

**This work is licensed under a
Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-
NoDerivs 3.0 Licence.**

**To view a copy of the licence please see:
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/>**

^(A)DISCUSSION PAPERS

⁽²¹¹⁾ ZIMBABWE INSTITUTE OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

⁽¹⁾ ZIMBABWE .

**A Review of the Class and Gender
Basis of Agricultural Extension Services
in Zimbabwe's Communal Areas.**

Sam Moyo
Helen Page

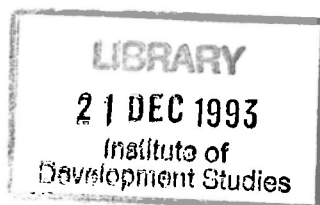
16



P.O. Box 880 HARARE

DISCUSSION PAPER

Number 16



**A REVIEW OF THE CLASS AND GENDER BASIS OF
AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICES IN
ZIMBABWE'S COMMUNAL AREAS**

by

**Sam Moyo
and
Helen Page**

ZIMBABWE INSTITUTE OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES
HARARE 1992

IDS



018955

©1992 Zimbabwe Institute of Development Studies

P O Box 880

Harare

Zimbabwe

First printing 1992.

All rights reserved.

Printed and published in Zimbabwe.

The views and opinions expressed in this paper are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of ZIDS.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
CONCEPTUAL PROBLEM OF THE STUDY	2
Theoretical Issues	2
The Zimbabwean Reality	3
THE DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL CLASSES	4
Suppression of Independent Peasantry	5
Emergence of a Dependent Peasantry	6
An Uneven Rural Social Order	9
Rural Institutions and Extension Structure	11
THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF GENDER	18
The Feminisation of Poverty	18
Communal Households Headed by Women	18
Rural Women and the Urban Response	20
The Gender Issue	21
THE ROLE OF FARMER GROUPS	22
THE ISSUES OF INVESTMENT AND CONSUMPTION	25
THE POTENTIAL FOR PEASANT DEVELOPMENT	27
CLASS-BASED COMMODITY DYNAMISM AND TECHNICAL CHANGE	32
Crops	32
Research and Commodity Dynamism	32
RESEARCH AGENDA SUMMARY	34

INTRODUCTION

This survey and review of literature was undertaken in order to lay the foundation for the conceptualisation of the extension study and formulation of hypotheses. It has also guided the selection of areas of in-depth case studies which should add more knowledge to the national extension study.

In the review, the study problem is conceptualised at the broad theoretical level and from an analysis of the Zimbabwean reality. A thorough historical examination of how rural social classes and gender developed in Zimbabwe was undertaken in the course of the literature review in an effort to obtain a better understanding of the nature of extension alliances among the rural farmers.

CONCEPTUAL PROBLEM OF THE STUDY

Theoretical Issues

Typically, agricultural development encompasses only two of three important dimensions; or so in the opinion of Bernard Woods, a Project Officer for the World Bank.¹ While development planners often recognise the human dimension, it is Woods' observation that they also tend to lose sight of it somewhere between conception and implementation. Technical/physical and financial/economic dimensions are dutifully addressed in the proposals of many development projects, he explains, but the human/institutional dimension is invariably ignored. Like Woods, a growing number of development experts now realise that a sustainable agricultural development programme must be "concerned with learning and the information transfer on which learning depends".²

The following conceptual problems are a cause for concern. At broad theoretical level there is a tendency to view the technical/physical and financial/economic issues in isolation from the institutional/human dimensions. Institutionalists idealise and mystify human and social processes. Functionalists, on the other hand, understand and use extension in a top-down fashion. There is also a tendency to neglect class and socio-political forces. Many studies over-simplify the view of peasantry/household dynamics, resource use and gender household relations. The broader role of the state, propaganda, coercion, legislation, administrative control, etc, is not properly articulated by development experts. In most cases, the impact of the uneven development of capitalism on both homogenising and differentiating the peasantry, on migration, labour processes, markets development, including the opportunities and constraints, and the adjustment by peasants to the changes is not adequately understood in extension. It is not surprising, therefore, that peasant knowledge systems and ways of adapting this new context to local situations are often ignored in development models.

In this review we shall refrain from falsely separating the technical/physical and financial/economic dimensions from the human/institutional one. Instead, we shall try to look at how the various dimensions are interlocked and strive to adequately account for the human agency of peasant farmers. We shall view peasants as members of a farmers' underclass who are seeking to make a living within the agricultural context.

By focusing on "extension" we are trying to widen the scope of our discussion beyond the basic meaning of the word and towards a deeper exploration of context as a grounded reality. Our task is to discover how the word "extension" is situated in the world. We realise so far that the popular meaning of the word extension obscures its potential to bring about change in the daily life of peasants. Our feature of that virtual understanding is the nature of extension worker professionalism. We expect to find that the potential of extension workers to help peasants achieve their development goals is

1 Woods, B. "Human Development and Sustainability" in Sustainability Issues in Agricultural Development, Proceedings of the 7th Agricultural Sector Symposium. T.J. Davis and I.A. Schiimer (eds). The World Bank, Washington, DC (1987: 80-91).

2 Ibid., p.83.

undermined by a class bias acquired through the education system.

Along the same lines, Paulo Freire suggests that sustainability cannot be achieved until we adequately account for the human agency of peasants who seek a more viable engagement in the agricultural context. Both as a concept and as an activity institutionalised by states, Freire views extension essentially as an educative process. He proposes that extension could liberate creative action among peasants on their own behalf instead of merely persuading them to follow the thinking of others. This can be accomplished, he argues, only if we widen the scope of our problem beyond the basic meaning of the word and towards an examination of its context.³ It is through such an understanding of how the word "extension" is situated in the world that we can then determine its "virtual" or "potential" use.

The Zimbabwean Reality

In Zimbabwe, one cannot make sense of agricultural "extension" without reference to the history of this institutionalised activity.

The problem of colonial agricultural and extension policies and their effects is not fully articulated in Zimbabwean literature much of which is not comprehensive or balanced because of its protest and topical basis. There is much knowledge on land, but little on peasant production processes, technology, gender and specific technical aspects. Extension services have tended to be evaluated or described but the essence of the processes has not been analysed. This is what we shall attempt to do in this paper.

In the post-independence period there is the assumption that changing the government and adding more manpower, including some resources, would shift the content and direction and results of extension. It is also assumed that all that is required is institutional adaptation, but to what extent this has been done is the question. There are a number of other questions which need to be answered: What is the effect of limited agrarian reform? What really is the purpose of extension in Zimbabwe? The assumption is that regardless of all the best intentions of Government as stated in various policy documents, it is impossible to extricate post-independence extension from colonial extension in less than a decade without a concerted and deliberate effort to transform, not only the extension process itself, but the agrarian structure and broader policy framework upon which extension was founded.

3 Freire, P., "Extension of Communication" in *Education for Critical Consciousness*, The Continuum Publishing Company: New York (1973:91)

THE DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL SOCIAL CLASSES

Before the turn of the century, the indigenous farmers of the Southern African region were not peasants.⁴ They functioned as self-sustaining members of households in extended family settlements that participated in networks of tribal communities. Within these communities extended family networks practised various modes of resource extraction based on available labour and access to land. While most households met their needs, only the well-off could afford the economic advantage that accrued to polygamous households. So for years there was a process of rapid adjustment of land and labour use, purposes of production, structure of labour available, and techniques of production. This was followed by land alienation and movement of peoples to new environments, under different household resource conditions. These factors in relation to the power structures began a growing process of rural differentiation in all spheres of life. Specifically, there was a widespread response to growth in food markets so that by 1911 the rise of commodity production by Africans was evident.

Admittedly, African farming systems had their weaknesses, but it seems, nevertheless, that Africans understood quite well many of the problems they faced in trying to adapt their agricultural activity to their various ecological niches. Yet, the extremely rapid social differentiation very much changed the character of these niches and the manner in which they were utilised. For years, indigenous systems underwent a process of rapid adjustment of land and labour use, purposes of production, the structure of available labour and the techniques of production. By the 1930s and 1940s after these transformations had taken place, Allan considered it "axiomatic" that African cultivators who depended entirely or almost entirely on their gardens tended to cultivate an area large enough to ensure an adequate food supply in seasons of poor yields.⁵

Africans had been alienated from the best land and were adjusting to the poorer agro-ecological areas. Their relocation to such isolated regions obviously shut them off from the commodity markets they had once skilfully exploited. This undermined their incentive for agricultural commodity production. In trying to understand why Africans were suddenly underproductive, Allan urged European science to be more careful about the assumptions it brought to the problems of African agriculture. Apparently, Allan was frustrated by their tendency to presume the cultivatability of more African land area than was warranted by ecological conditions. He warned them that "serious miscalculations have been made in the past and continue to be made".⁶

In Allan's mind, it was difficult for Europeans "to realise the far greater variability of unaltered African soils formed under very different conditions of leaching and natural erosion... (to understand that)... soils naturally suitable for cropping are often limited

4 Ranger, T. O., 1985, *Peasant Consciousness and Guerilla War in Zimbabwe*, Zimbabwe Publishing House: Harare, Zimbabwe, p.29.

5 Allan, W., *The African Husbandman*, Oliver & Boyd: Edinburgh, London, 1965: 335-475.

6 *Ibid*, p.38.

and widely dispersed".⁷ While some of that miscalculation could certainly be explained with reference to the agricultural traditions of European farmers "whose standards have been set by the uniformity of farm lands of Britain"⁸, he did not hesitate to point out how overcrowding the barely cultivatable, relatively fragile soils of the colonial reserve lands and resettlement schemes would quickly and adversely affect African food production.

Without going into the details that are covered in a concurrent work, let it suffice to say that even without reference to other work, Allan's data makes it clear that African farmers were enterprising when they commoditised their crops, selling their normal surplus for cash. This cash was required and pursued first in order to pay head taxes without having to resort to labouring in mines and on European farms, and second in order to obtain the consumer goods which had become an acquired taste. Having thus entered the cash economy, they soon found themselves unable to do without a cash income, however small the amount.

Suppression of Independent Peasantry

According to Allan, the early 1930s saw a surplus of maize being produced by African farmers throughout Zambia, Zimbabwe and Malawi. Famine assistance had also come to be expected and monetisation was being pushed. Industrialisation was still on its way but had not yet arrived. This was evidenced by the fact that by 1926 motor lorries owned overwhelmingly by European (personally or institutionally) had started to penetrate the reserves but it was not until 1950 that ploughs were commonly adopted by Africans in the region and even then they were mostly shared, not individually owned.⁹

In this context of rapid technological change, Allan reports from a 1938 Zambian study that the average producing unit cultivated about 6 acres of maize, but only needed about 13 bags of maize to meet its domestic requirements. The rest of the normal surplus of formerly subsistence maize was sold.¹⁰ He notes a fairly static period from 1936-49 when ploughless African production first peaked, then levelled off.

Obviously, this sale of the normal surplus means that Africans learned to be less dependent on food and more dependent on cash, as Allan explains:

One of the earlier effects of European administration and settlement in Africa was to make the food surplus less essential as a safeguard and to attract it within the orbit of the money economy... The first markets for the surplus were administrative centres and mission stations whose small needs were easily supplied, but as increasing demand came from industry, mining and other enterprises...the very unreliable nature of the surplus...or, as it was usually expressed, the inadequacy of "native farming"...became apparent in the regions of unreliable climate.¹¹

7 Ibid., p.29.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid., op. cit. p.156.

10 Ibid., p.39.

11 Ibid., p.48.

Yet care must be taken in assessing Allan's rather idyllic discourse about the food/cash dualism. Although it is an important sign of use-value shifts and commoditisation many local markets continued to depend on African production, even though the national food security needs of the settler society may have appropriated the productive capacity of many African farmers.

In addition to defining native farming as being inadequate to meet the demands of their food security needs, Rhodesians passed a series of restrictive laws that only exacerbated the situation of African farmers. As these legal manoeuvres further institutionalised land alienation and market segregation Rhodesians became less dependent on peasant production even though black sharecroppers or tenant farmers on European land still played an important role in provisioning food markets. This model of apartheid-like "development" undertaken by Rhodesia orchestrated changes in native farming that gave Rhodesians a definite class advantage. While separation based on colour was cited as the main reason for the erection of racially different social systems, the issues of colour and native backwardness really only served to camouflage the class issue.¹² As a subordinated class, peasants would labour for Rhodesians and less for themselves. It was indeed the food demands "from industry, mining and other enterprises" that seems to have been the real reason why the ecologically sensitive African agriculture were designated as "unreliable". Clearly, the owning class wanted control over a more reliable food supply for industrial labourers, most of whom were Africans conscripted into labour migrancy.¹³

Emergence of a Dependent Peasantry

When by the 1920s the white population had given up on a gold boom, they began to foster capitalist agrarian relations through the development of speculative land markets. At the same time, they encouraged European farmers who were paid for settling on the land and who were supported in their efforts to grow food for the mines and the anticipated growth of urban and industrial centres. The long-term objective, of course, was to exploit the "gold leaf" (tobacco) instead which, it was hoped, would pay for the development process. It was mainly this expectation - along with efforts to compensate immigrants and war-returnees - that spawned the process of land alienation. Despite these primary factors, there was indeed concern about guaranteeing (1) the lack of African independence (as their own reproduction was inextricably tied to the land) and (2) a cheap and steady flow of labour.

Therefore, it could be argued that before industrialisation could be sustained, the rural peasant population had to be put in its agro-economic/ecological place, or acceptable class position, as Allan notes:

12 Araya, H. "Foreword", *From Race to Class: American Protest Expression* by Abraham, Grassroots Publisher: London, pp. viii-x.

13 Ranger, T. *op.cit.* pp.29-31.

Many factors inhibit the growth of industrialisation... but economists generally point to the static nature of the rural sector as a factor of crucial importance. The market for manufactured goods among a population consisting largely of subsistence and semi-subsistence cultivators and petty commodity producers is far too small to encourage industrial development. There can be no significant increase in purchasing power without a very large increase of agricultural output.¹⁴

However, the overall model of industrialisation and economic development was not premised on broadly based production and incomes that might characterise a demand structure, but on a narrow, elite market of settler farmers, industrialists and privileged white workers. The peripherisation of Africans was essential to that development model as it was their function to reproduce the large pool of labourers who would facilitate this development at the barest minimum cost.

Given this scenario, the role of agricultural education in this process of peasant transformation was crucial. The peripherisation of Africans complemented the privileging of the whites and this was particularly evident in the contrast between the nature of education provided in the reserves and that enjoyed by the community of white farmers. One guiding hypothesis of the study is that agricultural education became the chief strategy of socialising the peasantry into producing and consuming roles that were acceptable to White Rhodesia. While this issue is dealt with in more detail in other studies, we shall say something about it here in order to establish that data on the role of education in the peasant transformation does exist in the archival literature.

The initial emphasis was on the Native Affairs Department (NAD) mandated to oversee "the well-being and development of the backward races" by means of the institutionalised agricultural research being conducted by that agency.¹⁵ Keigwin suggests that missionaries were already and would continue taking care of the natives' moral (read conceptual value system) development, using conversion to Christianity as the primary method of properly socialising the indigenous people. By this means, they would one day learn to appreciate "emancipation from the terrors of superstition and witchcraft".¹⁶ Whereas much of Keigwin's statement could be dismissed simply as ethnocentrism that rather superficial approach obscures a more tactical reality if we recognise the agricultural context from which his ideas extract their meaning. We cannot dismiss an intent to control native thinking and behaviour seeping through his apparently benign concern.

Keigwin admits without hesitation that the mandated "sacred trust" of civilising indigenous people "is also a plain duty of self-preservation". He assures his 1920s Rhodesian audience that self-preservation is dependent on controlling the ability of Africans to compete. Proper training reinforced by containment in the reserves would provide the solution, he argues, as they "are by no means fully occupied, nor are likely

14 Ibid., p.464.

15 Cited in Keigwin.

16 Of course, one has to understand that European settlers interpreted socially cohesive indigenous conceptual systems as posing a serious threat to their survival, as evidenced by the execution of the resistance leaders, Mbuya Nehanda and her colleague, Sekuru Kaguvi, in 1897.

to be for many years". Thus ran the rationalisation for accepting the growing population pressure on reserves as being inevitable.

It was not until many years later that Allan describes a very different view of the reality of reserves to European scholars, based on his very reliable calculations:

By 1926, very probably, the numbers of humans and cattle had caught up with or exceeded the carrying capacity, for traditional methods of land-use, of the areas set aside for African occupation, though these areas may well have been adequate for the numbers existing at the time they were set aside.¹⁷

The cessation of traditional land use was precisely the desire of the Rhodesians. While it perhaps would have been ideal if Africans could keep feeding themselves and relieve White Rhodesia of that responsibility, there can be no question that Keigwin's concern for self-preservation sought to turn those reserves into ready pools of labour. It is for this reason that he advocated "an organised scheme of progressive instruction".

Acknowledging the role of NAD, Keigwin viewed religion and education as being "two other powerful agencies" that would be useful in the transformation of an independent peasantry into a dependent one. This was a prerequisite for the transformation of the old Rhodesia into a new industrial Rhodesia. In reference to a report on India published by a Commission of Missionaries, Keigwin fully supports their plan to provide "industrial education, including cultivation, partly for the development of their country (read the Native Reserves) but far more urgently, for their own self-development". He goes on to say that this cultural reprogramming of colonised indigenous people will be achieved most readily by means of "demonstrators" or extension workers.¹⁸

Finally, let us examine peasant resistance to reprogramming by looking at a 1950 article published in *The New Rhodesia* (assuming the word "new" refers, in fact, to an industrialising Rhodesia instead of a predominantly agricultural one). The article is simply signed by one Leo who states that in the *bhundu*, the fellows from the NAD "do not get too much encouragement from the natives they are endeavouring to teach". Although the NAD was established some 25 years earlier, Leo claims that 10% of the natives had been taught "proper" tillage methods.¹⁹

Although he implies that Rhodesians put Africans on reserves so that they might be fruitful and multiply (if they learn to produce enough food to keep from starving), he also makes the following disclaimer:

17 Allan, op. cit. pp.341-342.

18 Ibid. p.13.

19 Zero tillage is a feature of slash and burn cultivation in which the soil must not be turned in order to preserve the sterilising and fertilising effect of the burn. In the European view, "proper" tillage means ploughing, i.e. turning over the soil to a depth of 15-20 centimetres. This kind of tillage system became necessary as permanent cultivation replaced shifting cultivation and slash and burn was no longer possible due to an increasing lack of trees and other plant material. However, the destructive effect of ploughing on most soils in the communal areas has been amply demonstrated.

It has to be remembered that in all countries settled by white colonists the first essential has been the assurance of the food supply. It was the wheat lands of Canada and the United States which made their vast industrial development possible, and they still produce an excess of foodstuffs. Central Africa cannot expect to be an exception to the rule that sufficient essential foodstuffs must be produced before a new country can safely embark on other development.²⁰

So, from the above we can see that the NAD's attempts to change indigenous agriculture were not motivated by the fact that those systems had proved to be ineffective. On the contrary, the myth of African ineffectiveness was, in part, a racially rationalised justification for imposing change in the agrarian relations of production.

Another factor, however, was the concern of Rhodesians for the environment. Ecological degradation ensued shortly after the reserves had reached and surpassed their carrying capacity. There was indeed evidence of erosion, deforestation and decreased soil fertility which gave rise to an increasingly vocal environmental lobby. Subsequently, conservation was another factor which gave impetus to an extension model of African education. It became the task of demonstrators to transfer those skills of European farmers which purportedly would arrest the process of rapid environmental deterioration.²¹ Techniques such as contour ridging, land use demarcation, etc. were formalised into what eventually became the Land Husbandry Act, implemented in the 1960s. Despite the good intentions of environmental conservationists, these changes were seen by Africans as being malicious. They viewed them in this manner, not simply because they were ignorantly opposed to change, but because the changes recommended strained their meagre household resources, overtaxed local control systems, and thereby generated immense resistance and disaffection. In fact, nationalist mobilisation during the 1960s thrived on this disenchantment.

In summary, cultural re-programming by means of educating for Rhodesian development was considered the strategy most likely to succeed. Therefore, we may conclude that the agricultural information passed on to the early African "demonstrators" was designed by Rhodesians in their own capitalist class interest. Peasants resisted the transfer of this information for many years and were able to hold their own in maize production, using traditional methods, even in the face of overcrowding in the native reserves. We might interpret their resistance as a refusal to substitute European agricultural traditions for their own time-tested ones. However, it is also true that their resistance was worn down in time, mainly by means of formal and informal extension activity.

An Uneven Rural Social Order

The uneven situation of farmers - mainly a consequence of land settlement patterns - makes it difficult for extension workers to pursue equity in practice, even though the concept may be upheld as an ideal. Aside from the communal areas, that comprise 41,8% of the land, there are other sectoral divisions including the small-scale

20 Leo, "Teaching Natives to Farm: Work of the NAD, The New Rhodesia, July-December 1950.

21 "What Else Was Taught?" See Lord Alvord's "Institutionalisation Process"; J. Made's thesis; Sam Page's Notes on History of Extension; N. Mugabe's paper on research.

commercial farm areas (SSCF), the large-scale commercial farm areas (LSCF), resettlement areas, including Models A, B (co-ops), C and D and State farms. In addition, there are also forest areas and National Parks, comprising the balance of land-use patterns. These patterns are important because they help us understand the relative inequality that still exists in land distribution.

Table 1
ZIMBABWE'S LAND USE CATEGORIES BY SECTOR

	Total Area (in million ha)	Proportion of total area (%)	Proportion of arable land (%)
Non-agricultural			
National parks	4,70	12,1	-
State forests	0,92	2,4	-
Urban and other	0,22	0,6	-
<i>Sub-totals</i>	5,84	15,0	-
Agricultural			
LSCFs	12,65	32,5	38,3
SSCFs	1,42	3,7	4,3
Communal	16,35	42,0	49,5
Resettlement	2,64	6,8	8,0
<i>Sub-totals</i>	33,06	85,0	100,0
TOTALS	38,90	100,0	100,0

Source: Moyo, 1986.

The inequality of cultivatable spaces remains, despite Government's commendable efforts to redistribute land as equitably as possible under the constraints of the Lancaster House Agreement.²²

22 Although it was not entirely in their interest, the people of Zimbabwe accepted the Lancaster House Agreement because it facilitated independence while blocking the flight of European capital that has devastated countries such as Mozambique, and it also signalled the end of a protracted liberation war. The agreement prohibited State nationalisation of privately owned lands and permitted resettlement purchases by the Government only on a willing-buyer/willing-seller basis. This meant that in most cases only marginal lands owned by white settlers were relinquished, leaving large tracts of the best land in their hands.

Resettlement Model A and Model B (co-ops) are areas where Africans are issued licence to reside and cultivate. Five hectare allotments are distributed to household heads, with variable grazing rights, but most women are not aware that they are eligible to apply for resettlement without males acting as heads of household.^{23 24}

To the extent that these areas certainly have helped relieve overcrowding in the Communal Areas (CAs), some 4,3 million people remained in those areas as of 1982 with about 3,9 hectares available per person. By comparison, there are 12,3 hectares per person in the LSCF areas. Whereas peasant farmers in CAs only have 3 hectares of arable land per person, there are still 2 200 hectares per farm in the LSCF areas. It is also important to note that 81% of the resettlement model is located in agro-ecological regions III, IV and V where marginal to drylands are designated for crop production.

Due to the diversity of the sector farmer audience, it is hypothesised that peasant farmers are not targeted for the same treatment as other farmers. To illustrate this, the ratio of EWs to farmers in the LSCF sub-sector is about 1:90, while in the CAs, this ratio is approximately 1:800. There seems to be a clear tendency to allocate extension resources to the wealthier, more successful farmers. If this pattern holds in our national study, we will learn much about the comparative quality of extension services to peasants. The disparities in the level of service provided to CA and LSCF farmers must be examined. The important question is why does it make administrative sense to focus on the "successful" farmer? Or, is it political pressure from these farmers which makes them successful? Or, is it characteristic of development approaches to start from the top and "trickle down"?

Rural Institutions and Extension Structure

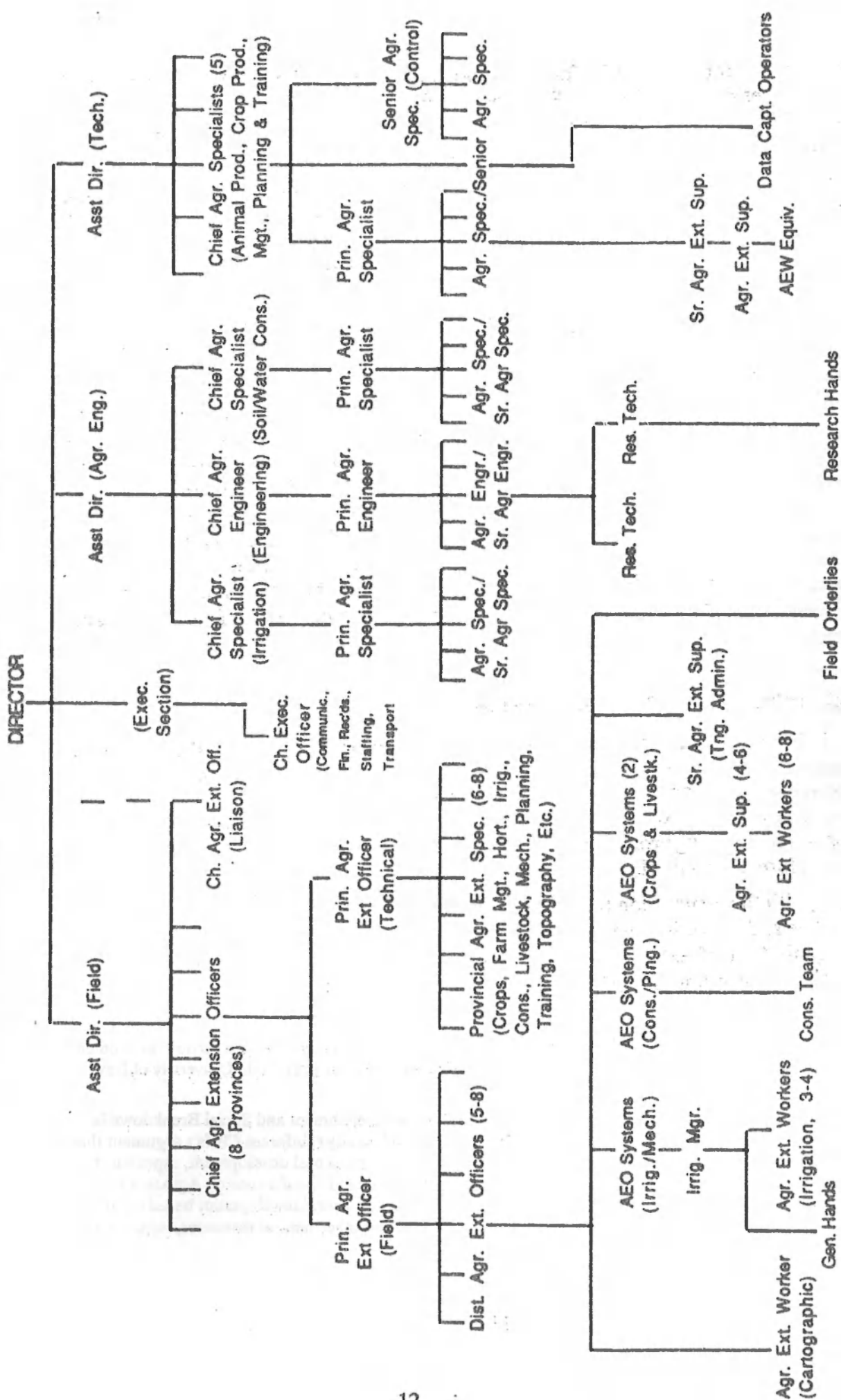
Is it possible that the uneven rural social order expresses itself in the structural unevenness of agricultural extension? While this hypothesis can be tested in part with reference to macro-observations, it will be necessary to examine also the micro-level relationship between extension and Zimbabwean farmers in order to determine if equal access is actually being promoted or exists only as an extension ideal. Micro-observation will therefore be required.

Starting with the assumption that the relationship between farmers and extension is an interactive and educative one, we seek to understand how that interaction is affected by the organisation of extension services. We presume further that farmers will see themselves as needing the info-techno systems that extension seeks to transfer. The

23 Jacobs, S.M. and Howood, T. "Women in Zimbabwe: Stated Policy and State Action" in *Women, State and Ideology: Studies from Africa and Asia*, Haleh Afshar (ed), State University of New York Press, p. 36.

24 Cliffe, L. "The Crisis of Social Reproduction: Rural Impoverishment and Social Breakdown in Southern Africa", A Working Paper, 1985. The Makonde study reinforces Cliffe's argument that gender issues must emerge in the various approaches to agricultural development, especially the equity approach. This idea was also stressed at the 1979 World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (WCARRD). It was concluded that rural development based on growth with equity will require equitable access to land, water and other natural resources, inputs and services for women.

Figure 1: Structure of the Department of Agricultural, Technical and Extension Services (Agritex)



question is whether or not extension is organisationally and conceptually designed to bring about the development changes sought in all farmers equally?

To explore this question, we have to assess what we already know about extension today. We are unable, for example, to represent the organisational structure of Zimbabwe's rural extension services as a division of the Ministry of Agriculture (see Figure 1). While this kind of chart shows the hierarchical relationships among administrative units of functions, it cannot represent the meaning of the units themselves or the actual conceptual and interactive linkages between them. Our need to clarify the meaning of the AGRITEX organisational structure in the real world requires us to go beyond such superficial representations.

For example, we see from Figure 1 that AGRITEX is organised into three main branches that focus on providing field, agricultural engineering and technical services. We know that the Technical Services Division strives to back up field services by providing farmers with technical information and technologies, but we cannot assume we understand the meaningful social impact implied in these terms. What kind of technical information and technologies are provided by whom, to whom, and to what ends? The Agricultural Engineering Division, on the other hand, provides advice on irrigation, engineering, soil and water conservation.

We understand that Field Services is the division which strives to provide methodological agricultural extension messages, but how can we understand their effort to communicate with peasants? Does it communicate in a way that protects the interests of all farmers? Or is it, deliberately or otherwise, more oriented towards the country's commercial farmers at the expense of the peasant sector? Could the communication of Field Services be clouded by their overall goal of raising agricultural productivity along preconceived lines? This kind of inquiry must be pursued because Field Services liaises and coordinates with both Government and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in addition to providing regulatory, inspectorial and other official service requirements. So, the potential of Field Services to influence farmers' view of themselves and to modify their activities is great indeed. Only by trying to understand the gap between this potential and the actuality can AGRITEX hope to improve its operations in the field.

The onerous task of improving agriculture since independence has been assigned to AGRITEX. Prior to 1984 agricultural research was aimed primarily at LSCF farmers and its impact in the communal areas was marginal, at best. Since 1984, the Farming Systems Research Unit (FSRU) of the Department of Research and Specialist Services (R&SS) has launched a new approach which espouses a holistic and inter-disciplinary analysis of the problems in CA farming systems. Ideally, an interface has been created that is expected to facilitate the flow of information between research and extension. One example of success was the recent development of "Red Swazi" hybrid sorghum by R&SS for use in the marginal areas of agro-ecological regions IV and V.

Extension workers first distributed the seed to CA farmers in several districts during the 1983 season. The hybrid has been adopted by many in Binga and Omay, but most CA farmers have resisted it, preferring long-season, local varieties which seem to perform well even under drought conditions. If the local varieties are drought-resistant, pest-resistant and tasty too, this might explain why a new hybrid was developed rather than improving the local varieties. And, we might try to determine if this was the best possible action to be taken. Were farmers consulted before the hybrid was developed in order to get their views of what kind of seed qualities would improve their production?

If not, then the example suggests that research and extension might be doing a commendable job, but nevertheless at odds with the food security needs of peasant households.

AGRITEX employs various strategies in its efforts to reach farmers. Master Farmers are trained to transmit farming techniques to the average farmer by example. There is an effort to focus on the development of groups in areas where no such groups exist. In another approach some farmers are trained and paid to work for AGRITEX as promoters of extension messages. Radio listening groups have been piloted in Matabeleland South and Mashonaland Central provinces, but as noted in the Makonde study, the existence of information/communication systems becomes practically negligible in the more remote CA regions. The Training and Visit Approach is to be the most effective, but again the Makonde study showed that in an area of 2 277 km² there were only 29 EWs serving 12 111 farmers. This EW/farmer ratio of 1:521 is much better than the national average of 1:850, indicating the extremes of inadequate contact between EWs and farmers.

The ability to control EW contact with farmers will determine who controls (at least influentially) the extension message. This probability is very significant in the context of how EWs move from one village to another. It is not surprising to find that the EWs interviewed for the Makonde study all used motorcycles, bought by AGRITEX with loans sourced from the World Bank. When questioned about the mileage shortage, one extension administrator explained that while EWs do not have access to enough mileage rebate to cover their entire area, it is also true that this limit on mileage forces them to first visit those areas they consider to be of priority.

The problem of forced choice is evident also in the role of the Institute of Agricultural Engineering (IAE). The Institute is intended to direct its efforts towards the commercial and communal sectors by researching, designing and testing improved tillage farming and post-harvest technologies. It was primarily oriented towards the commercial sector before independence, but post-independence changes have not brought better results as its progress is hampered by the lack of a solid database on the social realities of the farmers being served. A recent evaluative report by ENDA/UNICEF cites an overemphasis in research on draught power and soil erosion practically to the exclusion of most other problems that farmers experience. Adoption is hampered because IAE develops and tests on site with little or no attention as to how local conditions in the prospective adopting locals will enhance or inhibit the likelihood of adoption. IAE is criticised for the over-use of hasty consultancies which have not helped to better co-ordinate research activities with farmer needs. Essentially, the report concludes that a rational policy for the development of appropriate technology is lacking.

There is a strong probability that extension efforts are being irrationally duplicated. In addition to AGRITEX, the Government extends its messages to peasants through a number of other channels not to mention the private, NGO channels over which the Government has only minimal control. The Ministry of Community Development and Women's Affairs (MCDWA) has shown interest in women's projects by facilitating their access to farm inputs, offering technical advice, as well as training in group and organisational skills. MCDWA projects have been popular with women probably because they take into account the labour-consuming activities of women and children. The MCDWA also provides literacy and numeracy skills that are invaluable to women, enabling them to make even better use of their time. Principles of savings, credit and

small business tactics are also offered to women through this ministry.

The Ministry of Co-operatives (MINCOP) co-ordinates services for pre-co-operatives consisting of people who are interested, but not registered as a co-operative because they are not yet prepared to operate as a permanent collective, and for registered collective co-operatives. MINCOP serves these peasant groupings mainly by offering administrative and bookkeeping services, technical agricultural skills and farm management education.

The Ministry of Local Government, Rural and Urban Development (MLGRUD) acts as a clearing house for recommendations originating from the local level to Central Government. This ministry allocates communal land, co-ordinates the transport of produce to the Grain Marketing Board, provides tractor services, support co-operatives and other income-generating projects, monitors the impact of projects on communities, trains staff at all levels in rural development activities. Co-ordination between women farmers, AGRITEX and this Ministry is critical in terms of providing a resource base to help women in decision-making, but at present the efficacy of that co-ordination is highly questionable.

The Ministry of Health is also very actively involved with rural extension, shouldering the main responsibility for providing clinic and hospital services to a population for which malnutrition, diarrhoea and respiratory diseases are the main cause of death. Village Health Workers (VHWs) are trained by this Ministry which places them in rural health programmes targeted to specific health problems, e.g. maternal and child health, family planning, sanitation, etc.

Peasant farmers also interact with the State through a number of parastatals including the Agricultural Finance Corporation (AFC), the Grain Marketing Board (GMB), the Dairy Marketing Board (DMB), the Cotton Marketing Board (CMB), the Cold Storage Commission (CSC), all of which help farmers co-ordinate their productive activity with local, national and international markets. The Agricultural and Rural Development Authority (ARDA) is another parastatal which was set up specifically to spearhead development in appropriate farming for communal areas. The District Development Fund (DDF), among other things, does road work and hires out tractors to peasants at \$55 per hectare.

In addition to all these offices and agents who have their hands in the rural development pot, we must add a long list of NGOs. A directory of NGO training centres and programmes gives a provincial breakdown of their distribution, revealing a concentration around the two main urban centres of Harare in Mashonaland East and Bulawayo in Matabeleland North. Own research does not seem to be the main activity of these NGOs. It appears that they depend on AGRITEX and other Government agencies to refer clients who are then trained at the NGO premises or at Government training centres by NGO personnel. The questions are:

- To what extent do NGO activities benefit peasant farmers and how?
- To what extent is the co-operation between Government and NGOs rational? and
- To what extent are the habits and technologies disseminated by NGOs amenable to the economic and socio-political context of peasant farmers?

We hope to find answers to some of these questions through our extension survey. Whereas we believe that NGOs will show a firm bias towards servicing the needs of women in the work they do at the village and ward levels, we suspect that the tendency of most NGOs to organise around or near urban centres may account for their programmatic gender-sensitivity. But among peasants in Makonde where males dominate land rights and 72% of female labour is allocated to farming, gender-related issues do not arise when it comes to assessing the quality of services available and needed. In Makonde, farmers seem to want help; they are not so particular about the sex of the service provider. This does not mean that gender-sensitivity is not important in the provision of extension services. What it means is that the need for such services is so critical that the question of gender insensitivity becomes irrelevant.

This description of what we so far know about the structure of extension is somewhat sketchy. A substantive filling in of the outline provided here requires a more detailed analysis of this structure at the micro-level to understand how it works and/or fails to work in the interest of communal farmers. The *vee heuristic* below helps us to decide how we can formulate such an approach.

First and foremost, our *vee* suggests that understanding whether the current structure of extension reinforces a class/gender stratified unevenness in the rural social order requires us to investigate how the conceptual understanding of those involved with the delivery of extension services dovetails with their methodological approaches. This dovetailing occurs in the context of extension service delivery, where the actual objects/subjects of extension delivery live and the actual events take place.

So far, we understand that the prevailing world view is one which sees farming as a hi-tech science. We also presume that extension agents are operating on the assumption that good farming can only result from scientific methods. This would no doubt lead to extension workers making the unfounded claim that peasant farmers cannot compete with commercial farmers in terms of productivity. We would also expect them to vigorously defend the appropriateness of the current extension delivery structure. Another aspect of the operative world view seems to be the assumption held by most Government EWs that men are the rightful recipients of extension services because they are more likely to make the best use of it. But we understand already that "the best use" conception may very well refer to male control over the powerful agricultural strategies that promise greater productivity and greater cash income for males who have rights in land. The knowledge claim would be that extension can help peasants enhance their production, but the implicit claim is that the peasants who will get the most help will be male household heads, not women who should get other kinds of help because of their dependency.

The fundamental value claim that we expect to find EWs asserting is the idea that peasants should be brought into the mainstream of production, in accordance with the commercial model. But when we test this claim against the theories we bring to the study about the class/gender issues involved with a farm systems approach and with Freire's ideas on extension, then we begin to identify the principles that seem to be operating in this context. Among these principles are included the ideas that the knowledge claims made by EWs derive from the development goals of Government, that peasant development means modernising their knowledge, methods and technology in this framework and that it is the job of EWs to transfer info-techno systems

to peasants so that they may become "good farmers".

Thus, to get a better understanding of the concepts involved in the formulation of such principles, we must then transform the contextually relevant objects/subjects and events into kinds of information that will be useful to extension. At this very early stage we presume a need to know the attitudes of peasants and EWs, the extent of EW/peasant contact, the actual structure of extension at both micro and macro-levels. We will get much of this information in Phase I of our study, but our final analysis will depend on more detailed work scheduled for Phase II.

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF GENDER

The Feminisation of Poverty

The role of women in Zimbabwean agriculture is circumscribed by the general socio-cultural patterns of the country's CAs. Due initially to labour migrancy and more recently to general trends in urban migration, women comprise 60-70% of the adults working as CA farmers and, on an average, they head 45% of CA households as revealed in the Makonde study. Over the years, through the imposition of European patriarchal values on property roles and work and through imposition of taxes, responsibility, labour recruitment practices and political control, rather specific gender-related processes of production and social relations have emerged amongst the African population. Various legislation along with the codification of customary law, rights and practices emerged to set a framework for what has evolved in the CAs as a distorted, patriarchal productive system based on dependent female labour.

Government has shown sensitivity to the issues of gender by recently establishing the Ministry of Community Development and Women's Affairs. Policy has been made in areas advancing the rights of individual women on issues such as the age of majority, inheritance, usufruct rights and marketing rights, but some have been critical of the gap between intentions and action on the part of the State.²⁵ Thus, it appears that the pursuit of change on behalf of rural women as a class will be hampered until more research about their life-world in the CAs is conducted.

As one step in that direction we will be exploring the manner in which peasant women are affected by extension activities. The early data indicates that women perform most of the agricultural labour activities and manage the majority of peasant agricultural enterprises. It is important, therefore, to examine the problems women face with agricultural extension by assessing the kind of support they currently get and still need.

We shall begin by stating the obvious: Most peasant farmers are women, most peasant households are poor, and most heads of peasant households will soon be women. This association of poverty with the phenomenon of a growing number of female-headed households is prevalent worldwide and has been called "the feminisation of poverty" by many scholars in the West. The phrase refers to a shift in economic standing that takes place when societies provide preferential access to men over women when it comes to economic development.

Communal Households Headed by Women

It has been found that this marginalisation of women is empirically related to the mode of production in at least four ways:

- The demand for female labour;
- The linkage between child-care responsibilities and the economic activities women are likely to take up;

25 Jacobs, S.M. and Howard, T. 1987. pp.28-47.

- The absolute and proportional monetary compensation for the comparative work of women and men; and
- The level and availability of alternative income sources, aside from economic compensations which already belong to women such as welfare, the earnings of their children, etc.²⁶

It is quite obvious that the growing poverty of Zimbabwe's rural women cannot be assessed accurately without examining the gender issue as it relates to the land question. In recent forums, questions have been raised with regard to the predicament of women as non-owners of land; as food providers whose food plots are too small; as less important farmers who are "justifiably" allocated the poorest land, widows who are being dispossessed of land and as potential co-operators who are inhibited by the unavailability of land for their co-operative activities. In order to understand how these issues are interrelated and to assess how they may be related more accurately to the land question, we need to disaggregate the available data on land-holding profiles, based perhaps on gender, class and other factors, including acreage.

Beyond this, it will also be necessary to gain an understanding of the skills that rural women make use of and still need in order to ensure their household viability. At this juncture, it is trite to note how women's work has always been taken for granted. It is sad to note that in spite of volumes of literature documenting the economic value of women's work in household production, in Zimbabwe the household labour of women not yet recognised as skilled labour or even as labour requiring new skills immediately. This does not apply to rural women only, as "only 8 percent of professional, skilled and semi-skilled workers are female in Zimbabwe".²⁷

The ability of rural women to obtain and use skills is a problem that will be found in the extension context. It was found in the Makonde study that AGRITEX, the main arm of Government extension service, does not have programmes designed specifically to address the needs of women farmers even though the evidence indicates they are structurally disadvantaged in comparison to men. For example, only two out of 45 EWs in the area were women. No wonder, the women in Makonde felt oppressed as women. But surprisingly, just over 15% preferred women as EWs, with at least 50% having no preference, probably because they did not think that female EWs would help them much. Their problems are too serious to be effectively addressed or solved by gender politics.

For example, in Chirau, one master farmer participating in the Makonde study reported that 18 women were known to have committed suicide in the past two years because polygamous husbands spent monies accrued by means of female labour without taking into account the needs of the women who laboured for them. These deaths can be blamed on the preferential access and control of males over females. They cannot be attributed to the faults of a polygamous culture as only 7,5% of the women believed that

26 Blumberg, R.L. with M. Garcia Pilar, "The Political Economy of the Mother-Child Family: A Cross-Societal View", in *Beyond the Nuclear Family Model*, edited by L. Lenero-Otero, Sage Publications: London, 1976.

27 Jacobs, S.M. and Howard, T. op. cit. 1987. pp.34.

discouraging polygamy might improve their agricultural access and control. Government policy supports the equal access of women in the ownership of the means of production, but the assumption prevails that women just need more confidence.

In the Makonde study, 60% of the women interviewed seek this confidence (and the support it implies) by joining women's groups, but tend to shun participation in the predominantly male farmer groups that AGRITEX prefer to work with. This suggests that men working with women in extension need to conscientise their colleagues on the importance of women's contribution to the productive process.

While the conscientisation of men may be helpful to women, improving their access to information and resources must be equally significant. Of 14 EWs interviewed in the Makonde study, 10 reported having no trouble reaching women and two of those included the only two women working in extension in the area. The six male EWs who reported difficulties in reaching women said they had trouble meeting them alone when their husbands were working away in town as this tended to arouse suspicions among the village folk. Long distances and lack of transport often discouraged women from attending meetings. The six men who had trouble also said they believe that women farmers would be more comfortable with women EWs.

It is interesting to note that only two of the EWs were women. This tends to suggest that the field information access inherent in the EW training process has been controlled by men. The 30 women who were interviewed on completion of their training as EWs reported they did not want office work. They also pointed out that the only difficulty they faced during their EW training was having to adjust to the agricultural tasks which have traditionally been performed by men. All of the women were single and only two planned to get married after training. This suggests that women who enter professional work may find themselves having to forego marriage in favour of professional fulfilment. Learning the traditionally male tasks did not take too long as the female EW trainees were self-motivated to succeed in their new careers. The opportunity to enter a previously male domain was something the women found not only irresistible but adventurous. It was also seen as an achievement that would earn them recognition within their home communities and put them on the road to upward mobility.

Rural Women and the Urban Response

It is not unusual these days for peasant women to abandon their rural homes in favour of the cities. Until recently, such migration was almost entirely restricted to dependants of male migrants. But today, women are migrating on their own, with or without children. They flock to the cities in search of jobs, but most of them do not qualify for the jobs on offer. Most rural skills do not find a ready market in modern urban settings. In fact, such skills are becoming redundant (even at the subsistence level) in the mainly communal villages from whence they have fled their roles as members of an unpaid labour force.

In Zimbabwe, African females comprise 5,4% of all skilled occupations while 32,3% of them occupy positions in clerical and service work (medical assistants, nurses, midwives, teachers, social workers, typists and telephonists) despite the fact that some white collar

positions are opening up.²⁸ The total percentage of African women engaged in any kind of production is 4,4% of all skilled workers, and only a small fraction of these are skilled agricultural labour.

Many of these former peasant women resort to prostitution, begging or petty commodity trading in order to survive. Their children become street kids who are gradually forming themselves into gangs to pursue criminal activity as a source of income. The newspapers regularly publish letters (often from middle-class women) complaining about the eyesore that the beggars, prostitutes, vagrants, etc., create and the State has more than once taken steps to eradicate them with periodic mass-arrests or "round-ups" (e.g. "Operation Chinyavada"). Ultimately, the authority symbolised by the police force only exemplifies the class bias against the poor and the male bias against women who are seeking to earn an income by whatever means.

The Gender Issue

The truth is that rural women have nowhere to turn to. The economic significance of their food crop production and their unpaid or poorly remunerated labour on cash crops can no longer be ignored. Along these lines, our study especially seeks to investigate how communal women are benefiting from agricultural extension services in their areas. Consistent with the findings of others, we join Redclift in documenting the economic role of women and in recognising that the problem is not to integrate them into the economy, but to understand the realities of their current integration.²⁹

Perhaps the most important insight offered by Redclift's citation of Deere is that capitalist expansion will not mean the same thing for all women, even in the same society. Some will find ways to participate closer to the centre of the state's economic activity, but most will be relegated to non-capitalist modes of production. If this must indeed happen in Zimbabwe, the Government's problem is to find ways to make those lower economic levels subsistent in terms of household food security, at the very least.

28 Ibid., pp.34-35.

29 Redclift, N. "The Contested Domain: Gender, Accumulation and the Labour Process", in *Beyond Employment: Household, Gender and Subsistence*, Nanneke Redclift and Enzo Mingionne (eds), Basil Blackwell: Oxford, UK, p.107.

THE ROLE OF FARMER GROUPS

It was Bratton's hypothesis that farmer groups made the crucial difference.³⁰ He studied 464 randomly selected households in four rural areas: Wedza, Gutu, Chipuriro and Dande. Interviewing the leaders and members of 50 farmer groups, he discovered that while only a minority of peasants are involved, farmer organisations are numerous and widespread. Of the total respondents, 44% belonged to voluntary associations, with 56% in Wedza alone, and 21% in the more remote area of Dande. Where market and State penetration is high, collective action by farmers was most common, and collectivity was least likely where the extent of market and State penetration was low. In Bratton's view, the implication is that while farmer groups are initiated locally and enjoy relative autonomy, they are most likely to emerge in settings where institutionalised support services are available.

At first glance, Bratton's analysis seems practically faultless, but according to the chart below, this support is available in the form of implements and credit provided by the State and production services such as draught power and information. While Bratton's chart looks neat, it simplifies the complex nature of the situation and can lead to misconceptions. For example, he fails to note that draught power may be provided for a fee, either by the DDF in the form of tractor hire or by private households who can afford to rent out whatever draught power they have. Cash resources for such expenditures are not taken into account in the chart. Furthermore, the information provided is communicated by various EWs and represents extension resources which may originate from the State or from private enterprise.

Table 2
PRODUCTION RESOURCES OF SMALLHOLDER AGRICULTURE

Level of Origin	Production Resource	Nature of Resource
Production Level	Land	Production
	Labour	(owned by household)
	Draught Power	Production service (provided by State or market)
	Implements	Production service (provided by State or market)
Exchange Level	Information	Production service (provided by State or market)
	Credit	Production service (provided by State or market)
	Inputs	
	Transport	

Source: Bratton, M., "A Share of the Plow", MSU, 1985.

30 Bratton, M. and Truscott, K. "Fertiliser Packages, Maize Yields and Economic Returns: An Evaluation of Wedza Communal Land", in Zimbabwe Agricultural Journal, 82 (1): 1-8.

Another point concerns the provision of inputs and transport. In many cases, post-harvest transport is provided by the State, but many farmers' produce was ruined by rain in 1988 when the State failed to provide adequate transport. Even when the State is in a position to fulfil its normal transport obligations, some peasants farmers cannot afford the cost. Nor does the chart clarify whether or not the farmers Bratton studied were directly provided with free agricultural inputs, or purchased them with credit which the State does provide or bought them as a normal household expense.³¹ These are the kind of blind spots our study hopes to clear up.

Whereas Bratton may be right in arguing that farmer groups are initiated locally, his own chart causes us to wonder how they can enjoy relative "autonomy" when the only resource they provide themselves is labour? Is it that wealthier farmers rely more on groups than on extension and are able to maintain a degree of autonomy but the more dependent communal farmers cannot?³² In fact, we may find that CA farmers living in areas where institutionalised support services are available can become quite dependent. It is apparent from his findings that Bratton did not study the gender relations within the groups.

It is not far-fetched to presume that dependent farmers are quite susceptible to being persuaded to follow whatever development path is laid down either by the State or by private concerns, whichever is more influential in the area. It is even more apparent that the support that peasants find in such situations is mainly in the form of access to resources which are beyond their means. Could not Bratton's facts just as easily be read another way: that groups in areas of greater market and State penetration simply have greater access to EWs because they, quite literally, are in a better position - macro-organisationally speaking - to invest in the inputs and extension resources that can enhance their productivity?

While location is most certainly a factor, access to EWs and other extension resources must at least play an equal role. In his sample, for example, Bratton found peasant wealth to be differentiated primarily by cattle and implement ownership, but we wonder how well this assumption would hold for most peasant households? For example, let us assume that livestock is an indicator, as some studies have suggested.³³ If this is so, then how can we reconcile Bratton's findings with what we already know - that 40% of all

-
- 31 Ibid. Despite the fact that many of Bratton's peasant farmers lived in relatively inaccessible parts of the country, they nonetheless used commercial inputs extensively. Ninety-five percent of maize growers purchase certified hybrid seed, with a substantial proportion of these using artificial fertilisers for cash crops and cotton at 61% and storage pesticides at 66%. He found that group farmers are more likely to have access to fertiliser than 48% of individual farmers. The proportions were 77% and 48% respectively. Groups also seem to benefit more easily and cheaply from factory prices for goods purchased in urban centres, while individuals are much more dependent on unreliable inputs from urban family members or through middlemen at costly prices.
- 32 Leonard, D.K., "The Organisational Requirements of the Rural Poor", in *Institutions of Rural Development for the Poor*, Leonard D.K. and Marshall, R.D. (eds) Berkeley: Institute of International Studies, University of California Press.
- 33 Theisen, R. J. and Marasha, J. "An Ecological Study of the Importance of Livestock to Development". The authors observed a relationship between the possession of livestock and family crop yields. These researchers argue further that child mortality rates are lower in families with an above average livestock holding while they rise in families who have a below average livestock holding.

peasant households do not own cattle and that 60% own an average of four each? If there are so many households with no cattle, what other form of land preparation do they use and to what effect? How does the lack of draught power impact on women whose access is restricted because their husbands are migrant labourers?

We know that the Commercial Farmers' Union (CFU) has empowered itself to exert pressure on the Government over the issue of prices and land, but we need to understand more about how this organisation was formed, to what extent it is operating as a white farmers' lobby, and how it influences the formation of other farmer organisations. Furthermore, we cannot presume that the only interests served by the CFU are those of commercial farmers; instead, we must look beyond the obvious for other vested interests. Apparently, the National Farmers' Association of Zimbabwe (NFAZ) was formed to advocate the interests of smallholders who were in need of increased service delivery, improved infrastructure and greater market access, but if the CFU represents the mainstream agrarian status quo, then we must ask to what extent does the NFAZ function as a grassroots organisation or whether it could be moving in some other direction altogether?

These kinds of questions challenge the concept of farmers' group autonomy. We are led to ask autonomy from whom/what or autonomy on whose terms? Such questioning suggests that other interests besides those of farmers may be operating. Is extension influenced both by obvious and less obvious interests? In addition to responding directly to the needs of farmers, whether commercial or communal, is it not to private concerns as well as to the political aspirations of party members? If we start to understand how farmers groups in the 1980s have been integrated into the overall political framework, then we are likely to reveal an intricate network of complementary interests which historically have structured extension to perform certain tasks to the exclusion of others.

ISSUES OF INVESTMENT AND CONSUMPTION

Another damper on capital formation among peasants is that the percentage of private consumption cash spent on agricultural products has steadily declined in the 15 years from 1970 to 1985. This is corroborated by the fact that the cost of food has increased sharply in as many years ranging from a consumer price index of 46,0 in 1975 (for income at current prices) to 253,6 in 1987.³⁴ Although a larger difference in urban and rural consumption patterns might be expected, it is common knowledge that the majority of peasants are consuming less and less of their own production. They, like urban-dwellers, now purchase most of their food requirements. For example, sixty-three percent of the Makonde study respondents indicated that their biggest problem was not having enough food.³⁵ The existence of controlled pricing and industrial Government subsidies - for the processing of raw food materials such as grain milling or beef and dairy processing - suggests that most peasants would be eating even less without such costly Government intervention. As of now, we are not sure of the amounts, but our study promises to shed light on peasant consumption patterns. The general trend, however, has been towards increasing monetisation and declining absolute self-sufficiency.

This poverty-profile may cause EWs to invest less of their extension resources in peasant development, but the diversity of peasant wealth and resource access is not going to disappear. Moyo (1987) argues that discrepancies in income and wealth exist not only between the commercial and communal sectors, but also between different peasant households and even within the same households.³⁶ Income sources and income flows must be assessed, Moyo argues, if we hope to get a clear picture of this phenomenon.

Our study expects to demonstrate that some households derive their incomes from a number of different enterprises while others depend on just one or two sources. This heterogeneity may help explain why some farm households enthusiastically respond to extension information and innovations while others are less willing to risk investment possibilities. The implication is that the development of peasant farming in CAs will continue grinding along until EWs adapt the extension process to accommodate this diversity. There is a general lack of information about peasant wealth and consumption and this may help explain why EWs do not understand some aspects of peasant agriculture. Our analysis hopes to close this gap by looking at different levels of production and consumption within and between households. We propose to examine inter-household production to levels in order to schematise ownership of the means of production as well as production differences. In this way, we expect our data to indicate social differentiation in peasant production.

We know something about the economies of the resource rich, but very little about the

34 Consumer Price Index for Foodstuffs (1980 = 100); Central Statistical Office, Harare, Zimbabwe.

35 Mutuma, M.P., Magonya, S. and Moyo, S. "An Evaluation of Agricultural Extension Services Support to Women Farmers in Zimbabwe with Special Reference to Makonde District", ZIDS, Harare, 1987.

36 Moyo, S. (1987), "The Land Question", in Mandaza, I. (ed), Zimbabwe: The Political Economy of Transition 1980-1986, CODESRIA Book Series.

resource poor. For example, we know more about wage earning farm workers than unwaged poor farmers. We know that there are 70 000 fewer farm employees today (276 000) than there were in 1973 (346 000) and we know that those farm workers presently employed are earning Z\$215 million more than all the agricultural workers in 1973. We are also aware that those 70 000 people were put out of work by farm mechanisation soon after a minimum wage of Z\$30 a month (plus cost of living allowances) was legislated in 1980. We suspect that most of these basically unskilled workers were reabsorbed into CAs, but a few may have spilled over either into the private non-agricultural sector or into urban areas, where some have become squatters.

Farm workers who remained employed have achieved very little investment potential in real dollars, since the cost of fixed assets has grown steadily since independence. Finally, we know that the few farm workers with managerial experience are being lured into the private sector where wage levels are much more competitive than those offered by the State. This is detrimental to the poor peasant farmers who are the main beneficiaries of extension service. If waged farm workers are being displaced from large farms what are the chances of success for peasants who are trying to invest cash in subsistence agriculture?

This is why we are hoping to learn something about the investment structure in the CAs - how much income is being generated in peasant households, through which channels, and how is it being disbursed? Until Zimbabwe can answer these questions, extension will know very little about how poor farmers make their investment decisions. Indeed, without such information we cannot even say whether the majority of peasants can actually afford to adopt most extension advice.

THE POTENTIAL FOR PEASANT DEVELOPMENT

Mugova (1988) submits that 91% of the communal areas are in the dry and marginal lands of natural regions III, IV and V. Ecological conditions in these areas are such, she concludes, that productivity requires large capital investment and a re-orientation of the cropping profile. In her view, these changes must occur if productivity is expected to meet the needs of household subsistence and permit the profitable extraction of saleable surpluses. Without this capital injection and creative crop planning, Mugova believes that even subsistence productivity will be threatened.

We expect our study to provide even more evidence that the sustainability of subsistence cropping is becoming more perilous for peasant farmers. Indications of agro-ecological stress suggest that subsistence cropping would fare better with agricultural inputs and irrigation technology than without them. But this view contradicts recent literature which suggests that subsistence cropping is most likely to be more economic for households if it is based on a zero input strategy.³⁷ Despite the conclusions of this literature, we do not expect to find EWs recommending zero inputs as a viable development option for household production.

Let us also note that Mugova ignores the extensive role that AGRITEX and other extension agencies can play in bringing about the changes in peasant farming that she prescribes. For example, AGRITEX EWs are pivotal in helping farmers get loans. Although the granting of loan monies has shifted from a predominance of LSCFs in 1980 to a much greater share for CAs in 1986, the LSCFs still get the lion's share. This is due mainly to the fact that LSCFs are seen as less risky investments.

Lending agencies rightfully seek to ensure not only that the associated administrative costs and risk element are covered, but also that loan monies are recovered. The fact is, however, the AFC loses more than 50% of its capital annually to defaulters on its small farm credit and resettlement credit scheme.³⁸ It seems that default rates (30-40%) could be mitigated by some changes in fiscal services to CAs along with the kind of crop-mix suggested above. Bratton informs us that group lending has lower administrative costs and loans are more likely to be repaid, because liability is shared instead of being the burden of individual households. We can conclude, therefore, that loans given to group members have a higher chance of being recovered than those advanced to individual farmers. Bratton demonstrates that group membership and access to credit are positively correlated, but he also admits that the members of the groups who do so well are the best (wealthiest?) of the organised smallholders.

As argued previously, there are unlikely to be any major changes in peasant farming as long as extension concentrates on developing LSCFs at the expense of peasant farms. But if any changes do take place as a result of extension effort these will predictably follow the LSCF model. The question of interest is to what extent is the role of an extension agency like AGRITEX a technical or administrative one? It seems that

37 Richards, P., *The Indigenous Agricultural Revolution*.

38 In his analysis of this situation, Bratton, M. argues that the AFC policy of directing loan monies to individuals is "a drain to the national Treasury". For more details see "Financing Smallholder Production: A Comparison of Individual and Group Credit Schemes in Zimbabwe", *Public Administration and Development*, 6 (1986) pp.115-132.

historical change has brought about a shift from a purely technical focus to an administrative one. Can our study assess this kind of institutional shift? If so, what are its implications for the most effective extension role possible?

Whatever the nature of its role, there is reason already for extension to take a very different view of peasant farmers. Despite their overall poverty, it is clear that peasants are already trying to conform to the developmental pattern established by the LSCF sub-sector. It seems though that their savings may be expended on consumption priorities long before they can be seriously invested in agricultural development projects. For example, Radke studied 79 savings clubs in Manicaland Province both from an institutional viewpoint (top-down) and from the viewpoint of the rural saver (bottom-up). These clubs averaged 20-30 communal farmers who were mostly female *de facto* heads of CA households. Among 89% of the 79 clubs sampled, buying fertiliser (a vital agricultural input) is the primary reason for saving, and 77% of those clubs also report saving in order to pay their children's school fees. Three percent of those clubs save for consumption, 14% save against future contingencies, but only 20% save towards the development or maintenance of income-generating projects.

We have reason to think of these clubs as examples of collective action rather than instances of individual farmer development. While household saving may be their primary *raison d'être*, these clubs encourage other kinds of economic activity such as the exchange of labour or draught power, and the pooling of savings towards the bulk purchase of fertiliser and seed. It appears that they also help farmers improve their access to technical advice, credit and input supply. Radke recommends that farmers throughout Zimbabwe should be encouraged to form or join savings clubs. He further suggests that NGOs, community-based workers and AGRITEX EWs should better utilise these clubs as channels for disseminating information. Radke's study concurs with Bratton on the point that labour and credit access are the main reasons why many farmers seek membership of farmers' groups or associations, not saving *per se*. The current objective is to ascertain to what extent these clubs are being used by peasant households and what approach is taken by extension and what messages are extended.

Saving for investment could be enhanced if employment opportunities could be created in the CAs. Such a potential does exist. From a nutritional point of view, there are indications of a growing demand for major food crops such as maize, wheat, sorghum, coffee, edible groundnuts, soyabeans, and beef and milk (Table 3). In order to meet this demand, it would be necessary for the agricultural sector to expand. However, that expansion must be managed in such a way that peasant farms are themselves cultivated in order to encourage their full productive potential. But Moyo (1986) suggests that there is a class basis for the dynamism of certain commodities over others.

Table 3

DEMAND PROJECTIONS, MAJOR FOOD CROPS BY YEAR 2000 (Population 13 660 000)

Agricultural Produce	Quantity (Tonnes)
Maize	1 366 000
Wheat	409 800
Sorghum	40 980
Coffee	928 880
Edible Groundnuts	24 098
Soyabeans	136 600
Beef	136 600
Milk Products	327 840 (million litres)

Source: Murphy, 1985.

The issue then is to what extent are peasant support systems, including extension services, targeted in a manner that ensures household and national food security (for grain and other crops) in addition to enabling the peasantry to produce those commodities with greater dynamism (price/cost)? In the long run, an extension focus which serves the immediate national level food and/or export needs at the expense of heavy labour value extraction could reduce the assurance of food security at both household and national levels, and/or reduce the predictability of output. The sorghum overproduction and maize price crisis over the last five years reflect this problem and emphasise the need to explore such questions.

Specifically, we expect to find extension emphasising lower value cash crops and de-emphasising food crops, excepting maize and sorghum by default. We suspect that such a preference for cash crops will show a strong relationship to the predominantly male presumption that women should grow both crop categories. The Makonde study has already shown that food production is frequently assigned to women (with very little help from any of the male members of the household) while men concentrate mainly on cash crop production. We hope to discover whether this is a localised or national trend.

If extension shows a bias towards cash crop production, this would suggest that EWs may be defining women only as household members and labourers, not as potential producers or owners of cash crops. It would also mean that EW advice is likely to be directed more at a male audience. Evidence of this would indicate that food production is being institutionally excluded from the productive equation. Because peasant survival depends on subsistence farming, any overemphasis by extension on cash crops may be putting peasants at risk. In fact, extension's failure to communicate with peasants in a manner that helps them meet their food criteria is probably one of the major causes of household food insecurity.

It is, however, important to assess the extent of extension advice rejection and perhaps the nature of the conflicts that often arise between peasants and the extension service agents. Moreover, achieving a more balanced growth in food and cash crops may indeed necessitate extension's taking a new look at how cropping resources are allocated. Table 4 indicates that cash crops for export have grown steadily between 1978-1983 and, with

the exception of maize and beef, there is no indication that this growth will not continue in the foreseeable future. Nevertheless, to reap maximum benefit, cropping patterns will need to be modified, as suggested by ZIDS scholars who believe that crop distributions should reflect the ability of CAs to contribute to Zimbabwe's potential growth in demand and export.³⁹

Table 4
GROWTH RATE OF ZIMBABWE'S MAJOR AGRICULTURAL EXPORTS 1978-1983

Commodity	Growth Rate Per Annum (%)
Tobacco	4,4
Sugar (raw & refined)	8,2
Maize	-0,6
Tea	1,6
Coffee	7,4
Beef	-13,7
Cotton Lint	0,8

Source: CSO, Quarterly Digest of Statistics, March 1985.

A re-organisation of the agricultural sector of this nature, on this scale, would make it possible to put more people to work in the CAs. With adequate Government intervention, an allocation of additional hectareage to a different proportion of crops in the CAs could go a long way towards providing more cash income for CA households. Of course, this projection is based on fuller land utilisation in the LSCF sub-sector, and it is also predicated on adequate irrigation to supplement costly agricultural inputs that would not be as helpful with inadequate water. Nevertheless, the potential exists.

To what extent, therefore, is extension advice directed at preparing peasants for a broader and technologically superior contribution to output and productivity, beyond the two-crop emphasis (maize/cotton) now presumed suitable for peasant growth? What types of manpower skills, information, manuals and experiences has the extension establishment built up to encourage the real diversification suggested above? Does the NFAZ have any real power to change AGRITEX aside from its plan for diversification?

Since irrigation would be essential to the proposed revised cropping allocation of hectareage, loans would be necessary to fund irrigation projects that may ease the rate of

39 Moyo, S., Mupindu, S. and Ngobese P. "Agricultural Employment and Development in Zimbabwe: A Background Paper", ZIDS Working Paper Series, November, 1988.

default a great deal. Currently (even though many of them are located in agro-ecological regions of the greatest rainfall), LSCFs have done so well mainly because Rhodesia set up the Farm Irrigation Fund in 1966 to subsidise irrigation systems on European farms. CAs promise much increased production with similar attention. However, the question of whether a mass water development programme should be undertaken by Government, or whether private CA households should be funded is one that requires much more investigation.⁴⁰ The point is that either in either case, EWs must shift their extension attention to CAs with the same vigour that LSCFs have enjoyed.

40 See The Herald, December 3, 1988 for announcement of a new AFC irrigation loan programme which proposes lending for the finance of irrigation projects to individual peasant farmers in communal and resettlement areas. See also the article of December 5, 1988 in which the AFC general manager urges farmers to use the irrigation fund. "It was important that those granted loans repaid them in time. Where there were genuine cases of hardships due to drought, farmers could be excused but side-marketing to avoid repayment had to be condemned... Already this year there have been complaints that fertiliser sales have gone down due to the high loan-refusal rate by the AFC".

CLASS-BASED COMMODITY DYNAMISM AND TECHNICAL CHANGE

Crops

ZIDS research has found that a greater proportion of low-value crops such as sorghum, millets and rapoko are grown in the CAs.⁴¹ Between 1977 and 1985 there was a major shift from the production of groundnuts (a high-value crop) to cotton. This shift is significant because the high value of groundnuts accounts for their role as both a cash and food crop. Replacing this crop with cotton increases the focus on cash crop incomes, while minimising the food use-value of CA crops. The production of high-value, flue-cured tobacco practically represented a monopoly in which the LSCF and SSCF farmers grew approximately 99% of the tobacco crop. Since independence, however, communal farmers are now growing the flue-cured variety as well as burley tobacco to which they were once restricted. The very wide gap in tonnage between CA and commercial sector production reveals the structure of class differentiation as tobacco is a major foreign exchange earner.

The yields in maize show a similar gap between the production levels of commercial and communal farmers, except that the gap is slightly narrower for maize because it is both a food and cash crop.

Research and Commodity Dynamism

These startling contrasts between the enhanced productivity of the commercial sector and the lower levels of productivity in the communal sector where the amount of land being cultivated has even surpassed that of the commercial sector suggests that rural class formation is very much sustained by a technology gap. The existence of this gap indicates that the commercial sector's access to info-techno resources far outstrips that of the communal sector, primarily because productivity in the former translates into much higher cash returns (including forex earnings).

This differential access to info-techno systems is especially evident in the commercial sector's ability to use irrigation systems, agro-chemical inputs, machinery (e.g. tractors, combine harvesters) that are simply beyond the reach of peasant farmers, even those organised into groups. This disparity can also be explained with reference to research and the competitive edge it has created for the commercial sector since the early 1920s.

The practice of researching the technical problems of agriculture is well established in Zimbabwe (Weinmann, 1976), but the bias in favour of the commercial sector has been evident since the colonial era. The research being done, mainly by privately funded institutions, is of special interest to the commercial sector farmers who pay levies averaging 0,5% to 1% of the gross value of production in order to finance their research needs. This information gap makes it possible for the commercial sector to identify the development of new commodity niches before they happen so that appropriate divestment and investment decisions can be made. In contrast, the communal sector is compelled to simply react to shifts in market demand.

41 Moyo, S. et. al. 1988.

Another advantage of research to commercial farmers is that it enables them to mechanise commodities such as wheat, soyabeans, cotton and sunflowers, giving them a higher output value per labour day employed. Lacking an equivalent access to machinery, the communal sector is relegated to the production of lower value crops like sorghum or maize. These factors contribute to what has been called the bias of capitalist agriculture against wage foods in favour of cash crop exportables (Crouch and de Janvry, 1980).

Significantly, the production gap that structures the class differences between the commercial and communal sectors is due mainly to differential access to research information which has made it possible for the commercial sector to enjoy the competitive edge. The higher growth rates of capitalist commodities must be attributed therefore to the control that capitalists exert over the direction and distribution of technological change. In effect, the agrarian question is not tied to land distribution *per se*, but is more concerned with the social basis of production. Differential access to services and policy influence, and to the wherewithal needed to control resources and markets, creates an abyss between the commercial and communal sectors that peasants cannot leap across easily.

A RESEARCH AGENDA SUMMARY

One of the most important advances of the Agricultural Revolution was the emergence of sedentary agriculture. Enhanced by the principles of land tillage, sedentary agriculture was able to feed most of Europe once a critical threshold in the quantity and quality of food and livestock products was achieved. The capacity of European states to market first local and then colonial exports in metropolitan urban areas raised the price of local land in Europe, ushered in an enclosure process, and freed up labour in one fell swoop. This pool of available (displaced agricultural) labour and the assembly line mode of use signalled the birth of industrial society. Before the formation of this pool, these free labourers were peasants who once fed themselves by and large from commonly held land.

Although industrialisation had not yet taken place at the start of their African odyssey, European settlers would have been customarily inclined to transfer their agricultural sciences to their new environments. Yet, the same principles of land tillage would prove destructive to African soils which are more fragile than those of most European farmlands. For the most part, as we have seen, the agro-ecological system in Zimbabwe does not respond well to leaving the topsoil bare. The evidence suggests that Africans did not readily resign themselves to the imposition of fundamentally inappropriate European systems.

In the past, most African agricultural soils responded best to systems of slash and burn cultivation with variable fallow periods, depending on the inherent fertility of the soil. Crops were literally planted in the ash. This method insured a system of agricultural fertility that suddenly declined not because there was increasing population pressure, but because people were herded into undesirably small and infertile areas. This containment process rapidly brought ecological stress into the reserve areas.

The dislocated African farmers who had been shunted into reserve areas were also (and still are) encouraged to cut down trees.⁴²

We may conclude then that the process of transferring a European info-techno agricultural system disrupted and transformed the ideological basis of African agricultural systems, causing much essential information to be lost from the process of daily transmission to younger generations. It is largely due to this loss that after green revolutions have taken place in the old world, and in the West, one has yet to occur in Zimbabwe and other parts of the Third World. In particular, Africa is experiencing an agricultural crisis in which rapid and extensive agro-ecological degradation are the order of the day. The soil in Zimbabwe's communal lands can no longer support most crops adequately without the investment of massive inputs, such as fertiliser. So, we have in

42 Mining companies were the biggest tree choppers requiring many uses of timber. This led to wholesale felling and logging for the mines and railways (see Ken Wilson, ENDA Report). Most peasants are now finding themselves travelling several kilometres just to get firewood. So, the possibility of burning branches in order to fertilise fields is today practically out of the question for most peasant farmers living in the CAs, the former reserves. While the idea of clearing trees may have worked well on European soils, it has robbed peasant farmers of their living (replenishable) fertiliser resource.

Zimbabwe, and elsewhere in Africa, a desperate situation in which Africans are feeling helpless to act without reference to European info-techno systems. There is growing evidence that large-scale commercial farming systems are more likely to be inappropriate and damaging than helpful to peasant farmers.

Furthermore, to alleviate the process of peasant dependency set in motion by the policies of their forefathers, the descendants of European colonial cultures are playing a more benevolent role by facilitating crisis relief. But the benefits of their activities are considerably reduced since they continue to influence the direction of peasant change and development towards accepting a European cultural bias in the development strategies, methods and techniques. Technical co-operation experts (TCEs) are just one type among a corps of expatriate extension workers who are attached to local institutions in most cases with the help of the former colonial powers.

The value of these New Age pioneers is reflected not only from the needy inexperience of Third World people as much as it derives from the enlightened self-interest of the World Bank or the EEC, the history of which is steeped in the coloniser/colonised relationship. The point is that current and future Western investment makes it very much in the interest of the West to take up the stance of helpfulness towards African agricultural efforts that are open to Western "specialist" advice. However, as we have pointed out earlier, information gleaned through research has benefited the LSCF farmers in Zimbabwe and has not tackled the problems of CA farmers with corresponding vigour. Until this imbalance is redressed, agricultural help that is especially adapted to the conditions and needs of LSCF farmers must be carefully assessed before it is transferred wholesale to the CA sector.

Contrary to popular belief and especially in its post-colonial phase, the relationship between Zimbabwe and the West is not simply one-way, as suggested by the dependency school of thought. Nor is it predominantly beneficial to the recipients of culture as the capitalist school would have us believe. Instead, the relationship is a two-way one, an interactional bond over which flows people, materials, things and ideas. In Zimbabwe, that relationship has generated wealth for the "chosen few" and poverty for the majority.

Ideally, we understand this as a relationship based on social class formation, the competitive excellence of one group over another by means of the elite classes (oppressing groups) suppressing the competitive capacity of the lower classes (oppressed groups). It is a relationship in which the African world-view is assaulted and surrendered at all the necessary points in order to integrate it with a European world-view. The relational or dialogical content behind this fact is no less obvious in the productive aspirations of the colonised as it is in those of the coloniser. Each group seeks to possess something of the other, and the oppressed group seeks to reclaim the self-sufficiency it once possessed. Post-independence Zimbabwe aspires to help close the gap between rich and poor, not by repudiating the rich, but by enhancing the capacity of the peasant poor to compete in the market context.

The point of resistance and surrender concerning us here is the place where the self-sufficient production of agricultural systems matters. The phenomenon became the bone of contention over which Africans and settlers fought a bitter war in Zimbabwe. The struggle establishes the context in which the conflict between imported and indigenous info-techno systems becomes meaningful. We have outlined in this literature review some of the key points revealing what we already know about the peasant economy concerning its status and future development. And we have identified

areas in need of further investigation which our study hopes to pursue.

We dealt first with the question of extension or communication. Recognising the extension process as a fundamentally educative one, it became necessary to inquire into the epistemological foundations of the extension concept. This inevitably led to an analysis of extension activities and to an assessment of how well they serve or how badly they fail peasant needs. We explained that even in the post-independence era, there is a tendency for EWs to exhibit a class bias in the assumptions they make about who are fit recipients of info-techno agricultural transfer and who are not.

We thereby determined the necessity of examining the relationship between peasants and EWs more closely, and from a communicational perspective. We believe such a study will reveal how the extension concept and activity is grounded in linguistic fields that comprise the contextual domain of meaning in which certain ideas and practices have pragmatic relevance to recurrent agricultural problems. We hypothesised that the class distance between peasants and upwardly mobile EWs may very well have a negative impact on peasant farming systems, especially to the extent that peasant experience is not adequately taken into account and peasant input is largely excluded from the decision-making process.

Next, we discussed the social construction of class and gender in the CAs. In this part of our discussion, we dealt with the feminisation of poverty, explaining that this is related mainly to the out-migration of agricultural labour into free, waged labour markets. We also cited the rising percentage of female heads of household who are saddled with most of the work and many of the agricultural decisions, but who lack any substantive control over agricultural profits earned from cash crops. Furthermore, we postulated that the extent of poverty in the CAs is driving unmarried mothers to the cities. This contrasts sharply with past experience when women only migrated as wives of men working in the cities. We explained that this flight from the CAs was taking place because women were finding it hard to feed themselves and because urban life offered promises of work that simply does not exist for the masses of unskilled workers. Even school-leavers with 5 O-levels now find it difficult get employment. So, the chances of peasant women with children and little or no formal education doing well in urban areas is considerably reduced at the same time that their potential for self-sufficient food production is severely undermined in the CAs.

Next, in order to better understand extension, we examined the process of peasantisation as it occurred in Zimbabwe. We explained that the African peasantry was formed in response to changing conditions that were due mainly to the rise of a settler economy. The suppression of that independent and productive peasantry is noted and the hypothesis is proposed that the post of extension worker has its roots in the colonial demonstrators who served the class interests of settler farmers and opposed those of the peasants. Finally, we argued that settlers took measures to ensure a dependent peasant class, as they were the designated labour force who would fuel the industrialisation of Zimbabwe.

We looked at how extension functions in the context of post-independence agrarian reforms. Touching first on the dilemma of whether to pursue equity or institutional viability, we attributed this problem mainly to the unevenness of rural social formation in which LSCF farmers seem to outstrip peasants by far. We attributed this unevenness mainly to land settlement patterns and to what, in our opinion, is an EW preference for developing the commercial sector or promoting the commercial model even when other

models may be more appropriate for agro-ecological conditions in the CAs.

We examined the role of extension and the formation of peasant capital. While farmer groups were found to play a big role, we also learned that they mostly benefit those farmers who are better off. This raised the issue concerning the diversity of peasant households and the policy implications of this diversity. Peasants make an effort to counteract the divisive propensity of this diversity by forming farmer groups mainly to enhance their resource utilisation, even though they cite savings as their primary purpose.

The upshot of this discussion was the hypothesis that peasants who organise farmer groups are more likely to gain access to EWs and the info-techno inputs for which EWs act as gatekeepers. The control that EWs have over peasant investment and consumption is attributable to peasant poverty which is only exacerbated by the possibility that EWs shun peasant household food production in favour of cash crops. The dislocation of waged agricultural workers and their reabsorption into the CAs makes knowledge of income and investment structures even more crucial to understanding how the decisions of peasant households impact on their development.

Lastly, we argue that the peasant potential for income generation can be developed by the injection of capital in the form of money and irrigation infrastructure. Yet, we questioned whether more income would solve the problem of food security for peasant households. We asked if we were wrong to assume that income will translate into food and that communal food production required the same info-techno inputs as commercial farming. If greater monetary expenditures are required then we call for an examination of the role played in loan recommendations by EWs, who, we hypothesise, are more likely to recommend LSCF farmers.

Acknowledging the critical status of the AFC default rate, we argue these defaults may be mitigated if loans were made to groups rather than to individuals since groups tend to bear the burden of repayment better. We noted that projected demands for food crops and export cash crops suggest a re-organisation of arable land use to accommodate a new cropping pattern that will shift some aspects of production to the peasant sector. We also hypothesise that the weight shifted to peasants is most likely to fall on the shoulders of women who are required to grow both food and cash crops as opposed to men who devote more time to cash crops. Improving the ratio of EWs to peasants from the present 1:850 was suggested as one possible solution.