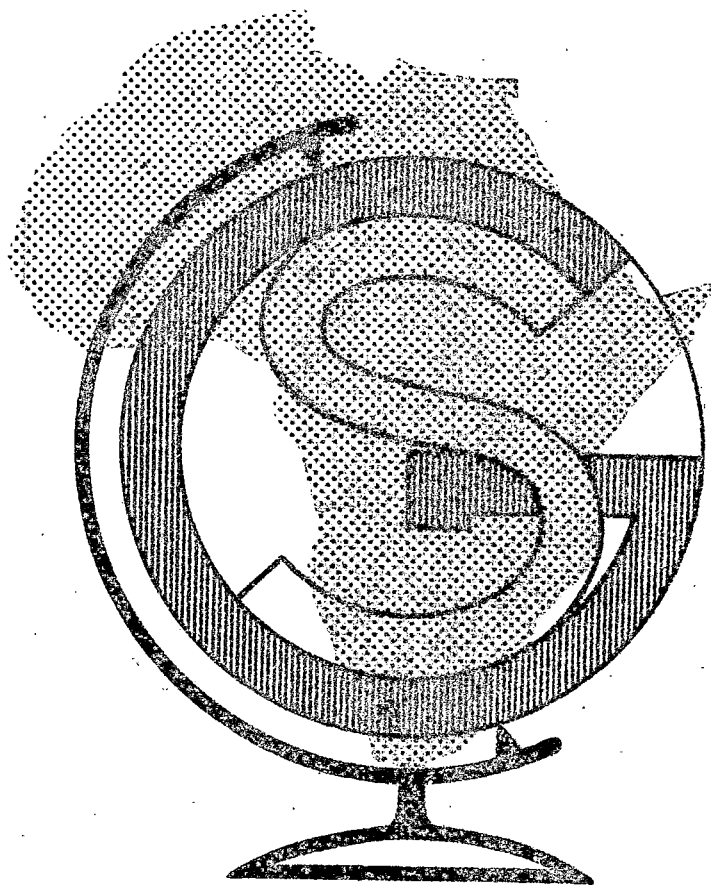


# THE GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY MAGAZINE



UNIVERSITY OF RHODESIA

1971/72



CONTENTS

	Page
Committee 1971-72	
Editorial	
Geography at the University of Rhodesia..... S.Madzokere	1.
Geography in an Age of "Love" .....	R.W.Tomlinson 6.
On Environmental Pollution and Biogeography.. K.W.Nyamapfene	9.
Fire: A Grassland Farming Factor .....	C.K.T.Vengesayi 14.
Some Problems of Irrigation Farming at the Nyanyadzi Irrigation Scheme .....	P.Mbiriri 16.
The Purchase Areas of Rhodesia .....	A.K.H.Weinrich 20.
Livestock Farming in the Economy of a part of the Sabi-North Tribal Trust Land .....	N.T.Gocha 25.
Labour Migrations and Rural Economies .....	O.Mvura 29.
Industry: Its Basis in Africa .....	E.S.Nhandara 32.
A Visit to Acucareira Sugar Plantation, Mfambice P.E.A.....	E.M.Munowenyu 35.

.....

Opinions expressed in this Magazine are the sole responsibility  
of the author.

## Editorial

This is the second issue of the Geographical Society Magazine, the first having been published at the beginning of 1971. The original aim of the Society was to publish at least two issues a year, but due to a disappointing response to the appeal for articles, this had not proved possible. However, we are glad that we have eventually managed to get the magazine into print, with some articles of a high standard. To quote the Editorial of the last issue, we hope that "in reading them you will find much that will enrich your store of geographical knowledge, and much that will challenge you into taking a keener interest in all that is around you - your micro-geography."

Compared with 1970, the Society did not have a particularly active year in 1971. A number of meetings and field trips had to be cancelled either through lack of support from the members or because of organisational difficulties. For instance, a trip to Malawi in the second term had to be cancelled because no suitable accommodation could be found. We found many of the meetings that were held during the year most enjoyable, but the attendance was at times disappointing. We therefore hope that the coming year will be a more active one for the Society, and that all the members will give their fullest support to the Society and the Committee.

Membership to the Geographical Society is not limited to students and staff of the Department of Geography. Members from other Faculties and Departments of the University are always welcome; we are confident that you will find something along your line of interests. And in case you did not know it, we sometimes give out free beer at our meetings, but we cannot tell you at which meetings. So the best way to avoid disappointment is by turning up at all meetings. Finally, your articles will always find a place in the Society's Magazine; you need not be a geographer to contribute to it. This is one of the numerous ways of sharing ideas for, after all, that is the purpose of a University. So, if you have anything to offer, please send it as soon as possible to:

The Editor,  
The Geographical Society,  
University of Rhodesia,  
P.O. Box MP. 167,  
Mount Pleasant.  
SALISBURY.

# THE PURCHASE AREAS IN RHODESIA

A.K.H.Weinrich

## 1) INTRODUCTION

Since their inception, purchase areas have been part of the Rhodesian government's policy to separate African from European farming areas. The first purchase areas were created in the early 1930's after the Land Apportionment Act had been passed. Up to that time Africans had been free to buy land outside tribal areas on the same conditions as Europeans. As some Africans made use of this right, some European farmers became concerned at the presence of African-owned farms in their neighbourhood and demanded separation. But other Europeans were motivated by the desire to assist a greater number of progressive African farmers to obtain freehold titles to farms large enough to enable the owners to reap a significant surplus. This was another reason for the establishment of the purchase areas.

In the Midland and Victoria provinces where rainfall varies between 20 and 30 inches a year, the average farm is about 200 acres in size. In lower rainfall areas farms are larger, in higher rainfall areas smaller. By 1968, 8410 African farmers owned, or were in the process of acquiring, 3,100,000 acres of farm land.

Purchase areas did not develop as fast as the legislators in 1930 had hoped. Today the great majority of farmers have an annual income of below £300. Though the Minister of Lands stated in 1968 that the bar to the advancement of purchase area farmers was not lack of good land but reluctance to make good use of it<sup>2</sup> the President of the African Farmers' Union stated that three-quarters of the purchase area farms were uneconomic.<sup>3</sup>

The two purchase areas of which I shall write in this article belong to the large majority of those whose farms bring in an income of below £300. A full account of these communities will shortly be published in a book entitled Old and New Peasant Communities in Karangaland, Rhodesia. In this book I referred to the two purchase areas as Guruuswa and Mutadza, and in this article I shall use the same fictional names.

## 2) THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF PURCHASE AREAS

My aim was to study two purchase areas which differ in productivity, yet possess the same ecological environment. Guruuswa and Mutadza lie at an altitude of 4,300 to 4,400 feet, have an annual mean temperature of 70 to 80 Fahrenheit and an average annual rainfall of 20 to 30 inches and have sandy loam soils. Moreover, they are inhabited by farmers who share a common tribal background. Almost all are Karanga who have a tradition of mixed farming and animal husbandry. Differences in agricultural output therefore cannot be ascribed to the environment and inherited customs. I set myself the task of finding out what factors account for the different productivity in these communities.

Both areas had been inhabited by tribal people before government declared them purchase areas. The people living there were evicted and the land was surveyed and divided into farms. Mutadza purchase area was opened in 1950 and Guruuswa in 1957. During these few years government policy towards purchase area farmers changed. In 1950 most men who showed a willingness to settle in a purchase area were allowed to take up a farm. Consequently many of the people who had formerly lived in Mutadza went back but few of them possessed a farming certificate. In 1967 only 18 out of 60 farm owners in Mutadza were

master farmers. Few of the new settlers brought money with them to invest in the land. By 1957, when the Guruswa purchase area was opened, all applicants had to possess a master farmer's certificate and have £300 in cash or kind. This new requirement resulted in a much more capable farming population settling in Guruswa.

An African who had been accepted as a prospective farm owner, has to lease a farm for two years during which time he must co-operate with the agricultural staff and prove his suitability as a farmer. If he satisfies his supervisors he can then enter an agreement of purchase and pay annual instalments towards the purchase price. Once he has paid the full price of his farm he can obtain his title deeds which are registered in a Deeds Registry. Until he has obtained his title deeds a farmer must follow good farming practices for if he proves grossly inefficient he can be evicted from his land. No farmer has so far been evicted from Guruswa purchase area for negligent farming, but in Mutadza six farm owners were evicted in 1967 for unsatisfactory farming practices. All of them had an agricultural income of less than £30 in the preceding season.

Purchase areas are administered by democratically elected committees of the African Farmers' Union. No chiefs of adjoining tribal trust lands have authority over farm owners. This gives purchase area farmers a greater degree of freedom and security than peasant cultivators in tribal trust lands, and farm owners are keen to preserve their local independence. In addition to their African Farmers' Union committees, purchase area farmers also have their own cooperative societies and some have also formed intensive conservation area committees. These various societies have fared differently in Mutadza and Guruswa.

In Guruswa farm owners elected the most successful farmers to serve on their African Farmers' Union committees. Of 16 committee members in 1966 six had harvested, in the preceding year, crops worth more than £400, four crops worth more than £300, four crops worth more than £200, and only two crops worth just below £200. In Mutadza, on the other hand, farm owners did not look for agricultural leadership in their committee members. Of eight members on their African Farmers' Union committee only one had reaped crops worth more than £300, two had an agricultural income of just over £200, one of over £100 and four had reaped crops well below £100. Two of these had harvested only £27 and £23 worth of crops and were evicted in 1967 for bad farming practices. Mutadza farmers stated that what they looked for in their leaders was not agricultural excellence but an ability to speak up for the community before government officials.

The cooperative society in Guruswa has flourished since its inception. By 1967 out of 144 farm owners, 107 had joined and most made full use of the loan facilities it offered. In Mutadza, however, only 19 out of 60 farm owners were members in 1967. Most had originally taken out loans for opening up their land, but then they defaulted in repaying their debts and in order not to have their loans deducted from their sales, they sold their crops through other channels. Hence cooperative farming plays a very minor role in Mutadza.

Guruswa farmers also formed an intensive conservation area committee. This move, however, did not meet with universal approval. In 1965 the purchase area split into two sections, each with its own African Farmers' Union committee. The eastern section started an intensive conservation area committee, the western section did not. Mutadza farmers never thought of forming such a committee.

In addition to these formal associations, many informal clubs exist in the two purchase areas. But these clubs differ greatly in character. Whereas in Guruuswa most clubs are based on agricultural interests, for example neighbouring farmers have organised themselves into competitive groups trying to surpass each other in agricultural production, in Mutadza most clubs are fund-raising associations and are generally linked with beer parties and feasting.

3) FAMILY STRUCTURE, LABOUR SUPPLY AND AGRICULTURAL INCOME IN THE PURCHASE AREAS.

Even a casual traveller through a purchase area is struck by the difference in community structure between tribal trust lands and purchase areas. Whereas peasant cultivators in tribal trust lands live in compact villages, purchase area farmers build their individual homesteads on their own farms. In Guruuswa most farm owners have built their homes on small hills overlooking their land. Out of the 144 farms 119 have planted fruit or gum trees around their huts and houses. Most of them cleared the land at the foot of these hills. Mutadza farmers planned their farms differently. Many cleared the fields in the vleis which required less labour for clearing than the well-wooded parts; they then built their homesteads near their fields. As a result many of their fields become water-logged and their yields are low.

In both purchase areas homesteads lie apart and most people have to walk for quarter of an hour if they want to visit their neighbours. This forces most farm owners to be self-reliant and few services can be exchanged, a practice so common in tribal trust lands and villages. Communal work parties are more difficult to organise in purchase areas and many families try hard to provide their own farm labour. Since the labour supply is often short, many farm owners try to overcome this shortage by marrying additional wives. In Guruuswa 37 percent of all farm owners are polygamists, and in Mutadza 43 percent. Some regularly employ hired labourers especially for herding cattle, so that their own children can attend school.

Labour shortage is made worse by the high average age of farm owners and the consequent emigration of adult children. In Guruuswa 24 percent of all farm owners are 60 years of age or older, and in Mutadza 32 percent. Their married sons are prohibited by government regulations to live on the farms for fear that the land be sub-divided. Many sons also leave of their own accord to make a living in town or to find a home for their families in the tribal trust lands from which their parents emigrated. Daughters too flee the purchase areas. Their fathers are very keen to marry them to their neighbours, but these girls who throughout their childhood have experienced the heavy work on the farms and who, moreover, have often received a fairly good education, are most reluctant to become junior wives to polygamists on the farms and generally succeed in marrying into a tribal trust land. In this endeavour they are often supported by their mothers.

As a result of these various pressures which induce young people to leave the farms, the average farm household has about ten members, including some three men, three women and four children, half of the latter being six years and younger.

The average farming family in Guruuswa cultivates some 23 acres and the average Mutadza family 17 acres. Though most farming families possess adequate farming implements, and all have enough ploughs and oxen, labour shortage often prevents them from cultivating their land as intensively as they did in the tribal areas before they moved to the farms. Those farmers whose farms border on a tribal trust land, generally find it easy to invite peasant cultivators for communal work

parties to help them on their land, but those whose farms lie further away from the tribal areas have greater difficulties. Moreover, the better farm owners are sceptical of communal work parties and prefer hiring labourers on a piece-work basis or for fixed periods. In Guruuswa family members provide 81 percent of all labour in the fields, but in Mutadza only 60 percent is provided by family members. Members of the family are said to work more accurately and harder than any other category of worker. Hence the fields in Guruuswa are worked much more carefully than those in Mutadza.

Though the family labour force is about equal in the two purchase areas, and though Guruuswa farmers cultivate on the average 6 acres more than Mutadza farmers, the labour input per acre is much higher in Guruuswa than in Mutadza. For every acre of maize planted Guruuswa farmers invest on the average 263 working hours a year, but Mutadza farmers only 211 hours. Even in tribal trust lands master farmers invest 291 working hours on an acre of maize, and ordinary peasant cultivators 253 hours. Hence land in purchase areas is less thoroughly cultivated than in tribal trust lands.

The average Guruuswa family spends some £14 a year in buying improved seed and fertilizer, the average Mutadza family only £7.10.0. Even master farmers in tribal trust lands spend some £7 a year on improved seed and fertilizer, though they seldom cultivate more than eight acres.

As a result of this different investment in labour, improved seed and fertilizer, the yields in these communities vary greatly. In a season of average rainfall the typical Guruuswa farm owner reaps 5.7 bags of maize per acre but the comparable Mutadza farmer reaps only 2.7 bags. In contrast the average master farmer in two tribal trust lands adjoining these purchase areas reaps 9.3 bags of maize per acre, and the ordinary peasant cultivator reaps 3.9 bags of maize.

In addition to the crop harvest, farm owners gain a substantial part of their income from their herds and also from the sale of eggs, milk, fruit and vegetables. In a year of average rainfall, the average Guruuswa farmer has an income of £237 and the Mutadza farmer of £112. These averages, however, conceal the spread of farming success in the two communities. In 1965-66 no farm owner in Mutadza had an income of more than £260. In Guruuswa one farmer had an income of well over £1000, three of over £500 and nine of over £400. In Guruuswa no farmer reaped a crop worth less than £100, but 21 out of 60 Mutadza farmers did so.

#### 4) CONCLUSION

We may now ask what factors are responsible for the differential income of farm owners in Guruuswa and Mutadza. I stressed that the ecological environment of the two communities is identical<sup>4</sup> and that the overall structure of the two purchase areas is also the same. An important reason for the greater success of the Guruuswa farmers seems to be the more careful selection of this farming community. Their possession of a farming certificate, and therewith of farming ability, as well as their greater financial resources which enabled them to buy more farming implements and to invest more money in their land, seem important factors contributing to their success.

Guruuswa farmers, moreover, seem more highly motivated to make a success of their farming than those in Mutadza. This is shown by the criteria according to which these farm owners select their committee members for the African Farmers' Union, the use they make of their

cooperative society, the foundation of the intensive conservation area committee in Guruuswa, and by the many agricultural clubs in that community, in which farm owners spontaneously gather to increase their agricultural output. Whereas Guruuswa farmers gave as the most common reason for their coming to the purchase area the desire to make money, Mutadza farmers said that they had come to the farms to gain security for their old age; enough land to plough and enough cattle to see them through their financial difficulties.

The most serious handicap which farm owners face is labour shortage. In a relatively progressive purchase area like Guruuswa this difficulty might be overcome by encouraging groups of farmers to buy more expensive machinery. The present clubs which consist of men who trust each other and who are highly motivated to increase their farm output, seem to be ideal groups which could buy tractors and combine harvesters.

I grant that the land of both Guruuswa and Mutadza purchase areas is not particularly fertile, yet the high yields of some farmers indicate the potential which is there. Case histories - which I have no space to present here - indicate that those farm owners are the most successful who in their previous careers worked for several years successfully for European employers or who used their initiative to make money as self-employed entrepreneurs. Most of these belonged to the younger section of the farming community and were better educated than the rest. If the future purchase area farms are given to such men, rather than to the older and less educated peasants, farm incomes may increase considerably.

FOOTNOTES:

1. Elkington, 1968, p.5, SARCCUS, Salisbury.
2. The Rhodesia Herald, 10.10.1968.
3. The Rhodesia Herald, 21. 9.1967.
4. The ecological environment of the tribal trust land peasant cultivators whose labour input and crop output has been compared with those of the purchase area farmers, is also identical with that of the two farming communities.

.....





This work is licensed under a  
Creative Commons  
Attribution – NonCommercial - NoDerivs 3.0 License.

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

This is a download from the BLDS Digital Library on OpenDocs  
<http://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/>