made possible by instituting a number of reforms, Zimbabwe developed a star performing agricultural sector, especially in the first six years after independence (from 1980-1986). The reforms implemented to directly boost communal farming included lifting of racially charged barriers of access to credit and increased farmer support services such as Agritex

services (Agricultural extension services). Additional Agritex Officers were employed to improve the efficiency of extension service through improved Farmer-Extension Officer ratio and to improve Agritex network with some of the country's remotest rural areas (Hanlon et al., 2013. p. 46). Supplementary buying points for communal farmers were put in place. Various agricultural marketing boards such as the Grain Marketing Board (GMB), Cotton Marketing Board (CMB) and the Dairy Marketing Board (DMB) were established to increase the small farmers' market share (Hanlon et al., 2013. p. 46). Farming inputs subsidies were availed, free seed and fertilizer packages were handed out to the poorest peasants, while developments of irrigation schemes and other infrastructural support, such as roads, bridges, hospitals, and schools "was in overdrive" (Hanlon et al., 2013. p. 46). Rain fed maize and cotton production was shifted to the communal areas while the large scale farmers concentrated on more profitable export oriented irrigated crops including maize, tobacco and cotton (ibid.). By the end of the 1980s to the mid-1990s, Zimbabwe had become the "bread basket" of Southern Africa with a grain reserve of over 204% (Jayne et al., 2006). Despite these success stories in production, the government had failed in the area of land redistribution, leaving the issue largely unresolved, but needing urgent attention.

One of the central reasons for going into the liberation struggle that led to independence was the need for the native Africans to reclaim their land lost to the colonial settlers (Moyo, 1986). Addressing the land question of unequal land ownership between the former white European settlers and the native black Africans thus remained top on the political agenda of the post-independence regime under President Mugabe.



The government planned to acquire and reallocate 8.3 million hectares of land to settle 162, 000 peasant families between 1981 and 1985 (Logan, 2007. p. 204-5). The main vision was to alter the racial composition of land ownership and access, to dismantle the inherited dual agricultural structure that was based on the large-scale commercial farming sector and the small-scale communal farming sector (Moyo, 2007. p. 344). The commercial farming sector was made up of the white minority group, constituting less than 2% of the national population, but controlling more than 51% of the country total land area, most of it prime agricultural land at the expense of the communal farmers (Moyo, 2007. p. 344). However, a number of constraints prevented the government from achieving this important goal.

One of the main government constraints from carrying out redistributive land reforms had to do with the Lancaster Agreement of 1979, which was adopted as the new constitution at independence, but had specific provisions that limited the government from carrying out effective land reforms in the first ten years of independence (Moyo, 1986. p. 183). The new constitution provided that land reform was to be done on a willing buyer and willing seller basis, without expropriation or coercion for the first 10 years after independence. The state was expected to play a limited role of providing funds for the peasants to purchase the land, to provide administrative assistance; and technical and financial support on the resettlement schemes. The white farmers were to receive full and fair market value for their land in a currency of their choice. In exchange, Britain agreed to provide 50% of the necessary funds and to organize donor support to finance land reforms in line with the principles of the new constitution (Logan, 2007, p.

204-5; Moyo, 2007. p. 352-54). After 10 years making attempts at land reforms based on the Lancaster principles, the government failed to meet its land reform goal, and managed to resettle only 52, 000 families by 1990 (Logan, 2007, p. 204-5).

Apart from the constitutional constraints, the government also faced financial problems and stern resistance from white farmers, who engaged in obstructionist strategies to slow down the land reform processes. The obstructionist strategies engaged included constant unreasonable price rise for land to discourage potential buyers, offering to sell only the worst land while keeping the best for themselves, knowing that the government could not force or coerce them otherwise (Moyo, 2007. p. 353). On the other hand, Britain did not meet its end of the promised funds and other donors also did not come forth as expected. For example, some of the donor funds from countries like Kuwait, the European Union and the African Development Bank were disbursed as matching loans and or a reimbursement of the governments funds already used to purchase land approved by the Overseas Development Administration (ODA) (Moyo, 2007. p. 353). This created bottlenecks and conflicts between the donors and the Zimbabwe Government thus mostly just private land transfers were successful. Britain provided funds in the form of grants amounting to about 33 million pounds (an equivalent of 44 million U.S dollars), which was far short of the 50% promised and the total requirements for the land reforms (Moyo, 2007. p. 353). As a result, the first land reform programme was not successful.

## **Second Phase Land Reform and National Food Security [1990–2000]**

The expiry of the Lancaster House Agreement (LHA) in 1990 helped the state to by-pass most of the previous challenges that had prevented the government from carrying out effective land reforms. In 1992, a new sweeping National Land Policy was introduced as part of the government's renewed efforts to speed up the land reform and address the long-standing social injustice of unequal land redistribution. The new National Land Policy, enshrined in the 1992 Land Acquisition Act, granted the state authority to compulsorily buy or acquire land by removing the "willing buyer- willing seller" clause, which limited the pace of the land reforms and also the size of farms the government, could acquire (GoZ n. d in Logan, 2007. p. 205). A fair compensation of the land acquired was to be paid to the affected parties, and the landowners could contest prices offered for their land in the courts. The goal was to acquire 5 million hectares of agricultural land and settle 100, 000 families in five years (Matondi and Munyuki-Hungwe, 2006. p. 67-68). Land targeted for acquisition was based on the following five broad categories: Land that was derelict, underutilised, owned by more than one person, land belonging to foreigners, and privately owned land that was contiguous to the communal areas (GoZ n. d in Logan, 2007. p. 205). The set objectives of the 1992 Land Acquisition Act were for the government "to ensure equitable and socially just access to land; to democratise land tenure systems and ensure security of tenure for all forms of land holdings; to provide for participatory processes of management in the use and planning of land; and to promote sustainable and efficient use and management of land" (GoZ 2001, p. 2 in Logan, 2007. p. 205). However, due to stiff resistance from the land

owners, fewer than 100, 000 African families benefited land by 1997, while much of the land acquired under this second phase of land reforms was mostly poor quality land (Logan, 2007).

Meanwhile, the economy was on a downward trend following the aggressive social spending under the earlier Growth with Equity national policy, punctuated by regular droughts, irresponsible policies and an increasingly weak currency, which was affecting balance of payments. For example, in 1997 the Zimbabwe government sent Zimbabwean troops on a high cost mission to support the DRC government in an ongoing war, but the government did not have a stable budget to support the mission (Mushava, 2012). In the same year, former war veterans were each given ZW\$50, 000 gratuities, which costed the country an unbudgeted ZW\$4 billion, triggering monetary inflation that sank the economy even deeper over the following years (Mambo, 2013, Aug 16). Also, in 1991, in order to access loans to rescue an economy in crisis, Zimbabwe had accepted IMF and WB's Economic Structural Adjustment Programs (ESAPs). ESAPs, among other things, required the government to reduce public spending and to step back from taking centre stage in the land reforms to allow market forces to direct the land reforms under the principle of willing buyer and willing seller, similar to the principles of the expired Lancaster Agreement. Soon Zimbabwe was in a development impasse characterised by rising social, economic and political tensions across the country. ESAPs were eventually dropped in 1995, allowing the state to re-engage in state directed land reforms, more on the imperative of regime survival (Logan, 2007. p. 206).

The government continued to seek funding for land reforms, but efforts were often not rewarded as donors, and especially Britain, differed on the Zimbabwean ideology of fast paced land reforms, arguing that expropriatory land reforms risked permanent damage of national agricultural output and were tantamount to abuse of human rights when land owners are unwillingly driven off their land. For example, the Zimbabwe government reminded Britain of their promise to meet 50% of the funding required for land reforms as agreed under the Lancaster treaty. Britain responded with a letter dated November 5<sup>th</sup> 1997 clearly stating that the new British Labour government that came into power in 1997 under Tony Blair did not intend to sponsor Zimbabwe's land reforms. The letter also stated that the Blair regime was not obligated to honour the Lancaster agreement because it was not the government involved in the signing of the Lancaster agreement, and did not agree with the proposed land reform principles (Lobel, 2003). This response angered the Zimbabwean government, which decided to go ahead with land the land reform programme anyway, at any cost.

In June 1998, the Zimbabwe government published a new policy framework on the Land Reform and Resettlement Programme Phase II, whose vision was to acquire at least five million hectares and settle 150, 000 black Zimbabwean families over a period of five years, built on the expectation of receiving donor-funding (GoZ 2001 in Logan, 2007. p. 207). In September 1998, the government convened a donor conference in Harare, which was attended by representatives from 48 countries and various international organizations, to inform the donor community about the impending accelerated land reform programme and to ask for financial support to ensure success of

the programme. The donor community endorsed the proposed land reform programme, but later failed to meet its promised financial assistance. Between 1998 and 2000, the government managed to acquire only 168, 263 hectares and settle just 4,697 families, which was far short of the annual target of 1 million hectares in order to meet the five year target (GoZ 2001 in Logan, 2007. p. 207).

In 2000, still with land reform on the political agenda, the government decided to alter the land reform proposals and include a clause, which allowed the government to compulsorily acquire land without paying any compensation to the affected white farmers. This clause was included in the new draft constitution, which was presented in February 2000 at a referendum for upcoming critical presidential elections of 2002. However, the leading opposition party, MDC, which had strong backing from large-scale white commercial farmers, together with the majority of Zimbabweans rejected the proposed draft constitution, arguing that it would entrench President Mugabe's rule. The rejection of the draft constitution threw the ruling party off guard as it clearly threatened the ruling party's hold to power. Soon after the rejection of the draft constitution, former war veterans, with support from some rural peasants, mobilized themselves, and began farm invasions that were first recorded in June 1998 in the Svosve communal areas of Mashonaland East Province (Alexander, 2006. p. 184). The government did not stop the ongoing farm invasions, but instead officialised the land occupations, marking the beginning of the radical Fast Track Land Reform Programme.

## **Conclusion**

The historical background of Zimbabwe clearly shows that land distribution problems emanated from the almost century long colonial era, where the European settlers took away land that belonged to the native black Africans against their will. The Africans were driven off their land and confined into Reserve areas that were agriculturally unproductive, unsuitable for human habitation, and too small to sustain land requirements for a comfortable life. The need to free themselves from colonial rule and to get their land back drove the Africans into a number of battles, in which they were often defeated by the gun wielding Europeans until the second protracted war of liberation, which led to official independence in 1980. Since independence, the government constantly made effort to address the unequal land ownership inherited at independence to deliver social justice and economic freedom to the black Zimbabweans. However, the series of attempts at land reforms were met with several hurdles that prevented their success. The more radical approach to land reform approach introduced in 2000 under the Fast Track Land Reform was expected to finally put a seal on the land issue and to ensure a more effective redistributive land reform, but this programme came with its own set of problems, as further discussed in the following chapter.

## **Chapter 3**

### **The Fast Track Land Reform and Impact on Food Production**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter examines the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) and aims to show the program's direct implications on national food production since 2000. While acknowledging the complex nature of the FTLRP, given the deep political, economic and social entanglements around Zimbabwe just before and after the onset of the land reform programme in 2000, the chapter focuses more on key weaknesses and challenges within the land reform programme itself, and less on the politics and other social, economic and environmental pressures around it. Focus areas of analysis include the various processes involved in program planning, implementation, administration, tenure arrangements, post settlement activities, policy, and support structures set by the government to assist in promoting sustainable production on the new fast track farms. The chapter also looks at the new production systems and new production trends that emerged following the official end of the FTLRP in 2003. The last part of the chapter highlights key challenges faced by farmers on the fast track farms are highlighted based on on-the-ground local evidence from different geographical locations across the country. This local empirical evidence is obtained from three selected major case studies of long drawn empirical research done by various scholars knowledgeable about Zimbabwe's land reforms and political economy. Finally, a summarised conclusion of discussions in the chapter is provided in closing.



### **The Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP)**

The FTLRP, officially launched on the 15<sup>th</sup> of July 2000, was the third and most radical phase of Zimbabwe's land reform programmes since independence. The objective was to accelerate the identification and acquisition of not less than five million hectares of agricultural land and reallocate it to at least 160,340 black Zimbabwean households, and to provide limited basic infrastructural and agricultural support services to boost production on the fast track farms (GoZ, 2000; Logan 2007. p. 205). The long-standing goal was to address the unbalanced access to productive land inherited at independence, but also to alleviate pressure in the rural communal areas, and to provide a means of improving the lives and livelihoods of the poor while boosting small-scale agriculture for the overall benefit of the country's economy and food security (Kinsey, 1999).

Under the FTLRP, land was to be compulsorily acquired from various categories: farms owned by foreigners, land that was owned by white commercial farmers, land that was abandoned and under-utilised, land under multiple ownership, and land that was adjacent to communal areas (Utete, 2003. p. 19). There were, however, some designated areas that were exempt from redistribution, such as agricultural plantations involved in large-scale commercial production, agro-processing and seed multiplication farms and farms owned by organizations or under special agreements such as the Bilateral Investments Promotions and Protection Agreements (BIPPA) (Utete, 2003. p. 19). To achieve this legally, and on the backdrop of financial constraints after the failure to mobilize funds at the 1998 donor conference and before, the government altered the law in 2000 and gained power to expropriate land with limited or no compensation on the

part of affected farmers (Matondi, 2012. p. 38). Proposed farm models were based on two main schemes, the A1 scheme, and the A2 scheme. The A1 scheme was mainly aimed at decongesting the communal areas and was a subsistence based production model where peasants would produce mainly to feed their families. Hence, targeted beneficiaries under the A1 scheme included any black Zimbabwean who showed interest in farming, and this resulted in the bulk of the farms under the FTLRP (Zikali, 2008).

On the other hand, the A2 scheme was a commercial production oriented model targeted at creating a cadre of indigenous black commercial farmers on small, medium, and large-scale commercial farms who would bridge the gap between the former white large scale commercial farmers and the new producers on the fast track farms (Utete, 2003. p. 20). Plot<sup>3</sup> sizes under A2 farms were thus bigger than those under A1. For A2, maximum plot sizes ranged from 20ha to 240ha, depending on the productive capacity of that land, juggled according to its agro-ecological region, while A1 farms ranged from 6 – 10 ha plus common shared grazing land (Hanlon, et al. 2003. p. 9; 140). Areas of higher agricultural potential, like the Eastern Highlands in Manicaland, which is situated in high potential agro-ecological region I were allocated smaller farms compared to the drier northern and southern parts of the country in region IV and V (Hanlon, et al. 2003. p. 140). There was higher demand for land in the best agro-ecological regions, especially for the bigger A2 farms. In principle, A2 farms were based on the principle of full production cost recovery. Hence, targeted beneficiaries under the A2 model were black

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<sup>3</sup> A plot is a term used in Zimbabwe's land reform discourse to mean that broken down piece of land allocated to individual land reform beneficiaries as a smaller sized farm. Henceforth, the term "plot" and "fast track farm" will be used interchangeably.

Zimbabwean citizens with proven farming experience, agricultural qualifications, and financial resources, or evidence of source of funds to support their proposed farming activities (GoZ, 2000; Matondi, 2012. p. 54).

Tenure arrangements on both A1 and A2 farms were based on multiple tenure systems that became a source of many problems that adversely affected production. A1 farmers were issued with land permits, while A2 farmers were given offer letters with 25 or 99-year leases, which explicitly stated that the government could at any time withdraw the land offer at the discretion of the responsible Minister. This created a lot of investment insecurities for the new farmers and land based conflicts, which often spilt into the courts and wasted a lot of money and time that could otherwise be invested in production. There were cases where both A1 and A2 farmers had their farms revoked for various unexplained reasons and other cases where beneficiaries were delisted from the land acquisition list, while others had their A2 farms repossessed and subdivided for re-allocation under A1 scheme (Marongwe, 2013. p. 180). For example, government local based land audit reports showed that eight A2 farmers on a farm called Mashonganyika in Goromonzi district who had been allocated plots ranging between 18.4 to 32.8ha lost their plots after the whole farm was de-listed in 2003 (GoZ, 2003 in Marongwe, 2013. p. 180). In another example on Colga farm in the same Goromonzi district, sixty A1 settlers had to be re-allocated after that farm had been re-designated as an A2 farm. Also, at Oribi farm, 30 households were pending re-allocation, and at Clovadale B Farm, only 2 out of 10 new settlers' who were allocated plots had taken up their plot allocations (Marongwe, 2013. p. 180-89). Such cases caused a lot of anxiety among farmers and

reflected confusion and problems in insecure land tenure that had a direct impact on production on the farms.

Selection of beneficiaries differed according to the various production models. For both A1 and A2 models, beneficiaries ranged from ordinary citizens who did not belong to any special interest groups, civil servants, farm workers, war veterans, politicians, business people, and the elite, all under cross cutting categories of different age groups, genders, ethnicities, and occupation (Matondi, 2012. p. 64). Overall, District officials were responsible for selection of beneficiaries under the supervision of central government officials from the ruling ZANU-PF party (Moyo, 2006. p. 147). For A1 farms, selection process was simple. Interested individuals were required to register their farming interest with local institutions (village head, chiefs, councilors, the ruling ZANU (PF) political party, or any relevant immediate authority). The District Land Committee would then identify and select applicants based on a 20% quota for war veterans (as per national policy), although some chiefs sometimes also claimed 5% quota on all farms for allocation (Matondi, 2012. p. 65). Successful applicants were then announced through the chief, councilors, or directly through following up with other allocation authorities. Sometimes potential beneficiaries or applicants (including individuals who would have participated in mobilized farm invasions through *jambanja*<sup>4</sup> would simply come together at a designated farm where they would randomly pick a plot number from a hat. The number picked represented the plot number the farmer would take, then the district land

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<sup>4</sup> *Jambanja* is a Shona term popularly used to mean a state of chaos or lawlessness. In Zimbabwe circles, many also referred to this *Jambanja* period as the Third Chimurenga due to the violence and killings that were involved on both the side of the white farmers and black settlers during the land occupations and takeover processes.

committee would issue each individual with offer letters signed by the District Administrator. The last stage would be for the farmers to then occupy the allocated plot, put up shelter and relocate to the new farm with their whole families to start farming (Matondi, 2012. p. 65).

For the A2 farm models, selection of beneficiaries and subsequent land allocations involved more elaborate processes. Individuals interested in the A2 farms would submit application forms attached with proof of funds and cash flow statements through their local District Office or directly to the Ministry of Lands and Rural Resettlement. (Matondi (2012. p. 68). Applicants were assessed based on income, strength of cash flow, gender, qualification, experience and training, which had different scores that were then calculated and added up and used to make a decision (Marongwe, 2013. p. 168). A selected Provincial Assessment Committee processed the applications. The Committee constituted senior Government Officials from different provincial offices of various government departments such as the Lands office, Agritex office, Local Government and Physical Planning, Veterinary Services, District Development Office and each committee had to have at least one former war Veteran (Marongwe, 2013. p. 168). Successful applicants were then informed by telephone, letter or through the local print media, after which they would then be issued with offer letters with details of their allocated land, signed by the Minister of Lands and Rural Resettlement. These processes were however not always smooth due to the overwhelming applications against weak processing systems and technology. In many instances applicants made several unsuccessful visits to granting authorities following up on their applications, which

seemed to take long to come out. For example, in Mazowe, one of the areas that had a huge number of some of the country's best placed A2 farms that were especially on demand by high profile political figures and connected elites, Matondi (2012) found out that there were communication problems between the Provincial Land Committees, the District Land Committee and applicants, resulting in multiple allocations of the same farms, failure of beneficiaries to take up farms on time due to delays in information flow, or complete loss of interest by some of the applicants who would completely abandon the whole idea of farming out of frustration from institutional delays in processing their applications (Matondi, 2012. p. 68). This created major production inefficiencies as a number of farms remained abandoned, underutilized or fallow during the whole time.

After accepting offer of land, Agritex officials would then visit the designated farms and peg plot sizes for the A2 farms. Beneficiaries were required to immediately take up their land and start farming, but sometimes they faced problems from the white farmers who would ignore notices of evacuation from government authorities, or would simply resist forced evictions. In many cases, settlers with organised support from the rural masses led by war veterans would then invade the farms, and engage in scare tactics or various mechanisms to frustrate the white farmer off the farm. They could gather at one farm in large groups and simply camp up at the farm until the farmer left, they could at times start singing political party slogans or revolutionary songs, which sometimes culminated in violence and killings on both the side of the farmer and that of the settlers. Although affected farmers reported and called the police to rescue them, the police were either outrun in numbers to handle the big groups, or sometimes they would simply

ignore calls to intervene, claiming that the land occupation issues were highly political and beyond their jurisdiction. In fact, the government had a standing policy that a person could not be removed from the farm that person has occupied, unless allocated another farm elsewhere, making it easy for farm invaders to apply for land permits, which were usually successfully granted (Hanlon et al., 2013.p. 9). This all created a chaotic situation that quickly spiralled out of control as the government watched and did not stop the farm invaders. Due to the chaos, some land fell into the hands of unintended beneficiaries. It also exposed the programme to manipulation by politicians and other powerful individuals who could hire farm invaders to help them take over any farm they desired without following proper channels. On this backdrop, for example, it was difficult for the government to make accurate records and statistics that would inform important farming decisions that the government needed to make for a successful land reform. It was difficult to keep pace on who got what land when, and what or how much targeted support would be need to sustainably produce on the farm. In addition, a number of actively producing farms were invaded. This had drastic and sometimes irreversible damage to farm production, thereby contributing to continued food crisis.

### **Who were the Actual Land Beneficiaries?**

Various groups of black Zimbabwean families accessed land through both farm invasions and formal land takeovers under different farm types. Over 70% of the land beneficiaries were under the A1 small-scale farm type, where intended beneficiaries were simply black Zimbabweans interested in farming without any other special requirements. There were claims of corruption, nepotism and cronyism in both beneficially selection

and land allocation processes. Most of the best farms were said to be benefited by the ZANU-PF cronies. These were common claims in both local and international public media, and among those opposed to the land reform. From a critical stand point, it is not realistic to completely rule out cronyism, but it is difficult to make generalized assertions on the actual land beneficiaries. This is more so given that the land reform process itself was a controversial political process deeply entangled in intense local politics, where some people did not voluntarily belong to a political party, but would simply play along out of fear (Matondi, 2012. p. 74).

Scoones et al. (2010) assert that there is need for local based evidence of actual land beneficiaries before making any generalizations. A number of researchers provide local based evidence suggesting that mostly ordinary peasants who did not belong to any special interest group actually got land under the FTLRP. For example, the AIAS baseline survey of 2005/2006 in Moyo (2006. p. 49) noted that more than 73% of beneficiaries were ordinary peasants. On the other hand, Alexander (2003) and Zamchiya (2011) argue that land allocations were biased towards ZANU-PF cardholders. Matondi (2012) also shows that there was a lot of politics at play in the land allocations in Mazowe, but could not say for a fact who actually got the land in terms of political affiliation. It was difficult to ascertain one's political position given the highly political processes of the FTLRP, where just because a person attended ZANU-PF rallies or held ZANU-PF cards did not necessarily mean they were ZANU-PF (p.74). Matondi (2012), however, notes that the general observation in Mazowe was that largely ordinary peasants and civil servants actually got the land, albeit mostly under the A1 model. Many



scholars do, however, acknowledge that high profile politicians and elites did influence land allocations and managed to get themselves some of the best farms, mostly A2 farms especially in areas like Mazowe (Matondi, 2012). In his study, Matondi (2012) notes that there were on the ground allegations that civil servants could have used their strategic employment positions to influence land allocations for their benefit, especially those in the security sector. Matondi (2012) further asserts that there was evidence of corruption and undue influence, but there was also a huge social interest and local pressure to distribute land fairly, and this helped to effectively minimise unfair practices.

Marongwe (2013), on the other hand, paints a different picture of what happened on the ground. He notes that mostly political figures got A2 farms, especially the best of the A2 farms in Goromonzi District (p. 182). Many of these farmers were, however, absentee farmers, or weekend farmers who in most cases failed to comply with the government policy of hiring a qualified farm manager in the absence of the actual farm owner, and not much was done to enforce the policy in which an absentee farmer was required to employ a qualified experienced farm manager. Meanwhile, the politicisation and manipulation of land reform processes had the net effect of weakening formal government institutions' ability to deal with cases of breach of policy. The disregard of policy on beneficiary selection criteria and the expectations for resettled farmers had profound direct negative implications on farm production and productivity.

### **The Redistributive Nature of the FTLRP and New Agricultural Production Systems**

Zimbabwe has a total land area of 39 million hectares, 33.3 million of which is arable land (FAO, n. d). Throughout the series of land reforms since independence in

1980 up to 2009, over 13 of the 15 million hectares of land, mostly prime agricultural land, was controlled by a minority group of about 6, 000 white commercial farmers and was redistributed to over 240, 000 black Zimbabwean families (Moyo, 2011. p. 497). Close to five million hectares of agricultural land was redistributed from the inception of the FTLRP in 1998 until 2002 to benefit over 160, 000 black Zimbabwean families (GOZ 2002, p. 2. in Logan 2007, p. 205). By 2009, over 9.2 million hectares were redistributed and close to 170, 000 families were resettled under various farm types and sizes averaging 20 hectares for the A1 small-scale production model and 100hectres for the A2 larger-scale production model (Moyo, 2011. p. 497). Statistical data on land beneficiaries and plot sizes differ among the different researchers because there were also unofficial land transfers that took place, making it difficult to get accurate figures, or to completely rely on official data. Most researchers, however, note that more than 70% of the total land beneficiaries were mostly A1 farmers, who are the smaller-scale farmers (Moyo, 2011. p. 497). According to a baseline survey by the Agricultural Institute of Agrarian Studies (AIAS), across six districts, more than 82% of the land beneficiaries had been allocated land by the government and just 2.9% claimed to have bought their own farms, while about 15% unofficially accessed land through illegal farm occupations (Moyo, 2011. p. 497-499). For the first time, Zimbabwe managed to implement a successfully redistributive land reform programme compared to any other in all of its history of land reforms.

The revolution in Zimbabwe's agriculture brought about by the FTLRP is evident in the new land distribution patterns that emerged after 2000. As can be seen in table 3.1,

percentage of total land area under communal farming remained at 42%, while land area under large-scale commercial farms dropped from 30% in 2000 down to only 9% by 2010. The table shows the significant drop in actual land area under large-scale commercial farms from 11.7 million hectares (as at 2000) to 3.4 million hectares by 2010, further highlighting the redistributive nature of the FTLRP. An agricultural sector once dominated by large-scale commercial farmers was dramatically transformed into one controlled by smallholder farmers, accompanied by new production patterns.

**Table 3.1: National Land Distribution Pattern**

Land category	1980		2000		2010	
	Area (Mil.ha)	% of Total Land Area	Area (Mil.ha)	% of Total Land area	Area (Mil.ha)	% of Total Land area
Communal areas	16.4	42%	16.4	42%	16.4	42%
Old resettlement	0	0%	3.5	9%	3.5	9%
New Resettlement: A1	0	0%	0	0%	4.1	11%
New Resettlement: A2	0	0%	0	0%	3.5	9%
Small-scale commercial farms	1.4	4%	1.4	4%	1.4	4%
Large-scale commercial farms	15.5	40%	11.7	30%	3.4*	9%
State farms	0.5	1%	0.7	2%	0.7	2%
Urban land	0.2	1%	0.3	1%	0.3	1%
National parks and forest land	5.1	13%	5.1	13%	5.1	13%
Unallocated land	0	0%	0	0%	0.7	2%
Total	39.1	100%	39.1	100%	39.1	100%

*Note:* Reproduced from "Zimbabwe's Land Reform, Myths and Realities," by I. Scoones *et al.*, 2010, p. 4. \*Includes all large commercial farms, agro-industrial estate farms, church/trust farms, BIPPA farms and conservancies."

Unlike in the former large-scale commercial farms where production could be carried out throughout the year under irrigation systems, crop production systems on the new fast track farms was mostly based on dry land farming, which relied on rainfall.

More than 70% of households across all the districts did not practice irrigation based farming (Moyo, 2006. p. 64). Those who did engage in some irrigation were mostly A2 farmers (27.9%) in areas like Chipinge and Chiredzi districts, and a few of them were A1 farmers (14.1%) (Moyo, 2006. p. 64). Chiredzi had more farms under irrigation because it's a dry part of the country where mostly sugarcane is grown, and this crop requires water throughout the year (ibid.). In another survey of irrigation systems under fast track farms done by the Ruzivo Trust in Mazowe District, it was shown that 80% of the commercial farms in that district engaged in irrigation farming for all year crop production before 2000, but by 2004, only 41% of the farms practised irrigation and again dropped to 12% by 2007 (Matondi, 2012. p. 141). Increased reliance on rain fed agriculture meant that crop production could not be carried out all year round and was exposed to dangers of drought. For example, in another study in Mazowe by Matondi (2012), 6% of a sampled population grew tobacco under dry land farming for a crop that usually does best under irrigation. As such, average yields fell from more than 3.5t/ha for the former commercial farmers to 1tone/ha or less (Matondi, 2012. p. 139). Reliance of rain fed agriculture exposed households to seasonal food security during the lean agricultural seasons.

A number of challenges affected the use of irrigation systems and equipment on the new fast track farms. Most of the irrigation equipment on these farms was inherited from the previous farmers hence in some cases, existing irrigation structures were for large-scale commercial farming systems and not quite suitable for the smaller sized plots established under the FTLRP. For them to be functional on the new farms, the existing

systems require reconfiguration (Moyo, 2006. p. 64). Other challenges encountered by the farms were lack of proper skill and knowledge of how to operate the irrigation equipment, some of the equipment went un-serviced for too long, some of it fell prey to thieves, and others were vandalised during the farm invasions, or stripped of parts by the new settlers to meet other pressing household needs.

Apart from changes of irrigation systems, the FTLRP also introduced new farm-labour production systems. The former commercial farmers relied heavily on waged labour for their capitalist mode of production, but when the massive farm invasions occurred, farm workers were also casualties together with their white employers (Rutherford, 2001). When settlers invaded targeted farms, loyal farm workers would sometimes stand and support their farm managers and farm owners with whom they had fostered strong relationships, but many of the farm workers were violently displaced, and left without jobs and homes, while others were killed (Cliffe et al., 2013. p. 7; Rutherford, 2001). There were, however, a number of options given to affected farm workers. Foreign farm workers without proper documentation were asked to regularize or faced deportation, others were offered small plots to farm themselves with their families, and others could seek employment in neighbouring safe black owned farms, while others flocked to the cities to eke out a living (Nzwamba, 2011, July 24). In the aftermath, most of the farms inherited under the FTLRP did not have as much labour as that of the former commercial farms to maximize production. A new problem of labour emerged on the fast track farms, and many of the farmers, especially A1 farmers relied on family labour, a few permanent staff, usually less than five workers, or they would exchange labour

within their households to work on each other's farms. Shortage of farm labour had a direct negative impact on production, especially on crops like tobacco and maize, which require heavy manual labour at particular agricultural cycles such as planting, weeding, grading and harvesting.

Some of the old farm workers accessed land under the FTLRP (A1 model) and created a form of self-employment that created new agrarian labour relations based on new labour supply - farmer negotiations (Chambati, 2011. p. 1047). Chambati notes that 60.7% of land beneficiaries had low labour requirements because they used mostly family labour and hired seasonal labour to produce on their small sized farms, and 26%, mostly A2 farmers were high labour users with at least seven permanent workers on the farm (2011. p. 1057). Utilization of labour also differed according to each farm's capital, farm machinery and equipment endowment, cropping area, and the type of crops grown on the farm. For example, in the Zvimba area, farming households, producing on 3.5ha were low capital intensity household and required less labour compared to the high capital intensive farming households producing on 17.6 ha (Chambati, 2009 in Chambati 2011. p. 1057). In the same study, farmers producing high labour intensity crops like tobacco, had high capital stocks and high labour requirements, thus labour availability, usage, and ability to pay the labour played an important role in determining what crops to grow and how much land to cultivate (Chambati, 2011. p. 1059).

In general, the displaced group of large-scale commercial producers used sophisticated production systems (for example combine harvesters, vicon sprayers, dryers and so on) that allowed them to maximise production for commerce. On the other hand,

the new group of mostly small-scale farmers did not have sophisticated production systems to maximise production on their farms. The new farmers on fast track farms concentrated on subsistence farming for household food security. These changes meant that in good rain seasons, the new farmers would grow enough to feed their families, but non-farming households, especially those without rural connections, would not be able to access enough food on the market. Ultimately, national food production would be inadequate to sufficiently feed all Zimbabweans in need of food; hence the government would have to resort to food imports, and sometimes accept food aid to bridge the gap.

### **Changes in Production Patterns**

Prior to 2000, Zimbabwe's agricultural production sector had a distinct dual nature, characterised by large-scale commercial farms, mostly white owned on prime agricultural lands on one side, and on the other side, communal farms, mostly owned by indigenous black Africans, and located in some of the country's worst agricultural zones. The large-scale commercial farmers concentrated on mass production of intensive and specialised forms of agriculture and were the major drivers of the country's national food production. A number of large-scale commercial farms concentrated on export-led agriculture through production of crops like tobacco (responsible for 60% of all agricultural exports), cotton (responsible for 10% of total agricultural exports), raw sugar (responsible for 9% of national agricultural exports), commercial maize, beef and horticulture (flowers, fruits and vegetables) (FAO, n. d). On the other hand, communal farmers mainly produced maize and other small grain crops like sorghum, rapoko, and millet, legumes (beans), vegetables, and small livestock, mainly for family consumption

(Jayne et al., 2006. p. 526). New production patterns introduced by the FTLRP based on multiple farm types and sizes of an uneven class of farmers both altered and consolidated the country's agrarian, social, and production relations (Moyo, 2013. p. 41).

For a long time, maize has been the staple food for the majority of Zimbabweans and is considered responsible for national food security. It is a strategic crop of choice for many farmers in Zimbabwe, because it also doubles as a cash crop when sold on both local and international markets for profit. About 64% of the total maize deliveries to the Grain Marketing Board (GMB) is directed at human consumption, 22% is reserved for animal feed, and 14% goes towards industrial purposes (Mashingaidze, 2006. p. 363). Wheat is the second strategic food security crop, followed by other traditional grain crops like sorghum, rapoko, and millet (Jayne et al., 2006. p. 526). Wheat was especially grown by large-scale commercial farmers because the crop requires sophisticated production methods such as irrigation, and use of high technology farm equipment and machinery like tractors, combine harvesters, and related implements, which the small-scale communal farmers could not afford. As such, maize was a crop of choice for many fast track farms, but production patterns of these strategic crops in the years after the FTLR significantly differed from those of the 1990s.

National food production patterns significantly changed after the FTLRP, especially for agricultural commodities associated with large-scale farming, such as wheat, dairy and key export crops such as tobacco and cotton. On average, fast track land beneficiaries reserved 78% of their cropped land for production of staple grains, effectively shifting orientation of agricultural production systems from export-led



production on the crown land to staple grain production for domestic consumption (Moyo, 2013. p. 41). Maize remained the dominant crop grown on both old and new resettlement farms in the new agricultural dispensation. The overall picture shows that area under crop production increased due to land clearing by the new settlers and improved use of land formerly abandoned or underutilised. However, this did not necessarily translate to improved yields (Moyo and Nyoni, 2011. p. 211). For example, annual national maize output averaged 1.6 million tonnes in the 1990s, but fell down to an annual national average output of 1.04 million tonnes in the 2000s, and was projected to remain low, although land area under maize production gradually increased (See figure 3. 2 below, showing changes in national maize production pattern from the 1990s up to 2010 (FAO, 2009, June 22).

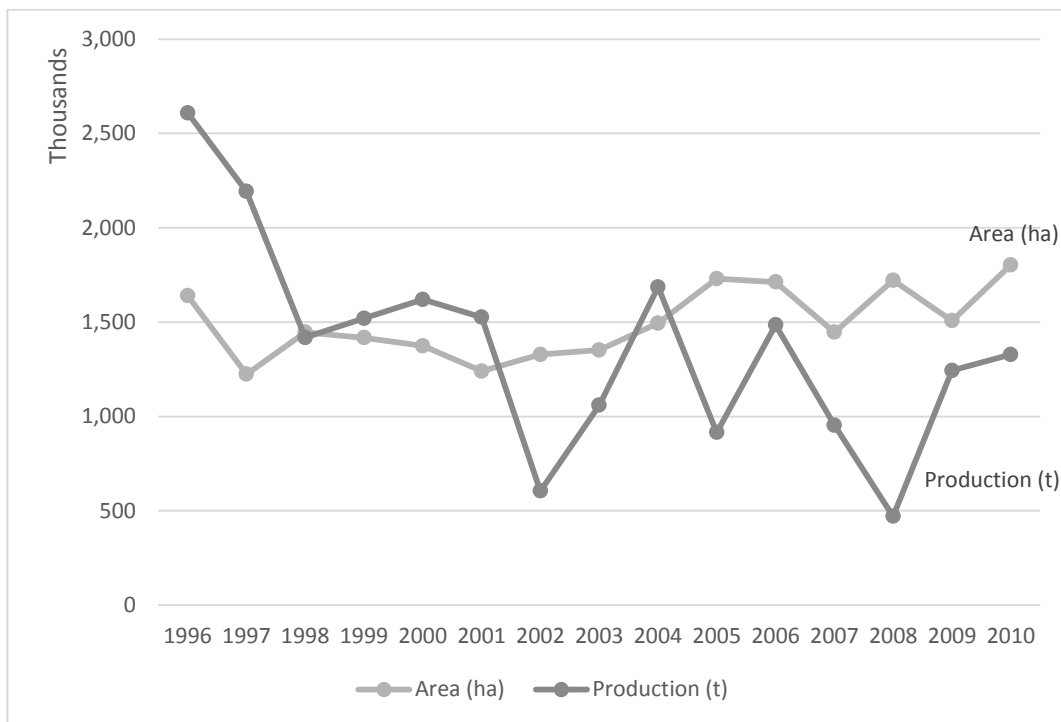


Figure 3. National maize production trends (1996-2010)

Source: Various sources and FAO (2010).

From figure 3, we can see that there was a significant decline in national maize output since 1996 and fluctuating output levels every year of the period under review. Another noticeable decline in production was in 2002/3 (0.930 million tonnes), although this yield improved to 1.68 million tonnes in the following year (2003/4), which was attributed to good rains received in that year. The general trend, however, shows a decline in output with another notable low in the 2007/8 production season (0.575 million tonnes), which was a 65.8% fall from the previous season), and yet again in 2011/12 when production fell to 0.968 million tonnes (a 42.5% drop from the previous season) (Moyo, and Nyoni 2013. p. 112).

Wheat production, on the other hand, shows an interestingly different production pattern from that of maize. Prior to 2000, wheat was predominantly grown by LSCF and mostly A2 farmers took over production of wheat in the post-land reform era. In the 1990s, an average of 58,000 hectares were covered by wheat production, but dramatically declined since 2002 down to 18,200 hectares as at 2010 (Moyo, 2013. p. 41). Figure 4 below shows the changes in production pattern of wheat from the late 1990s to 2010. The figure shows an almost constant land area under wheat production from 1996 to 2003 when area under wheat production slightly increased immediately after the FTLR, only to drop again about five years later in 2008 and beyond. In relation to production, there was a steady decline in production since the late 1990s due to mostly broader economic challenges, but production increased in the 2003-4 season, mostly because of good rains and increased government support for wheat farmers, which however, proved inadequate in the long run due to broader economic challenges.

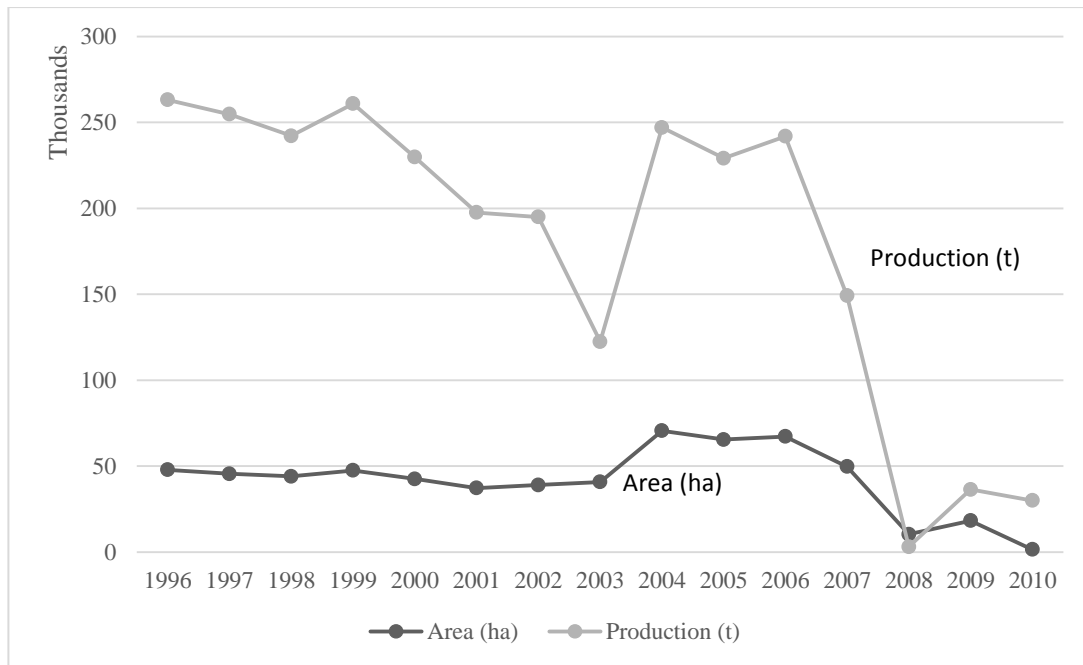


Figure 4. Wheat production trends (1996-2010)

Source: FAO (2010)

There are a number of other constrains for the new wheat farmers which resulted in this significant fall in wheat production. The new farmers could not produce at the level of the previous large-scale commercial farmers because they lacked adequate farming capital in the form of technical skill and knowledge of how to produce wheat. They also could not afford the high technology machinery and equipment required for efficient wheat production (such as irrigation equipment, irrigation infrastructure, tractors and combine harvesters), faced major constrains in accessing adequate inputs on the local market as the government increasingly relied of foreign markets to meet the high input demands from the increased number of farmers after the resettlement programme (Moyo, 2006). Wider economic and political factors also played a part in this change in wheat production. Due to the ensuing economic problems, the government could not adequately

provide the necessary support for the new wheat farmers who, unlike the former large-scale commercial farmers, dependent on government financial support for their farming enterprises. Constant electrical blackouts, which dramatically increased after 2007/ 2008 also significantly hurt production of wheat. In the end, a number of new wheat farmers simply abandoned producing wheat because of the numerous production constraints.

Overall, national average cereal production declined over the years since 2000 with marginal gains in selective years. Since the 1980s, national maize balance sheet maintained a positive trend with sharp declines in selective drought years of 1982, 1992, and 1998/ 2000 when a major drought hit the region and coincided with the inception of the FTLRP in 2000. The 1980s average is especially high because of the massive drive for rural and agricultural based development soon after independence, and the 1990s production was generally lower than that of the 1980s due to drastic national policies like the economic structural adjustment program (ESAP). National output, however, quickly recovered after bad agricultural seasons, partly because of good food reserves from previous bumper harvests, and also because of supportive policies that were quickly put in place to revive production. Recent figures show that Zimbabwe's food production sector is struggling and reliant on food imports and international food aid to feed an increasingly hungry population (See figure 5 below).

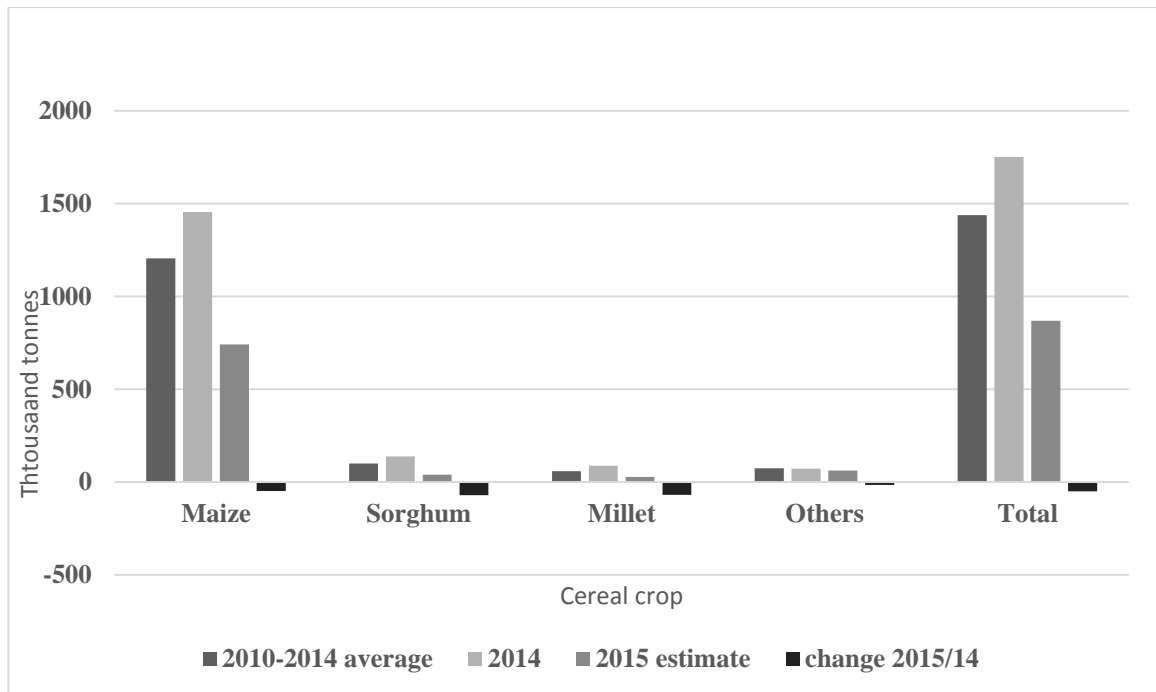


Figure 5. Zimbabwe's average cereal production (2010-2015)

Source: FAO (2010); Moyo (2013, p. 112)

Figure 5 shows recent national production averages of maize compared to other traditional grain crops for the period 2010 to 2015. The production trend shows maize as the dominant cereal crop produced, but in inadequate quantities to sufficiently meet national consumption demand. To be food secure, Zimbabwe requires a minimum of 2 million tonnes of maize, and 2010 – 2015 average yields fall far short of the minimum requirement, suggesting that millions of Zimbabweans have been increasingly exposed to food insecurity over the years (UN-WFP, March 2014). In March 2014, 2.2 million Zimbabweans (out of an estimated 13 million Zimbabweans) were said to be in danger of chronic food insecurity and unsure of where they could get their next meal (New Zimbabwe Online News, March 4, 2014). Since 2002, the government has had to resort

to food imports and to accept food aid to supplement affected areas, especially the most vulnerable drier parts of the country (IRIN News, August 2013). Moyo (2013, p. 41) notes that on average, A1 average crop yields were 50% less than A2 average yields, and average yields in the drier areas were also on average 50% less than those in the wetter areas in the period between 2000 and 2010. As at 2013, Zimbabwe's import share of maize and wheat consumption stood at 56.4% and 90.4% respectively, and has not really improved much since then (FAO, 2013, p. 5). The Commercial Farmers Union (CFU) of Zimbabwe described this situation as a 'man-made crisis' that directly resulted from the "chaotic" land reform programme and a decade of "inappropriate policies" (Zimbabweland, 2013, September 16). Table 3.5 in the appendix section summarises assessments of changes in food security and progression of vulnerability to food insecurity in various provinces and districts across the country from 1994 to 2003.

Ordinarily, extensive land redistribution would be expected to change agricultural production structure and direction during the transitional phase as new farmers take up their allocated farms and mobilise resources to set themselves up, while other support mechanisms such as financial support and other state support programmes prepare for the change (Moyo, 2006). Continued underperformance in Zimbabwe's agricultural production sector more than a decade later suggests deeper underlying problems that require further investigation. The next section of this chapter focuses on some of the key challenges in the FTLRP showing how they have led to a precipitous fall in national agricultural food production since 2002.

## **Key Challenges in the Fast Track Land Reform Programme**

There are a number of key problems in the FTLRP, which had both immediate and long-term implications on national food production. Key issues were found in the planning, administration, implementation, management, land tenure arrangements, and wider economic and political factors, which made it difficult for the government to provide adequate post resettlement support on the fast track farms. Given that in Zimbabwe, like in many other African countries, land is a political resource with more than just economic value, but is also tied to social, cultural and spiritual values of the indigenous people, the impact of the land reform can be broad and difficult to untangle out of that mix. Zimbabwe's agricultural sector is also tied to many other economic sectors and this interdependent relationship also strengthens the complexities in unfolding the independent implications of the FTLRP, disentangled from all these other related factors. However, this study maintains focus on the processes and events of the FTLRP itself. The broad categories of the stated weaknesses in the FTLRP are expounded in the following discussion.

### **Planning**

From the onset, the FTLRP seemed to be a rushed decision with no proper planning on the part of the government. Coming soon after the rejection of a new draft constitution in 2000, just before the June 2000 parliamentary elections and the critical presidential elections in 2002, the sincerity of the government in carrying out accelerated land reforms was questioned, especially by the international community and those in opposition political parties, like the MDC (Utete, 2003. p. 16). Due to the lack of proper

planning, and the hastiness with which the program was implemented, many saw the FTLRP as a political ploy by the ruling party to boost its waning support base in the face of rising popularity of the MDC. It was also viewed as a political tool to silence critics, especially the white commercial farmers who were strongly against the land reform and were also strong supporters of the MDC with the plan of instituting a regime change.

Lack of proper planning made it difficult for the government to keep up with the fast changing realities of the land reform programme. The government could not institute efficient policies and measures to deal with the number of problems, both expected and unexpected, which emerged in the rapid implementation of the land reform programme. For example, there were a number of land-based conflicts, especially in high demand areas like Mazowe, Chipinge, and a number of other areas close to the capital Harare, which spilt into the courts, but the courts were overwhelmed because the government had not properly planned how to deal with such scenarios. In the end, politics seemed to take over most of the processes, as political decisions and utterances at public rallies became policy, and the direction followed by many involved in the land reform processes FTLRP (Matondi, 2012. p. 5). This was however problematic because those political utterances and instructions were not enforceable by law, giving rise to a lot of confusion and undue political influence in the land reform processes and outcomes. For example, some of the land ended up falling into the hands of the wrong people who did not qualify for the type of farms they got, and the end result was negative implications on farm production and productivity (Matondi, 2012. p. 5).



In the little planning that was done, for example to provide farming capital in the form of finance and subsidised input support, infrastructural support in the form of irrigation support structures like boreholes and dip tanks, and to also develop transport networks such as roads and bridges, and also expand on the rural electrification program, the success rate of execution of these plans was minimal. For example, due to lack of planning and also the wider implications of a weak economy, there was an acute shortage of critical farm inputs such as seed and fertilizers, which had direct negative implications on production. In Masvingo, thousands of farmers failed to access sufficient seed and fertilizers on the local market and in most cases, the few inputs available were going for exorbitant prices that the new farmers could not afford, and also not sustainable for profitable farming (Scoones et al., 2010 .p. 151). In the end, many farmers dropped production of vital crops such as wheat, leading to shortage of commodities like bread. In response the government engaged in command agriculture, using the military to monitor wheat and maize production in the irrigated A2 farms and agricultural estates within the High-veld Masvingo region (Scoones et al., p.149- 151). Market control strategies were put in place, where all farmers were to sell their wheat and maize to the GMB at controlled prices, and this did not work out well because farmers strongly resisted militarisation of farming and the government's market monopoly offering low market prices for the farmers' hard earned wheat and maize commodities.

### **Administration**

Administration processes in the FTLRP were marred by politics, corruption, nepotism, and bureaucratic inefficiencies that had a net negative impact on production

outcomes on the fast track farms. Administrative institutions were also not properly equipped with the right technical and technological systems necessary for comprehensive data management to assist in making complex land identification processes and for effectively reviewing important decisions that would ensure efficient land identification, allocation and occupation processes (Makadho, 2006. p. 173). As a result, there were beneficiaries who accessed multiple farms against the policy of one man one farm, there was also the problem of double farm allocations (one farm being allocated to more than one person), which created a number of land disputes that again flooded the courts and also took up a lot of productive time of the local authorities and farmers trying to fix the problems. In 2001, the government issued a warning to all multiple farm owners and that they had to relinquish extra farms they had to allow others to also have land, and more than 25,000 farms were relinquished (Utete, 2003), but still others remained in possession of multiple farms, especially high profile politicians and politically connected elite individuals.

Inefficient administration systems also reflected in the major communication problems between various policy-making bodies, implementing agencies, prospective land beneficiaries and farmers. A 2002 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) report on the FTLRP noted that “Communication between central –level committees and between the district and central government levels [was] poor. The management systems, information systems and skills required to coordinate the functions at these various levels [was] ineffective, while the management of conflicts between settlers, landowners and government officials over land matters [was] poorly

coordinated...” (UNDP, 2002. p. 23 in Makadho, 2006. p. 181). Despite set structures and processes of dealing with administration issues, bureaucratic tendencies influenced by the political sensitivity of the land reform programme slowed down administrative decision making, and created problems of patronage, corruption and cronyism in important production decisions, which had potential long lasting negative implications on farm production, as was the case seen in Mazowe area (Makadho, 2006. p. 183).

Also due to administration and management weaknesses some of the farms ended up belonging to unintended beneficiaries who were not intended for the type of farms they got. For example, there were some farmers in Mazowe who benefited from A2 farms, but were in fact suitable only for smaller farms like the A1 model because they did not possess the technical, mechanical, and financial resources required to properly manage the large farm sizes they got. As a result, land was wasted and underutilised as they could afford to produce on only a small portion of the acquired farm. Others inherited farm structures and equipment that they did not know how to operate, leading to cases of vandalism or simply stripping off some parts for sale to make money to recapitalize the farm, or to meet other pressing financial obligations, possibly not even related to farming. For example, a government report on A2 farmers in Mashonaland East showed that in 2002/3 season, more than 117 resettled farmers were not making use of available irrigation equipment on the farms that they had acquired under the FTLRP (Summary from Goromonzi District Commercial A2 Audit Report, Excel Sheet, Department of Lands and Rural Resettlement in Marongwe, 2013. p. 181). Another 14 farmers were not efficiently utilizing greenhouses, about 99 farmers were not making use

of tobacco barns, and another 230 land beneficiaries were not utilizing various agricultural infrastructure they inherited on the farms (Summary from Goromonzi District Commercial A2 Audit Report, Excel Sheet, Department of Lands and Rural Resettlement in Marongwe, 2013. p. 181). Some of the important farming equipment and infrastructure inherited on the FTFs even fell prey to thieves or simply went obsolete because of mismanagement.

### **Implementation**

Implementation strategies employed in the actual land occupation processes had direct negative short term and long-term implications on agricultural production on the fast track farms. In many cases, actual land occupations involved violent and chaotic land take overs that led to immediate flight of vast knowledge, skill and experience as the white farmers sped off their farms for safety without sharing or transferring valuable farming experience to the incoming farmers. It can be argued, however, that the possibility of peaceful land transfers under the FTLRP was thin, given the need to achieve set land redistribution targets against firm resistance from the commercial farmers. As such, forced land evictions would have been the only way to achieve the land reform goals. However, the mostly chaotic land occupations and seizures caused a lot of confusion and land disputes that discouraged potential agricultural financial investors from financially investing in agriculture on fast track due to the instability. Some western donors, even 10 years later, are still unwilling to support land beneficiaries under the FTLR, arguing that the farmers are settled on contested land and western investment can only be considered when the western investors are satisfied that land disputes are

amicably resolved (Matondi, 2012. p. 235, and p. 11). Matondi (2012. p. 238) notes that the FTLR will “only gain popular recognition when the farmers on the ground start producing sufficiently to regain the confidence of the western donors.” This means the problem becomes a vicious cycle where without adequate finance the farmers cannot produce, and without producing, they cannot access finance.

Another problem with the chaotic farm invasions and takeovers was that it encouraged political manipulation and undue influence by powerful connected elites who could hire “thugs” to occupy undesignated farms for a fee. This was problematic because it derailed the formal land identification, selection and allocation procedures making it difficult for the government to have accurate records of who got what type of land and to determine actual quantities of land transferred. The fact that the government easily formalised land invasions by granting land permits to any occupant of an invaded farm and making it illegal for removal of a person from any farm, regardless of how that person initially settled in, without being allocated an alternative farm did not help the situation and related problems.

The consequence of this was that the international community considered the violent land evictions an abuse to human rights and reacted with imposing economic sanctions on Zimbabwe thereby effectively excluding Zimbabwe from international dealings, vital to support an increasingly failing economy. Although the economic sanctions, effected the 7th of March 2003, led by the European Union (EU), United States of America (USA) and Australia were said to be targeted to specific individuals, external government funding from the IMF and WB were immediately suspended and

other international business partners were discouraged from dealing with Zimbabwe (GoUSA, 2011; RBZ, 2007. p. 207). The economic sanctions effectively plunged Zimbabwe into a deep economic crisis that had a direct bearing on agricultural production and the progress of the land reform programme. By 2008, Zimbabwe was experiencing unprecedented hyper monetary inflation rates that led to among other problems, critical shortages of vital agricultural inputs like fuel, fertilizer and seed. Given the dependence of Zimbabwe's agrarian economy on foreign markets and agricultural inputs, these negative reactions from the international community became a key constraint to production activities and related agro-industries (Moyo, 2007, p. 364). The economic problems also weakened the ability of the government to adequately provide the much-needed financial support to boost production on the new fast track farms. The situation only improved in 2009 under a new government of national unity between the MDC and ZANU-PF when the Zimbabwean dollar was completely abandoned and a new multi-currency system was adopted.

### **Inadequate Post Settlement Support**

After the new settlers acquired farms, there was need for the government to provide financial, technical, mechanical, and infrastructural support to boost production on the new fast track farms. However, due to lack of proper planning, the government had embarked on a costly exercise with limited financial resources on the backdrop of a deteriorating economy. As a result, the government failed to provide *adequate* post resettlement support for the newly resettled farmers. Despite the effort made in arranging for some agricultural support schemes for the new farmers, wider economic conditions,

among other reasons, prevented the government from adequately supporting its farmers. The new farmers needed various kinds of support such as subsidized credit, adequate supply and efficient access of inputs like seed and fertilizer, mechanical support in the form of tractors and other relevant equipment, and technical support such as efficient extension services especially in the remote rural areas. But the government lacked funds to adequately provide the much needed support.

Besides an inadequate financial base, there were other constraints such as distribution inefficiencies of those few available government resources, and weak policy structures that failed to enforce proper usage of the already limited resources. Most of the support programs availed by the government were directed by the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) with support from a number of other government departments linked to the agricultural sector. Examples include, the crop and livestock input scheme led by the Grain Marketing Board (GMB), the Irrigation Rehabilitation and Development Programme directed by the National Irrigation Department, Operation Maguta/Inala (food security) led by the Zimbabwe Defense Forces and a few other programmes spearheaded through agricultural institutions like the Agricultural Development Bank of Zimbabwe (Agribank), the Tobacco Industry and Marketing Board (TIMB) in collaboration with various other bodies such as the Department of Agricultural and Technical Extension Services (Agritex), Agricultural and Rural Development Authority (ARDA), and the District Development Fund (DDF) (Moyo and Nyoni, 2011. p. 206). (See Table 3.6 in appendix showing more details on major agricultural support schemes that were availed by the government through the RBZ.

The 2003 national survey of land reform outcomes produced in the Utete report showed local evidence of production struggles faced by farmers due to lack of adequate post settlement support. The report noted that many of the new farmers who acquired land did not qualify and did not have technical and management skills to productively run a farm, especially in the remote parts of the country, where the problem was worsened by limited availability of tillage and extension services as well as little access to inputs and other government post-settlement support programs (Utete, 2003. p. 41-45). In another local study done in Masvingo between 2006-2009, it was noted that the local farmers engaged in intensive cropping strategies to try and improve yields through maximising land usage with the help of few government support schemes, like operation Maguta, which was introduced in 2005, focused on supplying inputs in the new resettlement areas, but major inputs shortages on the local market severely hampered the government's efforts and success of the farming programmes (Scoones et al., 2010. p. 151). The inputs problem was especially critical at the height of politics in Zimbabwe leading up to 2008 and was alleviated in 2009 at the formation of the government of national unity in 2009 (Scoones et al., 2010. p. 151). Selective access to inputs due to political patronage, corruption, and vote buying also marred the government's post-settlement support activities as some undeserving individuals accessed inputs at the expense of deserving farmers who later resold the inputs on the parallel market, leading to major production inefficiencies (Scoones et al., 2010. p. 149). Similar problems were also reported by Matondi (2012) in the Mazowe, Mangwe and Shamva Districts. Overall, inadequate post-settlement support, distribution inefficiencies of various government



initiated support schemes, and selective access of the little available agricultural inputs on the market had a direct negative impact on agricultural production on the fast track farms and countrywide availability of food.

### **Nature of Land Tenure Systems Granted to New Settlers**

Tenure arrangements on the new resettlement schemes were based on leasehold land tenure system, where land permits or offer letters, not full land title (in the form of legal title deeds), represented proof of ownership. The letters explicitly stated that the government could revoke the land offer at any time under the discretion of the responsible Ministry and this created tenure insecurity and was a source of a number of production problems due to uncertainty for the new farmers on the fast track farms. In most instances, the new land beneficiaries were not motivated to make significant investments on the newly resettled farms for fear of having their farms revoked at any time, thereby lose money they would probably not be compensated for the farm investments made should they be moved.

Another problem with the volatile land permits was that they were unbankable and could not be used as collateral to access bank loans and credit. Unless a farmer had alternative collateral in the form of a house or other tangible security elsewhere, they could not use their farm to access bank credit (Marongwe, 2013 .p. 180). However, there was no clear policy suggesting a relationship between secure tenure and access to agricultural finance, which again caused confusion within the finance sector as the government constantly pushed the banks to support farmers based on land permits, but most banks resisted, and continued requesting legal title deeds as collateral for any

significant bank loans (Marongwe, 2013 .p. 180). In some cases, A2 farmers used political connections to access state funding that they did not necessarily deserve, causing wastage of funds (Scoones et al. 2010. p. 88). Moyo (2013. p. 47) notes that shortages of key agricultural production inputs, such as seeds, fertilisers and agrochemicals severely lowered the farms' productive capacities in the face of expanding demand from the growing numbers of new farmers (Moyo, 2013. p. 47). Farmers would have to either use their own resources to purchase inputs, sometimes at exorbitant prices on the parallel market because of scarcity, or they could get subsidised inputs from the GMB. For example, in direct contrast to the government policy, over 70% of A2 farmers in a study sample in Goromonzi district accessed subsidised inputs from the GMB loan scheme, while only 23% used their own resources (Marongwe, 2013. p. 181). This would sometimes happen at the expense of the smaller A1 or communal farmers, causing net selective access to inputs that would, in some cases, end up on the parallel market. Also because of inadequate financial resources, the government failed to provide enough farming equipment, training and extension services as well as credit and loan subsidies. Hostile international relations, especially with economic sanctions in place, aggravated the inputs problems and further weakened the ability of the government to fully support its farmers.

The problem of insecure tenure also led to a number of land based conflicts, such as boundary disputes, double land allocations, and ownership wrangles which at times spilt into the courts, wasting a lot of productive time as the farmers followed up on the issues with the courts. Because of the land conflicts, some of the farms remained

uncultivated and fallow during planting seasons as it would be unclear who the actual owner of the land is as the affected farmers would be waiting for formal instructions from authorities on what to do next. Although the government acknowledged the problems attracted by insecure land tenure, they also feared a total reversal of the land reform programme should they give the settlers title deeds because they will be able to easily sell the land, even back to the previously displaced white farmers. This has been an ongoing conundrum, but with detrimental effects on production due to weak farm investments that would not fully maximise farm production and productivity.

### **Absence of a Strong Policy Framework to Support the New Farmers**

Early land reforms of the mid-1980s resulted in a successful agricultural story that earned Zimbabwe recognition as the breadbasket of Southern Africa. The national development policy of growth with equity was clear, enforced and specifically targeted at boosting communal agriculture, hence the success. For the FTLRP, the policy environment lacked clarity, consistency, and firm enforcement needed to protect national food production. Although the overall national policy was aimed at accelerating land redistribution, the overall agricultural policy environment was not supportive to the new farmers nor did it give the government much direction in planning or monitoring performance of fast track farms in order to come up with accurate intervention strategies for areas that were not performing well after resettlement (Jayne, et al. 2006, p. 534). The overall growth with equity policy of the 1980s was strongly supported as shown by the government changing all key government institutions to give high priority to the communal farmers and small scale producers, which was met with dramatic response by

especially the communal farmers who became the largest suppliers of maize and cotton for the local market in the first five years after independence (FAO, n.d; Dansereau, 2005. p. 8). A series of other supportive policies were instituted in the first late 1980s to stimulate small-scale agriculture, such as the Export Retention Scheme and the Export Revolving Fund instituted in 1986, and the communal areas management programme for indigenous resources (Operation Campfire), instituted in the late 1980s (Alexander, 2006. p. 182). Operation Campfire involved various community conservation programs that helped the farmers to carryout sustainable agricultural practices in their communal lands. In addition, the government provided subsidised producer prices that indirectly stimulated growth for the export market for commercial farmers, through such cash crops as maize (FAO, n. d). Under the FTLRP, the government did not have such robust policy frameworks to support the new farmers on the fast track farms and this failed to stimulate farmers to produce on the new farms.

Another problem with the weak policy environment under the FTLRP is that unclear and unenforced policies encouraged politicisation and manipulation of land reform processes, especially in the high demand areas like areas close to the capital or urban areas such as the Mashonaland Central District. For example, there were claims of political manipulation and cronyism which led to most of the A2 farms, especially those of prime soils and good existing infrastructure, going to political figures and powerful elites in the Goromonzi area, which is located close to the capital Harare, where most of the farmers could commute from their businesses and families in Harare to visit the farms after work or during weekends (Marongwe, 2013. p. 182). Although the land reform

policy provided that absentee farmers should employ a qualified and experienced farm manager to run the farming enterprise in the owner's absence. This policy was not enforced. Hence, it was easily breached by this group of farmers, resulting in major production inefficiencies due to weak farm management practices.

The FTLRP coincided with a major drought of 2000 and 2002, which required rethinking of policy to reduce the impact of recurring droughts on the fast track farms, but there was no new policy put in place to this effect. For example, the government treated all farmers across the country as a homogenous group and lacked policy strategy on how to specifically target the real needs of various groups of farmers. The inputs needs for the different climatic and geographic parts of the country are different, yet the government treats all farmers as a homogenous group by providing the same seed varieties and quantities of fertilizers for the varied parts of the country during times of drought (Jayne, et al, 2006. p. 534). Another example is the restrictive marketing policies instituted on commercial selling and trade for maize and wheat following the July 16, 2001 legislative instruments No 235A, which prohibited free marketing and distribution of maize and wheat except through the Grain Marketing Board (GMB) (Jayne et al. 2006, p. 535). The GMB was the sole buyer and seller of maize, thus it controlled the commodity prices. This was a production disincentive to the maize and wheat producers.

## Case Studies

The purpose of the following case study section is to underline the major issues discussed above, and provide local based evidence of a national problem, showing the said weaknesses and problems in the FTLRP, which led to both long-term and short-term food production problems. Three case studies are carefully selected based on their different strategic position within different agro-ecological and political administrative zones in order to provide a fair local analysis of a national problem under review. The first case study is based on a 2003 national audit report on the impact of the FTLRP, done by a presidential land review committee led by Dr. Charles Utete. The project was funded by the government and requested by President R.G. Mugabe to assess progress of the fast track land reform programme. The second case study was situated in Masvingo Province, led by Professor Ian Scoones, published in a book called *Zimbabwe's Land reform Myths and Realities* (2010). The third case study was situated in Mashonaland Central Province (Shamva and Mazowe Districts) led by Prosper Matondi and was published in a book called *Zimbabwe's Fast Track Land Reform* (2012). The 2012 study by Matondi is of a much broader geographical scope encompassing another sustained survey in Matabeleland South Province (Mangwe District) led by the RUZIVO Trust, a non-governmental organisation founded by Prosper Matondi.

Data presented from these studies show changes in production patterns and productivity on the resettled fast track farms and highlights the different experiences of the new farmers showing how their various experiences resulted in the downturn in production. All case studies show somewhat similar experiences among the new settlers,

but there are some experiences that were more intense in other regions compared to other regions. For example, dry parts of the country had less politically motivated problems compared to the high rainfall regions, where demand for land was high, and the impact of drought was minimal. As such, increased incidences of disruptive land conflicts were seen to be more in the areas close to the capital, Harare, or close to the urban areas, more than in remote parts of the country such as Mangwe District in the low rainfall area of Matabeleland South Province.

### **Case 1: The Utete Report**

The Utete report was a publicly financed land reform audit report based on three intense months of assessing land reform processes and their immediate outcomes across the country. The report showed that despite the overarching problem of drought and a number of common challenges faced in programme implementation across the various provinces, production ranged from good to average (p. 22). The newly resettled A1 farmers were found to achieve better production levels compared to their A2 counterparts and those obtained in the pre-land reform period (p. 22). The report identified that the resettled farmers commonly grew maize and cash crops such as tobacco, cotton, soya beans and paprika, while horticultural crops were especially grown in the Manicaland and Mashonaland East provinces (p. 28). Production trends shown in the report indicate that maize took up most of the cropping area, but production decreased while productivity increased. The report noted that extensive land clearings during settlement were mainly responsible for the increased harvests as average national yields were found to be lower than those of the previous commercial farmers, meaning that the farmers

were not producing to their full potential. Table 3.1 below shows that the amount of land under maize production actually declined every year in the three-year period under review, between 1999 and 2001 against a gradual increase in yields. This was because most of the land that had been recently cleared was highly productive virgin land. Production of soya beans and cotton also showed a similar trend to that of maize, but production of tobacco showed a different production trend, where there was a significant fall in the land area under tobacco production and this also reflected in the fall of total annual output although again the yield indicates that the virgin soils from land expansions contributed to high land productivity.

**Table 3.1: Maize, Soya beans, Cotton and Tobacco Production Figures (1999-2001)**

<b>Crop</b>		<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>
Maize	Area planted	1,477,990	1,373,117	1,239,988
	Harvest (tonnes)	944,344	1,502,651	1,526,779
	Yield (t/ha)	0.64	1.09	1.23
Soya beans	Area planted	52,931	60,650	64,009
	Harvest (tonnes)	120,684	135,417	140,793
	Yield (t/ha)	2.28	2.23	2.20
Cotton	Area planted	310,534	282,469	384,574
	Harvest (tonnes)	197,259	241,964	280,254
	Yield (t/ha)	0.64	0.86	0.73
Tobacco	Area planted	79,108	76,486	66,970
	Harvest (tonnes)	175,282	190,242	161,901
	Yield (t/ha)	2.22	2.49	2.42

*Note:* Reproduced from *Utete report* (2003. p. 28)

The report noted a number of both common and localised production challenges across the country. These problems ranged from the level of the farmer to policy level. For example, at the local level, some of the new farmers who acquired land did not have



the much needed technical and management skills to productively run the farms they acquired, especially in the remote parts of the country, where there was limited availability of farmer support services such as tillage and extension services, as well as severe shortages of inputs and limited access to the few government post-settlement support programmes (p. 41-45). Some of the new farmers were said to have inherited big plot sizes that they could not manage, or that they were not adequately equipped to run efficiently. The few who accessed mechanised farms sometimes had no idea of how to use the farm implements that they found on the farms, while others vandalised some of the farm structures (farm houses, tobacco barns, fences, etc.), and other valuable equipment like irrigation equipment, tractors, and stripped them of parts to sell for money. Some of the equipment fell prey to thieves, and the new farmers were simply unable to replenish the stolen equipment, leading to major production problems.

The report also acknowledged policy weaknesses that were not supportive of productive agriculture. The problem of insecure land tenure was particularly noted to be detrimental to production. Due to insecure land tenure arrangements based on leasehold, and offer letters or land permits which clearly stated that they could be revoked at any time, the farmers were not motivated to fully invest on land that they did not fully own (p. 48). This was especially an issue among the A2 farmers. Poor farm investments thus undermined production and productivity on the farms (p. 48). In addition, the land permits were not bankable, thus the banks did not accept them as collateral to access bank loans and this created major finance problems for the farmers (p. 52). The report

noted that the problem of finance needed to be addressed urgently, adding that sufficient well-directed financing was key to the entire land reform programme (p. 9).

Administration problems characterised by winding bureaucratic processes were cited as another key problem in the FTLRP as it encouraged corruption and nepotism in land deals, which resulted in a number of instances where farms fell into the hands of wrong beneficiaries who could not fully utilise the farms accessed (p. 41-45).

Administrative weaknesses also contributed to low uptake of allocated land, particularly among the A2 beneficiaries (p. 5). As at the 31<sup>st</sup> of July 2003, the nationwide land take up rate was 97% for A1 farmers and 68% for the A2 farmers (p. 5). Low uptake rate for the A2 farmers was due to a range of reasons. In many cases, responsible authorities did not inform successful applicants on time, causing major delays that sometimes frustrated potential farmers into quitting farming completely and opting to venture into other non-farming businesses. As a result, the prospective farmers would simply not take up the allocated farms and processing alternative beneficiaries for such farms caused production inefficiencies as that land would be left fallow in productive seasons. In other cases, prospective farmers would turn down land offers on realising that the farm had underdeveloped or inadequate infrastructure. In other instances, resource constraints and unending land conflicts forced them to quite farming altogether, leaving such farms abandoned, idle, and underutilised yet thousands other applicants pressured the government for land (p. 25).

Other common problems noted in the report were politicisation of various processes in the land reform programme, especially in areas closer to the urban cities like

Mazowe, Bindura and Marondera. Land conflicts, fuelled by multiple farm allocations, boundary disputes, and compensation claims made possible investors hesitant to invest on most fast track farms. The problem of drought, particularly in the northern and southern dry parts of the country was also a major drawback on production. The government failed to provide sufficient drought relief structures like adequate boreholes, efficient irrigation systems, drought resistance seed for the dry regions and subsidised fertilizers directly targeted for affected and drought prone areas. The report acknowledged the important link between land reform and national food security, citing that the FTLR, like any other land reform elsewhere, must not only redistribute land, but should also ensure improved agricultural production in a way that significantly contributes to national food security (p.3).

### **Case 2: The Masvingo Study**

The Masvingo study was based on a decade long empirical research on the FTLRP since 2000, led by Professor Ian Scoones. The study was mainly aimed at challenging negative popular media reports on the FTLRP by providing “hard empirical data,” by challenging some “10 Myths of the FTLRP,” one of which was that “agriculture is in complete ruins creating chronic food insecurity” (p.8). Masvingo is situated in the country’s South-eastern low-veld area, which is characterised by low rainfall and is mostly suitable for irrigation based agriculture or cattle ranching. The study was based on a randomly selected sample of 400 households, selected from 16 different sites, out of a total of 1, 351 households resettled in the Masvingo area by 2008 (p. 7). Prior to the land reform, cattle ranching and beef production was the core of

commercial farming in the Masvingo province. This was radically changed when the commercial farms were broken down during land reform processes, affecting all parts of the commodity chain, from production, processing and retailing. The new farmers were not mechanically and technically equipped to run the beef projects even at a smaller scale. The situation was worsened by a serious outbreak of foot and mouth disease in 2003, which banned all beef exports from Zimbabwe, resulting in the total collapse of the commercial beef sector in Masvingo, and other regions in Zimbabwe that depended on Masvingo for beef.

The Masvingo study, however, tries to paint a positivist picture on agricultural crop production. It claims that 40-50% of households across the sites showed a positive dynamic picture of productive agriculture through mixed farming, mainly in the smaller A1 farms, although A2 farmers, on the other hand, showed little success that needed more policy and capital intervention to facilitate take off (p. 240). Production pattern on the various farms showed that maize was the crop of choice for most farmers (p. 149). Other crops grown were cotton, sorghum, sunflower, finger millet, horticultural crops (vegetables) and beef production (p. 106). Although yields clearly varied between households and between study sites, the production pattern of cereal crops like sorghum and millet closely followed that of maize and the total amount of grain produced was less than that of maize alone (p. 149).

Due to extensive land clearings, and not necessarily improved yields, the number of households producing at least a tonne of maize gradually increased from 2002/03 to 2005/06 season (p. 107-108). Using a tonne of maize as the standard mark for a food

secure household, the study noted that 77% of the households in the A1 schemes of the Gutu cluster produced at least one tonne of maize during the relatively wet season of 2005/06 and 2008/09 season. From 2006 to 2009, the farmers engaged intensive cropping strategies to try and improve yields through maximising land usage with the help of few government support schemes, like operation Maguta that was introduced in 2005 aimed at supplying subsidised inputs in the new resettlement areas (p. 151). Such support schemes and the relatively more fertile lands within the new resettlement areas contributed to somewhat higher yields within the resettlement farms compared to their communal counterparts (p. 151).

Added to the inadequate government input subsidy schemes, major shortages of critical agricultural inputs such as seed and fertilizers on the market hampered the success of most farming programmes (p. 151.). The inputs problem was especially critical during 2008, at the height of political violence in Zimbabwe, leading up to the formation of the government of national unity in 2009. Political patronage, corruption, and vote buying led to selective access to inputs and food aid by the farmers, while some undeserving individuals accessed inputs at the expense of deserving farmers, leading to major production inefficiencies (p. 149).

The chaotic farm invasion also contributed to shortage of inputs like seed. For example, Seed-co, a major seed producing company in the Highveld area, experienced increased problems of finding seed multiplication sites across the country as most of their former seed growing sites were now occupied by resettled new farmers, most of whom did not have seed growing experience (p. 149). Also, the government had taken over the

local seed market and instituted price controls which offered low prices for seed, forcing the seed companies to withdraw their product on the local market and sell it to foreign markets such as Zambia and Botswana who paid fair commodity prices (p. 150-151). The GMB was also given market monopoly to buy all the maize and wheat, albeit at low prices that could not sustain the farmers into the next growing season. As a result, many wheat products, like bread, were withdrawn from the supermarket shelves as the bakeries and wheat producers were quickly falling out of business (p. 149). The farmers increasingly became dependent on state support, but the wider economic challenges constrained the government from providing adequate support needed to stimulate production on the new farms.

Other production challenges faced by the local farmers included financial constraints, shortages of draft power and labour, regular droughts, pests and diseases. These were constant strikingly similar problems shared by 75 randomly selected rich and poor, male and female participants from both smallholder (A1) and larger (A2) farmers interviewed across the various sites (p. 94, 143). For all these problems, the government responded with a string of increasingly rushed and desperate policies that were still not effective. For example, the state engaged in command driven agriculture. The military was deployed to monitor production and imposed production targets mainly for grains such as wheat, and maize in some A2 farms and estates located in the highveld, where irrigation is mostly practiced (p.149-151). Command agriculture was not sustainable and quickly failed because the local people strongly resented militarisation of farming and most of the government's strategies, especially monopolising the market for strategic

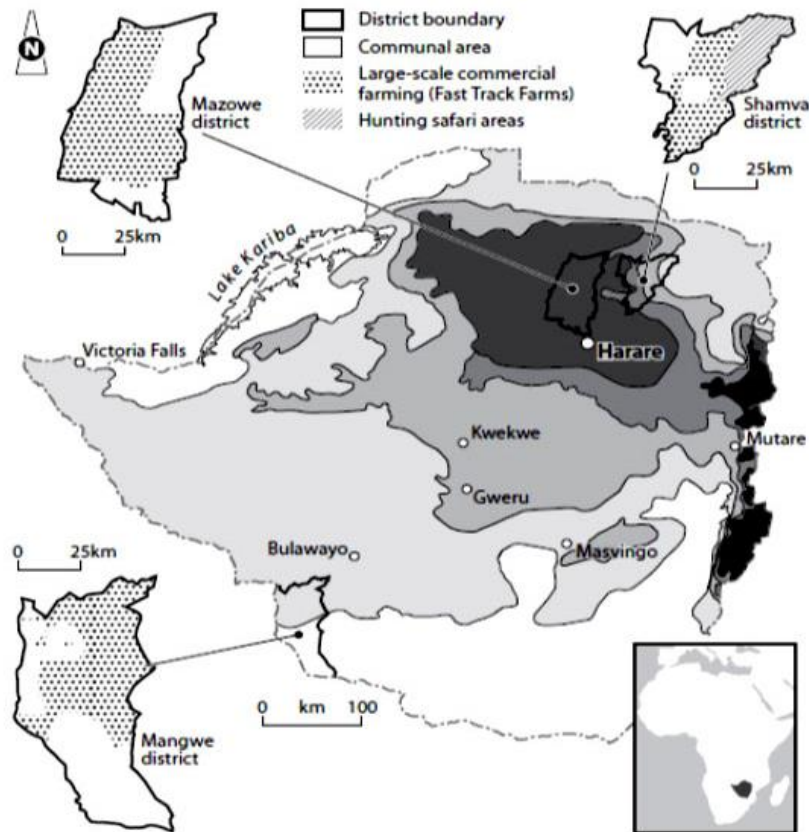
crops like maize and wheat. Interestingly, the Masvingo study concludes that although Zimbabwe's agriculture suffered over the decade since 2000, the situation on the ground is a differentiated and more complex picture (p. 239).

### **Case 3: Mashonaland Central and Matabeleland South Study**

In 2003, Prosper Matondi led a team of researchers to carry out an in-depth study of the FTLRP. The study was aimed at obtaining empirical evidence of local level transformations in the Mazowe and Shamva districts of Mashonaland Central province focusing on changes in livelihoods, agricultural production and development; and the forces that shaped them (p. xv-xi). Matondi and his team were later in 2006 joined by the Ruzivo Trust team to examine the same issues in the Mangwe district of the Matabeleland South province and together published the research findings in a book called *Zimbabwe's Fast Track Land Reform* (2012). The research was altogether recognised by other FTLR analysts as solid evidence based "landmark study" of broader geographical scope compared to any other FTLR studies done prior to 2012. Map 3 below shows the study sites that were investigated under this study.

**Figure 6: Map showing study sites for the Mashonaland Central and Matabeleland**

**South Case Study**



*Note:* Reproduced from “Zimbabwe Fast Track Land Reform” by P. B. Matondi, 2012, (p. xvi). Africa now. Zed Books: London & New York.

The Mashonaland Central province, especially Mazowe area was a source of much of the conflicts and struggles surrounding the FTLRP as farms in this area were on high demand, especially from a number of highly influential and powerful politicians because of the region’s strategic location in the best agricultural zone (p. xvii). Also, Mazowe is strategically located near urban centers like Bindura, and only a few kilometers away from the capital, Harare. This would allow land beneficiaries flexible



and convenient travel to their formal jobs and businesses in the city and back to the farms, especially on weekends. Some of the best commercial farms that produced high quality agricultural commodities were also located in this province. Of the five other districts in Mashonaland Central Province, Mazowe District holds the highest percentage (51%) of the close to a million hectares of prime land under A1 and A2 farmers in the province, followed by Bindura (18%) and Shamva (9%) (p. 41). Mazowe was thus quite attractive to most of the wealthy individuals who could convince the government that they could afford farm operations since financial standing was one of the main requirements to get A2 farms in this area and elsewhere. Mangwe District, on the other hand, did not attract much attention from such “land barons,” as they are known in Zimbabwe, mostly because of its location. It is situated in the south-western low veld area within agro-ecological region V, where the climate is generally dry with low annual rainfall of 650mm or less, thus, it less suitable for meaningful crop production (p. xvii). The difference in geography was an important dynamic that had a lot to do with the forces at play at the local levels and wider implications on food production.

In terms of production, the researchers observed that the new farmers in all three districts, Mazowe, Shamva and Mangwe adopted the same enterprises as the former white commercial farmers albeit at a much smaller scale. Although citrus and other horticultural products were produced, especially in Mazowe, cereals (maize, wheat) were the most commonly grown crops followed by tobacco and soya beans (p. 136). However, maize was the predominant crop for most of the A1, A2, and communal farmers in Mazowe mainly because of its strategic position as a staple food, and also a potential

income earner from sales (p. 136). Of the 38, 000 ha planted under maize, it was observed that the communal areas contributed much of this cultivated land area and the “untouched” large-scale commercial farms covered the least crop area (p. 136). It was estimated that communal farmers produced 70% of the total maize yield for the 2003/4 season, apparently typical of national production trends where the communal farmers supply 60 to 70% of the total national maize yields (p. 136). However, the combined total maize production of more than 75, 000 tonnes within the communal areas fell far short from the pre-2000 district production potential of 355, 000 tonnes (ibid.). In the Shamva district, maize took up at least 71% of the total cropped area in 2004/5 season, and 40% of the 30, 000 tonnes of total maize produced was under communal areas (at an average yield of 2.65t/ha), followed by 28 % from the old resettlement areas (at an average yield of 1-1.5t/ha), 26% from A1 farms (at an average yield of 2.45t/ha), and 6% from A2 farms (at an average yield of 3.65t/ha). In general, Mazowe and Shamva produced crop yields that were barely half of the yield potentials in those districts (p. 138).

Despite the unfavourable climatic conditions for maize production in Mangwe district, maize was also the chief crop grown with average yields of less than 0.5t/ha on an average of 2ha cropping areas (p. 138). “The low yields in Mangwe District have been attributed to poor soils, unreliable rainfall and poor agronomic practices especially late planting and low chemical fertilizer application (both compound D and Ammonium Nitrate)” (p. 138). Although a few farmers raised their crops under irrigation, particularly in the dryer Mangwe area, in general yields from both rain-fed crops and irrigated crops remained lower than the district potentials, and the average yields of the former large-

scale farmers in the same areas. Not only were there pre and post land reform differences in quantity of crops produced, but there were differences in the quality of the crops produced as well, owing to a number of complex factors and production challenges faced by the new farmers (p. 139).

The production challenges at play were influenced by a number of factors ranging from the farmer level, community level, to national and policy level. At the farmer level, many of the new farmers on the fast track farms (FTFs) started by growing familiar crops, while some of the A2 farmers sought assistance from extension services or engaged expertise of the previous farm workers to explore production of other crops like tobacco (p. 139). Some of the new farmers lacked knowledge, experience and technical skills to operate some of the farm equipment left by the former commercial farm owners (p. 141). At times they failed to identify the purpose or use of some of the equipment hence most of the machinery and equipment was not only underutilised, but left to dilapidate or stripped of parts and sold to raise farming capital or to meet other household costs such as health and education. Underutilization of farm machinery and relevant equipment resulted in inefficient farming practices that had net negative implications on food production.

The Ruzivo survey showed that prior to 2000, 80% of the commercial farms in Mazowe produced crops all year round through irrigation, but by 2004, only 41% of arable land was under irrigation and continued to fall to just 12% by 2007 because of decreased use of irrigation facilities (p. 141). There was an increased reliance on rain-fed agriculture, which meant that crops were more vulnerable to the impact of drought. In

Mazowe, tobacco was grown by about 6% of the sampled population and yields were generally low, averaging one tonne and below, mostly because the farmers relied on rain-fed production techniques for crops that usually do well under irrigation (p. 139). In the few cases that irrigation was still employed, a number of “unprogressive” issues were observed, such as “dysfunctional irrigation committees, poor collection of levies, poor yields under irrigation, inefficient use of water and poor timing of planting,” which all contributed to low yields (p. 141).

At the government level, there are complex sets of elements identified as inhibitors to successful agricultural production in the FTFs, especially in the Mazowe region that was marred by numerous land related conflicts. The state was slow to resolve these conflicts. Hence, significant amounts of productive time and financial resources that could have otherwise been invested in farming went to waste. Most land-based conflicts were caused by poor planning, management and administration inefficiencies that led to, for example, multiple farm ownership, issuing of the same piece of land to more than one person, boundary conflicts, constant movement of farmers induced by farm restructuring (for example converting A2 farms to A1 farms or vice versa), and weak communication lines among all parties involved. p. 109).

Institutional inefficiencies also had direct implications on production on the FTFs. For example, it resulted in poor selection of land beneficiaries and inefficient distribution of the already limited government post settlement support, such as subsidised inputs, extension, and tillage services. The problem was compounded by failure of the government to equip the various key agricultural institutions with latest technologies to

monitor land reform activities and progress, and to effectively arrange strong farmer organisations and marketing strategies to enhance profitable farming. Meanwhile, growing economic and political instability did not help the situation.

Most new large scale farmers were also not adequately equipped to run the farms they benefited and were forced to scale down their production owing to inadequate support from the government, and the biting wider economy (p. 112). In some cases, a new A2 farmer would have a 100ha plot, but able to utilise only 10ha of that land, leaving the rest of the land fallow and unproductive (p. 146). Sometimes prospective farmers were frustrated with the various production challenges and simply abandoned their new farms or handed them back over to the liable powers that be (p.141). Others, A2 farmers, would opt out of that model to go to a smaller A1 farm, not only because it was easier for them to manage, but somehow had a better sense of security, due to group security based on kinship, unlike on the A2 farms where land tenure fully depended on the insecure offer letter or land permit (p. 112). This all worked against the agricultural sector as there was no morale on the new farmers to efficiently and effectively produce (p. 141). Production challenges noted in all three districts mirror countrywide production problems on fast track farms. Although the studies showed that agriculture production was on a path to recovery, A1 farmers “presented a better scope of driving agriculture forward” (p. 161).

Insecure land tenure arrangements was discouraging for new farmers to meaningfully invest on leased farm, especially in the Mazowe area where the situation was highly politically tense, and powerful politicians could at any time use their powers

to take over land of their choice at any cost. The land offer letters issued to these farmers also explicitly stated that they could be withdrawn by authorities at any time, causing anxiety and a lot of uncertainty among the farmers. The permits were also not bankable and could not be used to access bank loans needed to financially boost production on the farms (p. 107-109). Insecure land tenure was also a political tool used by the state to control the people, and elicit “loyalty” to the government; otherwise those perceived disloyal feared having the land taken away from them (p. 97-110). Because of insecure tenure, some farmers were sceptical of establishing proper farm structures such as farmhouses, dams and other irrigation systems. Consequently, the farms did not provide comfortable residence for the new A2 farmers who are used to the comfort of their homes; hence they would opt to commute to and from the farm, due to its proximity to their urban homes. This had a problem of encouraging partial commitment to both their formal jobs in the city, and the farm shown in “weekend” or “cell phone” farming as the farmer was not fully present at his farm, unlike the former white farmers who practically lived on the farm and directly involved themselves in daily farm operations (p. 119).

## **Conclusion**

This chapter clearly indicated some key problems with the FTLRP that ultimately led to negative implications on national food production. Although there were some amazingly similar challenges across the country, varying from the level of the farmer, community level, and policy level, the three case studies presented showed that there were also some localised problems, as well as differences in intensity of albeit similar problems. For example, although all farmers struggled with access to critical farming

inputs, the situation was seemingly more severe in the drier parts of the country like in Masvingo area. In addition, politically motivated problems like selective access to inputs, hijack of processes such as identification of land beneficiaries, and land allocations encouraged mismanagement of already scarce, but critical state support that could otherwise boost food production on the new farms. Such problems were notably prominent in high land demand areas such as those close to the capital Harare, or other urban areas. The end result was a direct negative impact on national food production.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Thesis Conclusion**

This study set out to examine the implications of the Fast Track land reform programme (FLRP) on Zimbabwe's national food production, independent of other social, political and economic complexities in which the country is currently entangled. From this study, there is no doubt that land was effectively redistributed, but with long lasting negative consequences on national food production. A number of problems were identified in the FTLRP, which undermined agricultural production at different levels. Based on a critical review of literature on the various approaches to land reforms, tenure systems, and the theoretical underpinnings that guide them, the study concludes that there were key policy weaknesses in the FTLRP that led to poor planning, problematic execution strategies and, weak administration processes. Also, the unresolved issue of insecure land tenure arrangements discouraged meaningful farm investments necessary to boost agriculture on the new farms. In addition, inadequate post-settlement support, and the persistent shortage of critical agricultural inputs on the local market were also seen as major challenges faced in the FTLRP. This was worsened by a generally weak and unsupportive policy environment that failed to enforce the land reform policy on the newly distributed farms to ensure a successful land reform programme. An appreciation of the history behind the FTLRP and context within which it was carried out helped to better analyse the issue at hand, in order to successfully meet the objective of this thesis.

As shown in Chapter 1, land reform is a critical development issue in the Global South, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa where the countries share a common history of



forceful land dispossessions through colonisation. Chapter 1 also highlighted the significance of the agricultural sector in the developing countries, in this case represented by Zimbabwe, and how the problem of inadequate food availability has been retrogressive to development from the individual personal level right up to the national level. The thesis statement drawn from this literature review, also discussed in Chapter 1, aligns with the findings in the study. However, findings also showed that the land reform processes were quite complex and difficult to disentangle from the social, economic and political environment within which they are situated.

The historical background and context needed to fully understand and comprehend the FTLRP was provided in chapter 2. This historical background showed that after a series of failed attempts to carry out effective redistributive land reforms after attaining independence from Britain, the FTLRP was expected to finally put a seal to the nagging unequal land distribution problem. There was strong political will by the government to ensure that the minority group of former white European settlers (less than 2% of the population), most of them large-scale commercial farmers (LSCFs), who controlled more than 51% of the country's prime agricultural land, relinquish that land to the native black farmers, who are the majority. As noted by Borras (2007), in a truly redistributive land reform, very little if any compensation is offered to the affected parties, in this case former white LSCFs. This argument justifies the Zimbabwean government's unwillingness to provide full compensation to the displaced white farmers, except for farm improvements and not for the value of the land, which was all considered state property during and after the FTLR. The problem of compensation, however,

became such a contentious issue that it spilled over and flooded courthouses with legal battles between the state and the white farmers. The white farmers of course lost the battles, because the government continuously changed the laws to protect itself and to avoid legal costs. This in itself had a direct bearing on production, because those farms under legal disputes could not be fully utilised productively as both the farmer and possible investors felt insecure to invest on such farms.

Chapter 3 describes the FTLRP in greater detail, highlighting actual processes involved in the FTLRP and the changes in the agricultural production models brought about by the FTLRP. The chapter shows how these factors affected levels of national output. As shown in chapter 3, agricultural production drastically dropped during and soon after the FTLRP. Production figures since 2002 show that production has failed to recover to the 1990s level. Firstly, the planning processes involved in the land reform programme were problematic in a number of ways. Coming soon after a first time major defeat in a constitutional referendum against an increasingly popular opposition party, and the failure to mobilise funds in a major donor conference in 1998, the government seemed to make a hasty, unplanned, and emotional decision to embark on a high cost land reform operation without properly planning for the financial resources needed to successfully implement the costly programme. Without adequate financial resources, it was difficult to put in place strong institutions to manage and monitor the land reform processes. It was also difficult to ensure adequate post resettlement support for the new farmers on the FTFs, and it was equally difficult to enforce policies around the land reform programme.

For example, Operation Maguta, a 2005 government-sponsored subsidised agricultural inputs programme to boost agricultural production and food security spearheaded by the central bank of Zimbabwe through the GMB, was marred by distribution inefficiencies due to corruption, political patronage, thefts, and general mismanagement. As a result, valuable inputs went to unintended recipients, some of whom hoarded the inputs only to re-emerge on the parallel market at exorbitant prices that the majority of the poor farmers could not afford. However, because of planning inefficiencies and financial restrictions, the government failed to institute proper policy procedures to monitor the input distribution processes to ensure that they not only reach the intended beneficiaries, but also that the inputs were marketed and received at the correct value set by the government. In a study done in Goromonzi District based on national audit reports, over 70% of A2 farmers accessed subsidised inputs from the GMB loan scheme, while only 23% used their own resources (Marongwe, 2013. p. 181). This would sometimes happen at the expense of smaller A1 or communal farmers, who constitute the majority of farmers especially responsible for ensuring food security under the new production models introduced by the land reform programme. As a result, many of the smaller sized farmers would not be able to access the subsidised farm inputs, leaving them unable to optimise production on their farms. Other important post-settlement support that was needed included adequate mechanical support (e.g tractors and implements, irrigation equipment and machinery), technical support such as effective extension service especially in the remote rural parts of the country, and development of

supportive infrastructure like roads and bridges to ensure access to markets for both inputs and outputs. Due to limited funds, this support could not be provided adequately.

Secondly, the manner in which the actual land seizures and occupation occurred seriously undermined production. The settlers, led by former war veterans with mobilised support from the rural masses used violent and chaotic strategies to intimidate and drive the white farmers off the farm. They could just come in large numbers, create violence or chant political slogans, or simply sit in on the farm until the farmer left. Although reports were made to the police, the police were either few in numbers to handle the big groups, or sometimes they would simply ignore calls to intervene, claiming that the land occupation issues were highly political and beyond their jurisdiction. As a result, in the middle of the chaos, some unintended beneficiaries occupied land that they could not handle. Some were simply not educated, skilled or qualified to manage the farms that they got, simply because of mob support and political patronage. Although there were formal implementation procedures set, these were often not followed because the processes and procedures largely became political and difficult to enforce by law, since even the police could not intervene. Ultimately, production was disrupted, sometimes with unrecoverable losses, because some of the violently seized farms had actively producing crops in the field, whose growing cycle would be destroyed by lack of management and proper care during the chaos.

On the other hand, the flight of the white farmers from violence meant that they did not actually pass on their farming knowledge and skill to the new incoming farmers properly, if at all. As a result, some of the new farmers inherited equipment and

machineries that they first of all did not know what it is used for, and secondly, how it is operated. Thus the machinery was underutilised, run down, or became obsolete. At times the resettled farmers stripped off parts for resale, either to recapitalise the farm or to meet other pressing non-farming family expenses. In the long run, farm production suffered and for a long time failed to recover. For example, in a government report on A2 farmers in Mashonaland East, more than 117 resettled farmers were not making use of available irrigation equipment on the farms that they had acquired under the FTLRP in the 2002/3 season, 14 others were not efficiently utilizing greenhouses, at least 99 others were not making use of tobacco barns on their farms, and another 230 land beneficiaries were not utilizing various agricultural infrastructure they inherited on the farms (Summary from Goromonzi District Commercial A2 Audit Report, Excel Sheet, Department of Lands and Rural Resettlement in Marongwe, 2013. p. 181). The net result was a precipitous fall in production due to underutilisation of otherwise important technology and productivity enhancing resources.

Thirdly, there were major weaknesses in the administration processes that significantly affected production on the FTFs. These weaknesses were especially reflected in co-ordination problems between policymaking bodies and implementing agencies, and between various institutions and land beneficiaries, mostly caused by communication problems (UNDP, 2002. p. 23 in Makadho, 2006. p. 181). Bureaucratic tendencies and politicisation of administrative processes not only delayed making of important decisions, but also created problems of patronage and corruption, which had a direct impact on production (Makadho, 2006. p. 183). Coordination problems were also

evident in farm identification, allocations and occupations. Poor coordination and communication between responsible authorities and successful applicants caused a lot of confusion like multiple farm allocations (one farm given to more than one person), which was a source of conflict. Sometimes information would completely fail to reach successful applicants such that they would not take up their allocated farms on time or even at all, leaving productive land fallow and underutilised. The situation was worsened by the absence of comprehensive computerised database management systems necessary to make complex land identification and review decisions which could guide effective land allocation, acquisition and utilisation (Makadho, 2006. p. 173). This resulted in a lot of ownership and boundary disputes that caused a lot of problems like wastage of valuable time and resources trying to resolve the conflicts, which could otherwise have been invested in farming.

Additionally, the nature of land tenure systems granted to settlers was not encouraging for the new farmers to fully invest productively in their new farming enterprises on the fast track farms. Resettled farmers were issued land permits or offer letters and not formal land titles in the form of legal title deeds. Farmers felt that the land tenure arrangement was unstable and insecure. A number of cases confirming the fear of insecure tenure include those noted by Marongwe (2013. p. 180), where some A1 and A2 farmers had their offer letters withdrawn for unclear reasons, others had their A2 farms repossessed and subdivided for re-allocation under A1 scheme, while others had their farms delisted, leaving them in limbo and unable to grow any crops for some time until the issues were resolved (Marongwe, 2013. p. 180). For example, eight A2 farmers on a

farm called Mashonganyika in Goromonzi district who were formerly allocated plots ranging between 18.4 to 32.8ha lost their plots after the whole farm was de-listed in 2003 (GoZ, 2003 in Marongwe, 2013. p. 180). As a result, these farmers did not plant any crops during that farming season, waiting to get advice from authorities on what to do next after losing their land. Such cases discouraged farmers from setting up permanent structures like comfortable homes that would encourage them to stay on the farms and fully commit to farming, instead of commuting from their urban homes only during weekends. Former commercial farmers were fully stationed on their farms and this ensured efficient management of farm operations necessary for optimum production.

Land permits were also unbankable thus could not be used to secure credit or loans from the banks. This had a net effect of discouraging meaningful farm investments to support sustainable production. The government on many occasions pushed for banks to support farmers based on land permits, but banks insisted on legal title deeds for them to provide significant financial assistance to the borrowing farmers. Meanwhile, the government acknowledged weaknesses in the tenure arrangements, but feared a reversal of the programme if farmers were allocated full title to the land. The case of land titling therefore remains a contentious issue, but with direct repercussions on production.

Finally, weak, unclear, inconsistent and unenforced policies on agriculture and food security made it difficult to plan, monitor, or organise intervention strategies in areas that were not performing well after resettlement, or to properly support production in higher agricultural potential areas (Jayne et al., 2006. p. 534). Looking back, in the early to mid-1980s, Zimbabwe was an agricultural powerhouse mainly because of clear,

enforced, targeted, and supportive policies for enhanced agriculture and rural development. This was not the case under the FTLRP. For example, the government treated all farmers across the country as a homogenous group and lacked policy strategy on how to specifically target the real needs of various groups of farmers, like providing relevant type of seeds according to the different agro-ecological conditions, or agricultural mechanisation required across the different agricultural zones. Policy weakness also contributed to politicisation and manipulation of land reform processes because what was viewed as policy were more of political decisions made to suite a particular purpose at a particular time, but not really enforceable by law. Restrictive policies in marketing of both inputs and outputs also discouraged farmers. For example, the GMB gained total monopoly of maize and wheat for some years, offering discouraging buying prices that took most farmers out of business. The situation was worsened by a hostile international market environment caused by economic sanctions, which influenced severe shortage of key agricultural inputs like seed, fertilizers and chemicals acknowledged across the country, because the agricultural inputs market, to a large extent, depended on imports to feed the local inputs market. This resulted in severe decline of the farms' productive capacities in the face of expanding demand from the growing numbers of new farmers (Moyo, 2013. p. 47).

Because of the complex nature of land reforms and a number of other issues that could affect agricultural production in different ways within the varied geographical locations across Zimbabwe, it is difficult to completely generalise the implications of the FTLRP. As a result, three carefully selected case study were further investigated to



provide localised empirical evidence of the different implications of the FTLRP on food production. The Utete report provided a national picture of the FTLR processes and outcomes during the heated period of land reforms and this was mostly a transitional period where the impacts were not fully exposed. Immediate outcomes in findings from this report showed that there were already common problems across the country on most of the FTFs, especially for A2 farmers, who had bigger sized plots and required more capital and financial outlay. The report also shows that a number of new farmers struggled with the issue of insecure tenure, because of the unbankable land permits and offered letters issued out to the new farmers as representing ownership of their newly acquired farms. Because the land permits were not recognised as legal full title to the landed property, farmers feared that they could be displaced at any time, and felt insecure to make a lot of farm investments for fear of losses in the event that the farm was repossessed. Lack of significant farm investments therefore became a limiting factor to effective land use. Most of the increases in output were attributed to expansion of farming land due to land clearings as the new farmers settled, and not efficiency of land use. Otherwise productivity was, in many parts of the country, reportedly lower than that of the previous farmers.

The Masvingo case study showed that in addition to other common production problems with fast track farmers in other parts of the country, Masvingo had more severe problems of drought and shortage of inputs. Although some of the farmers inherited high technology irrigation equipment, many of them did not know how to operate the equipment, sometimes vandalised inherited equipment for parts to sell and make money

for other farm or non-farm expenses, while others failed to manage their equipment leaving it prey to thieves. Because of the weak agricultural policy environment, Masvingo area also felt the brunt the more because farmers in the area did not have policy support targeted to meet their actual production problems they were experiencing. They seemed to be grouped together under blanket policies with everyone else, but they had a number of unique, but serious problems that needed targeted urgent attention at policy level. Instead, the state resorted to command agriculture, which was resisted by the farmers. The case of Seed-Co Company, which struggled to find seed multiplication sites, presents a compelling policy weakness because such strategic companies that supply inputs can be effectively protected at policy level.

The Mashonaland Central and Matabeleland South case study showed a more complex picture of production problems on FTFs. Communal areas were seen to produce much of the maize (70%), followed by the few remaining “untouched” large scale commercial farms, the A1 farmers, followed by the A2 farmers (Matondi, 2012. p. 136). However, in general, average annual output for new farmers in this area fell far short of that of the displaced previous commercial farmers by more than 50% (Matondi, 2012. p. 138). There were not only differences in output, but also the quality of crops produced was lower than that of the former commercial farmers (Matondi, 2012. p. 139). A number of production challenges were highlighted. These include lack of farming experience, knowledge, skill, neglect and underutilisation of farm machinery and equipment; politics, partially committed “weekend farming” practices, disorganisation among some of the farming organisations, co-operatives, or committees and poor farming

practices like late planting. There were also noted administration problems shown in several land conflicts, weak communication lines between all parties involved, and long winding bureaucratic tendencies encouraged by politics. Although there were technocratic offices set for all processes, most decisions were made based on politics. Hence, there was a lot of consulting going on, which delayed making of important decisions and wasted a lot of time that could otherwise be invested in farming. Some farmers were forced to scale down operations because of production challenges, while others completely abandoned their farms because they were discouraged by politics in this area that had high political tensions among farm beneficiaries. Because of insecure tenure, the state could control the people and draw “loyalty,” and those perceived disloyal risked having their farms withdrawn (Matondi, 2012. p. 97-110).

Looking at the various approaches to land reforms discussed in the literature review, the FTLR closely follows the principles of the state-led approach to land reform and to some extent the state-society driven approach. Discussions of production outcomes associated with each of the various approaches can be easily discerned from those of the FTLRP shown in the various study areas. As Borras (2007) argues, a state-led approach constitutes a truly redistributive land reform that increases access to productive land in the interest of social justice and food self-sufficiency. This was evident in the FTLR, where more than 80% of the total land controlled by a minority group of white commercial farmers was successfully redistributed, with at least 70% of the land beneficiaries constituting the rural poor under the A1 production model. There were notable changes in production systems and patterns. While productivity was low,

output increased due to land expansions as more land was cleared for settlement. However, the following problems associated with the land reform approach emerged: inadequate planning, organisation, implementation, politics, insecure land tenure that discouraged land investments and, insufficient post-settlement support from the state. All these were problems that had direct detrimental effects on food production.

Interestingly, Zimbabwe is a unique case where many other approaches were tried before the controversial FTLR, but the results did not address the social injustice of unequal land ownership, which was at the heart of the land reforms, although earlier reforms did not have negative implications on food production unlike was seen with the FTLRP. However, earlier land reforms, especially in the 1980s, received strong policy support. The general political and economic stability also supported lucrative farming, but the problem of unequal land ownership structures remained unresolved, suggesting the conundrum of land reforms and food production. As Pica (2003) argues, the success or failure of land reforms lies in the historical context of the land reforms, the targeted objective, and imbedded social, political and economic context. In this case, Zimbabwe's FTLR was carried out within a context of a weak economy, strong political and social tensions that all contributed to the FTLR outcomes. While land was effectively redistributed, the implications on food production were clearly drastic.

The case of Zimbabwe also makes an important contribution to the irregularities in the theory of inverse farm size and productivity relationship. In all case studies discussed in this research, it was shown that communal farmers remain the leading producers of the staple grain crop, maize, followed by the small-scale A1 farmers, then

the A2 farmers. This supports findings by Bviringiro and Reardon (1996) for Rwanda farms, arguments by Sen (1966) from findings in India, and Ajit Kumar Chose (1979), who argues that all things constant, primitive production practices on small farms makes them more efficient, and that efficiency decreases as land size increases, and as farm mechanical and technological advances increases. Again as seen in the case of Zimbabwe, small-scale production produced high food output because of increased number of farmers, not because of improved productivity. Productivity was in fact lower than that of the previous commercial farmers. The effects of the FTLR approach along a number of unforeseen forces, such as economic sanctions, droughts, political and economic meltdown, disrupted what could otherwise have been a boost on food production, given that there was increased access to land, especially among the poor.

In conclusion, although the FTLR successfully and effectively redistributed land from the few former European settlers for the benefit of the black Zimbabweans, who are the majority, this had severe implications on national food production. Just as argued by Rutherford (2012), the “context and politics of the state” cannot be ignored (p. 147). Zimbabwe has come a long way in making various attempts to development, and land reform was one of the ways to achieve this objective. However, it seems that while one problem was solved, it resulted in multiple other problems. The question now is whether there is an alternative, given a series of failures in attempts in different approaches to land reforms prior-to the FTLRP? The case of Zimbabwe provides crucial lessons to other countries contemplating carrying out similar land reforms. One important lesson is that land reforms are complex processes that do not always provide desired solutions to

the development problem. State-led land reforms, in particular, can result in negative implications on food production, if not carefully planned, executed, and managed. For Zimbabwe, however, it is not yet a basket case, there is still hope to return to the glory of food self-sufficiency, only if urgent, resolute, and committed effort is made by parties involved, buttressed by a strong political will to bring resolve to the national food production crisis.

## Appendix

Table 3.5: Summary of Vulnerability Assessments and the Changes [1994 to 2003]

Consumption period	Provinces (districts)	Extent of food insecurity
1994/95	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Matabeleland South (Beitbridge, Mwenezi)</li> <li>• Masvingo (Mashava South in Chivi district)</li> </ul>	-Food insecure mostly communal areas
1996/97	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Matabeleland North (Binga, Lupane and Tsholochu)</li> <li>• Matabeleland South (Gwanda, Bulilimamangwe and Beitbridge)</li> <li>• Manicaland (Chimanimani)</li> </ul>	-The most food insecure people were found in the rural areas
1998/99	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Matabeleland South (Beitbridge, mamangwe, Gwanda and Matopo)</li> <li>• Matabeleland North ( Bimga, Tsholochu, and Hwange)</li> <li>• Masvingo (Chiredzi, Zaka and Bikita)</li> <li>• Manicaland (Buhera, Chipinge, Mutare)</li> <li>• Midlands (Zvishavane and Mberengwa)</li> <li>• Mashonaland central (Rushinga)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 80 out of 174 communal areas (33 districts) were vulnerable to food insecurity with a population of 2.3million people.</li> <li>- 45 % of these areas were regarded as highly food insecure.</li> <li>- The severity of the food insecurity in Matabeleland South was declared a national disaster in 1998.</li> </ul>
1999/2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Matabeleland North (10 districts)</li> <li>• Matabeleland South (5 districts)</li> <li>• Midlands (1)</li> <li>• Mashonaland East (1)</li> <li>• Manicaland (2)</li> <li>• Masvingo (1)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 40 out of 174 communal areas with a population of 1.2 million were identified as food insecure</li> <li>- 20 communal areas were regarded as highly food insecure 20 communal areas were regarded as highly moderately food insecure</li> </ul>
2002/2003	All 57 districts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 57 districts identified as food insecure in June 2002</li> <li>- Food relief programme fed about 49% of the country's population</li> <li>- State of disaster declared in April 2003</li> </ul>

Note: Reproduced from Jayne, T.S. et al. (2006. p. 529)

**Table 3.6: Coverage of RBZ Agricultural Financing Schemes**

Scheme/Years	Objectives of scheme	Support provided	Targeted beneficiaries	Comments on beneficiaries
Free Government Inputs 2002 -2011	Support peasant production	Seed and fertiliser packs	Communal/A1 farmers	
Productive Sector Financing 2004	Provide agricultural credit when private finance declined	Subsidised loans at 25% interest vs. 300% private banks	A2 Farmers	
ASPEF 2005	Enhance food export production	Cheap credit	A2 farms, agro-industry, merchants, state farms	80% of funds targeted A2 farmers
Operation Maguta 2005	Boost food security through command agriculture	Inputs and ploughing support (maize/wheat)	A2 farms and A1 and CA in 2005/06	
Champion Farmer 2008-2009	Boost food security through capable farmers	Inputs subsidy	A2 farms	
Farm Mechanisation 2003 – 2008	Address labour shortages and expand cropped area	Machinery and equipment for free and on cheap credit	A2, A1 and state farms	Small proportion of large farmers benefitted
Seed supply recovery 2002–2008	Increase area and number of seed producers	Cheap credit; Subsidised forex; Output contracts	Seed producing firms to contract A2 farmers	Relied mostly on new larger-scale farms
Irrigation rehabilitation and development 2004 – 2011	To resuscitate and expand irrigation	Cheap credit for equipment; Subsidised water and electricity	A2 and state farms	Mostly benefitted A2 farms
ARDA recovery 2003-2006	Increase ARDA cropped areas	Cheap credit; Seasonal land leases	ARDA farms Agribusiness	Agribusiness did not invest cash

Note: Reproduced from AIAS research, World Bank (2006); Scoones et al. (2010) in Moyo and Nyoni (2013. p. 206)



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