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Land Policy, Poverty Reduction and Public Action in Zimbabwe

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1.0 Introduction: land and poverty discourses in Zimbabwe

A ‘fast track’, state-driven approach to land reform was introduced during 1997 in Zimbabwe, culminating in extensive land transfers by 2004. Land reform took centre stage in Zimbabwe’s politics and economy, and polarised land policy discourses nationally and internationally. The earlier period of 1980-96, represented a relatively “slow track” land redistribution programme, characterised by a market driven approach to land reform. The effects on poverty reduction that arose from these land reforms have not been adequately discussed so far.

Current discourses eschew rigorous analysis of the relationship between land reform policy and public action, and its longer term effects on poverty reduction, development and democratisation. They focus on short term manifestations, such as the land disputes, agricultural decline and the electoral [mis]fortunes of competing political parties. Zimbabwe’s fast track land reform has been considered to be an odd aberration (Bernstein, 2002), contrived for political electoral advantage (Sachikonye, 2005), or for black elite interests (Davies, 2005). This discourse subordinates the land issue to ‘good governance’ procedural questions (Raftopolous, 2003), to be condemned for their human rights transgressions (Hellum and Derman, 2004). The place of land rights in this perspective is not adequately conceptualised or empirically defined, given the contested nature of land rights (Hunzwi¹, Sadomba, 2005). The tendency has been to reduce complex and diverse social actions or processes of civil society-state interactions over land, to the atavistic manipulations of a ‘pre-modernist’ (Worby, 2004), ‘authoritarian nationalist’ regime, using (however) modern institutions of the state, political parties and ‘uncivil’ associations.

In general Zimbabwe land redistribution policy envisioned a changing racial composition of access, of landholding sizes, land use norms (exports versus food) and of tenure systems, given the entrenchment of racially structured land access, tenures and production systems. Poverty benefits tended to be defined in general terms of more equitable land and natural resources ownership and deracialised “commercial” farming.

The main controversy in the land reform debate today is over the efficacy of market led reforms in delivering racially equitable land distribution, vis-à-vis the physical violence and the violation of property rights of land owners and of farm workers, which the militant and state-led approach pursued, having suspended certain land and related laws and ‘rights’ in order to reverse past injustices. Demands for a poverty oriented land reform grew in 1997, when the ‘international community’, rejected land expropriation and the deracialisation of commercial farming, in favour of support small scale settlers and at a slow redistributive pace (ODA, 1996).

This chapter assesses the evolution of land policy and social action for reform, in relation to issues of poverty reduction in Zimbabwe, based on three key arguments. First, that Zimbabwe’s pursuit of variants of a market led approach to land reform, during 17 of its 25 years of independence, between 1980 to 1996, and then between 1998 and 1999, rather than the lack of political will *per se*, led to less land redistribution than was promised or expected. This outcome limited the potential scope for poverty reduction at the national and farm household level. The reigning neoliberal development policy framework then, further limited the prospect of wider poverty gains from land. This induced expanding social agitation for radical reforms.

Second, the chapter argues that the radicalisation of the land reform approach in 1997, and then between 2000 and 2004, towards state driven land transfers, was significantly induced, in terms of land acquisition and allocation, by popular mobilisations of land occupations. This led to extensive land redistribution over 5 years, but yielded mixed poverty reduction gains in the short term (5 years).

¹ Hunzwi- public statement on RBZ/ZTC May 2000

The potential positive impacts of this non-market approach to land transfers on poverty reduction at farm household and national level were however limited, not only by the rapid “loss” of substantial agricultural (food and export) production by former land owners and farmworker jobs losses, but also by the wider effects of economic collapse and weak policies, internal opposition to land reform and international isolation.

Third, the chapter argues that the shifts in Zimbabwe’s land reform and development policy approaches over 25 years, and the nature of the redistributive outcome, as well as their impacts on poverty reduction, can be explained by complex changes in state-society interactions and relations, occasioned by the negative effects of economic liberalisation and unfulfilled land redistribution. Issues such as, political will, electoral instrumentalisation and weak ‘governance’, were symptomatic effects of the social (including economic) effects, which played a subordinate part in influencing the pace and nature of land reform, given that the wider role of social movements was more fundamental in radicalising land policy formation.

These three propositions suggest the need to consider the various direct and indirect effects of land reform on poverty, at the micro household and economy-wide level, including the political conflicts that arose from the dramatic shifts in the correlation of social forces that emerged as a result of the contradictions of neoliberalism, and from Zimbabwe’s ‘dissidence’ against the hegemonic models of market based and “internationally supported” approaches to land reform and economic management. This complex interaction of factors suggests that the land and poverty relationship can easily be confounded, in terms of causes and effects, particularly when the long term structural effects of unequal agrarian structures and extroverted development strategy, are not properly taken into account.

The next section outlines the nature of poverty in relation to land access and development policy. The evolution of land reform approaches and their effects on poverty are then discussed, followed by an assessment of the changing public actions and institutional settings of land reform advocacy. The last section draws some conclusions and outlines some elements of pro-poor land policy options.

2.0 Land, Development Strategy and Poverty

2.1 The poverty and land relationship in Zimbabwe

According to a national human development report (Zimbabwe NHDR, 1999) 60 per cent of Zimbabwe’s population was earning less than US\$1 a day, 80 per cent of whom live in the rural areas, while 25% were unable to meet basic needs, mainly as a result of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP). Due to frequent droughts between 1.5 and 5 million people require food relief every 3 to 5 years. Zimbabwe ranks 130th on the Human Development Index². Rural poverty was exacerbated by reduced remittances to the rural areas from urban relatives due to retrenchment of urban workers. Still categorised as a medium-income country, Zimbabwe is among 16 sub-Saharan African countries that experienced reversals in human development since 1990 (Economist Intelligence Unit, 3rd quarter 1999³).

Poverty is predominantly rural given that 70% of Zimbabwe’s population resides there (CSO, 2002). Rural livelihoods are mainly agricultural and depend on access to land and related resources (e.g. water, woodlands, etc). About 65% of the population lives in “communal areas”, as a differentiated peasantry, facing the second highest poverty levels surpassed only by rural farm labourers (comprising 12% of the population) until 2000. This labouring class (now reduced to about

² This measures quality of life, using real GDP per head, adult literacy rate and life expectancy (which in Zimbabwe dropped due to HIV/AIDS related deaths)

³ www.eiu.com

5% of the population) depended heavily on smaller scale food crop cultivation in both communal and commercial areas, given their low wages and insecure land rights. But a large part of the urban population mostly with incomes below the poverty datum line, straddles the rural-urban divide, and also depends on land for their livelihoods within the rural, peri-urban and urban areas. Rural-urban income and food transfers, define livelihoods strategies intended to secure precarious social conditions.

Thus, over 80% of Zimbabwe's rural and urban populations, have continued since 1980 to depend on farming and therefore access to increasingly overcrowded land in communal areas, given the stagnation and decline of employment in the secondary and tertiary sectors, and the slow land redistribution process. Small farming incomes remained low as a result of low productivity and poor returns to sold outputs, reflecting a long legacy of biased allocations of economic incentives towards large farmers. Land policies since 1980 had failed to redress the need among the poor for the effective control of productive assets, such as fertile land and related access to public irrigation water infrastructures, and of natural resources for consumptive and productive use. This relationship between landholding structures and poverty in a predominantly agrarian economy, was shaped by racially unequal (agricultural) landholdings in terms of area allocated and farm sizes, until 2004 (table 2-1).

Table 2-1: Land distribution and holdings size (million ha) patterns (1980-2004)

Farm Class	1980		1996		2004	
	Number of families/farms	Hectares (million)	Number of families/farms	Hectares (million)	Number of families/farms	Hectares (million)
Smallholder	700,000	14.4	1,000,000	16.4	1,312,866	24.34
Small to Medium Scale Commercial	8,000	1.4	8,000	1.4	21,000	2.83
Large Scale Commercial	6,000	15.5	4,500	7.7	4,317	3
Corporate Estates			960	2.04	960	2.04

Source: Moyo, forthcoming

Considerable differentiation of land size holdings has been typical. On the upper extreme are the transnationals and 'landed gentry', mainly comprising whites (Moyo, 1998), holding large estates and multiple farms with sizes of between 10,000 and over 100,000 hectares, pitted against black 'kulaks' holding between over 10 and 100 hectares depending on the agro-ecological region potential. On the lower extreme were the black landless and land poor, with dryland holdings of below 3 hectares, pitted against their relatively fewer large scale white landowners holding on average between 500 and 2,000 hectares. On the margins, numerous 'squatters' in various rural and peri-urban areas tended to occupy small plots of less than 1 hectare, including former farm workers who had informal access to land, at the mercy of landowners. About 25% of the 1.2 million rural households were land short (Sukume and Moyo, 2003). The urban poor and unemployed required at least 1,000,000 residential land plots, while farm workers, amounting to over 150,000 farm worker households, required access to residential land. Land reform since 1980 gradually shifted the land distribution and holdings size patterns over time, as the comparative figures of 1980, 1996 and 2004 show.

The share of the incomes of the smallholder farmers and of investments into rural social services, infrastructure and credit has consistently been the lowest. Rural communities' capacities to reverse poverty and their livelihoods, have tended to be precarious and dependent on small scale external welfare transfers from the state, urban workers' remittances, and aid dependent NGO's.

2.2 Development strategy and land policy

Settler colonial rule from 1890 to 1979 was characterized by racial land dispossession and, political and economic discrimination (see Mlambo, 2000; Moyana, 2002), which defined Zimbabwe's land question and mass nationalism. The settler colonial state sought to turn a most of the peasantry into

full-time industrial workers disconnected from the land (Yeros, 2002). The development strategy was structurally imbalanced and discriminatory, seeking to secure mainly the domestic markets of the white minority and exports, while providing minimum incomes for the subsistence of the black poor and the reproduction of migrant labour. The uneven allocation of economic infrastructures in rural areas was integral to this strategy, which emphasised import substitution industrialisation. Under these conditions, nationalist struggles mobilised extensive militancy in the rural areas. The United States and Britain facilitated a negotiated settlement towards 'majority rule' in 1979, (the Lancaster House agreement and constitution). This provided critical parameters to protect property rights, proscribing land reform within a market oriented liberal democratic governance framework, and brought unequal parliamentary power sharing with the white minority.

At independence, a key development policy challenge was to promote re-distributive strategies to reduce racial inequality and poverty, and broadly based economic growth, focused on the domestic needs, particularly of the poor (GoZ, 1982). Land reform and agrarian reform policy vested on development strategy still focused on import-substitution industrialisation within a heterodox macro-economic policy framework. The expansion of agricultural production envisioned land reform leading rural development and poverty reduction. The development strategy activities of Zimbabwean civil society organisations (CSO) during the 1980's focused on welfare projects, with little emphasis on land reform (see Moyo, 2001). From the mid-1990's their focus tilted towards demands for accelerated democratisation, and limited interrogation of the failure of neoliberal economic policies to deliver development. Proactive land reform within a more developmentalist economic strategy was called for by the Zimbabwean Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) for some time. The underlying land conflict which limited the productive use of land and access by the poor was underplayed.

Between 1980 and 1989 major political change occurred in the context of maintaining in general terms the pre-independence 'heterodox' and 'dirigiste' macro-economic strategy, based on a legacy of sanctions induced economic introversion and industrialisation. Social services (health and education) and infrastructure were extended to the smallholder farm sector, alongside policies in support of monopoly capital and state enterprise growth. Rapid growth followed the lifting of sanctions, the influx of aid and good rains. This accompanied increased social spending, minimum wage legislation and the inception of an 'accelerated resettlement' programme. A balance of payments crisis in 1982 saw the government engage the International Monetary Fund (IMF), leading to currency devaluation by half, increased interest rates, and reduced maize subsidies, through a 'home grown', SAP programme. This undercut the 'growth with equity' programme. By 1984, however the government had disengaged the IMF by repaying its outstanding debts, and 'went alone', rejecting the austerity measures (Yeros, 2002). Yet after 1984, a gradualist market based land reform programme was pursued, while unemployment hovered between 30% and 40% right into the early 1990's.

As the budget deficit grew, due to its increasing social policy and security expenditures, borrowing from the World Bank in 1991 grew especially when the ESAP was adopted, in the absence of economic crisis (Stoneman, 2000). Significantly this coincided with the expiry of the Lancaster House provisions pertaining to land. The IMF 'rescue mission' of January 1992, due to the ESAP and drought-induced effects on Zimbabwe's external balances, demanded the reduction of the budget deficit, trimming the public sector, cutting back of social services; and the liberalisation of currency, prices, interest rates, trade, capital flows, and the labour market (Yeros, 2002).

The adverse effects of droughts in 1991/92 and 1994/95, and the negative effects on export revenues arising from the expiry in 1992 of the 1964 preferential trade agreement with South Africa (renewed in 1996), saw the withdrawal of agricultural subsidies and foreign exchange depreciation to increase competitiveness (Ibid). Inflation grew to 42% in 1992 from an average of 14% in the 1980's and high interest rates choked the economy, while financial liberalisation pushed interest rates even higher (Ibid). From 1993 foreign dealing on the Zimbabwe Stock Exchange (ZSE) was introduced and money supply, interest rates, and currency became highly exposed to global financial instability (ibid).

Between 1990 and 1996 there was significant de-industrialisation, the reduction of social expenditures and subsidies in general, the liberalization of agricultural markets and trade, and the erosion of wages and incomes of the working classes. This was accompanied by escalating strike actions, while the least amount of land was distributed during the period.

The period between 1997 and 2004 saw the gradual return to a dirigiste and heterodox macro-economic policy framework, alongside the execution of extensive land reforms, in a context of increasing economic decline and international isolation. Policy immediately after ESAP had continued with the export-oriented strategy, by the deepening of Export Processing Zones (EPZ Act). A new International Financial Institution (IFI) sponsored programme, the Zimbabwe Programme for Economic and Social Transformation (ZIMPREST) was designed to restructure public enterprises, reform the financial sector, and with a proposed market-oriented land reform (focusing on land taxes and subdivision).

But, government contradicted the IFI demands in 1997, by making unbudgeted pension disbursements to disaffected war veterans, and by designating about 40% of the Large-Scale Commercial Farms (LSCF) for compulsory acquisition. ZIMPREST collapsed, as the currency crashed (losing 74% of its value) on the 14th November 1997. This led to price-hikes and job losses, followed by food riots and serial industrial actions led by the ZCTU, which the state forcefully suppressed. Meanwhile, the International Financial Institutions withheld balance of payments funding and demanded a return to SAP. Instead in 1998, price controls were re-introduced on staple goods and tariffs were re-imposed on luxury goods.

In the same year, the government (with Namibia and Angola) intervened militarily in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) at the invitation of the Kabila government. This strained further the national budget and led to harsher criticism from western donors. The IMF and the World Bank withdrew support to Zimbabwe from 1999, following government's default on its debt obligations. However they admitted that ESAP could not have been successful in an environment with extreme disparities and where land reform would need to be undertaken before economic reforms could have had their intended impact in the economy (Yeros, 2002).

The radicalisation between 1997 and 2002 of land reform (through expropriation) and the economic management strategy brought about increased economic isolation and restricted access to external credit and aid in general. Further control of prices, markets and the foreign exchange was introduced during 2000, and the indigenisation of banks, mines and industries was mooted more forcefully. A decrease in LSCF agricultural production and repeated droughts up to 2004, introduced additional imbalances. By 2003, inflation had risen to 600%, forex earnings had declined by at least 50%, and the cumulative gross domestic product (GDP) declined by about 30%. A more formally pronounced heterodox stabilisation and state interventionist development strategy was introduced in late 2003, albeit in a plan with limited coherence and backing by capital and various social forces. This led to a reduction of inflation to 132% by December 2004. The flows of forex into official instead of parallel channels increased to a small extent as a result of tighter regulation and anti-corruption measures. A somewhat slower rate of GDP decline was seen but the cost of living for the poor continued to be unbearably high. Forex shortages persisted, although the essentials (fuel, critical imported inputs, etc) become more regular in supply at higher prices until early 2005. But food security remained precarious and agricultural exports declined as inputs shortages and loss of farm production grew.

Official development strategy emphasised equitable land distribution, agrarian reform, agricultural inputs and food prices subsidies, nurturing of small business enterprises, the promotion of value added industrial production, and the indigenisation of mining and agri-business concerns. This thrust found support from a nationalist cross-class alliance of social forces around Zanu PF and selected CSOs, while the main opposition party opposed it, as did international finance. Symbolic

resumption of re-payment of international loans in 2004 suggested the re-forging of IFI relations,⁴ and the IMF/World Bank publicly pronounced cautious approval of the direction of macro-economic policy during 2004⁵. The political opposition and IFI's oppose current controls on the capital account, the foreign exchange management system and the dual interest rate system (IMF, 2004; Ndlela, 2004). It is improbable that there is likely to be a 'reversal' of the fast track land reforms, nor would it be feasible without large scale violent evictions of new landholders. However, the accommodation of some more former white farmers on smaller farms and of bi-lateral investors (on less than 5% of the land) is under consideration.

Significantly this period was significantly characterised by an enduring violent political conflict between the ruling Zanu PF party and the main opposition MDC party, as well as by international economic isolation, largely because the election results of 2000 and 2002 were contested. The MDC-CSO alliance movement pushed for governance reforms and challenged the governments' legitimacy. However by late 2003 they gave mixed signals over not reversing the fast track land reforms (see MDC, RESTART, 2004). Zanu PF had shifted its policy thrust towards the rural electoral constituency, and re-mobilised the liberation and nationalist forces around land reform, through the extensive land occupations led by war veterans (see Moyo and Yeros, 2005) and statist interventionism. The narrowing of democratic space for political parties and for a proliferated new wave of governance and human rights (NGO) activism, which had mushroomed from the mid-1990s, polarized politics and land reform processes to an extent never seen since independence (Moyo, 2000).

3.0 Market driven land reform and poverty (1980-1996)

The market driven land reform process limited the potential poverty reduction gains in Zimbabwe in a number of ways. The mechanisms of land transfer, including land acquisition, land prices and the quality of land redistributed, limited the scale of access to land by new beneficiaries, while land concentration persisted. The agricultural support system under the ESAP policy framework limited the benefits of resettlement and of communal farming in general, while raising the urban demand for unavailable land. Even those smallholders with land realised limited productivity and income gains.

3.1 Mechanisms of the market driven land redistribution approach

Land reform in Zimbabwe, between 1980 and 1996, was pursued within a "predominantly market-based" approach, whose main mechanism of land transfer was a willing-seller-willing-buyer process, agreed to at Lancaster House. The state played a dominant role in acquiring the land for the poor and supported resettlement schemes. Private agricultural land market transfers reallocated land to various new large farmers (white and black), while land concentration among a few existing large landholders proceeded (see Moyo, 1998).

The GoZ had placed emphasis on agricultural and rural development within the peasant sector during the 1980's, based largely on raising productivity and, improving inputs and commodity markets. Agricultural research, extension services, roads, and marketing depots, education and health became a focus (Bratton 1987), rather than the extensive redistribution of land and national agrarian restructuring. Yet, when the Lancaster House constitutional safeguards for market-based land transfers expired in 1990, legal instruments for state land expropriation were introduced but not fully used. The implementation of the ESAP, instead reinforced the market based character of land reform, reduced state interventions in support of small farmers and perpetuated the unequal agrarian economy.

⁴ The MDC has recently (October 2004) also expressed the desire for Zimbabwe not to be suspended from the IMF, on grounds that on winning the 2005 elections they would not want to start reapplying for membership (MDC, 2004)

⁵ The MDC has called upon the IMF not to make positive pronouncements on policy as these delay 'reform' and give government a propaganda advantage (ibid).

Market mechanisms for land transfer limited the redistributive efforts in various ways. First, landowners led the identification and supply of land available for resettlement, while central government was a reactive buyer choosing land on offer (Moyo, 1995). Until 1996, the amount, quality, location and cost of land acquired for redistribution was driven by landholders rather than the state or the beneficiaries in accordance with their needs and demands. The lowest quality land was redistributed (Ibid). Land prices grew dramatically throughout the period, spurred also by the growth of demand for land by growing black elite.

The UK provided grants worth approximately £33 million (US\$44 million) during the 1980's for market land acquisition as well as for various resettlement inputs. This money, conceptualised as "aid" rather than reparations, was provided as a matching grant to GoZ's own financial inputs, and was disbursed as reimbursements for GoZ land purchases approved by the ODA. This financing mechanism experienced various bottlenecks and aroused conflicts between the donor and the GoZ (personal communication⁶). Blacks also purchased farms on the market, with some using credit offered by the Agricultural Finance Corporation. Not surprisingly, few peasants or poor working class families and women, could afford land (see Rugube et al. 2004).

3.2 The market land redistribution outcome

About 70% of the land acquired on the market was procured during the 1980's, through the "Normal Intensive Resettlement" programme. The rest was purchased on the "market", following its "illegal" occupation by peasants (see Tshuma, 1997; Moyo, 2000; Alexander, 2003), through an official "Accelerated Land Resettlement Programme", complementing the "normal" programme. Thus, land occupations significantly challenged the market driven land transfers during the early 1980s, although these were 'regularised' into the market procedure.

From the middle of the 1980s, the state increasingly evicted, often in violent fashion, those deemed to be occupying land illegally in commercial farms (Herbst, 1990). This violence carried out by both the police and farmers mirrored colonial evictions. During the 1990s land occupations expanded in content and form, ranging from illegal access to land to the widespread poaching of natural resources, targeting not only private lands but also state lands, some "communally" owned lands and urban land (Moyo, 1998; 2000; 2003). The severe drought during the 1991/92 farming season also led to extensive commercial farm labour retrenchments, and increased the pressure on communal area land and natural resources (Moyo, 2000; 2003). Wider ESAP retrenchments in mining fuelled land occupations (Yeros, 2002) and "illegal" land occupations expanded, especially in the Mashonaland provinces culminating in more intense land occupations from 1998 (Moyo, 2001).

As a result, the pace of land reform between 1980 and 1996 was slow. Between 1980 and 1985 about 430,000 hectares were acquired each year. Between 1985 and 1992, the pace of acquisition fell to about 75,000 hectares per year, while between 1992 and 1997, approximately 158,000 hectares were acquired per year. Thus by 1996, about 3,4 million hectares of land had been transferred, reducing the white commercial farming area to 11 million hectares or by 29 percent, leaving the large land holdings with approximately 35% of the total agricultural land, most of which was 'prime' land.

About 70,000 families were resettled, far short of the targeted 162,000 families (Moyo 1995). Moreover those on official 'waiting lists' for land far exceeded this target. The government provided land to beneficiaries selected mainly by its district officials under the direct supervision of central government officials. This meant that 'congested' communal areas stood little chance of getting relief from land assets, as those districts not near these commercial lands received less land.

⁶ Sam Geza, former director of resettlement

By the end of the market-based land reform in the late 1990s, about 9,000 black capitalist farmers had established themselves in the former small scale and new large scale commercial farming areas, through land purchases, leases and inheritance, on about 19% of former large scale commercial farmland. New private land bidding patterns had emerged, as the prime lands were now a source of intra-capitalist (black and white) competition and inter-class conflicts. Aspiring black capital called for the state to 'set-aside' commercial land for them in the interest of 'indigenisation', even as they were directly being co-opted by local white and transnational capital, including through 'linkages' promoted by donor-funded 'enterprise development programmes'. While these pressures unfolded the 'squatter control' policy continued to be implemented (Ibid).

3.3 Poverty impacts of market driven land reform and agrarian policy

Scepticism reigned among key policy makers, stakeholders and CSO's about the desirability of extensive land redistribution and the efficacy of non-market approaches during the 1980s. But the adoption of the ESAP reined in the official drive for land redistribution and reduced agricultural support to small farmers, yielding negative effects for poverty reduction through land reform.

Some have argued that the Zimbabwean state lacked the political will or capacity to implement land reform prior to 2000, suggesting that constitutional and market constraints were not important. Yet the various administrative constraints imposed by the willing transactor principle had significantly affected the quality and pace of land redistributed, while imposing high financial costs on land reform (Moyo, 1995). The potential negative impacts of extensive redistribution on development and agriculture (see for example World Bank, 1991) was the mantra touted by many policy analysts, to the neglect of the potential benefits of redistribution (Moyo, 1998).

Empirical evidence (Kinsey, 2004; Moyo, 1995; Deininger, van den Brink, Moyo, 2000) suggests that the majority of the few poor rural households, who gained access to new land and related natural resource assets, tended in the medium term, to realise increased farm and woodland resources production, incomes and consumption benefits. For example resettlement households had over 20 years tripled their livestock wealth, while their productivity increased substantially, and their overall incomes were five times higher than those in agro-potentially similar communal areas (Ibid). While they represented less than 5% of the peasant population they produced over 15% of marketed maize and cotton outputs, and satisfied their own consumption needs (Moyo, 1995; Ibid). Moreover redistribution had not affected negatively the large scale farm outputs, although this sector remained with high land underutilisation rates of over 40% (Ibid; World Bank, 1991).

This evidence contradicts the assertion (CSO, 1999) that resettlement farmers had the highest prevalence of poverty, largely because the survey data used had numerous computation problems and it reflected the immediate effects of the drought in the previous year, in a resettlement situation where households rely less on non-farm employment than in communal areas (Deininger, et al 2000). Moreover the evidence suggests that resettled farmers' livelihoods improved after a 5-year transitional period low output (Kinsey, 2004), during stable macro-economic conditions.

Such conditions were eventually reversed by the negative effects of ESAP macro-economic policy, wider economic decline and repeated droughts, which had the effect of limiting wider socio-economic and poverty reduction gains in general, and of reducing state support to farm households to reduce poverty. And, landlessness had grown to around 30% by 1994 (Rukuni Commission, 1994; Chasi, et al 1994)

Agrarian policies were dramatically redirected by ESAP, with far reaching anti-poor effects on land use, land markets and the demand for land redistribution. The state retreat from subsidising agriculture was supported by the Commercial Farmers Union (CFU), who were a lesser target for many subsidies (see Toye, 1993; Moyo, 2000). Marketing boards were commercialized (or privatized)

and converted to ‘purchasers of last resort’, while private traders were allowed to compete, partly reversing the late-1980’s trends of increased smallholder profitability and relatively affordable food. Higher real prices for some crops such as maize and wheat were seen, but not for beef and cotton (see also Yeros, 2002). Generally, incentives benefited mainly the large farms that could switch and expand production flexibility. Budget contraction led to reduced extension services, inputs support and credit for smallholders, which along with the depreciation of the dollar eroded farm incomes. Smallholder market sales did not increase in the 1990s (with this share in 1998 equal to that of 1984), and they were regionally and socially differentiated, having been effectively confined to 20% of the ‘better-off’ households in communal and resettlement areas (see also Maast, 2000). A notable agrarian change was the integration of smallholders into seed and fertiliser markets now more controlled by Transnational Corporations.

Significantly these developments dovetailed with job losses in the formal sector and the erosion of wages, reduced remittances from urban workers to their relatives in the rural relatives. Many of the urban poor turned back to the land and illegal occupations (“squatting”) increased. The extension of peasant farming on marginal grazing lands increased, as did the intensification of women’s casual farm labour, reflecting limited access to land among other problems. The upsurge of demand for land, the deepening of land markets, and further social differentiation in communal areas, led to the undermining of local government institutions (Moyo, 2000).

But the most significant agrarian change that occurred with regard to its effect on land rights and land use, was the expansion of the non-traditional export activities, (specifically wildlife management, ostrich husbandry, and horticulture). This reinforced the division of labour and income distribution between smallholders and large-scale farmers (Moyo, 2000), while limiting the expansion of food production and undermining national food security. The larger farmers expanded export operations while the smallholders remained in maize and cotton production, given that historical constraints (such as access to land, water, credit and infrastructure), compounded by the retrenched extension services, limited their ‘responsiveness’ to the ESAP agricultural market incentives. About 300 large-scale farmers had embraced ostrich husbandry, 31% of large-scale commercial farms (LSCF) had come under wildlife, and 36% of the LSCF were engaged in horticulture. In communal areas on the other hand it is estimated that less than 10% of households became marginally involved in these new exports, thus limiting their income gains from ESAP, and other poverty reducing potentials.

Critically, the expansion of wildlife land use, amounted to the compulsory conversion of some of the communal lands to exclusive commercial exploitation by private leasees, reducing the access by some poor rural household to natural resources used for various consumption needs. This was sacrificed in return for cash invested in social services with limited capacities vis-à-vis demand. In commercial areas, this trend justified pre-existing large scale landholding in terms of export and environmentalist values. Agricultural land use conversion to wildlife enterprises created new relationships between local agrarian and transnational capital (including regional), whereby ‘conservancies’ created private companies which held and managed groups of farms in one block, further restructuring, by concentrating and de-personalising land ownership. This institution consolidated the land and development policy lobby power of large landowners, which together with the increasing demands of black elites to enter the LSCF, generated important contradictions in land reform policy and poverty reduction strategies.

The ESAP therefore reinforced the direct market approach to land reform by promoting the deregulation of land markets, including through increased land subdivisions and private sales, benefiting the elite, while initiating policy discourses on communal area land titling (World Bank, 1991; Rukuni Commission, 1994). Improving exports within the existing land ownership structure was the preoccupation (Moyo, 2000). This affected the agricultural markets of the poor, deepened national and agricultural income and wealth inequalities. De-industrialisation (including in the agro-industrial sector) led to drastic employment and wages declines. These effects on the labour market not only

strained urban workers' incomes and consumption, but also limited the beneficial rural-urban linkages based on urban remittances used to boost rural investment capacities, and the latter's supply of cheap foods⁷.

Yet land based livelihoods which could have emerged through land reform were blocked. The ESAP thus had extensive negative effects on land reform *per se*, as well as on poverty in general. But one 'unintended' consequence was the increased scale and sources of demand for land, in all farming areas, among the urban retrenches and poor, and among land seeking indigenous elites (Moyo, 2000).

Furthermore, since a significant share of rural incomes, especially from petty agricultural sales, is absorbed by direct and indirect expenditures on education and health services, the introduction under ESAP of cost-recovery systems for social services increased the financial strain on the rural poor. The 'Social Development Fund', did not ameliorate the situation adequately, since providing the safety-nets for the poor through social and agricultural facilities was fraught with bureaucratic bottlenecks and did not reach most of the vulnerable rural poor. In addition, direct government support to small-scale agricultural producers through crop pack subsidies had been phased out in the mid 1980s, only to be reintroduced during the 1991/92 droughts. These programmes were inadequate and did not reach most of the rural poor. Thus the poverty reducing potential of the market driven land reform programme was limited in general.

4.0 State driven land reform and poverty (1997-2004)

The state driven land reform approach began in earnest in 1997, based on state expropriation of land driven by widespread and nationally organised land occupations. Both the state and land seekers allocated land to beneficiaries on a large scale. While the poor gained extensive access to land, natural resources and infrastructure, the effects on poverty reduction of this approach to land reform has been mixed, and limited during the short term.

The process entailed numerous political and land conflicts, aroused by worker strikes and illegal land occupations, in a context of economic decline. By 1997 the Zimbabwean state faced political challenges from within and externally. In a racially divided wealth and agrarian structure, facing an economic crisis, nationalistic land policies were remobilised and state led land reform strategies gained significance. The land question also grew significantly in intra-ruling party succession politics and social discourses. Zimbabwe's development strategy and macro-economic policy context had shifted, a new correlation of social forces emerged to mobilise the rural and urban poor into two movements aligned with two main political parties (Zanu PF and the MDC. A deepening conflict between the international 'community' and the Zimbabwean state had emerged from 1998. In effect a wide set of conflictual state-society interactions and domestic-external relations had radicalised land reform, economic policy and the state (see Moyo and Yeros, 2005).

4.1 Mechanisms of state driven land transfer

In 1990, a new bifurcated land policy which sought to redistribute land to the poor and to create more commercial indigenous farmers was introduced, alongside constitutional amendments to the property rights clause. This was followed by a new Land Acquisition Act introduced in 1992 to enable the state to expropriate land. The government started acquiring land compulsorily on a small scale (targeting only 130 out of 7,000 properties), from then until 1995, but without renouncing the market land acquisition method, which it continued to use. The new compensation formula obliged the government

⁷ By 1995 20,000 workers lost their jobs in the public sector and 25,000 in the private sector. Real wages also declined, such that by 1993, real average total wages stood at 61.9% of their 1980 level, down from 103% in 1990 (Yeros, 2002). In addition the share of wages and salaries in the national income stood at 40% in 1996, down from 64% a decade earlier, while the share of profits accruing to capital was at 60%, up from 37% over the same period (Ibid).

to pay a 'fair compensation within reasonable time' (rather than on a 'prompt' and 'adequate' basis) and in local currency (not forex), as pertained in the 1980's. A crafted compromise on 'non-justifiability', was also sought by the government to deny the courts the power to declare land acquisition unconstitutional, only for it to accept the principle of legal recourse. In 1993, the government appointed a Land Tenure Commission (LTC), which produced inadequate alternatives on land redistribution.

State driven land redistribution was driven by popular land occupations, led by war veterans from 1998, building upon scattered and loosely organised "illegal" land occupations, which persisted between 1980 and 1996 (Moyo, 2001). This "community" led approach to land transfer, entails groups of households leading the identification of land for redistribution by "squatting" on it, with the expectation that the government would regularise the transfer, either by purchasing such land at market prices or by expropriating it. Local "squatter" communities "self-selected" themselves as "beneficiaries" for redistribution, often supplanting official beneficiary waiting lists. Abandoned and under utilised land, most of which were in the liberation war frontier zone of the eastern highlands, as well as state lands and sparse communal lands in the Zambezi valley had been prime targets for land occupation, as were some black owned LSCF farms by 1997. Whereas, the GoZ had up to 1998 restrained occupations, there is evidence of direct complicity in them among some Zanu PF and GoZ officials, and war veterans during the first 17 years (Tshuma, 1997; Alexander, 2003; Sadomba, 2005).

Land occupations highlighted land restitution approach (see Marongwe, 2003), which had driven the land reform agenda since independence (see Moyo, 2001). The land occupation "movements" however had varied over time in an unclear relationship with the pace and form of official land redistribution, given their repression during ESAP. The phase of **low profile high-intensity land occupations**, had occurred, from 1980-1985, parallel to the official land resettlement programme. The period between 1985 and 1996 witnessed growing occupations, in what we have termed a **normal profile low intensity land occupation** process (Moyo, 2001; 2003). While the former occupations reflected the residual militancy of landless communities in liberated zones and districts where chiefs, war veterans and war collaborators had been highly mobilised and/or disgruntled by progress with land reform, the latter movements were more broadly based. The **high profile intensive land occupations**, occurred on a national scale from 1997, after the GoZ had acceded to the war veteran demands to expropriate land (Moyo, 2001; 2003). In these occupations, a vanguard of war veterans, numerous rural peasants, some traditional leaders and spirit mediums, elements of the urban working class and elites, including largely Zanu PF and GoZ officials, were gradually mobilised towards direct action for land reform, challenging the entire "state" apparatus and its land reform instruments.

Interestingly, between 1995 and 1996 the government and Zanu PF had initiated provincial 'land committees' to begin an extensive process of identifying land which could be compulsorily acquired, suggesting that the legal bureaucratic-technocratic route to state led land reform was getting ensconced in the dominant state and political institutions. Parallel to this, negotiations with the UK (ODA) to fund land redistribution had been stalled by various differences.

The full scale state driven approach thus started with the designation of 1,471 farms (about 4 million hectares) for expropriation in 1997, using the new compensation rules. About 641 farms were delisted by the state from its acquisition agenda in 1998, while the rest were never acquired because of court challenges in 1998 and 1999. Revisions to the constitution and land act in 2000, led to new land expropriations land, in the face of numerous court challenges, but these were now backed by extensive 'illegal' occupations condoned by the state during 2000 and 2001.

4.2 The state driven redistribution outcome

The state driven redistribution of land was low during its inception between 1990 and 1999. By 1993, only 90 farms had been designated, the bulk of which were in the less fertile regions (71% in Natural Regions III, IV, and V), while 36 of these farms became undesignated through the stipulated legal challenges. The government proceeded to allocate land to 600 peasant families displaced by the construction of the Osborne Dam in Makoni District and thereafter, on a leasehold basis, to black capitalist farmers.

The land redistribution outcome from 2000 was extensive. By November 2004, smallholder allocations were granted to 140,866 families, while new 'commercial' beneficiaries amounted to 14,500⁸ new farmers, on 4.2 and 2.3 million hectares respectively (table 2-1). The number of 'commercial' farm units (including old and new units) increased by 64 percent, although their area dropped by 42%. Smallholder land increased from 56 percent of the total land area to 70%. The quality of land redistributed varied across the provinces depending on agro-ecological potential and the distribution of water and irrigation resources. About 2.5 million more hectares were still under expropriation procedures and unallocated. Some irrigated land went to small farmers (7,618 hectares or 6% of national irrigable land), while the 'commercial' beneficiaries received 12,448 hectares (10%) (Manzungu, 2004) and communal area smallholder irrigation schemes retained 11,861 hectares (10%). The rest remained in the unacquired large scale commercial farms, by 2003. Thus peasant farmers, mostly accessed land nearer the communal areas, with less physical advantages (such as being nearer markets and infrastructure).

The patterns of land distribution, in terms of wealth, gender and class were diverse. Urban households gained access to about 34% of the land allocated by 2003. These included working class groups and rich and influential rural people. The latter included rural businesspeople, teachers, civil servants, political leaders, and chiefs among others, and constitute about 10% of the urban beneficiaries. About 400 influential individuals had allocated themselves more than one A2 plot, while about 145 black and white farmers still owned multiple farms which were acquired on the open markets (Buka Report, 2002; PLRC Report, 2003).

The rural poor, including communal area farmers and some former farm workers, as well as a number of the urban poor, constituted about 87% of all beneficiaries, and they had access to 66% of the land so far redistributed, mainly through the A1 scheme intended for the of landless, land short and 'congested' rural households. This degree of inequality in landholdings meant that the decongestion of densely populated communal areas was inadequate (Moyo and Sukume, 2004). Some needy communal farmers, women, and former farm workers did not adequately benefit. Women (as individuals) gained an average of between 12 and 24% of the smallholder land allocations and an average of between 5 and 21% of the commercial land allocated, across the provinces. War veterans on average gained about 20% of the land.

Most farm workers lost homes and employment, and received little land, as they were largely perceived to have been against the FTLRP (Chambati and Moyo, 2004), and tended to be relegated to being potential farm labourers by new beneficiaries (Ibid). Out of 175,000 fulltime farm workers prior to the FTLRP (Magaramombe, 2003a; Chambati and Moyo, 2004), about 80,000 retained their employment in the unacquired large scale commercial and parastatal farms and on large scale plantations. The remaining 95,000 full-time workers were dispersed into communal areas, re-employed in A1/A2, and resettled, live on informal settlements or former compounds. The 170,000 part-time workers tended to relocate to communal areas, while only 5% (4,600) of the resettlement beneficiaries were former farm workers. Some provide casual labour to new farmers and live with informal rights in farm workers' compounds. Close to 30,000 were displaced into informal

⁸ Internal land reform and resettlement progress reports, Ministry of Lands and Rural Resettlement, Government of Zimbabwe.

settlements, while more than 20,000 joined the expanding informal gold panning industry. Thus, close to 90,000 former farm worker families at present, do not enjoy secure tenure in the rural areas.

Yet redistribution broadened the access to land among various social segments, while raising questions about security of some rights and access to land by some who claim rights to land. Excluded were many farm workers, who lost jobs and security of residential tenure, many 'single' women, some people who did not receive land allegedly because of their support for the MDC, some youth given their limited social and political influence, and peasants in communal areas remote from the LSCF areas. Some white LSCF owners, who claim to accept smaller units also alleged exclusion. Tenure insecurity is evident in the new landholding arrangements, since lease title or permits for the redistributed land are not yet provided.

4.3 The state driven approach's implications for poverty reduction

Zimbabwe's agrarian structure has thus changed in terms of the differential farm size allocations and the inferred class character and nationality of beneficiaries, as well as the demography of the farming population, in terms of its racial and gender composition (see table 2-1). This has also generated adjustments in the character of agro-services providers and services, just as it has changed the character of the rural labour market and labour process. Indeed the fast track process, has reconfigured Zimbabwe's agrarian question, reflecting new problems for the transformation of agriculture and industrialisation, including the trajectories for technical change, productivity, labour utilisation, mechanisation and support institutions in the public and private sphere. These demand an agrarian reform strategy that addresses rural poverty, a policy which has not yet been adequately crafted.

The downsized LSCF sector is dominated by the small to medium scale plots, largely comprising farms with average landholdings of 135 hectares, with an upper end averaging 695 hectares, while the remaining white LSCF farms average 871 hectares. At the top end of the new LSCF farm sector are the agro-industrial/company farms with average landholdings of 2,126 hectares. However the latter are being downsized through acquisition during 2004. Small to middle capitalist farmers now comprise about 21,000 units, holding 9% of the total agricultural land, on farms of between 30 to 150 hectares, and employing non-family labour. There is likely to be ongoing reconfiguration of these competing classes, while the middle capitalists farmers, including the remaining large units, have great advantage in the land bidding and accumulation process, by virtue of their better access to other means of production (credit and technology), to contacts and information, and to the policy-making process itself. This differentiation can potentially trigger new agrarian class formation processes, based upon uneven control of access to land, capital, labour and policy influence. Land redistribution has reduced land pressure in crowded communal areas, by increasing the smallholder land areas by 21% (Moyo and Sukume, 2004), although only 9% of households of communal area households were resettled. The proportion of landless households was reduced from around 30% prior to 2000 (Moyo, 1995, Chasi, et al. 1994) to below 20%, except in Manicaland where only about 2.4% of the households remain landless. In general resettlement left a significant numbers of households in communal areas with relatively more arable land per family, as more remaining land short families gained extra land, increasing smallholder household access to on average of about 1.5 hectares.

The new agrarian structure gains analytic significance for poverty reduction when examined in relation to the shift in agrarian labour processes, including the changing demand for and utilisation of farm labour, recruitment processes, wage and incomes patterns and the power of organised farm labour to influence their interests. The emerging agricultural labour and employment structure reflects the increased number of potential agricultural and non-farm employers in a context of increased numbers of the rural unemployed, since 2000. This represents a total of 3,339,143 farm jobs comprising owner operators and employees, with the new farms accounting for 356,040 jobs. Estimates suggest that in the medium term, an additional 40,000 farm jobs could be created the new

resettlement schemes, while the new commercial A2 farms could create 150,000 jobs (Chambati and Moyo, 2004; Magaramombe, 2003b). New employers include new commercial farmers, expanding state's farms (Agricultural Rural Development Authority), the remaining black and white large-scale commercial and indigenous farmers, the better-off communal farmers, as well as small scale gold miners and other informal non-farm enterprises. These entities re-engaged former farm workers on a limited basis and employ new farm workers from communal and urban areas (Chambati and Moyo, 2004), reflecting new rural power relations, agrarian labour structures and relations.

The social relationship between the predominantly black agrarian employer and farm employee, under changing residential and local government conditions has shifted partially changed from the landlord-labour tenant relationship of the former LSCF (see Rutherford, 2000 quoted by Moyo, 2003), towards new 'social patronage' system, alongside lingering animosities between new farmers and former farm workers. However, new farm jobs in resettled areas tend to be low paying and less secure, while the variability of farm wages is very high within and across farms, and even higher between districts. Some former farm workers refuse to be employed under these new conditions, allegedly even where better wages are paid. Farm workers' residential rights in farm compounds have become more precarious. Indeed low farm wages have created a huge demand for alternative income sources such as mining (e.g. gold panning and chrome mining), petty trading and prostitution among women former farm workers. New employers evict such workers from 'their' compounds.

Employment conditions have tended to deteriorate on the new farms, with high variability in the wages and benefits paid to farm workers by new farmers, with some paying more than the official wages while others pay less. Wage levels seem to be better where high value commodities (e.g. tobacco) and mechanization, are established, as these require skilled operators. Some new farmers do not provide employment contracts, and the provision of social services to workers by employers has greatly diminished. It is reported that in some newly resettled areas, arbitrary firing of workers, lack of protective clothing, lack of leave days and lack of consideration for special needs of female workers prevail (Parliament of Zimbabwe, 2003).

Even before the FTLRP, former farm workers, especially those employed on a part-time basis, always relied on alternative sources of income to supplement their wage income. Since the land redistribution and the deterioration of the rural economy and other speculative activities, new rural labour options have emerged. More former farm workers rely entirely on alternative sources of income for their livelihood, such as gold panning, fishing, animal poaching, fuel wood selling, construction of new homesteads⁹ and, petty trading among others (see Magaramombe, 2003a; Sachikonye, 2003). Under new and transitional land tenure relations, greater opportunities to pan gold, poach and sell wood have emerged, given the overstretched security system.

These structural trends potentially indicate a significantly broadened home market, founded upon a larger peasantry and its predominantly rural population, as well as a larger black agrarian capitalist class on smaller farms compared to the pre-2000 situation (Moyo and Yeros, 2005). If the combined 'commercial' farms succeed in re-entrenching a disarticulated pattern of accumulation, there could be negative implications for poverty reduction.

Moreover, in an agrarian economy dependent on external (foreign) inputs supplies and markets, the weak performance of the wider economy and negative reactions of the external 'markets', following the land redistribution, even if transitional, have become a key constraint to the realisation

⁹ There is huge demand among new farmers for labour to build houses and other farm structures, especially for former farm workers who possess construction skills.

of the potential poverty reduction benefits that the land reform might otherwise have yielded in the medium term.

Agricultural production declined in volume, and value terms since 2000 when compared to average output during the 1990's, but this was confined to eight of the 15 key commodities produced in Zimbabwe, and these exhibit varied rates of decline. This type of transitional production decline has not been uncommon where extensive land reforms were effected, although in Zimbabwe the "transition" has been longer for various reasons. Agricultural production fell because of the interrelated decline of the macro-economic conditions and their constraints on agricultural inputs supplies, the reduced production from LSCF land transfers, sustained droughts, economic isolation and the unwillingness of some LSCF's to produce under downsized landholdings.

Complex sets of domestic policy constraints, some arising from international isolation, economy wide dislocation and a negative balance of domestic political forces, have limited the potential of the rural and urban poor to benefit from the productive use of redistributed land assets since 2000.

While a wider potential economic base has emerged for the poor, the failure of policy to rapidly promote the productive use of land by all small farmers, has alongside the effects of droughts, led to the persistence of rural food insecurity and poverty. Humanitarian aid has been provided alongside counter-accusations between donors and government over the politicisation of food. The promotion of food security, including agricultural recovery among the poor, as opposed to short term feeding, has been limited.

The endogenous factors which affected agricultural production include the macro-economic conditions which affected the supply and use of inputs during the period, the land reallocation process itself and limited productive capacities of the new LSCF farming in the short term. Weak macro-economic conditions and policy (including agricultural policy) during this period, grossly affected the profitability of farming and of agribusiness and agricultural support agents, especially because forex shortages limited the entire range of inputs available to all farmers, while inflation and price controls resulted in a cost-price squeeze that weighed heavily against agricultural investment. In 2004, these conditions improved marginally. However, these internal factors were exacerbated, if not triggered off in some instances by exogenous factors, whose real effects commenced prior to the fast track programme in 1997/8, including reduced external credit and aid (i.e. economic isolation) and political conflict, and later the protracted droughts (see also Moyo and Sukume, 2004; Moyo, 2005).

The capacity of new and communal area farmers in terms of skills, own savings and credit to produce the crops formerly dominated by the LSCF have been limited. Access to investment resources (credit), has been limited partly due to the insecurity of their land tenure, and the poor political and economic conditions and policy environment. This has limited the potential gains of the land reform. Thus, the long run trend of growing poverty levels in Zimbabwe, especially since the ESAP period, has been compounded by the recent economic decline, including the loss of agricultural export revenues, inputs shortages in communal areas, increased staple food insecurity, the reduced national capacity (including of the urban poor) to invest in agricultural recovery, and the debilitating effects on household labour of HIV/AIDS has affected smallholder agricultural production. The extent to which state policy and civil society advocacy promote the land reforms and poverty reducing farm production, rural employment and rural off-farm income earning opportunities could determine the longer term benefits to poverty reduction of the fast track land reform.

5.0 Institutional context for land reform and poverty policies

The recent macro policy and structural (socio-economic) context of land reform was shaped by Zimbabwe's swing to a new heterodox economic policy and dirigiste political management framework

since 1997. The Zimbabwe Congress for Trade unions (ZCTU) successfully coordinated growing urban social protest in the face of economic decline, and to set up the opposition (MDC) party. By 1999, local and international support for increased NGO governance and human rights activism had grown under the ZCTU-National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) coordination.

A new setting and conjuncture of civil society activism emerged from then. The government had challenged the international financial institutions (IFI) and was being weaned off IFI loans, now based on broader conditionalities. Reduced external financial flows and forex shortages, and economic instability, created a new context for policy formation.

Zanu PF and the government of Zimbabwe became radicalized in terms of their nationalist and anti-imperialist ideology and rhetoric, and land reform policy, by the emergence of war veterans led land occupations and challenges to its powers, by the emergent opposition and the external conflict (Moyo and Yeros, 2005). Zanu PF remobilized the rural and other liberationist constituencies around land reform first in 2000, and then around economic indigenization and statist development strategies from mid-2000, emphasizing their sovereign right to choose the governance system. Public action on land reform and development policy advocacy in this situation, particularly from perspective of the subjectively dominant, largely urban based CSO organizations (NGOs and trade unions, business associations and farmers union), and on direct action, became polarized and viscous. Contradictory alliances in class wider social and political terms emerged. Some fractions of the minority black capital aligned with white capital, external capital, labour and middle class elements (including in NGO's, the professions and academia) around the NCA-MDC formation. The other fractions of indigenous capital aligned with government policy elites, the peasantry and elements of the middle class.

This suggests that, apart from national influences on development and land policies, external influences on development and land policy are critical to explaining domestic state-civil society policy interactions. Understanding the institutional framework in which the interests of local capital, workers and peasants, policy elites, CSO elites, as well as international finance are mediated is critical.

This raises some important questions. What were the main actions of key state and CSO institutions in advancing pro-poor land reform and development policies? What land policy alternatives were proffered? And, what was the role of international interests in the land reform, development and governance agenda of Zimbabwe?

5.1 Zimbabwe's land policy framework in the international context

The intellectual and financial role of the 'international community' in influencing Zimbabwe's land, economic and governance problems is understated in current research (see for instance Raftopoulos, 2004; Phimister, 2004, Davies, 2004, Sachikonye, 2004), largely because undue weight is given to state-centric 'internal' causes of the problem, neglecting the role of international capital and civil society 'oppositional' forces.

Zimbabwe's market-led land reform was embraced by World Bank, which had focused on raising peasant productivity (World Bank, 1982), promoting freer land markets (World Bank, 1991). A modified market assisted and community based approach to land reform was proposed during 1997-1999 (World Bank, 1999). This sought a curtailed role of the state in land reform, increased NGO participation, and challenged rapid land expropriation and the administrative pricing of land compensation as initiated by GoZ in 1997 and in policy statements at the 1998 donors' conference (GoZ, 1998). Zimbabwe's demands for British colonial responsibility to fund land acquisition was opposed by the latter, who allegedly sponsored the 'internationalisation' of the land question, focusing instead on a poverty oriented aid framework to land reform. This led to bi-lateral conflict and the 'politicisation' of land reform policy (see also Clare Short, 1997).

The international community increased their funding of land NGOs by 1998 in support of ‘community led’ and NGO participation in “demand led” market assisted land reform. Meanwhile popular pressures on the state to “get on” with land expropriation, regardless of market principles and property law restrictions in the constitution were in 1998 stoked by war veteran demands for land reform to be sped up, countervailing the market friendly proposals in favour of land expropriation and ‘illegal land seizures.

A compromise was reached at the 1998 donors’ conference where a two pronged approach to land reform was proposed in the ill-fated two year Inception Phase Land Reform Programme (GoZ, 1999). It intended to acquire less than 10% of LSCF land in two years, combining land expropriation with market purchases, including self-selected land transactions between land owners and potential beneficiaries, with NGO support assisted by external finance. Public credit and small subsidies were to be given new farmers. But the lack of external finance and mutual mistrust between the GoZ and donors killed this “learning” project in its tracks, reflecting their differences over ‘sustainability’ issues, defined in terms of an orthodox macro-economic strategy, transparency and the rule of law. Failure also reflected the reluctance of landowners to transfer land outside the market mechanism, and their litigations.

GoZ officials interpreted this impasse as a tactic of delaying land reform to the post-2000 election period, and larger political and economic interests had enveloped the land policy process by 1999. Numerous conflicts over the land ‘seizure’, between former and ‘new’ farmers, emerged and, political conflict and ‘governance’ problems expanded, the latter expressed through struggles over the ‘rule of law’, elections and human rights. The international isolation of Zimbabwe grew incrementally in various ways (Elich, 2002), including through condemnation of Zimbabwe, aid withdrawal (see USA, 2001, Zimbabwe Democracy Act) and trade and credit restrictions. Donors went as far as to discriminatorily apply humanitarian aid for food and social services against poor land beneficiaries (HRW, 2004; Amnesty, 2004), as well as from the Global Fund for HIV/AIDS, on grounds that they were on ‘stolen land’, and that the aid would legitimise the land reform and the government. Donors even funded the resettlement of white farmers in countries such as Zambia, Mozambique and Nigeria. By 2003, most of the European ‘donor country’ offices had refocused their visible dialogue with the GoZ over land to pursuing exemption from land expropriation for their citizens’ farms protected by bilateral agreements (BIPA farms)¹⁰.

These domestic-international contradictions in land policy dialogue have been a critical source of the failure to find an ‘agreed’ approach to land reform in Zimbabwe. The emergence of domestic political confrontations in general, and specifically over land reform, among the heterogeneous CSO formations was as much part of these contradictions, as they were based on the sharp class, racial and ideological polarisation that emerged from 1997. The legal-bureaucratic and technocratic land policy formation and implementation process became subordinated to the wider dimensions of internal and external politics. For, the social mobilisation for access to land and opposition to dispossession, within complex class based land struggles and competing demands for land, had overtaken technocracy, in shaping land policy and its poverty orientation. A different redistributive focus, challenged the conservatism of official programme design, while the responses by those opposed to the ‘radical’ land reforms in turn shaped policy responses. Indeed, since state policy elites now had direct and indirect material interest in land, just as much as some leaderships in opposition parties and CSO’s, care is required in interpreting the origin and motives of public action over land reform processes and the nature of opposition to it.

¹⁰ See Moyo, S (forthcoming) on details of such farms.

5.2 CSO institutional landscape and land reform

Zimbabwe has over 1,000 formal NGO's, a few thousands of CBO's, two federations of trade unions representing over 50 trade unions, one major agricultural workers union (GAPWUZ), and various unregistered associations focused on a variety of social issues. These institutions include local and national-level NGOs, which encompass teachers' associations, youths and women's groups, church-affiliated welfare organizations, farmers' groups, village associations, burial and credit societies, advocacy and research institutions, human-rights organizations, rural-development institutions, and professional and cultural groups (Moyo, Raftopoulos and Makumbe, 2000). It is estimated that at least 300 other NGO's, largely those which emerged in the last 10 years, are registered under trust laws with the Registrar of Deeds and the High Court.

The NGO institution in Zimbabwe as an organisational form has developed the greatest visibility and weight in terms of resources (skills, finances and connection) in the CSO landscape and society in general. However its members and those it represents are much fewer than the CBO formation, which in rural areas represent mainly peasants. The CBO's and other informal associations are the dominant institutions in terms of members and constituency, although these tend not to be well coordinated nationally and exist mostly as regional groupings, coordinated by intermediary NGO's. While they are less visible, nationally, they have great weight in micro-localities. The NGO formation has increased its impact on the national policy and political arena, in selected fields.

The ZCTU, the main federation of labour unions has generally played a peripheral role in advocacy for land reform, although it played a more critical role in the ESAP policy re-design debates, especially around 1995 (ZCTU, 1996; Yeros, 2002). It aligned with an opposition political party the MDC, in alliance with NGO's, students, professional and business people, initially under the umbrella of the NCA in 1998. By 1999, through its joint campaigns with the NCA and MDC for constitutional reform and the electoral campaign of 2000, the union seemed increasingly submerged by the MDC, whose political strategy became focused on elections and de-legitimising the government of Zanu PF, on grounds of 'alleged' electoral improprieties, the breakdown of the rule of law and human rights violations. The ZCTU tactic included mobilising MDC membership, articulating a general critique of government economic policies and governance and human rights record, coupled with dis-engagement from GoZ-labour negotiation forums (National Economic Consultative Forum [NECF], Tripartite Negotiating Forum [TNF], etc). It allegedly campaigns for Zimbabwe's international isolation including the mobilisation of regional trade unions to this effect (The Sunday Mail, 2005).

In the context of polarisation around political parties, the false bimodal trade off between governance and development issues, and the Zimbabwe state vis-à-vis the donor community, there have been critical constraints to engaging CSOs, particularly around resolving the land question. CSO lobby on macro-economic policy reform was also weakened from 1999, unlike their more coherent stance during the 1980's around the nationalist nation-building agenda, focusing on the reformation of racially discriminatory policies and unequal employment opportunities. Then CSO's exhibited a more ideologically common front of collaborating with a stronger state, whose growing fiscal resources ensured expanding social services provisions and some worker protection.

During the ESAP era (1990-1996) the political environment for policy reform advocacy was slightly more liberalised. This saw the emergence of stronger indigenisation lobby groups (also CSO's), the expansion of women's advocacy groups, new environmental CSO's, many HIV/AIDS service and lobby CSO's, and to a lesser extent a few CSO's (e.g. the SAPRI network, ZIMCORD) focused on economic policy. Governance issues found greater scope as handful of new CSO's turned towards elections and human rights advocacy to supplement the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) effort. The ZCTU increasingly expanded its economic policy advocacy, tending towards qualified support for ESAP, following rapprochement with government in 1995, providing a mild critique of it, but not its outright rejection. From 1996, the ZCTU's mobilisation of numerous labour strikes, and the increased militancy of civil servants, teachers and medical workers, which the former

was loosely aligned with, heralded a stronger critique of ESAP. Yet at this stage, when NGO's grew and the effects of economic liberalisation were hurting urban workers the most, the ZCTU had remained largely workerist. It slowly evolved towards a political movement agenda as it gained autonomy from the ruling political party and its international aid increased. It has been suggested that this international alliance softened the ZCTU stance on the economic liberalisation policy (Yeros, 2002).

The dramatic loss of jobs and the erosion of wages and increased cost of living during the early 1990's created the social basis for a more political (but largely urban based) mobilisation of CSO alliances within the ZCTU. But this was muted until the cracks emerged within Zanu PF in 1997, as a result of declining economic conditions and social difficulties, the evident accumulation of wealth by a few indigenous elites, alongside the dominant white capital and large farmers, and increased incidences of corruption. The increased political challenge and interest group activism of the re-organised and consolidated Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association (ZNLWVA) was critical in opening the political space for militant activism in general, beyond the 'strike' mechanism, and in generating a new edge of radical demands around economic policy and leadership succession. They called for social welfare benefits (pensions, etc) and financial support to their economic projects (squeezing the redistribution pie) and more land redistribution, claiming their promised 20% share. Also demanded was a greater representation within Zanu PF and the government structures to counter the 'fat cats'.

This upsurge of war veteran influence into the economic policy making process, land reform policy, regime maintenance and the political succession issue had crept in around 1995, but it took a sharp organisational and strategic turn in 1997, when the war veterans held street marches, and in 1998 when they invaded rural land. This 'internal' critique of Zanu PF and government set a new framework for political activism. Their pension demands aggravated workers for its tax effects, angered the landowners whose land faced expropriation, upset businesses reeling from the forex rate collapse and price instabilities, affected the urban poor by inflation, and upset the 'donors' because their actions gave weight to the abrogation of neoliberalism. The reaction all round was an uproar, with the media turning to frenzied calls for 'stabilisation' and a slow down on land expropriation.

Thus, from 1997 a new era of policy influence and contestation of political power and, land and development policy emerged, characterised by the opening of political space for CSO advocacy. This space was created by both the war veterans and labour unions, and provided a conjunctural opportunity for new forms of alliance building, such as the 1998 ZCTU-NCA-MDC alliance. This alliance exploited the political divide or 'rupture' within Zanu PF, by attempts to recruit members of the latter, and by expanding their mobilisation of the increasing urban protest and workerist activism.

This dramatic realignment of socio-political forces was conjunctural and rapid. It emerged from the dramatic economic effects of the sudden devaluation and the flight of forex, and from the market jitters created by these events and the land occupations and expropriation moves. Increased external (IMF, etc) displeasure at these trends and, the DRC interventions' costs and international political ramifications, led to reduced international aid and credit, generating further instability in the financial markets. Meanwhile, increased external aid to CSO's (NGOs) and the ZCTU, strengthened the ZCTU-NCA-MDC alliance from 1998/9. In parallel to this largely urban alliance, Zanu PF co-opted the war veterans and remobilised some nationalist capitalists and peasants during 2000 around the liberationist ideal against the interests of white farmers and, of domestic and foreign capital into an anti-imperialist, pan-Africanist, and nationalist ideology.

The NGO community became 'paradoxically divided' over the land issue, posed in opposition governance issues (Interviews, 2004). The broader agenda for redistributive policies and 'development' policies, was now increasingly usurped by a focus on the symptoms of poverty in their reduction strategies, (see the SAPRN network), and on "process rather than content" (see NCA, 1999)

in all policy matters. Land reform policy discourses became reductionist and polarised, with less emphasis on social redistributive justice.

During the 1998, for the first time since independence a national land movement emerged, from combining scattered, sporadic and local land occupations (Moyo, 2001; Alexander, 2003; Sadomba, 2005). The ZNLWVA was the only CSO to truly build peasant capacity to demand land compared to the micro-level welfarist and environmentalist land use interventions of most NGO's. Initially war veterans joined the peasant occupations led by spirit mediums and traditional leaders, with the support of their urban based offspring, notably in Svosve and Hwedza (Sadomba, 2005). Then independently of Zanu PF, they mobilised 30 similar peasant led land occupations across the country. In 2000, after the referendum rejection which drafted constitutional reforms, including a clause to expropriate with payment only for improvements, nationwide occupations were led by war veterans initially. The were soon supported by Zanu PF and state officials, and were joined from 2001 by urban working class and elite occupiers, building a cross-class 'land movement' (Moyo, 2001). The recent attention directed towards war veterans, through the urban evictions and demolitions of 2005, is a response to the tactic of land occupation having been used in towns, against the elite's wishes. The war veterans had fast become an influential political actor, and a strong organisation, especially once they took a less entryist tactic and autonomous protest strategy vis-à-vis Zanu PF and the state during 1992-2000.¹¹

Academic and public debate has tended to conflate the ZNLWVA membership, which is organically born from Zanu PF membership, with Zanu PF organs and strategies as a party (see also Moore, 2005 and Kriger, 2003), neglecting the empirical evidence of the changing social and political relations of the two organisations, and the nuanced shifts in the alliance. A complex evolution of autonomy (full and/or partial) and cooptation or control of the ZNLWVA by Zanu PF and the state at its apex levels (national and provincial branches) was evident. It entailed a multiplicity of locally independent actions, mostly by the middle class and poor war veterans, challenging the local and central state and Zanu PF structures. These initiated processes such as land expropriation, invaded urban land factories, and later exposed corruption in land and agrarian resource allocations. However faulty the execution and the poverty outcome, the reform was essentially led by war veterans, in a cause that Zanu PF and the state co-opted and gave direction, long after the elections of 2000 and 2002 had transpired.

Various other associations CSO's were later mobilised by Zanu PF and the government in support of 'fast track'. These included the organisation of war collaborators, and ex-detainees associations representing emerging indigenous business, farming and professional class interests, such as the ZFU and the Indigenous Commercial Farmers Union (ICFU), which is now the Zimbabwe Commercial Farmers Union (ZCFU), various district level new farmers associations (e.g. Mazoe/Nyabira farmers association; Marondera association, etc). Their advocacy for land, agrarian inputs and other services were critical in shaping the land reform and economic policy (e.g. dual interest rates, subsidies, import regulations, etc), and served to strengthen this alliance. In urban areas, housing cooperatives, informal traders and other interests were also mobilised around the provision of land. Together this organisational network consolidated a rural (and small urban) land 'movement', which shaped much of the direction of the fast track land reform and, the emergent heterodox economic policy and development strategy.

The Zanu PF-war veterans-nationalist movement alliance that this triggered, exhibited important social and political differentiations in terms of ideology, tactics and material interests sought. The land occupations and state expropriation process was not a uniform and hegemonic structure, and was riddled by numerous internal conflicts and contradictions (Moyo, 2001). Some

¹¹ Urban discourses tend to emphasize a perceived 'uncivil' character of the war veterans, based on their military or guerrilla formation, rather than their civil associational basis of organisational cohesion.

sought the total restitution of all land and displacement of all white ('settler') farmers, while others sought to negotiate with and accommodate them on downsized farms. Some promoted physical confrontation in the invasions but most did not, and instead sought the more effective use of the legal instrument of land expropriation. Some engaged in corrupt land grabbing of large and multiple farms and equipment, but the majority did not, preferring to be formally allocated land and subsidised credit according to policy. These competing currents took four years to harmonise, and pervaded the political succession battles of Zanu PF. Landowners and farm workers opposed the land occupations or GoZ allocations through physical scuffles which led to the death of 6 land owners and 11 farm workers, through legal challenges of the expropriation and through internet protest advocacy. These fuelled the advocacy of various CSO organisations, and financed the mobilisation of legal defence structures.

By the end of 2004, the allocation of land and potential tenurial rights to peasants, various elites and lower tier urban workers, evoked a new agrarian and economic policy constituency, which included policy elites and CSO agents. Many white farmers had left after their eviction while some remained and splintered into three tendencies: a co-opted, independent and 'non-confrontationists' thread; a radical confrontationist group led by -Justice for Agriculture (JAG), and the moderate Commercial Farmers' Union (CFU) led a mainstream group in favour of engagement with the state and donors. Landowners retained their extensive legal challenges of the expropriation, while negotiating 'without pre-prejudice'. This unfolding reconfiguration of agrarian civil society structures and interests, gradually shifted land policy discourses, the state's policy attitudes and the role of the international community. Even the MDC was re-orienting its land policy by 2004 (MDC Restart, 2004).

5.3 Local government and land administration institutions

Rural local authorities, including elected councillors, local government officials and traditional leaders also interacted with civil society organisations and the land movement. Local government structures had experienced declining fiscal capacities to cover administrative, logistical and other implementation responsibilities by 1999. Yet the fast track land reform gave them substance at a relatively low direct budgetary cost, given that payment for land was not the constraint, and that only rudimentary support services and infrastructures, were being provided by the state to some new settlers. Various government and ruling party 'task forces' were established to monitor the land reform process. The district "land committees", which had been initiated in 1996, were restructured, around a 'command centre' concept in 2000, comprising almost all local ministry officials and traditional leaders, war veterans, the ruling party and the security organs. They reported to similarly constituted provincial land committees, coordinated by provincial governors, and these in turn reported to the central ministry of land. For at least three years (2000-2002) the authority of local state structures tended to be subordinated to the war veterans' structures, which tended to influence the identification of land and beneficiaries.

These structures regulated the land occupations, identifying land to be expropriated, selected land beneficiaries, negotiated the former farmers' retained landholdings, resolved land conflicts and prevented 'crime'. They also coordinated the distribution of state subsidised agricultural inputs and machinery for tillage and harvesting. Their advocacy spurred two GoZ land audits during 2002 and 2003 period (Buka audit report, 2002; PLRC report, 2003), and led to the restructuring of the Ministry of land and the initiation of land reform "corrections' from 2003.

However, 'structure' and policy 'consistency' in the land reform process took almost four years to emerge, when the institutions responsible for implementation stabilised through incrementally completing various procedures (e.g. court confirmations of acquisition, tenure certificates offered, compensation, support services, etc), building on the rudimentary allocation of land. It relegated to the longer term costly implementation processes (e.g. land subdivision surveying, infrastructure

investments, etc). The first 18 months of the fast track process entailed two parallel actions: coordinated and uncoordinated land occupations by groups of ‘occupiers’ and individuals on about 20% of the large farmers’ land; the state-led expropriation of 80% of the large farmers land, comprising invaded (‘occupied’) and unoccupied land, and the formal allocation to selected beneficiaries, including the initial occupiers. Both processes entailed elements of “chaotic” process, at the beginning, including incidences of violence on the farms, although ‘disorder’ gradually receded as state administrative and legal structures gained greater country-wide control of the process from late 2001. This process was mediated by the district land committees, and monitored technical audits and security monitoring task forces. But sporadic land invasions and violence on a few farms persisted into 2004.

However, although the scale of land eventually transferred was almost double that proposed in the land reform plans of 1998 (GoZ, 1998), some of the principles of that policy guided implementation (see GoZ, 2001), while the “correction” exercises attempted to sustain many of the principles (see PLRC Report, 2003). Inconsistent implementation of some principles reflected social demands, which forced the government to acquire more land and reduce the original farm sizes ceilings to accommodate more people. Yet opportunistic groups, which sought larger and multiple plots or used land as patronage among beneficiaries, also pressured the state to acquire more land or to evict more former landowners and some newly settled peasants. The media propaganda against ‘corrections’, which vilified the ‘return’ of land to some ‘whites’ was also used to check corrections.

5.4 Traditional peasant leadership structures

Traversing the rural structures of the local state and rural civil society, the institution of traditional leaders, had a pervasive influence over the peasant land movements, besides their control of critical levers of local power (traditional courts, etc) as well as over land policy and local state actions. They led some land occupations, lobbied for more formal powers over the regulation of land allocation, land use and natural resource management, and mediated competing land demands.

They competed among themselves over jurisdictions to allocate new land, and with local government structures, and against ‘outsiders’ to get as much land for their ‘subjects’. Their displeasure received wide media coverage, such that their advocacy influenced central land policy elites and local land committees in the land acquisition and allocation processes. Their position on land committees was strengthened but their relative influence over other members was shaky.

Their influence led to equity inducing or potential poverty reducing land policy responses from the state at times, highlighting the importance of various sources of ‘internal’ critique alongside the external (especially media) critique, which seized the opportunity of exposing oppositional grievances to the fast track process. Yet some chiefs gained larger pieces of prime land and homesteads, as much as their elite counterparts in the state and private sectors did. This support for the larger ‘commercial’ landholdings was an inequity inducing form of interest and policy influence, justified on grounds of royalty. This trend extended to their access to electricity, vehicles and farming inputs, co-opting them into the agrarian embourgeoisement, and as not so traditional ‘policy elites’.

A few chiefs in Matabeleland (an MDC stronghold) had not cooperated in the land occupations (the “informal” process) or in supplying ‘waiting lists’ of potential beneficiaries in the earlier ‘formal’ process, limiting the land gains of their peasantry, relative to their counterparts and new commercial farmers. This was inequity inducing and extended the redistribution exercise.

These various public interactions, including the key efforts of political parties were critical to the mobilisation of land reform and or opposition to it, and thus in shaping land policy. More systematic research on the events and context of the incidences of violence related to the land occupations, and expropriation vis-à-vis the elections, which engulfed Zanu PF and the MDC, and

landowner opposition to land takeovers, is required, for these struggles influenced key shifts in land policy, especially the scale of takeover and the aggression involved.

These state-civil society interactions generated what could be called an expanded redistributionism and equity inducement, tied to both an ‘internal self correcting mechanism’ within the government and ruling party, and influence by an external critique of elite land and equipment grabbing, led by the MDC and its allies. But it did eliminate the uneven land allocation tendency entirely. Nor did it ameliorate the wider economic problems and poverty effects in relation to land reform.

6.0 Conclusions

Zimbabwe’s land reform process changed from a market framework under neoliberal policy conditions towards a statist tendency, led by popular demands for land, which arose from growing poverty and in response to rekindled grievances over colonial injustices, associated with external influences on the recent political economy. Public advocacy and social demands for land, were shaped by both the inequities of pre-existing socio-economic structures and institutions, and the conjunctural turn in Zimbabwe’s economic and political conditions, as induced by both international forces and by internal struggles for accumulation and political succession.

Land policy approaches changed in relation to the changing strategies of non-state actors, such as peasants, war veterans, chiefs and NGO’s, as well as the landowners and ‘international community’. These ranged from direct actions such as land occupations and street action, to collaborative or corporatist engagement in the implementation of official land reform programmes. Different tactics of policy dialogue, negotiation and publicised confrontations were adopted at different times. These processes varied as the ideological and material conditions and interests of key actors changed in relation to economic decline and growing poverty.

The influence on land policy is a more complex phenomenon than is often recognised. The shaping of the fast track policy came from varied sources, including from internal and external (oppositional) pressures mobilised by political parties and CSO’s, and local structures of the state, traditional authorities and peasants’ movements (and CBO’s). The negative impacts of neoliberalism, mobilised greater demand for land among the poor and nascent black elites. The growth of formal political opposition ignited land politics, given the racial dimension of land inequality and legacy of the colonial responsibility. This reinforced the nationalist ideology of the ‘land movement’, while international opposition to a smaller scale of a ‘mixed’ land reform, and economic isolation, radicalised central policy elites.

The internal critique (supportive of the reform) and the external critique (for oppositional purposes) had their greatest effect on the “commercial” component of the land reform programme, in which elite access to land, inputs and credit exhibited tendencies of ‘cronyism’ corruption, and ineffective use of allocated land. These pressures sustained rural demands for greater equity in land allocations, and diverted the initial emphasis that had been placed on ‘blaming’ the purported failure of land reform on the allocation of land to poor “subsistence” farmers, especially by landowners and some middle class political party and CSO actors (see Tsvangirai, 2002¹²), and decrying the method of mass expropriation of large farms. These advocacy processes reflected unintended and intended, entryist and oppositional, confrontational and constructive processes of state-civil society interactions to influence the poverty and land policy nexus.

¹² Newspaper statements

Both the ruling and opposition political parties and CSO's aligned to them had various forms of influence on land policy. The government's dramatic turn to co-opt the land movements and later to effect policy changes for extensive redistribution, was fomented both by the advocacy of war veterans and scattered peasant movements, and by the emergence of the ZCTU-MDC alliance as a political force, supported by middle class NGO formations, as well as capital (including landowners). This re-configured the correlation of social forces and the balance of power in general. The 'pro-democracy' alliance between the MDC and some local CSO's, local and international capital, international donors and northern NGOs, was presented with the dilemma of apparently rejecting re-distributive policies and their potential to reduce inequality and poverty. The redistributionists and nationalist alliance faced the dilemma of being associated with democratic (governance) deficiencies, which during a strong statist reform agenda.

The focus by some of these CSO's on governance and human rights advocacy had the positive effect of highlighting Zimbabwe's democracy deficit and creating civil society capacities to influence policy in general. But their neglect of promoting redistributive land reform since 1980, and when the opportunity arose in 1997, following years of devastating ESAP policies and the recent economic decline, remains their main enigmatic contradiction. The rural populations' land rights thus became a neglected basic human right, until recent land beneficiary evictions, given their focus on the shortcomings in governance by the state and ruling party.

The Zimbabwean experience suggests the need to examine carefully how national and international policy (macro-economic, governance and land) and interactions evolve, in relation to their competing objectives and conceptualisations, within the wider context of political and economic agenda setting. It suggests that the wide range of public actions (including on electoral matters, land policy and wider economic policy, and direct actions over land) and institutions, compete under state and international orchestration, and that these mediate and shape policies and public actions, in struggles to protect existing property rights against struggles to gain access to land. The dynamics of land policy and public action reflected the changing political and economic fortunes of various classes, social groups and political formations, in relation to the progressively unsustainable economic performance and development of neoliberal Zimbabwe, in relation to changes in the political organisation and landscape of civil society formations.

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