

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

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Chapter Two

Socio-economic Conflicts of the Fast Track Resettlement Programme

Nelson Marongwe

Fast track resettlement has contributed immensely to the events leading to the current poor state of the economy. Business and investor confidence has been severely eroded since the adoption of fast track. Perceptions and interpretations on the rule of law concept and the non-observance of property rights are at the centre of the effects of fast-track resettlement on the state of the economy. For example, according to the Zimbabwe National Chamber of Commerce (ZNCC), "--- private property rights --- form one of the central pillars of private enterprise development and also ensure security of tenure of investment in the eyes of both domestic and foreign investors. Further to this, the internal and external concerns about the observance of the rule of law as evidenced by non-observance of some court judgements have also been largely attributed to the state of the economy". Agriculture has generally been one of the most badly affected sectors. Yet it is undisputed that agriculture is the mainstay of Zimbabwe's economy and all other sectors are strongly linked to agriculture. For instance, manufacturing absorbs about 60% of agricultural output and 20% of mining input (ZNCC 2002). The disruption of agricultural production translate into a decline by the manufacturing sector, with the ZNNC estimating that industrial capacity has deteriorated to below 1970 levels.

High inflation and declining sectoral growth of the economy that have hit the country over the past two or so years have their origin in the controversies created by fast track resettlement. According to the CSO, inflation rose from below 60% in the first half of the year 2001 to over 100% by December of that year. In the year 2002, inflation was pegged at close to 120% for the first half of the year whilst projections for the latter half of the year are that it will soar to over 120%. The Ministry of Finance and Economic Development has projected a decline in the economy by 11.1%, up from the original forecast of 5.3% (see table 1).

Table 1: Estimates on Performance of Major Sectors of the Economy.

Sector	New Estimates	Original Estimates
Agriculture	- 24.6%	-6.9%
Mining	- 4.1 %	+2.2%
Manufacturing	- 11.9 %	-7.0%
Electricity and water	- 4.7%	-4.7%
Construction	- 10.%	-5.0%
Distribution and Hotels	- 12.0%	-8.6%

Source: Ministry of Finance and Economic Development Documents 2001

Generally, land occupations and Fast Track resettlement have negatively affected the performance of many other sectors linked to agriculture. Violence on the farms and uncertainty over their future has forced large-scale farmers to cut on agricultural production whilst the incoming settlers are yet to make an impact given the limited amount of resources for settler support services provision. Seed sales for most crops were reported to have dropped, while some large-scale farmers have been reported to be de-stocking. Livestock thefts also increased in most parts of Zimbabwe. Increased mobility of people under Fast Track has contributed towards the escalation of stock-theft cases. Investor confidence has been severely under-mined by both farm occupations and fast track resettlement. Commercial farming, in particular, has become a risky business. As a result, the financial sector has allegedly reduced its support to the agricultural sector. Some analysts have noted that fast track resettlement has negatively affected the value of the land. The market for land has been destabilised and the use of land as collateral for raising more resources might soon vanish if the current trends continue. Such allegations are however yet to be confirmed by scientific research. The poor performance of the economy could have resulted in more pressure being exerted on natural resources as people struggled to earn a living whilst land occupations created some-kind of open access environment for particular forms of natural resources, especially wildlife resources.

Data from industry and commerce, though unsubstantiated by independent studies, have shown that farm occupations and fast track resettlement have negatively affected the performance of almost all-key sectors of the economy (see table 2). For example, according to the Zimbabwe National Chamber of Commerce June 2000 report, one of the hardest hit sectors was the manufacturing and distribution of agricultural equipment where an 85% decline in business was reported. On the extreme end, the tourism sector reported a 100% cancellation in bookings. Other sectors that were negatively affected included manufacturing and distribution of animal feeds, farm vehicle dealing, advertising, tea, coffee and spices manufacturers and many others. Generally, there has been an increase in retrenchments and work cutbacks, an event that obviously affected livelihoods of households. For example, the ZNCC reports that 400 companies in the manufacturing sector closed down in 2000, shading off over 10000 workers. However, given the fact that fast track resettlement is a reality (GOZ 2001, Marongwe 2002), a way needs to be found for turning the country's fortunes, including fast track resettlement, into a success story. The challenge is to provide a detailed analysis of what transpired under fast-track as a way of providing the basis for correcting some of the misdirected efforts and misconceptions that might have been created in the politically charged environment.

Positive interventions can still be made with the support of scientific research as a basis for providing an informed analysis that will make fast track work better for everybody.

The effect of fast-track resettlement on agricultural production varied by location and agricultural commodity/product. For example, fast track resulted in the increased illegal movement of cattle and destruction of veterinary fences while some farms were forced to de-stock following the gazetting of their farms. For horticultural production, some international carriers withdrew services to Zimbabwe thus affecting the freight capacity to horticultural producers and freight charges. For tourism, insecurity on farms resulted in cancellations of visits by tourists, game auctions and hunting expeditions while poaching and snaring of animals has escalated (CFU documents 2000).

The most unfortunate thing, which, like previous attempts at land reform has been omitted is the quantification of the land-uses affected in terms of hectareage lost in production by land use type. Thus it is not possible to break how the over six million hectares acquired under fast track was being used prior to their acquisition. It is therefore not possible to evaluate how much land was lost that was used, for example, for tobacco production, cattle ranching etc. Further, any gap-filling by the newly resettled farms is difficult to assess as official resettlement statistics do not capture that level of detail.

Table 2: General Decline in Business Linked to Commercial Farm Occupations

Sector	Link with Agricultural Sector	Decline in business as at June 2000*
1. Manufacturers and distributors of animal feeds	Manufactures and distributors of animal feeds to farmers	60%
2. Manufacturers & Distributors of agricultural equipment including general agencies	Manufactures and sells agriculture equipment like tractors, irrigation equipment etc.	85% (farmers no longer spending on capital goods)
3. Tea, coffee & spices manufacturers	Get ingredients from farms. Now importing tea from Malawi	50%
4. Manufacturers of clothing (for agriculture)	Sells safety clothing like overalls, helmet etc. to farmers	Decline but % not given
5. Information Technology	I.T for information, A/C etc.	30%
6. Tourism	Farm – tourism – hunting safaris etc.	Almost 100% cancellation in bookings
7. Retail	Sell hardware to farmers	40 – 87%
8. Wholesale	Distribute products to farm stores & beer halls	40%
9. Farm vehicle dealing	Trading in motor cars / cycles	Decline but % not given
10. Leasing and insurance	Leasing farm equipment	No leasing – no insurance – no new loans - % not given
11. Advertising	Advertising agricultural products & products for farming community	30 – 40 %

Source ZNCC, June 2000 report

*Decline in business as a percentage of normal business volume conducted during this period

Given the size of the land distributed under fast track, it is inevitable that commercial farm production will initially take a nose-dive. The challenge for the nation is to build the capacity of the newly settled farmers to levels that will exceed the gaps left by the large-scale commercial farmers both in quantitative and qualitative terms. What

Zimbabwe's land resettlement programme has failed to do in the past and continues to do so in the current environment is to prepare resettled farmers to produce in a diversified way. Thus, there are no programmes meant to support resettled farmers to engage in diversified forms of land-uses that include dairy production, horticultural production, wildlife and tourism related land-uses, commercial cattle ranching, etc (Moyo 2000) A few schemes meant to support tobacco production have in the past been initiated on isolated localities but have generally not been replicated widely country-wide.

The haphazard manner under which land was acquired and redistributed under fast track, meant that such technical and production considerations could not have seen light of the day. As already mentioned, even gap-filling by newly resettled farmers is hard to conceptualise as there is no inventory on firstly, what the large farmers were producing on their land and secondly, what the new farmers are doing on the land. Although there is contradictory evidence on whether past resettlement efforts have been a success or a failure, (Kinsey, 1999; Deininger et al 2000) researchers who support that land reform has been successful in enhancing agricultural production cite the massive investment made by the state in providing specialist inputs and provision of wide ranging infrastructure and other support services as the main reasons behind the success. Given the situation created by fast track where there has been no corresponding massive investment on infrastructure provision on the newly settled areas, it is hard to understand how the fast-tracked farmers are expected to perform. Research has shown that upon resettlement, agricultural production and the livelihoods of settlers declines for the first couple of years but picking-up in the later years (Kinsey 1999). By extension of this argument, it seems that there will be an extended duration for the decline period under fast track given that most settlers were placed on the land without support infrastructure. In this respect, it is important to recognise that the role of donors and support from other countries is critical in making fast-track resettlement work. Perhaps it is time everybody sees sense and serious discussions tabled on how the country can get back to its feet.

Settler Livelihoods and the State of Natural Resources

Fast track resettlement brought its own challenges to the environment. Wildlife and forest resources were perhaps put under severe pressure as a result of high numbers of people allocated land without any institutional framework for the management of natural resources in place. For instance, the emplacement of settlers entitles them to start utilising land and other natural resources on the land regardless of the unclear nature of the land rights they have over their newly acquired land. In the short term period, the

immediate needs of settlers in the form of shelter, food and fuel-wood define their livelihood-based demands on the natural resource.

Fuel-wood remains the chief source for meeting the energy demands of the rural population. The demand for land by the rural populations is made more pressing by

their energy demands for cooking and other sources of earning a livelihood such as brick-making. Thus the land question is intricately linked to the energy problem in the rural communities. From past experiences, deforestation resulting from the use of wood as the main source of fuel is one of the major causes of environmental degradation in the resettlement areas. Addressing the energy needs of farmers in the resettlement areas then emerges as a major pre-requisite for the sustainable management of bio-mass, in particular woodland resources. Thus another major challenge under fast track is to address the linkage between land reforms and the energy needs of resettled farmers. How the energy-based livelihoods of settlers can be managed in an environment characterised by unprocessed, if not unclear, land tenure rights is a key challenge presented by fast track.

Another major issue of concern that has been ignored by policy makers is the use of construction materials by resettled farmers. Newly resettled farmers have been left to build their houses, granaries, cattle pens etc. on their own, with little monitoring on the impacts of these activities on the environment. Most farmers in the resettlement areas rely on the use of pole and daga and or farm-burnt bricks as the chief source of construction material. The use of wood as a main source of construction material has been one of the major causes of deforestation in the resettlement areas. Uncontrolled brick making can also be a major cause of environmental degradation. The use of wood-fuel as the main source of energy for burning farm bricks results in increased deforestation. At this point in time, there is no supporting data that quantifies the effects of fast track resettlement on the state of natural resources. However, given the magnitude of land settled under fast track and based on very preliminary data, one cannot escape the conclusion that the effects of fast track on the environment could have been substantial.

Fast Track and Local Level Conflicts

Farm occupations and the subsequent fast track resettlement has contributed to the development of intense confrontation at the local level. Local struggles and local conflicts by their very nature have a tendency of retarding developmental efforts. A survey by ZERO-Regional Environment Organisation in the year 2000 showed agricultural production had largely been compromised by the farm occupations (see Box 1)

Box 1: Examples of Confrontation at the local level

In a case study in Mazowe district, a study by ZERO highlighted the following situations, which to a large extent obtained in other districts

- A large-scale farmer at Virginia farm was locking his gates and electrifying the fence to ensure that new settlers would not have access to the fields.

- A ZRP Mvurwi report showed that a farmer at Msonendi farm ploughed the fields of resettled people who had already planted their crops.

- There were numerous reports where war veterans forced complete or partial work stoppages at some of the farms, an example being Chirobi in Mazoe districts

Source: ZERO Field Survey 2001

The saddest part of fast track resettlement is that it has been strongly associated with politically instigated violence on the farms. Criminal behaviour that include murder and attempted murder, child abuse and rape cases, torture, public/political violence, burning of property etc have been prevalent on the farms. Physical conflict was perhaps the most visible form of confrontation and it is because of such mishaps that fast-track resettlement has largely been deplored nationally and internationally. On the other hand, psychological conflict and tension has been inflicted on both the white farmers and the new settlers. On the part of the large farmers, physical insecurity and uncertainty over their long-term investments on the land was perhaps a major source of psychological tension. On the other hand, a huge chunk of the settlers on the land are now being described as informally settled by the Government itself. For example, about 14 286 households have been described as informally settled on 156 farms that have an area of over 400 000 hectares. Although the government talks of "relocating" the families, (or is it "eviction"?), this also causes psychological discomfort on the part of the settlers who have spent close two years on the land. Work stoppages and loss of earnings by farm-workers have obviously brought intense suffering on this section of society (see also table 3).

Thus fast track resettlement introduced new dimensions to local level conflicts. For example, there were cases where settlers were being continuously moved from one farm to the other (various Press Reports) in Masvingo, some 103 households were considered illegally settled on Svosve Wildlife farm while a farm belonging to the Development Trust of Zimbabwe was also illegally settled. There was also confrontation between local level structures such as the District Land Identification Committee and the provincial and national level institutions like the Provincial Land Identification Committees. A case in point was that of Filabusi District in

Matabeleland South, where the District Land Identification committee was demanding the re-pegging of the A1 villages to A1 self-contained units. Another area for possible conflict has been the process of de-listing of farms. In some situations, there have been allegations of corruption and political victimisation in the listing and de-listing of farms earmarked for acquisition. Further, the relationship between farm-workers and settlers have in some situations been characterised by tension (FCTZ 2002). Such controversies and points of conflict have added a gloomy picture to how fast track resettlement is perceived by outsiders.

Farm occupations and fast track resettlement in the peri-urban and urban environs have placed urban localities in a dilemma. In most of the cases, settlement patterns created under fast track are in direct contradiction with land-use plans that guide development in respective urban areas. In some situations, permanent physical structures have already been put into place and yet do not meet the planning standards as defined by various statutes. Any attempt to regularise such developments is directly opposed to the practicalities of urban planning, urban development and urban management. Thus fast track has created conflict between settlers and urban managers. How such situations are to be resolved remains a mystery.

Available evidence suggests that a very small number of farm-workers affected by fast track constitute the beneficiaries of the process. For example, a 2002 survey by Farm Community Trust of Zimbabwe (FCTZ) on 216 farms in the three Mashonaland provinces and Manicaland revealed that a high percentage of permanent and seasonal workers lost employment under fast track, with the bulk of them still living on the farms. Historically, the development of illegal settlements on large-scale commercial farms including those owned by the state is strongly linked to landlessness and homelessness by farm workers. Whilst the actual numbers of farm-workers displaced remains unknown, several thousands could have been affected. This has medium and long term implications on the state of natural resources as most of them are likely to turn into "squatters" who have no land rights at all. The situation of farm-workers has all the potential of developing into a conflict between them and the new settlers whilst on the other hand any likely illegal settlements will be a major threat to the environment.

Table 3: Farms affected by work stoppage as at 23/11/2000

District	Partial work stoppage	Total work stoppage
Centenary	7	0
Victory Block	4	0
Mvurwi	5	0
Glendale	6	4
Mutepatepa	11	0
Mazowe	10	3
Shamva	7	11
Harare west	11	0
Totals	61	18

Source: Commercial Farmers' Union Documents 2000

Whilst fast track is associated with escalation of local level conflicts, there is no clear indication of how those conflicts have been or were being managed. For the betterment of the programme, conflict management is something that is essential if fast track is to improve its image.

Concluding Remarks

Any solution to the land crisis in Zimbabwe must possibly start with the direct acknowledgement that fast track is a reality. However, both the Government and the international world need also to make genuine gestures if a solution is to be found on the current crisis. At the national level, it will be helpful to everyone if government could convince the citizenry that fast track was not a partisan process. The stale-mate with the international world has meant that financial resources from the international world meant to support land reform have dried up whilst the government's institutional capacity to deliver support services has been out-stretched. One can therefore ask, can the Government afford to go it alone in implementation of the land reform programme. This is a challenge that the government needs to pay attention to if fast track is to be transformed into a success story in land reform. This also requires the Government to make certain concessions as a strategy of re-engaging the international world. For practical considerations, it is vital that a detailed audit of all the activities carried out under fast track be undertaken. Independent monitoring and evaluation of fast track is required as a basis for any meaningful intervention required to turn fast track into a success story. More scientific research is also required for a more objective analysis of the programme. As illustrated in various parts of this paper, there are many more questions that remain unanswered which is a clear illustration of the need for more research. At the policy level, fast track still needs to be sent to the "cleaners" as part and parcel of sprucing its image at home and abroad.

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