

Post Independence Land Reform In Zimbabwe

CONTROVERSIES AND IMPACT ON THE ECONOMY

Medicine Masiwa

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POST-INDEPENDENCE LAND REFORM IN ZIMBABWE:

Controversies and Impact on the Economy

Edited by

Medicine Masiwa

Published by Friedrich Ebert Stiftung and Institute of Development Studies,
University of Zimbabwe, Harare, 2004

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Development Studies, University of Zimbabwe

© Contribution: the author

Cover design: Danes Design, Harare

Printed by: G. M & S. Printers, Harare

ISBN: 0-7974-2786-4

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Chapter Three

The Impact of Land Redistribution on Commercial Farm Workers

Godfrey Magaramombe

Historical background

The position of farm worker communities in Zimbabwe vis-à-vis the land reform process can be best understood from a historical perspective. Zimbabwe's colonisation in the 1890s created the conditions that still influence the pattern of income and wealth distribution in the country. A settler minority took control of the country's resources of wealth, in particular land and the associated mineral resources but also access to income generation and wealth, especially through education. The creation of native reserves in 1898 gave birth to the dual agrarian structures that have been in existence for the first twenty years of independence and remained a major source of poverty and inequitable income and wealth distribution. The Land Apportionment Act of 1930, which divided the country into white land and native land, further consolidated this process.

The acquisition of large-scale commercial farms was a central component of the colonisation process with only European settler farmers having access to the most fertile land. Large scale commercial farming came to dominate the economy of the country, as among other things it was economically and politically privileged in its relationship with the state.

The recruitment of African farm workers and their working conditions were largely determined by that colonial paradigm. The legacy of that paradigm is that commercial farm workers, although the largest proportion of Zimbabwe's proletariat, form one of its poor segments which has no access to land and housing rights. The present and future of farm workers has therefore been indissolubly bound up with how the land question is resolved. (Sachikonye and Zishiri 1999) The number of large-scale white and corporate-owned large-scale farms increased from 545 in 1904 to a peak of 6 255 in the mid-1950s, declining to 4 500 in 1990 (UNDP, PRF and IDS, 1998). The large scale commercial farms until 2000 contributed as much as 17% of the GDP and employed 322 000 full time workers who together with their

families made up of between 1.5 million people to 2 million people. (CSO, 1997: FEWS/ FCTZ, 1999)

The central issue in Zimbabwe is the resolution of the land question. At independence the land question had three major components: unequal and inequitable land distribution; insecurity of tenure, and unsustainable and sub optimal land use. (Zimbabwe Government, 1998)

The dramatic manifestation of the skewed distribution of land was the ownership of 15.5 million hectares by 6000 white farmers of the best land in the country while 7 million people were crowded into infertile, dry and arid communal areas. It is therefore not surprising that at independence Governments' priority was to deal with the issue of land redistribution. However Governments' capacity to undertake land redistribution was limited by the provisions of the Lancaster House Constitution, which provided for the willing seller, willing buyer principle for the first ten years of independence.

The impact of post independent land reforms on the farm worker community can therefore be assessed in terms of how government has sought to address the three components of the land question: and how this has in turn impacted on policies that govern the working and living conditions of farm workers. These include labour policies at the national level, and industrial relations practices at the farm level: as well as policies covering the provision of health, education and other social welfare provisions to the farm worker community, and last but not least land rights for the farm worker communities.

Impact of land reform on labour policy 1980 - 2000

Pre independence industrial relations within the commercial farming sector were governed by the Master and Servants Act of 1901. This Act institutionalised the paternalistic relationship between the master and the servant. The Act had no provision for collective bargaining or wage setting, which was left in the hands of the farmer. (Kanyenze, 2001) A relationship which Rutherford has described as domestic government¹. Although this Act was repealed in 1978, it continued to influence industrial relations practices in the commercial farming sector into much of the post independence era.

During the first and second phases of the land reform programme government pursued a narrowly defined land reform programme which focused solely on the

¹ In his Ph.D. thesis Traditions of Domesticity in "Modern" Zimbabwe Politics; Race Gender and Class in the Government of Commercial Farm Workers in Hurungwe District. McGill University 1996, Blair A Rutherford argues that the access, of commercial farm workers in Zimbabwe to resources such as wages and land has been strongly influenced by the spatial inscriptions of modernity in state administrative practices that emerged along with international concerns of, development, in the 1940s. Marginalised by the dominant narratives of modernisation within colonial development policies that focused on, African peasants, and, urban African workers, farm workers were officially viewed less as a Government responsibility and more as a domestic responsibility of white farmers. "domestic" in the double sense of officially promoting the "private" over "public" domain and administratively valuing proper paternalistic family and family like relations between male workers and their families and between farmers and their workers".

redistribution aspect for the land less and poor in communal areas and did not adequately address fundamental issues of land tenure and land use regulation. The land policy therefore influenced and impacted negatively on labour policy as it applied to farm workers. Many authors have noted that the disadvantages faced by farm workers in their living and working conditions, and with respect to their political and social rights, derived from their lack of land rights in Zimbabwe. (Loewenson, 1992: Amanor-Wilks 1995, Sachikonye and Zishiri 1999, Moyo et al 2000: Schou, 2000).

The absence of tenure security meant that the right to residency on a farm was tied to the employment status of the individual. Loss of employment would automatically mean loss of right to reside on the farm. This led to greater insecurity for farm workers which translated into poor living and working conditions with labour being paid barely enough to reproduce itself; with most farm workers having to put up with conditions that were totally unacceptable. Commenting on the totality of employer control over the workers, Clarke notes that the dual position occupied by the farmer, that of being sole employer of the workers family and landlord of the worker - tenant imposed additional constraints on the employee from making legitimate demands on the employer. (Clarke, 1977)

Although independence brought about a number of positive changes to the farm worker community, these did not go far enough in addressing the unequal relationship between the farmer and the farm worker. Political freedoms, the right to join a trade union, the introduction of workers committees, the introduction of a grievance procedure and arbitration system were all positive developments. However given that commercial farms were considered as private property farm workers remained at the margins of official attention. The tenure regime and land use patterns acted akin to what Marxist analysts have described as the superstructure (religion, law custom etc) that girds the capitalist system) by locking farm worker communities into a vicious circle of poverty.

In Kanyenze's discussion of Zimbabwe's labour relations' policies with regards to farm workers on individual farming units, he notes the difficulties encountered in organising farm labour.² These range from the geographical distances involved, the open hostility of farmers to trade unionists (especially during the early years of independence) a weak membership base and the problem of free riders; governments ambivalent attitude towards strong trade unions and labour relations policies that undermined the authority of trade unions.³ (Kanyenze 2001)

A number of authors note that post independence efforts to democratise the work place were bound to fail in the commercial agriculture sector, in the absence of measures designed to secure tenure rights for farm workers. (Kanyenze, 2001: Lowenson, 1992: Amanor -Wilks, 1995). Although the introduction of workers committees did achieve some limited success in dealing with some problems

² In fact this is a common problem through out Southern Africa most trade unions tend to be more effective in organizing workers involved in agro processing industries such as the pack house or workers on large plantations than general labourers on individual farming units

³ The introduction of workers committees weakened the trade union structures as these were not part of the union structures and theoretically can negotiate with management on behalf of labour at that particular establishment.

affecting workers. These gains tended to be limited as members of workers committees were easily victimised by employers resulting in reluctance among workers to be elected workers representatives. (Riddle, 1981; Kanyenze, 2001: Amanor Wilks, 1995)

Workers committees were viewed as a direct challenge to the authority of the white farmer. Farmers saw this as an assault on the whole philosophy of domestic government as a management tool. In a sense workers committees can therefore be viewed as an attempt to tinker with the system without addressing the underlying structural problem. Kanyenze concludes that although the inclusion of farm workers under the Labour Relations Act (1985) provided useful institutions for regulating working conditions. The dispute and grievance handling procedures and structures were ill suited to dealing with industrial relations in the commercial agricultural sector.

The centralised institutional set up and legalistic procedures were not user friendly in the case of farm workers who had little education⁴. The system suited the farmers and management, who could easily hire professionals to represent them. Employers would appeal even in cases where they had little hope of winning simply to frustrate workers. In addition as the dispute and grievance system was dependent on the workers reporting cases. In the case of a worker who lives on "private property" many kilometres away from administrative centres which is poorly serviced by public transport and works five and half days a week it is particularly difficult for the worker to find time to visit the Ministry of Labour. (Kanyenze, 2001)

The gradual shift by the land reform programme from its redistribution goal towards promoting the land demands of various categories of indigenous elite's further weakened the position of farm workers. In particular the entrance by senior government and party officials into commercial agriculture reinforced the concept of domestic governance.⁵

The absence of machinery to implement employment regulations in the agricultural industry during the first decade of independence also disadvantaged farm workers. Until 1992, the agriculture sector was regulated by an Employment Board, which tended to focus exclusively on wage issues. The board was controlled and chaired by government. Although the National Employment Council of the agricultural industry was established in 1992, the employment council continued to reflect the hegemony of the farmers in its dealings. The deregulation of industrial relations management during the Economic Structural Adjustment period of 1990- 1997 without corresponding efforts to tackle the issues of tenure security and land use in the commercial farming areas, put the workers under the mercy of their employers. (Kanyenze, 2001)

By failing to address the question of land use in commercial farming areas, government inadvertently continued to marginalise commercial farm workers. The

⁴ It has been noted that despite Zimbabwe's impressive achievements in terms of literacy, LSCF have lagged behind in terms of adult literacy.

⁵ A number of government ministers and senior army officers and civil servants owned more than one farm. Kanyenze cites the case of a minister who would patrol his farm armed with an AK assault rifle to intimidate farm workers.

size of commercial farms was seen as sacrosanct and a myriad of laws were in place which made it virtually impossible to subdivide the farms. It can therefore be argued that by failing to secure tenure rights for farm workers the reforms instituted since independence perpetuated the dependency of the farm worker on the farmer.

Impact of land reforms on access to social services and participation in local governance by farm worker communities 1980- 1997.

Participation in local governance by farm worker communities 1980- 1997.

Although farm workers could participate in national elections from 1980, they lacked a voice in local government until the late 1990's. This was because of the dichotomous institutional structure of local government, which was based on land use patterns during the first decade of independence. This meant that rural areas of Zimbabwe were administered by either rural councils or district councils. The dual structure was inherited from the colonial regime, with district councils succeeding the native councils in the communal areas; and rural councils administering the large-scale commercial farming areas. The major difference was that district council areas were run by councillors elected on the basis of universal adult franchise, and had sub-district structures such as ward development committees and village development committees⁶.

In contrast in the rural council areas, only ratepayers, property owners and their spouses had voting privileges. Ward boundaries in rural areas were based on the number of properties in the area. Similarly the property rights were used in the election of councillors. A person (farmer) with five properties would be allocated five votes and his spouse could be allocated one vote on the basis of being married to a voter. Corporate bodies were allowed to nominate representatives who would vote on their behalf. Farm worker communities were thus disenfranchised as they were neither property owners nor leased any property. (Schou, 2000)

These local authorities assumed responsibility for delivering social services to areas under their jurisdiction.

Although Rural Councils had responsibility over infrastructure development and maintenance, planning and health, in practice most of their energy and money went into road maintenance. Sector ministries such as those of Health and Education only provided facilities on request by the local authority. The Rural District councils Act of 1988, maintained the status quo of the wards in the commercial farming areas save that one councillor would now represent the whole ward. When the Act became operational in 1994, RDC's recommended that the existing wards in commercial farming areas be taken as they were.

The amalgamation of the two councils into Rural District Councils in 1994 did not bring about meaningful changes in farm workers representation as they were still disenfranchised⁷. As a result farm workers were deprived of a voice to influence the provision of social services in the commercial farming wards. Voting rights in local

⁶ At least the only qualification for participation was for one to have attained the age of majority. Although there was some token representation by people nominated by the Minister of Local Government. In the majority of cases these were not from the farm worker community.

government elections were only extended to farm workers in 1997. Although farm workers participated in local government elections for the first time in 1998, very few farm workers exercised their right to vote and none of the councillors were from the commercial farm worker communities. The absence of a civic education campaign aimed at the farm worker community to accompany the extension of voting rights largely explains the low levels of participation.

Health and educational services

Farm worker communities have been characterised by marginalisation and exclusion from official development agendas both before and after independence. Neglected by both farmers and government, who saw the social welfare of farm workers as the other's responsibility, farm worker communities manifest some of the worst health, education, nutrition, housing and sanitation statistics in the country.⁸ For example the Sentinel Survey for Social Dimensions of Adjustment (1995), showed that only 59% of children on farms attend primary school and less than one percent of these sit for grade seven examinations. In comparison to rural and urban areas attendance rates were calculated at 79% and 89% respectively.

There are three main reasons that explain the under provision of social amenities for the farm worker community. Firstly commercial farms are run as a business entity. Therefore profit considerations have often outweighed the need to provide social amenities for farm workers. As one commentator noted in the mid 1980's;

"The farm village is a historic accretion representing a microcosm of the development of wage labour in Rhodesia / Zimbabwe. with the struggle to accumulate a productive infrastructure on farms the material conditions of labour were often the last considerations, especially where the rate of turn over was rapid and the proportion of external migrants high. The ticket system, payment in kind and other more feudal attributes have only been recently jettisoned.The creator of more than bare self -aided residential accommodation -clinic, primary school communal meeting places - is generally newand very patchy". (Cross, 1986)

The quotation above sums up the position of farm workers with regards to social services provision before and after independence. The powerful commercial farmers lobby was quite successful in ensuring minimum interference by government in the operations of their farms. As a result government was reluctant to impose minimum standards on farms preferring "rhetoric" and not legislation as a way of persuading farmers to provide amenities for farm workers so as not to interfere with "productivity". (Rutherford, 1997)

In the 1980's government responded to the appalling health conditions on commercial farms by introducing the farm health worker scheme; with support from international NGO's such as the Save the Children (UK) and the Swedish International Development Agency. In the late 1990's a growing farm worker lobby led to the introduction of the farm worker welfare plan by the commercial farmers union. The plan sought to improve service provision for farm worker families in the areas of housing, water and sanitation, health and education.

⁸ Mclvor 2001

...ever the plan was largely dependent on external donors to finance its implementation. In the absence of legislation compelling farm owners to introduce minimum standards implementation of improvements remained at the discretion of the farmer. Government's position was that commercial farms were private property and what ever happened beyond the farm gate was the responsibility of the farmer. A vivid illustration of this is the Public Health Act, which literally stops at the farm gate.⁹ This places the responsibility for the provision of a public good on the whims of a private individual. (Lowenson, 1986: McIvor, 1995)

Secondly commercial farm workers have always lacked a political voice as noted above. During the first decade of independence, rural councils as distinct white run local authorities, had substantial autonomy from the rest of government and could at times be an obstacle in providing social services to Africans working on farms. (Herbst, 1990) In an analysis of the provision of health care services at the district level in the 1980's. Herbst notes that in provinces that were economically dominated by commercial agriculture such as the three Mashonaland provinces of East, West and Central rural councils often successfully resisted the introduction of the farm health worker scheme.¹⁰

Thirdly this was caused in part by the rigid regulation of the sub division of large-scale commercial farming area (LSCFA) and small-scale commercial farming area (SSCFA) farm holdings. The use of static criteria of large -scale farm viability and cumbersome bureaucratic procedures to obtain permission for subdivision. Restricted the release of LSCFA land on to the market and limited optimal land utilisation in the sector. (Zimbabwe Government, 1998) The difficulties presented by the rigid laws on subdivision led to a number of "progressive" farmers over the years to abandoned plans to build schools on their properties as the process of sub dividing land even for the provision of social services was too cumbersome and time consuming.

In addition the provision of educational and health facilities requires considerable amounts of investment in terms of infrastructure, equipment and staff. Such an investment is not easy to marshal on an individual basis. Donors and NGO's have been generally reluctant to invest resources on private property.

Access to land by farm worker communities 1980-1999

While the benefits of land reform in terms of a more equitable distribution of land and an easing on pressures on communal areas have been discussed at length, relatively little attention has been paid to the impact of land reform on those who have been working and living on the commercial farms. Farm workers live with pronounced insecurity about their future. By reason of their origin and biography most have little access to extended family, "safety nets" and have no claim to land in

⁹ The Public Health Act provides for minimum standards in urban, mining areas and even communal areas but only caters for the farm abattoir, pack house, butchery etc housing and sanitation for farm workers is at the discretion of the owner.

¹⁰ However by the end of the 1990's most rural district councils in the Mashonaland provinces and Manicaland had embraced the national farm health worker programme.

the communal areas.¹¹ They are extremely dependent upon their employers to satisfy their basic needs, to an extent unlike any other group of employees in Zimbabwe.

Yet farm workers should not be a captive community, dependent for all time on the idiosyncrasies and charity of the farm management. Employees age and retire, they develop different interests, their families are not necessarily bound and enfolded to agriculture labour. They should be encouraged to contribute and benefit from the improvement of their own immediate residential amenities. (Cross Sholto, 1987)

Farm workers were not considered as a relevant category in the land division during the colonial era. Most were of foreign origin and were viewed as completely tied to the white farmer and were thus ignored. During the immediate post independence period farm workers were not considered as a specific category in the resettlement programme, though they did fall into the broad category of "poor and landless" who were the main targets of the initial programme¹². (Kinsey, 1999; Moyo et al, 2000).

A number of farm workers resettled themselves on abandoned farms and State land in different parts of the country, and were officially recognised as resettlement farmer's *ex- post*. However, again in the mid-1980's as the land policy shifted towards more "efficient" and "productive" farmers resulted in a negative official policy towards farm workers, who became characterised as foreigners, as unproductive and *persona non grata* on resettlement farms. (Moyo, 1995; Rutherford, 1997)

Although at independence government had acknowledged the need to address the problems of the farm worker community and that these would need special attention; for insistence the 1980 election manifesto of the Zimbabwe African National Union (Patriotic Front) (ZANU PF) singled out commercial farm workers as a group in need. However after independence government prioritised development in communal areas, were the majority of its constituency lived with the expectation that commercial farmers would be responsible for developments in LSCFA.

A widely held view within government and the donor community was that commercial farming areas were islands of prosperity in a sea of rural poverty. However this relative wealth tended to mask the deprivations and inequalities faced by commercial farm worker households.

Government over the years set up a number of commission's which among other things looked at the position of farm workers. (Riddle Commission 1981, Rukuni Commission 1994: Utete Committee, 2003) One of the major recommendations to come out of these commissions was the need to provide security of tenure for farm workers through the creation of Amenities Centres / Service Hamlets or Common Border Villages. However none of the recommendations have been implemented. A number of reasons were advanced as to why such a strategy would not work. Most of them tended to focus on the perceived "costs" of such an undertaking to the

¹¹ Research carried out by Famine Early Warning Systems, Farm Community Trust of Zimbabwe and the Agriculture Labour Bureau in 1998 indicated that only 40% of permanent (male) farm workers maintain a rural home.

¹² According to Moyo only 3000 farm workers were officially resettled during the first phase of resettlement.

farmer while ignoring the costs to the farm worker associated with continued stay on farms under the current arrangements. In addition governments ability to provide administrative support to these areas was questioned.

Perhaps not surprisingly in light of the above, governments' policy with regards to farm workers did consider the issue of tenure security for farm workers until the late 1990's. It was assumed that the main concerns of farm workers were better working conditions and wages. In addition it was assumed by some that the majority of farm workers were "aliens" and could therefore be returned to their countries of origin at any time. While it is true that working conditions and wages need to be improved, the question of tenure security is the key in addressing the living and working conditions of farm workers. (Moyo et al, 2000: Sachikonye & Zishiri, 1999)

It was only in the 1990s when government was reformulating the land policy, that due to the advocacy efforts by the farm workers union, NGO's and academics, that farm workers came to be accepted as a category to be resettled.¹³ This resulted in the incorporation in the draft Land Policy Document of 1999, issues of land rights by farm workers, both in terms of residential rights and rights to resettlement under the land reform programme. (Moyo et al 2000).

Although some farm workers had access to small pieces of land to grow food, this was at the farmer's discretion. Determinant factors on the size of the pieces of land were the total size of the farm and the number of farm workers. Not all farmers provided such land, nor was it a legal obligation. This was an ad hoc arrangement between the farmer and his work force (Sachikonye & Zishiri, 1999). A survey carried out by the FCTZ, FEWS and the ALB revealed that 20% of farm workers had access to 0.3 hectares of arable land. (FCTZ/ FEWS/ ALB, 1999)

Farm workers have also expressed a desire for security of tenure. Delegates to an international conference on farm workers in 1996 pressed for a Southern African Charter on Land Labour and Food Security, which called for;

" independent ownership of housing security of tenure and an end of the threat of evictions for farm workers, and for independent access to productive land and other resources enabling farm workers to exercise the option of healthy and happy existence, independent of commercial land owners" (Cantilevers, 1997)

A number of surveys revealed that the majority of farm workers preferred to be resettled In a survey carried out by the Ministry of Labour in 1997, more than 53% of the surveyed farm workers preferred resettlement. The survey carried out by GAPWUZ around the same time revealed that 63% of respondents preferred resettlement.

The National Land Policy Document acknowledged that enforced segregation of farm workers denied them normal intercourse and restricted them from employment and other social and economic opportunities and recommended the establishment of new rural settlements in the LSCFA as a priority. (Zimbabwe Government, 1998)

¹³ In fact in reviewing recommendations of the Rukuni Commission cabinet had suggested that an Amenities Centers be identified, where proper housing, schools and recreation facilities are developed for the benefit of farm workers.

From an economic and social point of view, farm workers would enjoy immense benefits from securing tenure to land. Crop production would supplement their earnings as well as augment their food security. They would draw upon their present farming skills to produce for their own needs. Access to land would enhance the autonomy and sense of self-reliance on the part of farm workers. (Sachikonye & Zishiri, 1999)

Fast track land reform and resettlement programme (FTLRRP)

Although government had acknowledgement of the need for incorporating farm workers in the land reform and resettlement programme in both the draft land policy document and the inception phase framework plan (Phase II) of 1998. With the inception phase framework plan, providing room for complementary approaches, including the idea of residential settlements for farm workers.

However, events that took place since the referendum of 2000 rendered all the above irrelevant. After government's defeat in the February 2000 referendum a wave of farm invasions gripped the country. This further strained the relationship between government and the commercial farmers and international donor community, whom government had hoped would finance the reform programme.

This was subsequently followed by the introduction of the "fast-track" resettlement model. In the fast track programme, farm workers were no longer seen as a specific category to be considered for resettlement, but were viewed with suspicion if not outright hostility. Government believed that the economically powerful commercial farmers had mobilised financial resources and the farm workers, to vote against their proposals in the referendum which had resulted in its defeat. Farmers and farm workers were therefore viewed as the enemy, as anti land reform and were subjected to a lot of physical and verbal violence. This had the net effect of negating all the gains that groups engaged in farm worker advocacy had made, in terms of farm worker rights to land.

Although senior government officials claim that it is not government policy to displace farm workers, and that these would be considered on all fast tracked farms (either for resettlement on that farm or another property) the reality on the ground tends to contradict this.

There seems to be a resurgence of the perception that the majority of farm workers are aliens, who have no rights in Zimbabwe other than those, bestowed by their employers. This argument has been used by politicians and the media since the late 1980s to disqualify farm workers from securing land rights in resettlement schemes or even communal areas, this occurred as a new land policy was emerging that emphasised efficient, productive and skilled settlers. This has even been used to explain the "failure" of resettlement policy in terms of farm productivity, by early resettlement schemes of the 1980s. (Moyo et al 2000)

Farm workers and foreigners in general have been blamed for the alleged failure of the resettlement policies of the 1980s. Even though numerous studies have shown

that resettlement, including in those settlements with so-called foreign farm workers has had positive results (Moyo 1995; Kinsey 1999).

Socio economic impact of the FTLRRP on farm worker communities

Displacement

The slow pace at which land was acquired for the land reform programmes during the first and second phase of the resettlement programme from the 1980's to the late 1990's led to a minimum disruption of farm worker household's livelihoods and food security. In most cases the affected farm worker households were often absorbed within the commercial farming sector.

Although some research reports pointed to a rise in the number of people moving into informal settlements from commercial farms and mining areas in Mashonaland West province in the 1990's. (Zishiri, 1998) The level of farm workers suffering dislocation had been very low, in that even those who had moved into informal settlements found some albeit limited employment opportunities for casual / piece work within the commercial farming sector.

No major shocks were therefore experienced by a sizeable number of the farm worker community. While it is true that a number of farm workers were abandoned by their employers and did not receive any retrenchment packages this in no way matched the magnitude of the shock caused by the fast track programme.

The introduction of the fast track land reform programme worsened the situation for a large proportion of farm workers, as the closure of the farms upon which they worked resulted in a total loss of livelihoods and sometimes of their homes.

Initial assessments of the impact of the fast track land reform in Zimbabwe pointed to the fact that the programme, was likely to trigger a large displacement of farm workers (Zimbizi, 2000). This perception was based on the fact that the government policy did not appropriately address the issue of farm worker resettlement or and or compensation for those farm workers who are likely to be displaced by the land reform programme. However this did not materialise with about 70% of ex farm workers still resident within the former large-scale commercial farming areas. (FCTZ, 2003; Utete, 2003) Although these have not been physically displaced they are nevertheless faced with two major problems. Firstly they are economically "stuck" their livelihood options are particularly limited having been highly reliant on the commercial farms on which they worked, many have no rights or access to land, and there are limited alternative employment opportunities available them. (OCHA, 2002)

Secondly the farm workers right to residency is closely linked to their employment status. The implementation framework of the fast track programme lacks clarity, in terms of what happens to ex- farm workers on resettled farms, this leaves them at the mercy of the new settlers. This has lead to diminished access by ex farm workers to resources and services such as housing, water and sanitation, schooling and health facilities. (Sachikonye, 2003)

While some former farm workers have been resettled under the land reform programme, these constitute only 2% (3216 households) of the total resettled households. This is an insignificant number when compared to that of the retrenched farm workers as it is only 0.9% of the former farm worker population.

Table 1: Land Allocation Patterns Per Province

Province	Ordinary		Total	Farm Workers		Total	Farm Workers as % of Total
	A1	A2		A1	A2		
Manicaland	11 019	463	11 482	1080		1080	9.4%
Mashonaland Central	14 756	1 684	16 440	476	7	483	2.9%
Mashonaland East	16 702	1 646	18 348	236		236	1.2%
Mashonaland West	27 052	2003	29 055	450		450	1.5%
Masvingo	22 670	773	23 443	128		128	0.5%
Matebeleland North	9 901	191	10 092	225		225	2.2%
Matebeleland South	8 923	271	9 194	244		244	2.7%
Midlands	16 169	229	16 398	377		377	2%
Total	127 192	7 260	134 452	3216	7	3223	2.3%

Source Presidential Land Review Committee Report 2003

* Figures based on numbers provided by Ministry of Local Government and Public Works March 2002 Resettlement Data

Table 1 above indicates that only 3216 ex farm worker households were resettled under the programme these make up 2.3 % of the total resettled population.

Residential alternatives

Surveys carried out by a number of organisations reveal that the majority of farm workers have no where to go should they be displaced from the farms. (FCTZ, 2002: SC (UK) 2003: Zimbizi, 2000: Government of Zimbabwe, 2000: GAPWUZ, 1997) This lack of a feasible long-term plan explains the apparent farm worker resilience during the fast track programme.

Table 2 below gives an indication of farm workers preferences should they be moved from the farm they were working on. The majority of farm workers indicated that they would stay on the farms should these be taken over for resettlement.

Table 2: Percent Distribution of Past/Current and Proposed Destinations for Evicted Workers by Province

Province	Destination for evicted farm workers (%)					
	Communal	Other farms	Stay on farm	Resettlement	other	Total
Mash West	17.3	16.3	56.1	4.1	6.1	100
Mash East	46.1	17.3	34.6	0.0	1.9	100
Mash. Central	35.0	15.0	45.0	5.0	0.0	100
Manicaland	11.5	30.8	53.8	3.8	0.0	100
Total	26.9	18.1	48.6	3.2	3.2	100

Source FCTZ: Report Assessment of the Impact of Land Reform Programme on Commercial Farm Worker Livelihoods May 2002

Loss of employment

One of the major impacts of the FTLRRP on farm workers was the loss of employment. It is estimated that by August 2003 only 70 000 workers were still employed by the continuing commercial farmers. (CFU, 2003) Closely linked to this is the loss of permanent worker status. This has now largely been replaced by contract work arrangements. This is a reflection of the fluid situation on those commercial farms that are still operational; and the weak capacity of the model A 2 farmers to employ labour given their lack of financial resources and lower production capacity.

According to the National Employment Council of the Agriculture Industry (NECAIZ) most (white) commercial farmers have paid off their employees according to the provisions of statutory instrument SI 6 of 2002 and re-engaged them on a fixed contract basis, or as seasonal or casual workers¹⁴. Land reform has thus brought about a shift in the organisation of work, mainly towards more flexible hiring and firing and more *insecure* types of employment. (Sachikonye, 2003)

The loss of permanent and seasonal jobs arising from the FTLRRP resulted in farm workers no longer receiving a regular income. This is the most critical factor affecting their ability to sustain themselves. Some commentators have noted that although farm wages have generally been the lowest in the economy, they nevertheless made a difference between starvation and survival, between extreme poverty and access to basic things in life¹⁵ (Sachikonye, 2003)

The issue of minimum wages has been contentious since the introduction of the FTLRRP. The newly resettled farmers have accused the farm workers union the General Agriculture and Plantation Workers Union (GAPWUZ), of acting in collusion with the commercial farmers union labour arm the Agriculture Labour Bureau (ALB). To "sabotage" the "land reform programme" by agreeing to pay minimum wages which the majority of the new farmers can not afford. There are also reports

¹⁴ SI 6 of 2002 generally provides for the terminal benefits of workers at farm designation. However there have been accusations against the Zimbabwe Federation of Trade Unions of inciting workers to demand benefits under SI 6 even if the farm has not been designated.

¹⁵ According to the Poverty Assessment Study Survey 1997, the incomes of the farm workers enabled to escape becoming the poorest of the poor.

confirmed by the union and the National Employment Council of the Agricultural industry (NECAIZ) of intimidation of commercial farmers who are paying the minimum wage not to do so by the new settlers. They argue that by offering better terms and conditions they are denying the new farmers access to labour¹⁶.

Coping mechanisms

The coping mechanisms adopted by ex farm workers are part of a wider process of adjusting to a fluid, still evolving situation. However low levels of education make it difficult for farm workers to secure any other form of employment outside the farms.

Former LSCFA present limited opportunities for alternative sources of income generation to wage labour. Some of the strategies pursued by farm workers in that context included piecework, informal vending, gold panning, fishing and hunting and remittances in some provinces. (FCTZ, 2003: SC (UK), 2002) Piecework is by far the most common form of income generation. This is mainly at the peak of the agricultural season, especially at planting, weeding and harvesting. However, piecework jobs are neither secure nor as well paid as permanent jobs. No benefits, such as leave and medical support, go with this type of employment. (FCTZ, 2002: Utete, 2003).

FCTZ survey in 2002 of the impact of the FTLRRP on farm workers noted that piece-jobs contributed 52.7 % of coping strategies cited in all provinces. The survey also revealed that a significant number 33.3 % of ex farm workers were not engaged in any income generating activities. This ranges from 32.6% in Mashonaland East to 53.8% in Manicaland province¹⁷ Table 2 gives the provincial analysis of coping mechanisms of unemployed farm workers.

¹⁶ The Chambwino farm in Goromonzi district is a case in point where 200 farm workers were threatened with eviction from the farm village because they were refusing to work for the new settlers at the farm opting to work for a continuing white farmer a considerable distance away.

¹⁷ The Utete report also comments on the large number of ex farm workers who are still resident in the former LSCFA who are not productively engaged.

Table 3: Percent Distribution of: Source of Livelihoods for Unemployed Farm Workers

Province	Source of livelihood (%)					Total
	Piece-jobs	Gold Panning	Fishing	Nothing	Other	
Mash West	46.9	1.0	3.1	37.7	11.2	100
Mash East	55.9	0.0	1.9	32.6	9.6	100
Mash central	70.0	5.0	5.0	10.0	10.0	100
Manicaland	43.3	0.0	0.0	53.8	3.8	100
Total	52.7	1.4	2.7	33.3	9.8	100

Source FCTZ Baseline Survey of Impact of land Reform on commercial Farm Worker Livelihoods. 2002

Access to job opportunities also differ in terms of the model of resettlement that the farm would have been subjected to. With ex- farm workers on the model A1 resettlement schemes (villagised schemes) having more access to piece work opportunities than those who are under the model A2 resettlement scheme (commercial).

Vulnerable groups

The FTLRRP increased the vulnerability of certain social groups within the farm worker community. Although these groups — migrants, women, elderly, children and youth — already experienced certain disadvantages, the FTLRRP has exacerbated the situation. One of the principal factors behind their marginalisation is that they were not catered for under land reform. No special effort was made to address the needs of farm workers, as a whole, under land reform. The authorities took an ad hoc approach. (Sachikonye, 2003)

Migrant workers

The farm workers most vulnerable to FTLRRP have been considered as those farm workers who, although Zimbabwean by birth, are of foreign origin, and who thus do not have land rights in the communal areas, or access to traditional or local government leaders through whom they can be allocated land.

Their ties with ancestral homes in the neighbouring countries from which they or their grand-parents came have become very weak at best, and non-existent at worst. Yet most of the so-called migrant workers are actually second or third-generation Zimbabweans, who are descendants of the migrants who came into the country during the first half of the 20th century. Surveys conducted in the past five years indicate that 'migrant' farm workers now form a small percentage of the labour force (Zimbabwe Government, 1998, 2001; FCTZ, 2000; Sachikonye, 2003). This means that about 80,000 workers, who together with their families would make up a community of nearly half a million, are in limbo in the wake of land reform. (Sachikonye, 2003)

The position of Zimbabwean citizens who have one or both parents being of foreign origin is difficult. The Citizenship of Zimbabwe Amendment Act (no. 12, 2001) states that a Zimbabwean with a foreign citizenship had to renounce their foreign citizenship, in accordance with the law of the foreign country of which he/she held citizenship, by January 6, 2002 or lose his/her citizenship of Zimbabwe.

The Registrar –Generals office interpreted the Act to mean that all Zimbabweans with a potential right to a foreign citizenship must renounce the foreign “entitlement” they wished to remain Zimbabwean citizens. Since many farm workers have a foreign born father or grand father they are required to renounce their potential citizenship to the country of the parents birth. However the embassies of Malawi, Zambia and Mozambique have refused to assist them in renouncing their potential claim to citizenship. As a result many farm workers were rendered stateless by this Act.

Although the government of Zimbabwe has proposed amending the Citizenship Act to exempt persons of Southern African Development Community (SADC) parentage from compliance with the Act. Provided they were born in this country in this country the amendment is yet to be debated in Parliament.

Women

Women represent the majority of non-permanent workers; and they are rarely seen as workers in their own right (Amanor-Wilks, 1995). They account for less than 10 per cent of the permanent labour force in commercial farming. According to the Central Statistical Office (CSO), in 1999 the sector had 152,790 permanent male employees (90.3 per cent) and 16,460 permanent female employees (9.7 per cent) (CSO, 2000). Female employees were concentrated among casual workers: they constituted 55 per cent of casual labour. Female casual labour tends to be concentrated in the horticulture sector.

Women workers are often considered as part of a male-headed household and so their rights are often ignored. Also, women workers tend to be single. Nationally, women head one in three households. But their access to land for resettlement has been relatively limited, with one estimate being that they account for 18 % of the total number of people resettled by August 2003. (Utete, 2003) Given the structural bias against women in access to permanent employment, land and other economic opportunities, this puts women in a disadvantaged, vulnerable position.

The majority of women employees did not receive any packages on retrenchment, as they were casual workers. This could have an impact on the children, as the women are the main caregivers.

Orphans and other vulnerable children

The uncertainty and insecurity generated by land reform have created a difficult environment for young people and children in farm worker households. With limited education and skills, they have few, if any, opportunities for employment or self-employment. Such an environment is likely to lead to drinking, drug abuse, prostitution, crime and stress. (Sachikonye, 2003). Especially at risk population is the substantial orphan population that has been generated on most farms, as elsewhere in Zimbabwe, by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. It is variously estimated that there is anywhere from 900,000 to 1.2 million orphans in Zimbabwe. Extrapolating this national total to the farm worker and their dependent population, the orphan population resident on the LSCFA could be anywhere between 75,000 to 100,000 children. The Farm Orphan Support Trust (FOST) estimates that there were an average of 12 orphans per commercial farm in the three Mashonaland provinces and Manicaland. (Sachikonye, 2003)

FOST, together with other NGO's, has been supporting farm worker communities in coping with their orphan populations through financial and other assistance to foster parents. However, as farm workers' incomes shrink or disappear, their ability to foster orphans declines commensurately. Access to education is usually the first right to be lost by the orphans. Support to orphans is further curtailed by growing restrictions on access to farms by NGO's once settlers occupy farms. One consequence of this is that there is a significant increase in child-headed households that are living in acute poverty. Also, many elderly are now required to support their grandchildren at a time in life where they would normally enjoy support from their children. (Sachikonye, 2003)

Without continuing community support, older orphans are drifting to towns to add to the expanding street-children populations or young girls' drift into prostitution. There is also an increase in the incidence of child labour as employers seeking cheap labour are exploiting desperate orphans. (Sachikonye, 2003)

Elderly

The elderly and retired workers who normally remained on farms till they passed away are another vulnerable group. Traditionally there was no social safety net for this group, except perhaps a tiny pension, and access to housing and land on the formerly white-owned commercial farms. The elderly are more at risk of being evicted from the farm villages as they are not able to provide labour and do not have resources for long term resettlement opportunities. It is estimated that ex farm workers form the bulk of inmates at old age homes in the country.

Currently organisations that work specifically with the aged such as the department of Social Welfare have not been doing enough within the former LSCFA to assist this group.

It is inevitable that some farm workers would be retrenched and displaced by the land reform programme, especially older and infirm workers, if the resettlement programme had been carried out in a more orderly and systematic manner it would have resulted in more rural jobs being created.

There seems to have been an assumption that the fast track programme would create more jobs opportunities in particular under the model A2. However this has not materialised as most of the new farmers lack adequate resources to start farming on a large scale. The fast track land reform programme aims to create 52 000 new commercial farmers, given that the majority would have to rely on labour intensive methods. Farm worker communities in Zimbabwe will continue to play a critical role in the development of commercial agriculture.

Although land reform is one of the key instruments for addressing rural poverty, the post independence land reforms in Zimbabwe have proved wilfully inadequate in terms of providing for the farm worker community. If land reform aims to address the issues of inequality in access to economic and social opportunities and resources. Farm workers who are among the most impoverished and vulnerable groups in Zimbabwe should have been included in the programme.

Farm workers have often fallen victim to national politics and the interests of the economically powerful sections of society. As long as land reforms do not go beyond the redistribute aspect and begin to seriously tackle the other components of agrarian reform, the tenure system and land use regime farm workers will continue to fall between the cracks of governments development agendas.

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