

Title: Livelihoods after land reform in Zimbabwe: Understanding processes of rural differentiation

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2012 Livelihoods after land reform in Zimbabwe: Understanding processes of rural differentiation, with N. Marongwe, B. Mavedzenge, J. Mahenehene, F. Murimbarimba and C. Sukume. *Journal of Agrarian Change* Vol. 12 No. 4, pp. 503–527

Livelihoods after land reform in Zimbabwe:

Understanding processes of rural differentiation

ABSTRACT

This paper explores the consequences of Zimbabwe's land reform for the dynamics of differentiation in Zimbabwe's countryside, reporting on the results from a ten-year study from Masvingo province. Based on a detailed analysis of livelihoods across 400 households in 16 sites, the paper offers a detailed typology of livelihood strategies, linked to a class-based analysis of emerging agrarian dynamics. The paper identifies a significant and successful 'middle farmer' group, reliant on 'accumulation from below' through petty commodity production, existing alongside other worker-peasants and the semi-peasantry, whose livelihoods remain vulnerable with prospects for accumulation currently limited. In addition, there are others who are 'accumulating from above', through patronage and corruption. While small in number this group has significant political and economic influence, and is embedded in powerful alliances which have fundamental impacts on the wider political-economic dynamics. To conclude, the economic, social and political implications of the emerging patterns of differentiation in Zimbabwe's countryside are discussed.

Key words: Zimbabwe, land reform, social differentiation, accumulation, class

INTRODUCTION

Zimbabwe's land reform from 2000 has resulted in a massive agrarian restructuring with huge economic, social and political consequences. Since 2000, the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) allocated over 4,500 farms to around 170,000 new farmers. This represented around 7.6m hectares, 20 per cent of the total land area of the country, according to (admittedly rough) official figures. In 2009 this was made up of over 145,000 farm households in smallholder A1 schemes (including both self-contained farms and village settlements with individual arable fields and communal grazing) and around 16,500 further households occupying larger-scale A2 plots, aimed at small-scale commercial farming (Rukuni et al 2009). If the informal settlements, unrecognized by the government's FTLRP, alongside additional large-scale A2 farms allocated in recent years are added in the totals are even larger (Moyo 2011).

This paper explores the consequences of this land reform for the dynamics of differentiation in Zimbabwe's countryside by reporting on the results from a ten-year study in Masvingo province in the south and east of the country (Scoones et al 2010). Zimbabwe's land reform has resulted in what some might term a 'repeasantization' of the rural areas (van der Ploeg 2008), displacing large-scale capitalist agriculture with a much more differentiated pattern of livelihoods, centred on small-scale farming, but also including off-farm enterprises, informal mining and hunting, migration and remittance earning. In some important respects this runs counter to the oft-noted wider trend in Africa of 'deagrarianization' and the loss of peasant livelihoods in the face of wider economic and political forces (Bryceson 1996, Bryceson et al 2000, Weis 2007). Populist commentators might hail the Zimbabwe case as an instance of the triumph of efficient small-scale peasant farming resulting from land reform (Rosset et al 2006). Yet acquiring land through

reform processes – in this instance through land occupations and state expropriation – and allocating it to a mix of largely land and income poor people from nearby rural areas is not the end of the story. As new livelihoods are established, investments initiated and production, business, trade and marketing commence, processes of differentiation begin – within households, between households in a particular place and between sites.

This paper explores this unfolding dynamic across 400 households in 16 sites in Masvingo province, with the aim of trying to understand the new agrarian dynamic in Zimbabwe's countryside, and the implications for the future. These processes of differentiation are not without conflict and contest. This is not a story of a homogenous peasantry suddenly created through a back-to-the-land populist land reform. Multiple social forces – of class, gender, age and ethnicity – are at play, creating a differentiated pattern of livelihoods, with both winners and losers. These processes are highly contingent and very dynamic. Each site has a particular story, rooted in very particular histories of land invasion, the diverse origins of new settlers, the forms of authority and the degree of external intervention (Scoones et al 2010).

The paper will offer some sense of these specificities, but will also try and explore the wider story, asking what new agrarian classes are emerging on the new resettlements, what processes of accumulation are occurring, and what new political, economic and social relations are being forged? In particular the paper examines whether the new agrarian setting, rooted in a diversity of forms of essentially 'smallholder' production, offers a new possibility for agrarian transformation, based on a process of 'accumulation from below', driven by small-scale petty commodity production (Neocosmos 1993, Cousins 2010).

Some dismiss this possibility as naively 'populist', arguing that it runs against any historical analysis which inevitably sees the triumph of capitalist agrarian relations over subsistence-

oriented peasant production systems (Byres 2004). A variety of paths to agrarian transition can be mapped out, echoing different historical experiences (cf. Bernstein 2010), but support for land reform focused on smallholder production is sometimes seen as inappropriate, given the changing nature of agri-food systems under globalization, where large-scale options are needed with scale efficiencies, market connections and capitalization (cf. Sender and Johnson 2003). Such conditions, Bernstein (2004, 221) argues, give rise to a new agrarian question, one focused on questions of labour and 'rooted in crises of employment, and manifested in struggles over, and for, land to secure some part of its reproduction needs'. As Hart (2002) argues, redistributive land reform must be seen in relation to these dynamics of labour and the processes of differentiation that they entail. Could it be then that, under conditions of extremely insecure formal employment, smallholder production on land reform sites is simply a survivalist response, reliant on informal livelihood activities across urban and rural spaces, combining agriculture with employment and off-farm enterprises, but ultimately with little prospect of escaping long-run, deep poverty and marginalization?

Given these wider debates, how should we conceptualize the relationships between land and livelihoods in Zimbabwe? What is the future for agrarian livelihoods following land reform? Does land redistribution, primarily to small-scale producers, only prolong the transition to capitalist agriculture, leaving an increasing number of people impoverished, reliant on informal, fragile and insecure livelihoods from diverse sources or, by contrast, can redistributive land reform result in a revitalization of small-scale agriculture as the primary motor of growth and employment in ways that were prevented by the colonial inheritance? We ask, in turn, what do new patterns of livelihood activity imply for patterns of agrarian change, and the unfolding class and political dynamics in the countryside? Has land reform produced such a radically altered agrarian structure that a new economic dynamic is emerging? What forms of production, investment and accumulation are ongoing, and how is this affecting patterns of social and

economic differentiation? Is there, as a result, the potential for substantial and sustained 'accumulation from below', rooted in new forms of rural petty commodity production and centred on small-scale agriculture? Looking to the future, we ask: what are the longer-term implications of the replacement of a large-scale commercial farming sector owned and controlled by a small group with a more diverse set of farming enterprises of different scales? Can the new farmers generate not only subsistence livelihoods, but also surpluses to feed the nation and create broader wealth?

Only a detailed examination of the Zimbabwe situation can help us ascertain what broad scenario (or – most likely - combination of these) holds. This paper attempts this through a detailed examination of a particular set of sites in one region of the country, attempting to draw broader conclusions on the unfolding process of agrarian and livelihood change following land reform. Inevitably through a detailed, empirical case study approach, there are severe limits to generalization, but the aim is not to be prescriptive; merely to offer some questions, issues and hints about future patterns in order to enrich the policy debate about what might happen next.

Our starting point is a detailed investigation of livelihoods, and in particular patterns of differentiation and accumulation. In particular, as already mentioned, we explore the potentials and limits of 'accumulation from below' resulting from the reconfiguration of economic opportunity following land reform. As Cousins (2010, 15) argues: 'land reform and accumulation from below are necessary to reconfigure a dualistic and unequal agrarian structure which is itself a structural cause of poverty'. This requires the creation of a new group of farmers and entrepreneurs to fill the 'missing middle' between very small-scale survival farming and large-scale commercial operations (Hall 2009, Cousins 2007). Accumulation from below implies that 'the inherited agrarian structure is radically reconfigured so that much larger numbers of people begin to participate in the agricultural sector and benefit substantially from such participation.

However, it also suggests that these new producers must be able to produce at least as much (if not more) than large-scale commercial farmers, replacing them in supplying local, national and international markets” (Cousins 2010, 16). The big question is therefore: is this happening in Zimbabwe?

AGRARIAN TRANSFORMATION IN ZIMBABWE’S COUNTRYSIDE

In the past, a number of studies have attempted to assess the pattern of rural differentiation and its broad class characteristics in Zimbabwe (Bush and Cliffe 1984, Cousins *et al* 1992, Moyo 1995). Based on an extensive review of the 1980s literature on rural differentiation in Zimbabwe’s communal areas, for example, Ben Cousins and colleagues (1992, 12-13) identified four types of rural household, distinguishing ‘petty commodity producers’ from ‘worker-peasants’, the ‘semi-peasantry’ and the ‘rural petit bourgeoisie’. In their categorization, petty commodity producers combine capital (owning the means of production) and labour (providing primarily family labour) in the farm enterprise. They can meet a significant proportion of their simple reproduction needs¹ from direct production. While they have the potential to engage in expanded reproduction, their capacity to sustain capital accumulation is still constrained. Worker-peasants are a hybrid group, combining elements of the proletariat and (partially commoditized) petty commodity producers. The semi-peasantry are the most marginalized and impoverished group, and include significant numbers of women. They are insecure with respect to both rural production and wage labour. Finally, the rural petit bourgeoisie have, according to this classification, moved beyond simple reproduction and into (relatively) sustained capitalist accumulation, employing and extracting surplus from wage labour. They often have diversified

¹ Including daily reproduction (maintaining the means of production and levels of consumption) and generational reproduction (raising the next generation of family labour) (Bernstein, 2010).

livelihoods, drawing on rural and urban sources of income. However, according to Cousins and colleagues (1992, 13) ‘they are only petty capitalists and clearly not an “agrarian bourgeoisie” in the classical sense’.

These agrarian class dynamics necessarily take on a particular character in southern Africa, given the historical distortions of a colonial settler migrant labour economy. The relationships between the core economy and the rural ‘labour reserves’ had huge impacts on patterns of class and social differentiation in the countryside (Arrighi 1973). However, in contrast to some assessments that view rural people as a relatively homogenous ‘semi-proletariat’, there are important patterns of differentiation. These are not necessarily along classical lines, as parallel processes of proletarianization and the emergence of successful petty commodity production take place, creating important hybrid class categories such as worker-peasants (Cousins 2010) or the ‘semi-peasantry’. As Bernstein (2009, 73) explains, many must seek their livelihoods

...through insecure, oppressive and increasingly ‘informalized’ wage employment and/or a range of likewise precarious small-scale and insecure ‘informal sector’ (‘survival’) activity, including farming; in effect, various and complex *combinations* of employment and self-employment. Many of the labouring poor do this across different sites of the social division of labour: urban and rural, agricultural and non-agricultural, as well as wage employment and self-employment. This defies inherited assumptions of fixed, let alone uniform, notions (and ‘identities’) of ‘worker’, ‘trader’, ‘urban’, ‘rural’, ‘employed’ and ‘self-employed’.

Given this diversity of hybrid livelihood strategies and class identities, how does accumulation take place? As Cousins (2010, 17) argues for South Africa: ‘Successful accumulation from below would necessarily involve a class of productive small-scale capitalist farmers emerging from within a larger population of petty commodity producers, worker-peasants, allotment-

holding wage workers and supplementary food producers'. In Zimbabwe, the potential for this is highly dependent on wider political and economic relations, and most especially on those elites who, despite their political rhetoric, are not fully committed to a more radical reconfiguration of land, livelihoods and agrarian relations.

This paper therefore asks whether in the new resettlements we are seeing a process of accumulation from below - where new 'middle farmers' are contributing to economic development, urban food supplies and employment – or whether relationships are dominated by processes of accumulation from above – where accumulation derives from oppressive, exploitative and extractive political and market relations, de-linked from local-level commodity production and focused on large-scale capitalist farming. Or whether indeed there is some combination of these two contrasting dynamics, and so tensions and conflicts between groups and emerging rural classes. In order to answer these central issues, we must delineate the patterns of economic activity and their political dimensions, identifying the contours of social differentiation and class formation. This allows us in turn to evaluate not only the longer term livelihood trajectories being pursued, but also what political and economic alliances are being forged between different groups structuring the wider agrarian political economy. While necessarily speculative, such insights allow us to make some assessments about likely future changes, and the longer term impacts of Zimbabwe's land reform.

THE CHANGING AGRARIAN STRUCTURE IN MASVINGO PROVINCE

What broad patterns have emerged following land reform in Masvingo province in the south and east of the country? In 2000, Masvingo province had a total of 623 large-scale commercial

farms, covering 2.1m ha². By 2009, a total of 176 farms (28 per cent of the farms in the province), with an area of 371,520 hectares, were acquired under the A2 model. A further 244 farms (1,195,564 ha) were acquired under the A1 model. In terms of area, 23.7 per cent of the acquired land was allocated to A2 farmers and 76.3 per cent to A1 farmers. A total of 1,169 and 32,597 households benefited under the A2 and A1 schemes respectively, covering a total of 28 per cent of the province's land area or 1.5m ha. The number of official, recorded land reform beneficiaries (certainly an underestimate) for Masvingo is 33,766 households – perhaps over 200,000 people in total. In addition, Masvingo has a large number of informal settlements not registered under the fast-track programme, with around 8,500 households currently settled in this way, with around 6,000 of these concentrated in the Nuanetsi ranch area.

This was not land reform at the margins; this was a major transformation in agrarian structure and relations. Data are difficult to get hold of and often inconsistent, and the situation has been very fast-moving, with official statistics not covering contested areas and new invasions.

However, the following table gives an overview of Masvingo province's new agrarian structure in 2009.

² Ownership of these farms was varied. They were black-owned, white-owned, church-owned (especially the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe, Apostolic Faith Mission, Zion Christian Church, African Independent Churches and the Catholic Church) and state institutions (especially ARDA and CSC).

Table 1: Overview of land distribution in Masvingo province, 2009

Category	Area (hectares)	Per cent of total
A1	1 195 564	21.1 %
A2	371 520	6.5 %
Old Resettlement	440 163	7.8 %
Communal area	2 116 450	37.4 %
Gona reZhou National Park	505 300	8.9 %
Remaining large-scale farms, conservancies, small-scale farms, state farms)	1,027,603	18.3 % ³
Total	5 656 600	100 %

Source: compiled from various sources, including Masvingo Lands Department data, 2009

While land reform was dramatic, it did not cover all large-scale commercial farms. Some estates, conservancies and large-scale farm units were largely unaffected. For example, by 2009, 28 large-scale commercial farms were left in the hands of the original owners. Although the situation remains changeable, with evictions continuing to occur⁴, white-owned, large-scale farms do still exist in Masvingo province; even if in most cases other properties owned by the

³ This includes 28 large scale farms (black and white owned before FTLRP) making up 11,319ha (average size 404ha) and 53 new large-scale A2 farms over 110,718ha with an average size of 2,089ha. In addition of the 315,255ha that made up the four conservancies in the province (Save Valley, Chiredzi, Malilangwe and Masvingo), 211,474ha remains. In addition, Nuanetsi ranch, owned by the Development Trust of Zimbabwe, still amounts to over 300,000ha, even with resettlement areas accommodated. 16227ha remains under the ARDA as state land (data from Moyo, 2011)

⁴ In 2009, for example, three farms (3,000 ha) in Gutu, seven farms (18,400 ha) in Masvingo and ten farms (22,900 ha) in Mwenezi district were acquired, including some under bilateral investment treaties.

same individual were taken. Around the 2008 elections, however, there was a peak in land insecurity, and a number of properties were allocated to politically-connected elites as large-scale A2 farms, now amounting to over 110,000ha in the province, some in very large tracts. These represent the retention of a large-scale capitalist class of farmer, but under new ownership arrangements. In other areas 'joint ownership' arrangements have been imposed on wildlife conservancies⁵ and equally controversial developments have occurred in the Development Trust of Zimbabwe land at Nuanetsi, where external investment has been sought for large-scale plantation agriculture, crocodile farming and ethanol production⁶. A substantial proportion of Masvingo's lowveld citrus and sugar estates at Triangle, Hippo Valley and Mkwesine remained under the original ownership structure, although in the sugar estates outgrower plots were redistributed as part of land reform as A2 farms⁷. The national parks

⁵ See <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/safari-operators-enraged-as-zanupf-rewards-the-faithful-with-stolen-share-of-lucrative-trade-1786869.html> (accessed May 20 2011).

⁶ This has involved deals between ZANU-PF politicians, reputedly at the highest level, and the notorious businessman, Billy Rautenbach, who is investing in a sugar plantation and an ethanol plant, alongside various wildlife enterprises, including crocodile farming, on the DTZ ranch. This has resulted in an intense political struggle between informal settlers, local politicians and the investors (Scoones and Chaumba, in prep.). See for example: <http://www.zimbabwemetro.com/news/rautenbachpercentE2percent80percent99s-links-to-zanu-pf-reap-rewards-for-him-and-misery-for-25-families-on-nuanetsi-ranch/>; <http://www.theindependent.co.zw/local/24785-party-bigwigs-locked-in-nuanetsi-ranch-turf-war.html>; <http://www.thezimbabwean.co.uk/2010010927709/sunday-top-stories/nkomo-orders-war-vets-off-nuanetsi.html> (accessed 20 May 2011).

⁷ At Mkwesine, 3,871 ha of the 4,880 ha were allocated under the FTLRP, leaving only about 442 ha to the estate. Hippo Valley Estate was less targeted, with most of the land taken being that of outgrowers who bought the farms from the estate in the 1960s. Hippo Valley estate still has 19,917 ha of cane land. Triangle Limited was largely unaffected, and still has 21,553 ha of land (Siervogel et al 2007, <http://www.huletts.co.za/au/introduction.asp>)

estate, most notably Gonarezhou National Park in the south-east, was also largely left untouched, except for one high-profile invasion by the Chitsa people (Chaumba et al 2003), where some 16,000 ha of the park were occupied by over 700 families from Chitsa community (Mombeshora and Le Bel, 2009). Outside the parks estate some state and parastatal land was transferred as part of the FTLRP, but much has remained under the control of such organizations as ARDA (the Agricultural Rural Development Authority) and the CSC (the Cold Storage Company).

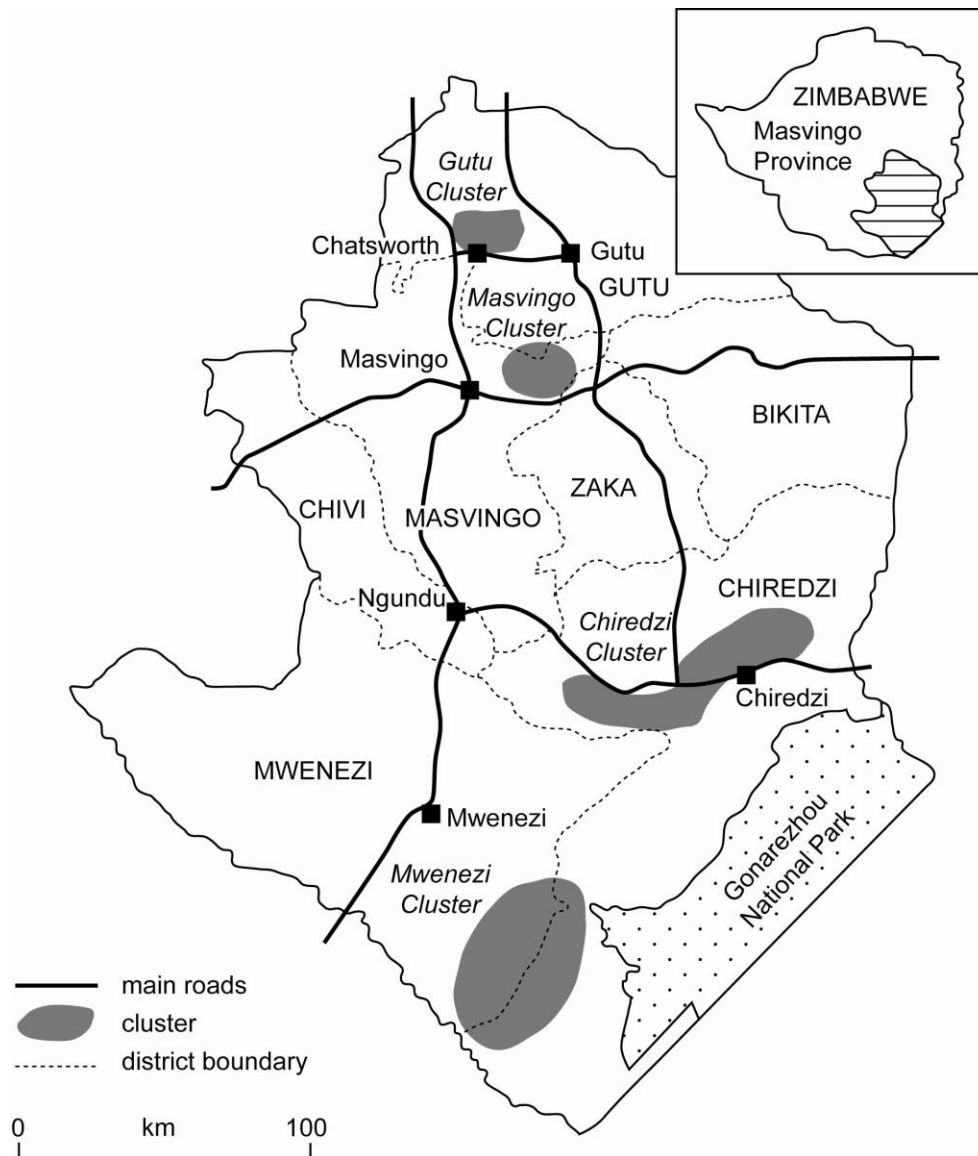
Thus areas redistributed as part of the fast-track land reform programme represent one part of a larger jigsaw, and their futures are bound up with what happens elsewhere – and particularly the political struggles over land and resources within Masvingo. It is this wider political economy of land that will determine the long-term future of the new resettlements and the livelihoods of the new settlers. These themes will be returned to briefly at the end of the paper; now we turn to the detailed analysis of processes of differentiation in the study sites.

THE MASVINGO STUDY: LIVELIHOODS AFTER LAND REFORM

The Masvingo study involved in-depth field research in 16 land reform sites located in four research 'clusters' across the province, involving a sample population of 400 households. Each cluster included different types of land reform model, including A2, A1 (self-contained and villagised) and, in some sites, informal settlements. The study area stretched from the relatively higher potential areas near Gutu to the sugar estate of Hippo Valley to the dry south in the lowveld, offering a picture of diverse agro-ecological conditions (Figure 1). Initial research commenced in 2000 around the time of the land invasions (Chaumba et al 2003 a,b, Wolmer et al 2004), and continued until 2009-10, offering insights in many sites over a full decade. This was a period of extreme political and economic turmoil, highlighted by violent elections

especially in 2008 and the collapse of the formal economy during the mid-2000s, with hyperinflation peaking at 231 million per cent. Following the establishment of the Government of National Unity in early 2009, some level of stability returned, but the story told below unfolded under very challenging conditions.

Figure 1: Map of Masvingo province, showing study areas



A mix of quantitative and qualitative research methods were used (Scoones et al 2010), including a census of all households and a detailed sample survey of 177. A household ranking exercise was also carried out in all sites in order to get insights into local understandings of social and economic differentiation. With a group of key informants, these rankings explored how settlers themselves ranked households on the site according to a composite idea of 'success', and discussions explored the criteria used. In addition, we undertook 120 detailed biographical interviews examining people's own perceptions and strategies, as well as a focus on intra-household dynamics, and especially the gender and age differentiation. These were selected from the household sample, and so represented a range of households across 'success groups' (denoted SG below).

Success ranks (SG1 more 'successful', SG3, less so) in each site correlated with a range of quantitative indicators, including asset ownership, income earning activities, agricultural production and sales, as shown in Table 1. Some significant contrasts exist, indicative, as discussed below, of emerging class dynamics. For example, in A1 self-contained sites, SG1 households' maize production in 2006 was nearly three times that of SG2 households in the same sites, while sales were nearly four times as large, despite land holdings and cropped areas being comparable. The SG1 households however own more than double the number of cattle and significantly more own scotch carts than their SG2 counterparts, demonstrating the differentiated nature of asset accumulation across households.

Table 1: Socio-economic differentiation by study site and success group (SG)

	A1 villagised			A1 self-contained			A1 informal			A2		
	SG1	SG2	SG3	SG1	SG2	SG3	SG1	SG2	SG3	SG1	SG2	SG3
Age of household head	41	39	38	38	38	36	42	36	30	44	44	47
Educational level of household head	Grade 7	Form 2	Form 2	Form 2	Form 2	Form 2	Grade 7	Grade 7	Grade 7	Form 3 or better	Form 3 or better	Form 3 or better
Land holding (ha)	4.8	4.3	4.5	37.1	33.3	32.5	7.0	6.7	6.7	182.5	126.8	153.1
Area cropped (ha)	3.8	3.3	3.2	9.9	6.0	5.7	5.9	4.9	2.8	11.3	12.4	8.1
Cattle owned (nos)	6.8	4.3	2.7	15.4	6.9	6.2	12.2	3.3	0.8	48.5	24.5	8.9
Maize output in 2006 kg	3466	2593	2105	9900	3480	2695	2626	1863	1006	25150	2914	6100
Sales (GMB and local) in kg in 2006	1968	1319	1076	7302	1950	1305	632	142	196	19550	1477	4375
Percent owning a scotch cart	65 %	50 %	55 %	79 %	46 %	33 %	53 %	50 %	21 %	29 %	48 %	27 %
House type (percent with tin/asbestos roof)	51 %	48 %	54 %	35 %	48 %	48 %	53 %	54 %	67 %	71 %	78 %	58 %
% receiving remittance	41 %	33 %	21 %	43 %	46 %	43 %	26 %	29 %	35 %	29 %	27 %	31 %

Source: Survey data, 2007-08 (Scoones et al 2010: 222)

But 'success' is clearly more than just such simple household level indicators: relationships, histories, intra-household dynamics, age and gender all construct cross-cutting patterns of difference within and between households. The following section offers more qualitative insights from a selection of the 120 biographies collected (drawn from Scoones et al 2010, 61-69), highlighting these dimensions, and especially insights into the dynamics of accumulation and differentiation.

Success Group 1

FV, Lonely Farm, Gutu cluster (A1 villagised). I was born in Gutu in 1950, and am a father of nine children. My previous home was in Serima nearby, and I have kept that home and field. I have a small engine for irrigation which is moved between my two farms. I irrigate maize, wheat, rice, beans, vegetables and fruit trees. At my Serima home I have seven wells and two small dams. At my new farm I have already dug two deep wells, and am planning more. My main reason for transferring to Lonely was to gain access to good grazing for livestock. In Serima it is very crowded, and the livestock suffer in the dry season. My wife trades vegetables from our plot. We also have a good trade in green mealies and other crops. Some of my children are now grown up and send us remittances as both cash and groceries. Two of my sons are teachers and two are builders. With the good grazing our animals are thriving. The cows are producing new calves every year, and we have plentiful milk supplies.

SM, Edenvale, Mwenezi cluster (A1 villagised). Since we arrived here, six of my sons have married and got land in the resettlement. My role in the land invasions was recognised with a large area, as well as giving my sons land. With a large family you must think of the future. We have spent a lot of time clearing fields. We grow a range of local sorghum varieties. My wives make and sell ilala palm trays, while some of my sons are border jumpers. One son is a gunner who works with safari hunters based in Chiredzi. He is well paid, has a car and assists us. I keep four orphans left by my late daughter. I had just a few cattle before coming here, but now I have 18. We are happier here at resettlement. There is more land, plots are larger and there is no overcrowding. Last season I got very good yields, and filled two granaries with sorghum. Following resettlement, there is now a future for my family, and my sons will have land.

EG, Wondedzo Extension. Masvingo cluster (A1 self-contained). We came to this place in 2000, coming from Buhera communal area. We came looking for land, as our original home was very crowded. Since coming we have had much better crop production than we had before. We have learned a lot, and developed skills in producing soya beans and sugar beans that earn good cash. I must get water from my neighbours, as we do not have a well. When we get maize we buy cattle. One tonne of maize allows us to

buy a cow. My husband is retired and we work the farm together. He used to be a police officer and later worked at a store in town. We have five children: four boys and a girl. I also look after two orphans, the children of my brother who passed away. Before, we had no cattle and little farm equipment. We now have cattle, and are able to sell up to eight litres of milk per day in Masvingo when the cows are milking. In the future, we have plans to dig a well, so that water supplies are close by and we can irrigate a garden.

Success Group 2

JM, Lonely Farm (A1 villagised). I was born in Gutu in 1979. I am married and have one child. In Gutu I had very little land to farm. It was not a good life for a young family. We had to rely on others. In 2000, I decided to join the invasion groups. Before I had no cattle, but now I own five head, all purchased through farming. I have also managed to buy a plough. Now I help my family back in Gutu during drought years with food, and I send cash for my young brothers to pay for school fees. All of this is from our hard work. I have cleared four hectares of land and I employ two workers on the farm, who stay with us. My wife has a vegetable garden and sells tomatoes and onions locally. She also has a small business selling second-hand clothes. The new land has transformed our lives.

MM – Turf Ranch. Mwenezi cluster (Informal). I was born in 1956 in Makhanani communal land. I worked for ten years as a herd boy and got a beast in payment. This became the foundation of my life. Its offspring paid *lobola* (bridewealth), and I was able to marry. In my old home there were very poor soils, and the place was so overcrowded. Here the soil is first class, and there is underground water. I have dug a well at my homestead, and my dream is to start irrigating. We keep in good touch with those from our previous home. When there are ceremonies, we brew beer together. I have a few cattle myself but I also look after others' animals as part of a sharing agreement. In addition to agriculture, we have a number of other activities. For example, I sometimes do some small-scale hunting in the area. I also sometimes do part-time piecework jobs on the nearby plots: maintaining fences for example. The pay is poor, but at least it is something. My wife makes mats and baskets and also does gardening and sells the vegetables.

However, her main business is selling milk. Mrs M explains: I make a deal with farm workers on nearby farms, and purchase the milk which they are selling – usually without the knowledge of the plot owner. I can make a real profit in a single day. I then buy maize with the proceeds.

DN – Fair Range. Chiredzi cluster (A2). I am now 60 years old, and I come from the Gonakudzingwa small-scale farming area where my father had a plot. I have a general dealer business at Chanyenga Business Centre near Chikombedzi. I am a member of the Agrodealers Association of Zimbabwe, and a member of the Dairy Association in the new resettlement areas. I settled here in 2003 with an offer letter. I am married and have two sons and one daughter. It was my interest in livestock production that encouraged me to apply for a farm under the fast track programme. My plot is 66 hectares in size, but I have only cleared ten so far. I am irrigating a portion, but otherwise I keep my livestock. I now have 12 cattle and 35 goats. These are sold sometimes in Chiredzi. I live at the farm with my wife and one son and daughter who are still schooling. We hire workers on a temporary basis. I have been unwell recently, so it is mostly my wife that does the work. Farming like this is my dream, and if I get the resources I plan to develop the farm.

Success Group 3

AG – Edenvale. Mwenezi cluster (A1 villagised). I was born in 1966, the daughter of headman Gezani. I was married to a businessman in Chikombedzi, but he passed away. I suffered a lot bringing up my children following the death of my husband. Most of the cattle were distributed to his other wives, and I had very little. However, the few animals I got paved the way for a new life. The land reform programme was a great boost, and I soon joined the land invasions. My old home is still nearby, and I keep good connections. But I have worked hard on my new land and cleared six hectares. Rain is the biggest problem in this area, but I have good soils and have been getting good crops. These can pay for school fees for my two daughters. I now have my own place. I am free from others and can do my own farming.

EM – Wonedzo Extension, Masvingo cluster (A1 self-contained). I have married two wives, each now with one young child. I am also staying with three brothers and a sister. There was no land for me at my home area, so resettlement was a good option. When we came to this place we had nothing. We now have one donkey and one goat, and I have bought a bicycle too. We now produce good crops, and we can send food to our relatives at our original home. I also do some clay pot making which gets a bit of extra money. Now we eat well and have better clothes. In the future I want to become a Master Farmer, and help my young brothers and sister go to school.

PP, Northdale, Gutu cluster (A2). I live in town where I work for the Vehicle Inspection Department. I have three houses in Masvingo, but I was keen to have a farm. I do not have any connections to the rural areas, as I have always been in town. So in 2000 I applied for land and got my plot at Northdale. It is 278 hectares in size, but is not yet developed. I have not had the resources. I have five cattle on the plot and have cleared six hectares. We have employed some temporary labour to farm, but the yields have been poor. Last year I did not plant anything, as I could not get hold of inputs and there are so many animals that come and destroy the crops. My eldest daughter stays at the plot and manages the farm. She grows a few vegetables and does some trading in the area. I stay with my wife and younger children who go to school in Masvingo. Hopefully in the future the farm will take off.

From the 120 biographies collected, these cases offer some inevitably limited glimpses of the processes of accumulation and differentiation at play across the resettlements. Some are accumulating (notably those in SG1 and to some extent SG2); mostly through surpluses from agriculture, but also through patronage (as in the case of SM who was allocated substantial land as a reward for leading the invasions). Others are struggling, barely creating a subsistence livelihood from farming, and selling their labour or engaging in off-farm income earning, sometimes illegally (such as hunting). Still others have other options, such as PP with a job in town, and so are not investing significantly in their new land assets. Some women, such as AG, have seen the option of resettlement as ‘paving the way for a new life’, escaping oppression and

poverty elsewhere. Other women have established thriving businesses, linked to agricultural activities (e.g. milk selling) or access to new resources (e.g. palm mat making). Relations between new and old homes remain important, with transfers of food, labour and income. Those accumulating are employing labour, sometimes permanently (often relatives from nearby areas) and sometimes temporarily (often poorer, SG3 households in the schemes). The overall image is a complex dynamic of rapidly changing social and economic relations. By looking at the different livelihood strategies linked to different success groups, the beginnings of a livelihood typology can be developed, as explored in the following section.

LIVELIHOOD TRANSITIONS AND PATTERNS OF DIFFERENTIATION

How, then, can we classify these often highly individualized, context-specific experiences in a way that makes sense of emerging patterns of differentiation and class formation across the sites? Previous work on livelihoods in rural Zimbabwe has offered various livelihood typologies. For example, Chimhowu (2002) and Chimhowu and Hulme (2006) offer five broad categories based on work in the frontier lands of northern Zimbabwe, both on formal and spontaneous resettlement sites. These include 'back-foot' strategies, pursued by chronically poor households, without productive assets and no external support who are often candidates for exit; 'crisis' strategies, involving households with a semi-subsistence farming strategy and who are often casualties of retrenchment or HIV/AIDS; 'survivalist' strategies, followed by vulnerable, non-poor households of average wealth who have secure livelihoods in good seasons, but are vulnerable during bad ones; and two types of 'accumulation' strategy, the first being farmers with assets and savings, focusing on agriculture, a high risk strategy which works as long as rains fall and markets function, and the second being village entrepreneurs who base their livelihoods on the buying and selling of agricultural commodities, and local business activity. Echoing this classification, a more generic livelihood typology has also been proposed by Dorward (2009)

and Dorward *et al.* (2009). This emphasises the dynamic changes and wider aspirations of households, contrasting those that are 'hanging in' (surviving, but poor – including crisis and survival strategies), 'stepping out' (diversifying away from agriculture, both locally and through migration) and 'stepping up' (accumulating locally, largely through agriculture). Mushongah (2009) has added a fourth strategy, 'dropping out', focusing on those essentially destitute households, reliant on different forms of social protection, and often in the process of exiting.

In the table below, 15 different livelihood pathways are identified which broadly cluster into the categories of dropping out, hanging in, stepping out and stepping up. Our livelihood typology is based on a detailed analysis of the transcripts of the success ranking workshops in all sites where 360 individual households across the sites were discussed, together with more detailed information from the 120 household and individual biographies. These different strategies are often associated with identifiable rural classes. So, for example, within the 'hanging in' category, we have identified asset-poor farmers and those pursuing straddling livelihoods (petty commodity producers), along with survival diversification (peasant-workers) and keeping the plot (not really a rural livelihood strategy at all, but an insurance for the future). In the 'stepping up' category, we have *hurudza* (successful farmers) and semi-commercial farmers (many of whom could be defined as an emerging rural petit bourgeoisie), alongside rural entrepreneurs (successful worker-peasants) and those who are accumulating from above through patronage connections.

Table 2: A livelihood typology for new resettlement households in Masvingo province

Category	Strategy	A2	A1 self-contained	A1 villagised	Informal	Total	Description
		54	72	159	75	360	N
Dropping out (10.0 %)	Exits	3.7 %	2.8 %	4.4 %	6.7 %	4.4 %	Those who have abandoned their plot, due to deaths in the family, other commitments, or having been removed through administrative (land audit) or political means. No one living there currently.
	Chronically poor, destitute	0.0 %	1.4 %	4.4 %	5.3 %	3.3 %	No assets, reliant on help from others, limited farming.
	Ill-health	0.0 %	1.4 %	3.8 %	1.3 %	2.2 %	As above, but suffering severe consequences of death or ill-health of one or more family members.
Hanging in (33.6 %)	Asset poor farming	1.9 %	16.7 %	16.4 %	33.3 %	17.8 %	Limited assets (of cattle, labour, etc.), relying on others to help out with draught power etc.
	Keeping the plot	11.1 %	15.3 %	8.8 %	8.0 %	10.3 %	The plot is being kept for the future – either for inheritance purposes or for later investments when conditions improve. A few relatives and/or workers occupy the plot.
	Straddling	0.0 %	1.4 %	10.1 %	4.0 %	5.6 %	Maintaining multiple homes/farms/herds, both in the resettlement area and the communal land, but not producing much on new plot.
Stepping out (21.4 %)	Survival diversification	0.0 %	2.8 %	1.9 %	6.7 %	2.8 %	Border jumping, gold panning, <i>makorokozo</i> (dealing), sex work. Limited farm assets and low production, sufficient for household food security in only some years.
	Local off-farm activities	5.6 %	1.4 %	7.5 %	4.0 %	5.3 %	Building, trading, craft activities etc. complement farming, and offset production deficits in some years.
	Reliance on remittances from within Zimbabwe	0.0 %	2.8 %	9.4 %	1.3 %	5.0 %	Teachers, civil servants and others, with a farming base and some remittance income, allowing investment and some accumulation on farm (although limited).
	Reliance on stable remittances from outside Zimbabwe	0.0 %	0.0 %	5.0 %	10.7 %	4.4 %	Those with sons/daughters in South Africa (or beyond, including UK) sending regular remittances in foreign exchange, allowing more substantial investment in the resettlement home, and a buffer against low agricultural production.
	Cell phone farmers	16.7 %	6.9 %	0.0 %	0.0 %	3.9 %	Those with other business interests/sources of income who fail to visit the farm regularly and are not really investing significantly. Workers and farm managers run the operation, while the plot holder lives and works elsewhere.
Stepping up (35.0 %)	<i>Hurudza</i>	0.0 %	26.4 %	22.0 %	16.0 %	18.3 %	The 'real farmers', accumulating through agriculture, as some in the communal areas did before. They sell regularly to a diversity of markets. Sufficient farm resources – cattle/draught, equipment, etc. Often hire in significant labour.

	Part-time farmers	33.3 %	11.1 %	6.3 %	2.7 %	10.6 %	Farming not the sole enterprise, but a core livelihood activity supported by off-farm work. Accumulation on farm significant, and assets sufficient for farming. May hire in labour through remittance income sources.
	New (semi) commercial farmers	22.2 %	6.9 %	0.0 %	0.0 %	4.7 %	Those with skills and resources who have a large plot (A2 or A1 self-contained). Investment into farm through off-farm businesses or employment paying in foreign exchange. They have started to farm productively, reinvesting in the plot.
	Farming from patronage	5.6 %	2.8 %	0.0 %	0.0 %	1.4 %	Those who have received support from the state through various forms of patronage, who have been able to invest in the farm. Mostly A2 farmers. Production may be significant.

Source: from Scoones et al (2010:228-229)

The table presents the percentage distribution of different livelihood types by scheme type. A2 farmers are well represented, for example, in the new (semi-)commercial farmer group, as are part-time and so-called cell phone farmers. A smaller group is identified as ‘farming from patronage’, deriving substantial benefits from external linkages. Those in the informal settlements have the highest percentage in the ‘asset poor farming’ and ‘chronically poor and destitute’ groups, while self-contained A1 farmers have the highest percentage in the stepping up ‘*hurudza*’ group.

Overall, the distribution of households across the broad livelihood categories shows 35 per cent ‘stepping up’ – on a significant upward accumulation trajectory based on farming. Most of these households are, in the terms described above, accumulating from below, while a small minority (1.4 per cent) are accumulating from above, through patronage relationships. A further 21.4 per cent of households are also accumulating and have livelihood strategies centred on diversification (‘stepping out’), and can be seen as a diverse group of ‘worker-peasants’. 70 per cent of this group are also accumulating from below, linking on-farm production with off-farm income earning in different ways. Others include those who are struggling (‘survival

diversification', 2.8 per cent of all households) and those 3.9 per cent households who are 'cell phone farmers' who are not investing significantly in their farms.

In sum, nearly half of all households, according to this classification, are 'accumulating from below', driven in large part by production from small-scale agriculture. Given the pessimism often associated with small-scale farming in Africa (Collier 2008) and Zimbabwe in particular (Frost et al 2007), this result is perhaps surprising. And especially so, given that this has been occurring in a situation where production often had to start essentially from scratch and with no external support. Our studies show that on average households across our sites have invested the equivalent of US\$2161 in land clearance, building, cattle, farm equipment, transport, fencing and constructing wells and toilets (Scoones et al 2010, 87), while government support, except for poorly targeted and often highly corrupt input programmes, has been minimal.

The proportion of these emerging 'middle farmers' is higher than that observed in the 1980s when a boom in smallholder agricultural production occurred in the communal areas following Independence, supported by the state (Eicher 1995). Estimates then showed that only around 20 per cent of households were selling maize regularly and accumulating (Stanning 1989). In the period from 2005-06 to 2008-09, in all years but one (a major drought), a significant percentage of our sample farmers sold more than a tonne of maize (Table 3). This was especially apparent in the A1 sites, and among those in 'success group' 1 and 2. And this is occurring in an area which is much more marginal in agro-ecological terms than where the 1980s 'green revolution' success was focused.

Table 3: Percentage of households selling more than one tonne of maize by scheme type and success group across four seasons

Scheme type	Success Group	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
A1 self-contained	1	95.7	78.3	4.3	65.2
	2	66.7	30.8	0	25.9
	3	48.4	25.8	0	17.2
A1 villagised	1	74.1	33.3	0	31.5
	2	59.3	38.9	0	11.3
	3	52.6	33.9	0	10.7
A2	1	55.6	20	50	20
	2	33.3	33.3	0	20
	3	12.5	0	0	10
Informal	1	31.6	0	0	0
	2	8.3	0	0	0
	3	8.3	0	0	0

Source: Annual crop census, 2003-09 (N=400) (Scoones et al 2010, 110)

There are of course in addition, 34 per cent who are only 'hanging in' and an additional 10 per cent who are 'dropping out', including some who have already left. Over the period from settlement to 2007-08, 20 per cent of households who originally established homes had left. The main reasons for the dissolving of households was death (46 per cent of 78 such exits), finding farming difficult (18 per cent), tenure insecurity (lack of an offer letter) (15 per cent) and domestic problems (8 per cent). Other reasons included expulsion, movement to another plot on another scheme, and community disputes (Scoones 2010, 74).

Those ‘hanging in’, while pursuing some agriculture, were also selling their labour to the more successful ‘middle farmer’ group. On average, A2 farm households have employed 5.1 permanent workers and regularly employ 7.3 temporary labourers, while those households in A1 schemes and in informal resettlement sites employ on average 0.5 permanent workers and 1.9 temporary labourers (Scoones et al 2010, 131). Over the whole sample, 45 per cent of households hire out labour (35 per cent on a temporary basis, 13 per cent more permanently, and some both). Hiring out temporary labour is more common in SG3 households, mostly for local agricultural labour. People more frequently leave SG1 than SG3 households on more permanent contracts, including leaving for higher-paid employment. In terms of the supply of agricultural labour, then, the main local source is SG3 households, alongside others from the communal areas and other resettlement sites. The SG1 households are more likely to contribute salaried non-agricultural labour away from the site. This confirms the class-based dynamic commented on above, with hiring in and hiring out agricultural labour within sites linked to the emerging class positions associated with different households.

Table 4: Labour hiring by activity across success groups (SG)

		A1 and informal			A2
		SG1	SG2	SG3	All success groups
Seasonal, temporary labour	% households of those hiring in seasonal labour for clearing and ploughing	28 %	22 %	23 %	44 %
	% hiring in for planting/transplanting	13 %	20 %	8 %	42 %
	% hiring in for weeding	51 %	37 %	18 %	64 %
	% hiring in for harvesting	31 %	16 %	13 %	68 %
	% hiring in for herding	22 %	13 %	3 %	43%
Permanent labour	% of those hiring permanent labour for cropping	11 %	14 %	8 %	72 %
	% hiring for livestock	14 %	14 %	0 %	43 %

Source: Survey data, 2007-08 (N=177) (Scoones et al 2010, 144)

Non-farm diversification ('stepping out') is significant both for processes of accumulation and for survival. Table 5 lists the dominant activities across all sites. Some of these are highly specialized and skilled and are pursued by very few households (such as many craft activities), others are more common (such as trading and off-farm employment). Off-farm employment is associated more with SG1 households and is an important driver of accumulation on farm. But most other activities do not show much differentiation between 'success groups', suggesting that the main source of accumulation for those in SG1 is agriculture, with many off-farm activities being a complement.

Table 5: Non-farm income earning across the study sites

Activity	Per cent households engaged in activity	Per cent women	Of those engaged: per cent SG1	Of those engaged per cent SG3	Of those engaged, per cent households with head below average age (45yrs)	Of those engaged, per cent households with head with educational level above average (8 yrs)
Building and Carpentry	3 %	0 %	50 %	33 %	33 %	33 %
Brick making and thatching	6 %	43 %	40 %	40 %	22 %	33 %
Fishing	3 %	56 %	17 %	50 %	33 %	33 %
Wood carving	1 %	0 %	50 %	0 %	100 %	0 %
Tailoring	3 %	29 %	60 %	20 %	40 %	60 %
Transport business	2 %	100 %	33 %	0 %	50 %	50 %
Grinding Mills	1 %	33 %	50 %	50 %	100 %	0 %
Pottery and basket making	16 %	62 %	28 %	34 %	57 %	21 %
Trading	18 %	59 %	29 %	29 %	44 %	50 %
Employment off farm	16 %	28 %	39 %	21 %	44 %	71 %

Source: Survey data, 2007-08 (N=177) (Scoones et al 2010, 170)

As already noted, within our sites there was in addition a small group reliant on processes of 'accumulation from above', in particular through state patronage. These included some of the cell phone farmers and those who were being continuously supported through input supply and mechanization programmes. We estimate that the total proportion of this category amounts to around five per cent of households in our study sites (Scoones et al 2011). These elites own larger plots, mostly in the A2 sites, and are often allied politically to those who have been allocated land in recent years as large A2 farms outside our study areas. While not numerically large in number, nor even owning very large land areas overall, this group, as we discuss further below, is important in social and political terms, and in many respects key to the unfolding political economic dynamics in the countryside.

Of course, no typology is ever definitive, and is inevitably a subjective interpretation of complex data. There are always variations and blurring of categories, and people move between categories over time, sometimes quite suddenly. However, a typology of this sort does highlight the significant variation in conditions and potentials of new resettlement farmers in our study sites. As the biographies clearly show, there is immense dynamism, as people move from phases of 'stepping out', accumulating assets through off-farm activities, to periods of 'stepping up', where accumulation through farming occurs. Others suffer downward trajectories, precipitated by misfortune or ill health. The loss of a job may mean that an individual or household may shift from a 'stepping out' strategy to one that is just 'hanging in'. A poor harvest or an illness may then push them further towards 'dropping out'. All these categories are highly gendered, with men and women often pursuing different livelihood strategies within households.

In sum, across our sample we see a significant group of households accumulating following land reform. This includes both an emergent rural petit bourgeoisie (accumulating assets, hiring

in labour, selling surplus produce etc.) and a larger group of petty commodity producers. Some of these households are more successful than others, as, for many, the core focus of livelihood strategies is on reproduction, not accumulation. Worker-peasant households, able to link off-farm income with successful agricultural production, are also evident. As discussed further in the next section, a distinction within this group between those accumulating below and those reliant at least in part on accumulation from above is important, given their very different nature of political and economic alliances and commitments to the land. By contrast, there are also many so-called semi-peasants and worker-peasants who often are selling their labour to others, at least on a seasonal, temporary basis and are failing to accumulate, with many barely able to reproduce themselves. They must either leave the area, or survive through often desperate means. Between these two extremes are a mixed group. Here we see multiple class identifications, ranging from those who are on the upward track, and rapidly accumulating (and so moving from petty commodity production towards being part of a rural petit bourgeois) to those who are surviving, while not doing badly, but through a variety of means (petty commodity production, off farm diversification, employment etc.). Overall, then, emerging class dynamics in the new resettlements are complex, often highly contingent and not easy to categorize neatly; and with age, gender and ethnic differences cutting across these dimensions made even more so.

But what does all of this mean for the longer-run trajectories of agrarian change? What are the social, economic and political consequences of such rural differentiation? These questions are the focus of the next section.

THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES OF RURAL DIFFERENTIATION

Such patterns of differentiation challenge any populist pretence that all new farmers on the resettlements are somehow members of a uniform semi-subsistence peasantry or, by contrast, a fanciful vision that all have the potential to be new capitalist farmers. They also reject the dismal view of a simple crisis of labour, and a downward spiral of informality and subsistence. A more informed, empirical engagement with emerging livelihood and agrarian change dynamics is instead required.

What then are these emerging patterns of agrarian change, and how do they relate to changing class formations in the Zimbabwean countryside? In the 1990s, Cousins and colleagues (1992, 21-2) argued that, despite the successes of smallholder production in the 1980s, the prospects for agricultural petty commodity producers were likely to be constrained during the 1990s by the just-emerging impacts of structural adjustment and economic reform; although a few in some areas were likely to thrive. The expansion of a rural petit bourgeoisie in the absence of significant agrarian reform was unlikely, they argued. Structural adjustment, they suggested, was likely to hit worker-peasants hardest, with remittance flows and employment opportunities constrained. The semi-peasantry was similarly likely to be hard hit, and a growing 'feminization of poverty' in the rural areas was predicted. Alliances between worker-peasants and the semi-peasantry, with a rallying call around land reform and job creation, was, they argued, the most likely political outcome of the class dynamics of that period.

In important respects, these predictions were highly accurate. After 1997 in particular, alliances were struck across these and other groupings not yet identified in this earlier analysis and land reform was indeed the rallying point (Moyo and Yeros 2005). What a new agrarian class structure implies for the future of agrarian politics remains less clear. Alliances are often highly

fragile, contradictory and always shifting. With such a diverse group of people on the new land, with complex and hybrid identities – in class, ethnic, political and other terms – simple formulae for understanding the relations emerging in the new resettlements do not exist.

Returning to the questions posed earlier, we need to explore whether land reform resulted in a ‘re-peasantization’ of the countryside, or whether we are seeing the emergence of new capitalist forms of farming for a few, with others providing ‘foot-loose’ labour and surviving in an informal economy. Has land reform resulted in an explosion of productive activity, based on dynamic accumulation from below, with the potential to drive economic growth more broadly? Or has land reform undermined the capacity for successful capitalist production by the division of land into plots insufficient for a successful livelihood, resulting ever-increasing cycles of poverty and destitution? Or, indeed, is there some combination of all these dynamics in play?

A decade after the land reform, and in a period of substantial political and economic upheaval, it is perhaps too early to tell what agrarian economic and political dynamics will emerge in the longer term. But hints are evident. As the previous sections have shown, the new resettlements are not replicas of what has gone before. A new process of agrarian change has been unleashed, although its directions and consequences remain highly uncertain. The political and economic alliances that will be struck in the coming years will define whether an emerging group of ‘middle’ farmers and entrepreneurs – representing, as indicated above, around half of all households in our sample – will be able to help transform the rural economy, or whether older patterns of dualism, with new elites in the driving seat, will be re-imposed.

Certainly, while numerically small, the elites, reliant in recent years on accumulation from above, exert disproportionate influence, and may yet act to upset or frustrate the energetic entrepreneurialism of others. The influence of the military-political elite in all areas of the

Zimbabwean economy is very apparent. By capturing important land and agriculture assets, particularly in the Highveld, but also in other parts of the country, a very powerful grouping has emerged, reliant on political patronage, but also with growing independent wealth, derived from the land and mineral assets they have captured (Raftopolous 2009). These individuals, linked to powerful economic actors and political interests, reside in the new large A2 farms, the estates and the conservancies (see footnote 3, above); right alongside the other resettlement areas which are dominated, as we have seen, by a middle farmer group, making a success of farming through accumulation from below. While the old dualism of the past has not returned, some of the tensions that existed from the colonial era and throughout the first thirty years of independence remain. Rooted in different interests, different visions of what farming is for and what farms should be like are projected, and this is in turn translated into policy framings and support structures (Cousins and Scoones, 2010). While a much smaller bloc than the large-scale white commercial farmers of the past, will these new powerful agrarian interests impose their vision and perspectives, and so garner policy support, in a similarly effective way in the future?

Some new alliances are already being struck between the new black elite on the land and former white commercial farmers, through contract farming arrangements, consultancies and management arrangements. Will the effective organization and political lobbying power of the white farming community that proved so massively successful right into the 1990s (Herbst 1990) be recaptured by a new alliance of elite interests that cuts across the racial divide, arguing that a resuscitation of the commercial farm economy, and the re-imposition of a dualistic structure, is the only way that Zimbabwean agriculture, 'the backbone of the economy', can be revived on an efficient basis, able to operate in a globalized economy with important regional competitors?

This is a powerful and well-rehearsed argument. But on the ground we also have another dynamic emerging on the new resettlements. In earlier sections, we have described the successes of especially the A1 and informal settlers (and some A2 farmers) – and particularly a significant group of ‘middle farmers’. This we have described in terms of ‘accumulation from below’: local investment and local gains through small-scale petty commodity production. Can this provide the basis for solid economic growth in the longer-term, feeding the urban areas, generating employment and added value economic linkages, as well as providing subsistence for the increasing numbers of rurally-based people? Our data suggest that the prospects are actually quite bright, even though limited availability of finance in the past decade has prevented the emergence of a significant capitalist class of farmer – whether on the A2 or A1 self-contained sites. However, such setbacks may be only temporary, and patterns of investment by some – and shifting labour relations – identify the emergence of a group of petty commodity producers and some rural petit bourgeoisie. Will these ‘middle farmers’ on the new resettlements – younger, better educated and more connected politically and economically than their counterparts in the communal and earlier resettlement areas are – be able to forge an effective, organized group, able to make claims on state support, against the interests of the small, but powerful elite?

Currently resettlement farmers are not organized in any sense. Having invaded the land or been allocated it by the state, they are often highly divided, with few organizational ties beyond those operating at the very local level (Murisa 2011). But, as a large group they are a significant part of the electorate and, although with different interests (say between a villager in an informal scheme and someone with an A2 farm), they do have some common ones, particularly in opposition to the capture of land and resources by a corrupt elite.

And where do the 44 per cent of households in the 'hanging in' and 'dropping out' categories fit into this picture? Will they be able, with the right support and incentives, to accumulate in the future and join this class of 'middle farmers'? Will they supply the labour for emergent capitalist farmers, and so transform into a new rural proletariat, servicing elite capitalist interests as in the past? Or will they move into non-farm work, adding value to local production, and so contributing to a new local economic regeneration, rooted in local accumulation from below? Or will they, as some assume, become destitute and require external support and protection, as their new farming enterprises fail?

Of course, there is no crystal ball which can show which way things will go, but our findings from Masvingo province certainly suggest that the countryside will remain the site of political and economic contest for some time to come. Clearly the outcome is highly dependent on the wider political struggles at the centre and the restructuring of the Zimbabwean state, and so the way alliances are struck within and between political formations. At the moment the 'securocrat' political elite, linked to key elements of ZANU-PF, have the upper hand, offering liberal doses of nationalist rhetoric about the benefits of redistributive land reform, but at the same time capturing land and other resources for themselves. Yet, despite the strong association of land reform areas with ZANU-PF, especially in the early years, there is greater ambivalence today towards the party. Across the then eight constituencies represented in our sites, only one voted for the opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), in 2000 and 2005 (the largely urban Masvingo Central), but seven out of the 15 new constituencies voted for the opposition in the highly contested 2008 elections (Scoones et al 2010, 29) . Future elections may yet offer new patterns.

However, if any opposition movement, through whatever alliances that are struck within and between parties, is to gain any purchase, and broader rural support, they will certainly have to

develop a more convincing narrative about land, agriculture and rural livelihoods than has been offered to date. Beyond the rhetoric, no one, from any political party, appears to acknowledge the importance – in both economic and political terms – of the emergent middle farmer group who have been carving out their livelihoods with some success on the resettlements for now more than a decade. In addition to the wider political struggles, how this group fares into the future will also be highly dependent on the future dynamics of the national economy. With some degree of economic stability, economic opportunities are once again emerging, and formal employment may again become more attractive than farming to those with the requisite skills and experience. The process of reagrarization may, as a result, be reversed as some leave the farms they acquired a decade ago; a process that could act to dilute the economic success of the new resettlements, and forms of investment and accumulation that have occurred, along with the potentials for political voice and influence.

CONCLUSIONS

Of course only time will tell who will win and who will lose from this political competition between these still-forming class-based groupings and interests. This paper has examined the highly differentiated tapestry on which this process will be played out in Masvingo province. As the paper has shown, there is much differentiation within and between the new resettlement areas, and these exist within a radically reconfigured overall agrarian structure. Following land reform, new livelihoods were created, in turn generating new processes of class formation, inflected by gender, age and ethnic differences. These processes are on-going, but suggest the emergence of a significant and successful 'middle farmer' group, reliant on 'accumulation from below'. In addition, there are others who are accumulating, but from above, through patronage and corrupt practice. While small in number this group has significant political and economic influences, and is embedded in powerful alliances which have fundamental impacts on the wider political-

economic dynamics. In addition there are those who are struggling – a significant group – whose livelihoods remain vulnerable and whose prospects for accumulation are limited on the resettlements.

A clear message emerging from this analysis is the need for supporting flexibility and dynamism and avoiding the dangers of locking people into particular livelihood options by virtue of their status, location or through unnecessary and restrictive planning or administrative frameworks. If the changes unleashed by land reform are to generate wider, longer-term benefits, processes of accumulation from below must be supported – both those ‘stepping up’ into more productive agriculture, and those ‘stepping out’, generating surpluses through linking on- and off-farm enterprises. While the wider benefits of land reform should not be ignored, those who are unable to benefit from new land should be allowed to seek alternatives. As rural economies grow, this may involve farm-based employment, or it may involve engaging in non-farm enterprises. For some, exit through migration elsewhere may be a better option, releasing land for others who can make use of it.

At this juncture, however, multiple futures are possible in the Zimbabwean countryside, representing some key political and economic choices, which to date remain largely unexplored and as a result not debated. Will the future bring a rural revival driven by accumulation from below by a strongly organized and politically influential group of ‘middle farmers’ (both petty commodity producers and a small group of rural petit bourgeoisie), allied to workers-peasants and semi-subsistence producers, and resident (largely) in the rural areas, and particularly the new resettlements? Or will a new form dualism be re-imposed, driven by a new elite, allied to the state, business interests and foreign investors, through the scaling up of A2 farms to recreate a large-scale commercial farming sector under a new ownership structure, in turn

squeezing those struggling to accumulate, but unable to benefit from state patronage and support?

The data presented in this paper – from one province across multiple sites and over a turbulent decade – therefore offer some insights into the options, trajectories and choices, but ones that remain highly uncertain, contingent and contested.

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