

**RHODES UNIVERSITY**  
**DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY**

**Rural Food Security in Mutare District, Zimbabwe, 1947-2010**

**By**

**BERNARD KUSENA**

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**SUPERVISOR: PROFESSOR ENOCENT MSINDO**

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## Abstract

*By taking Mutare District as its lens to explore the dynamics of rural food security in Zimbabwe, this thesis assesses the role of the state in tackling hunger among its rural populations. It examines the impact of colonial and post-colonial food policy on efforts to combat food insecurity. The thesis explores the uneasy options pursued by rural communities in response to droughts and other threats of hunger. It identifies and ranks crop failure as the chief culprit to the district's efforts towards food security. The thesis illustrates the contestations between the state and its rural people over which sustainable approaches to adopt in order to end hunger and how such debates continually shaped policy. It grapples with questions about the various understandings of food security advanced by scholars within the rural African context. It demonstrates, for instance, that the post-colonial state inherited an erstwhile crop production structure which shunned food crops in favour of cash crops. There was obvious bias against local preferences for a robust, home-grown food regime which did not put rural livelihoods at risk of starvation. The thesis also argues that food can be used as an instrument of war as evidenced during the liberation struggle when the vast majority of people residing in rural areas, particularly women and children, were pushed to the edges of survival. In addition, the thesis demonstrates that the infamous Marange diamonds turned out to be a curse rather than a blessing due to the state's lack of transparency in the beneficiation chain. It concludes by a detailed examination of the political economy of food aid, demonstrating why donors have not succeeded for long to combat hunger in the district. In light of this background, the thesis provides a more nuanced analysis of the whole question of rural food security using archival material, newspapers, government and civil society reports, interviews and field observation. The thesis benefits from the use of a multi-pronged theoretical framework to capture the disparate themes that form the bedrock of this study.*

**Keywords:** Food Security, Food Aid, Crop Failure, Hunger, Policy, Food and Cash Crops.

## **Dedication**

This thesis is dedicated to my late father, Abisha, who provided me with endless learning opportunities, and my mother, Rudo, who continues to be the pillar of my strength.

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## Abbreviations

AFC	Agricultural Finance Corporation
AGRITEX	Agricultural and Technical Extension Services
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ARDA	Agricultural Development Authority
BSAC	British South Africa Company
CCDT	Chiadzwa Community Development Trust
CFU	Commercial Farmers Union
CNC	Chief Native Commissioner
DMC	Diamond Mining Company
EMA	Environmental Management Authority
ESAP	Economic Structural Adjustment Programme
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FDPs	Food Distribution Points
FTLRP	Fast Track Land Reform Programme
GMOs	Genetically Modified Organisms
HIV	Human Immune-Deficiency Virus
IP	Implementing Partner
LAA	Land Apportionment Act
LDOs	Land Development Officers
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
MDT	Marange Development Trust
MMCZ	Minerals Marketing Corporation of Zimbabwe
MRDC	Mutare Rural District Council
NAZ	National Archives of Zimbabwe
NC	Native Commissioner
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations NGOs
NLHA	Native Land Husbandry Act
PVO	Private Voluntary Organisation
SEDCO	Seed Company of Zimbabwe
UDI	Unilateral Declaration of Independence
VGf	Vulnerable Group Feeding
WFP	United Nations World Food Programme
ZANU (PF)	Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front
ZCDC	Zimbabwe Consolidated Diamond Company
ZELA	Zimbabwe Environmental Law Association
ZIMVAC	Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee
ZMCSOT	Zimunya-Marange Community Share Ownership Trust
ZMDC	Zimbabwe Mining Development Corporation

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter gives an introductory overview to this thesis which is about food security. It begins by interrogating the shifting definitions of food security and their applicability to the case study of Mutare District, Zimbabwe, before it explores the complex dynamics of rural food security in greater detail. It demonstrates that, while the majority of the population in Mutare District depended on rain-fed crop cultivation, they did not have adequate means to effectively deal with extreme weather events such as droughts and other hazards when they arose. The thesis provides a framework through which to understand this dilemma, in addition to which it examines the various changes and continuities that placed local livelihoods and food security at risk in time and space. One of the main features of this study is to unpack the role and implications of colonial and post-colonial state policy on ways to mitigate food insecurity in rural environments. Given the recurrence and gravity of this problem, this thesis shows the impact of various factors on food security and people's responses to them. Therefore, , the thesis deploys a variety of theoretical and conceptual vantage points, in keeping with emerging perspectives on the political economy of food (in) security.

Historically, droughts have dominated known causes of food insecurity in Southern Africa. Although the starting point for this discussion is the 1947 drought, this drought was not the first one which colonial Zimbabwe suffered from. Iliffe provides snapshots of the most serious droughts that occurred between 1890 and 1960 in order to illustrate their impact on livelihoods and how people's ability to cope with them changed over time.<sup>1</sup> One of the ways adopted by African people to defray the potential threats of hunger was the principle of egalitarianism in

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<sup>1</sup> John Iliffe, *Famine in Zimbabwe, 1890-1960*, Gweru: Mambo Press, 1990.

which they shared food in order to cover up for those who might have failed to secure it. In his discussion of this concept which is known in Malawi as *chidyerano* (eating together), Elias Mandala presents interesting dynamics about the benefits of this system in cushioning desperate households from total affliction by hunger, even though that system was no longer in practice.<sup>2</sup>

Also central to this thesis is the view that African peasants have always had recourse to pre-capitalist, age-old and traditional methods of combating food insecurity when faced with adverse food security situations across the colonial and post-colonial epochs. They had agency in contexts of food emergencies, defying notions that they were hapless and dependent on the power and largesse of the state and donor organisations. This is why as late as 2010, the cut-off date of this thesis, they still practised *mukwerera*, rain-making ceremonies in pursuit of autonomous and sustainable ways of producing their own food.<sup>3</sup> For instance, an elderly Zimunya villager, Nekias Mukwindidza of Zimunya, advised participants to a community gathering that “We must go back to our traditions for solutions to droughts. If we go back to our traditional values and beliefs, things will change for the better. We will get the rainfall.”<sup>4</sup> Villagers had been summoned by traditional leaders to discuss ways of reviving abandoned rainmaking customs in response to recurring droughts. “If we go back to our traditional values and beliefs, things will change for the better,” she added. “We will get the rainfall.”<sup>5</sup> Iliffe captures this when he stresses that the massive alienation of land and the gradual eviction of people to poorer soils of the arid low-veld prone to crop failure scuttled traditional practices that enhanced grain production.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Elias C. Mandala, *The End of Chidyerano: A History of Food and Everyday Life in Malawi, 1860-2004*, Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2005.

<sup>33</sup> “Traditional Rainmaking Ceremonies Resurge in Parched Zimbabwe,” Thomson Reuters *Foundation*, 21 December 2016.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Iliffe, *Famine in Zimbabwe*.

The thesis locates the problem of food security in failure of the state to revise and challenge the erstwhile colonial attitude towards production of food crops through coercion or deliberate hiking of cash crop prices in order to lure African farmers to produce cash crops, or simply prohibit them from producing food crops. Added to this is the state's lack of capacity to effectively respond to intermittent drought, flood or locust emergencies that continue to afflict the country. More importantly, the thesis interrogates the place of diamond proceeds and food aid in the district's food security equation. It examines fresh discourses by Edelman and others on food sovereignty which aims to galvanise broad-based and diverse movements around the need for radical changes in agrarian studies.<sup>7</sup> By definition, food sovereignty is conceived as the right of nations and peoples to control their own food systems, including their own markets, production modes, food cultures and environments as a critical alternative to the dominant neoliberal model for agriculture and trade.<sup>8</sup>

### **Research Questions**

In broadening understandings of rural food security, the following key research questions are critical:

- a) What effect did successive colonial and post-colonial state policies and interventions have on rural food security?
- b) Why has Mutare District repeatedly experienced food insecurity and how effective have been the coping strategies adopted?
- c) In view of notions of a predatory state, how has the discovery of diamonds in Mutare District impacted on local livelihoods?
- d) How effective can 'food sovereignty,' unlike food aid, be integral towards greater food security?

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<sup>7</sup> Marc Edelman *et al.*, "Introduction: Critical Perspectives on Food Sovereignty," *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, Vol. 41, Issue 6, 2014, pp.911-931.

<sup>8</sup> Hannah K Wittman, Annette. A. Desmarais and Nettie. Wiebe (eds.), *Food Sovereignty: Reconnecting Food, Nature and Community*, Oakland: Food First Books, 2010.

## **Research Aim**

The aim of this thesis is to explore the root causes and impacts of, as well as peasant responses to, rural food insecurity in Mutare District, Zimbabwe from 1947 to 2010.

## **Research Objectives**

The underlying objectives of this thesis are to;

- a) Interrogate peasant discourses and context-sensitive perceptions of rural food security.
- b) Examine the diverse state and African responses to food insecurity in the colonial and post-colonial periods.
- c) Appraise the role and impact of food aid and natural resources in food security analyses

## **Justification, Methodology and Ethics**

The starting point for this thesis is 1947 when a devastating drought swept across the country and placed rural peasant households at risk of starvation. This drought episode had dire impacts on food security and the environment. It led to migration, natural resource degradation, and weak economic performance, while it also exacerbated social tensions and fuelled unrest. The thesis cuts off at 2010 when the country had just dollarized a year earlier, bringing on board unique dynamics with regards to how the newly established Government of National Unity designed its food security policy.<sup>9</sup> With the anticipated relief brought about by this government which rode on the good will of the masses, it was further hoped that the underlying causes of food insecurity would be effectively dealt with. By stretching the cut-off period to 2010, it was an attempt to predict whether or not the nascent political outfit exhibited correct signals for a more sustainable approach to food security. But it became clear hardly a year after its consummation that the squabbles and infighting among parties within the Inclusive Government diverted attention away from, and stifled focus on, rural food security. Although there was more continuity than change

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<sup>9</sup> The three major political players in Zimbabwe entered into an Inclusive Government between 2009 and 2013 as a compromise following sham elections in 2008.

in the strategies deployed by the state, developments which took place on the food security arena post-2010 would require fuller and separate analyses beyond the scope of this thesis. These include renewed pledges by the state to radically shift from reactive, crisis-led and sectorally-isolated interventions, to more proactive, risk-based approaches that enhanced performance and resilience among rural farmers faced with adverse food security situations.

This thesis examines the role of both the state and rural Africans in fostering the implementation of holistic, integrated interventions to the food crisis, including combating desertification and drought. Because lack of access to food is one major indicator of poverty in Africa, examining state's responses to the food crisis is timely as it likely to provoke further debates about the role of the state (and non-state actors) in relation to rural food security, especially at a time when Zimbabwe is undergoing economic (and possibly political) change. The thesis contributes to the discussion of the relationship between food security and mineral resources, while also shedding light on women's extended roles in food security matters, particularly their often downplayed contribution to household food security in adverse situations.

Writing about detainees during the guerrilla war of 1966-1979, Munyaradzi Munochiveyi has, for instance, spelled out how nationalist histories have 'suppressed, marginalised and silenced other historical subjects while reifying the historical role of other (mostly elite) historical subjects.'<sup>10</sup> In as much as Munochiveyi's work 'draws attention to an area that historians had never considered as a space of resistance, confrontation, and negotiation in the telling of liberation struggle histories,' this thesis borrows a similar concept by highlighting how women

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<sup>10</sup> Munyaradzi B. Munochiveyi, *Prisoners of Rhodesia: Inmates and Detainees in the Struggle for the Zimbabwean Liberation, 1960-1980*, New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014, p. 3.

were equally important historical actors whose contribution to food security and rural development is worth documenting.<sup>11</sup>

Given the fact that there is hardly any other work that has closely examined the role of food aid in Mutare District, this thesis seeks to plug that gap by providing analyses that are critical to an appreciation of rural food security. In view of the lack of independence of recipient countries and communities in determining which type of food aid could be desirable for them, including culture and timing of its distribution, his thesis uses empirical data to reveal that donors have a bigger say than the recipients. Donors could overcome this challenge by prioritising the needs of the poor and hungry rather than advancing their national strategic and commercial interests in determining how and where to provide food aid. Donor countries often fail to pledge enough food, especially in situations of emergencies, or they deliver the aid quite late due to bureaucratic logistics, while the food handouts are unevenly distributed in some instances. Food aid induces a donor syndrome which may have future consequences on local food production; it sometimes reaches the wrong recipients due to politicisation by political elites who seek unfair advantage over their rival; and, may be abused by the government which may abandon its obligation to ensure adequate and nutritious food at all times for its people.

The study is qualitative rather than quantitative in nature. A combination of archival documents and oral testimonies has been used. The major shortfalls of public records, however, have been the exaggerations in line with the motives of the chroniclers. To make up for these limitations, oral interviews have been used as well as personal observations as an insider with direct access to

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<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*



informants. The study has also utilised other primary sources such as newspaper articles and NGO documents, among others. It has then used secondary literature to buttress the primary sources and triangulate evidence. Its limits notwithstanding, the National Archives of Zimbabwe, like any other public records, has provided rich collections of relevant material about the state's responses to the food security challenges for the entire colonial period.

Although the bulk of some sources were official government sources that reflected official viewpoints, they have gone a long way in providing insight into the mechanics of state policy and official mind-set on issues. Data from officials and local people were carefully compared in the understanding that, on the balance of probabilities, government officials would not usually be willing to criticize themselves. Their weaknesses and biases were compensated by various other sources such as oral evidence, missionary records and reports from private voluntary organisations which offered further insights on patterns of rural agriculture and food production in Mutare District. These reports complemented other archival records from the Department of Agricultural and Technical Extension Services (Agritex) that included monthly reports, official memos and forecast data.

Government officials were available for oral interviews, as were Agritex officers and other stakeholders interested in food security issues in Mutare. Concerning interviews on the 1947 drought and the subsequent experiences of Mutare residents, old-aged informants were relatively easy to identify and were willing to surrender information. Data were collected during field trips through interviews held with different groups of people at the district, ward, village and household levels in Zimunya and Marange. In order to guarantee better coverage of the population during the exercise of data collection, I made use of gatherings initiated by Plan International, the Zimbabwe Environmental Law Association (ZELA), the Chiadzwa Community

Development Trust (CCDT), Marange Development Trust (MDT) and other civil society and community-based organisations during their routine meetings with their communities. In addition, one could get a more direct feel of what transpired on the ground through observation, especially at food distribution points (FDPs) across the district. The data so collected were collated and sorted out at the end of each field trip for subsequent interpretation.

With respect to ethical issues, no informant was subjected to any political harm at the time of the interviews or to any kinds of undue pressure for volunteering information for the thesis. Already, some local NGOs were operating in different districts, dealing with food issues and publicly disseminating their findings without harm. Never at any point was either of them or their research subjects been subjected to threats due to the professional approach that they used, although in some instances, the state kept checking on their integrity, especially during election times. Nonetheless, in my efforts to collect data using various research instruments, I ensured that interviewees were appraised and informed of their right to know about the research process and its intended outcomes before they opened up for discussion. I also informed them of their right to withdraw from the interview process at any time if they felt the need to do so for personal reasons. Moreover, where they preferred not to be identified as the source of any of the information which they volunteered to me, I promised to use pseudonyms on both my research instruments and in my final project.

The chapter is structured in such a way that, shortly after it unpacks the concept of food security, it then provides a brief overview of the case study. The use of this case study offers a range of opportunities to build detailed understandings of the topic through establishing a sound platform from which to explore factors influencing food security. This is then followed by a theoretical framework within which the thesis is contextualised which ventilates key issues, in addition to a

review of literature on food security. The chapter subsequently provides research aims and objectives, justification of the study, and then a commentary on ethics and methodological issues before it proceeds to an outline of the rest of the chapters in the thesis. This chapter breakdown serves as the roadmap for readers to succinctly ascertain the scope and purpose of the study.

### **Unpacking the Term Food Security**

The question of food security has befuddled stakeholders for many years, including agricultural authorities.<sup>12</sup> Attempting to define the term poses even more challenges to scholars and development practitioners alike because of lack of agreement on the exact meaning of the phenomenon. However, many are agreed on variables involved in food security which range from affordability to access.<sup>13</sup> Maxwell catalogues thirty-two definitions of food security which various researchers proffered between 1975 and 2001.<sup>14</sup> Four of them have been captured below because of their all-encompassing nature; hence, their wider acceptability in food security discourses:

- (i) Food security is access by all people at all times to enough food for an active and healthy life;<sup>15</sup>
- (ii) Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life;<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> The various definitions of food security proffered below are essentially an attempt to reflect the changing emphasis on the numerous aspects that comprise food security.

<sup>13</sup> A.K. Sen, *Poverty and Famines: An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981; Susan Zipperer, *Food Security and Agricultural Policy and Hunger*, Harare: Zimbabwe Foundation for Education with Production, 1987; A. de Waal, *Famine that kills: Darfur, Sudan, 1984–1985*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989; P. Raikes, *Modernising Hunger: Famine, Food Surplus and Farm Policy in the EEC and Africa*, London: James Currey, 1988; and, M. Alamgir and P. Arora, *Providing Food Security for All*, New York: New York University Press, 1991. For more definitions, see also Shlomo Reutlinger, “Food Security and Poverty in Developing Countries,” In J.P. Gittinger, S. Leslie and C. Hoisington (eds.), *Food Policy: Integrating Supply, Distribution and Consumption*, Baltimore: John Hopkins University, 1987, p. 205; M. Rukuni and Eicher, C.K, “Food Security Equation”, In C. Bryant (ed.), *Poverty, Policy and Food Security in Southern Africa*, London: Mansell, 1988, p. 40, and; World Food Programme, *World Hunger Series: Hunger and Health*, London; Earth scan, 2007.

<sup>14</sup> Simon Maxwell, “The Evolution of Thinking about Food Security”, In Stephen Devereux and Simon Maxwell (eds.), *Food Security in Sub-Saharan Africa*, London: Institute of Development Studies, 2001, pp. 15-16.

<sup>15</sup> S. Reutlinger, “Food Security and Poverty in Less Developed Countries (LDCs)”, *Finance and Development*, Vol. 22, No. 4, 1985, pp. 7-11.

<sup>16</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), *Rome Declaration on World Food Security and World Food Summit Plan of Action*, Rome: FAO, 1996.

- (iii) A country and people are ‘food secure when their food system operates in such a way as to remove the fear that there will not be enough to eat;<sup>17</sup> and,
- (iv) Food security will be achieved ‘when the poor and vulnerable, particularly women and children, and those living in marginal areas, have secure access to the food they want.<sup>18</sup>

Most contemporary definitions of food security include other new aspects such as food’s cultural acceptability. For instance, the Global Horticulture Initiative has concluded that food security involves situations when everyone has access to enough (quantity), nutritious (quality), and safe (health), personally acceptable and culturally appropriate foods, which are produced in a manner that does not degrade the environment.<sup>19</sup> Therefore, it can be deduced from the foregoing definitions that availability, accessibility, variety, affordability, quality, and quantity of food are key variables in achieving a healthy life.<sup>20</sup> For purposes of this discussion, food security is defined as the availability of food (whether through farming, food aid or entitlement) and the ability to acquire or access, a definition that incorporates the effects of both demand and supply.

The decision to engage with this definition has stemmed from a careful analysis of the context in Mutare District which is considered as an agrarian community even despite weather adversity and declining soil fertility in many of its parts. The issue is two-pronged; availability and access. The general perception of villagers in the district is that they are able to grow adequate crops for subsistence in any given year if ecological conditions permit, particularly rainfall. This thinking prevails in many households because dependence on cultivation has historically been the practice. The implication of this is that in every season, nearly all households engage themselves in farming, cropping and weeding available land in anticipation of good yields. In between seasons, there have also been efforts to improve soil fertility by spreading manure in the fields

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<sup>17</sup> S. Maxwell, “National Food Security Planning: First Thoughts from Sudan”, *Paper Presented to Workshop on Food Security in the Sudan*, Brighton: Institute of Development Studies, 1988, p. 10.

<sup>18</sup> Devereux and Maxwell (eds.), *Food Security in Sub-Saharan Africa*, Introduction.

<sup>19</sup>[http://www.globalhort.org/media/uploads/File/reference\\_docs/GHI%20Strategic%20Plan%20v3%2020May2007.pdf](http://www.globalhort.org/media/uploads/File/reference_docs/GHI%20Strategic%20Plan%20v3%2020May2007.pdf) (Accessed on 15 October 2015).

<sup>20</sup> Food and Agriculture Organisation, *The State of Food and Agriculture*, Rome: FAO, 2011.

and other fertilisers. This has been working fairly well when rains fell timeously and in appropriate quantities.

However, the changing climatic patterns, growing population, declining soil fertility, dwindling land area for cultivation and other variables have impacted negatively on this long-held view that crop cultivation alone could guarantee food security. But, even so, villagers have cushioned themselves drought times by selling livestock so as to access food from other crop-producing areas in Zimbabwe, well before the advent of food aid in the late 1980s. The question of access, therefore, comes into play because, as long as households keep sizeable numbers of livestock, it is generally possible to exchange such livestock for food. Although Mutare District has historically survived on these two elements, the realities brought about by the cited changes call for the rural farmers to rethink food security as such aspects no longer hold in view of the increasing instances of hunger and malnutrition.<sup>21</sup>

### **The Mutare District Case Study**

To start with, Zimbabwe is a country of enormous food and agricultural potential, with climatic and soil conditions suitable for growing a wide range of subsistence and commercial crops.<sup>22</sup> Most of the rural African farmers usually produce for subsistence, with surplus sold out for cash. The country also receives significant food from international donors. In times of food shortages, some rural Zimbabweans usually sell some off their livestock for cash which is in turn used to buy food. Mutare District, like a number of other rural districts, experiences

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<sup>21</sup>Whereas ordinarily hunger refers to a feeling of discomfort or weakness caused by lack of food and a desire to eat, in the broader fields of humanities, politics, and food aid, hunger is a condition in which a person, for a sustained period, is unable to eat sufficient food to meet basic nutritional needs. So, in this instance, the term hunger is used in a sense that goes beyond the common desire for food that all humans experience and is interchangeable with food insecurity.

<sup>22</sup>The country was known by the following different names: Southern Rhodesia (1890-1964); Rhodesia (1965-1978); Zimbabwe-Rhodesia (1978-79); and, finally, Zimbabwe (since 1980). Given that the period under study straddles the two colonial and post-colonial historical epochs, the country will generally be referred to as Zimbabwe, while the case study of Mutare will be used interchangeably with its colonial version of Umtali.

problems of food security emanating from wide-ranging situations. Apart from lacking family incomes and other sources of entitlement, households have also been faced with the impact of a series of droughts and floods which compromise harvests and narrow their options. The promotion of cash instead of food crops inadvertently hinders efforts by Africans to secure adequate food from their agrarian enterprises.

Previously known as Umtali from 1890 until 1983, Mutare is Zimbabwe's fourth largest city, after Harare (formerly Salisbury), Bulawayo, and Gweru (formerly Gwelo). Its urban and rural population is approximately 188,243 and 260,567 respectively in accordance with estimates of the latest population census.<sup>23</sup> Located in the eastern side of the country, Mutare is the capital of Manicaland Province, by far the biggest of the country's ten provinces in terms of population density and land size. Six other districts in Manicaland are Buhera in the west, Makoni, Mutasa and Nyanga in the north, Chipinge in the south and Chimanimani in the east.<sup>24</sup> Mutare District comprises of Mutare Urban District and Mutare Rural District (made up of Zimunya and Marange communal areas) in the south-western fringes of the city. Each of these two rural areas has several administrative wards. The Chiadzwa ward is one of the eleven wards of Marange and the hottest area of the district which became very popular for its diamond reserves discovered around June 2006.<sup>25</sup> Mutare Rural District Council (MRDC), one of the country's 160 rural district councils, is the responsible local government authority for this area.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>Zimbabwe Statistical Agency, *National Census for 2012*, Harare: Zimbabwe Statistical Agency, 2012.

<sup>24</sup> See the Mutare District map below.

<sup>25</sup>Chapter 6 examines the impact of the discovery of diamonds in Chiadzwa, Marange, on the district's food security position, to which interesting findings are made.

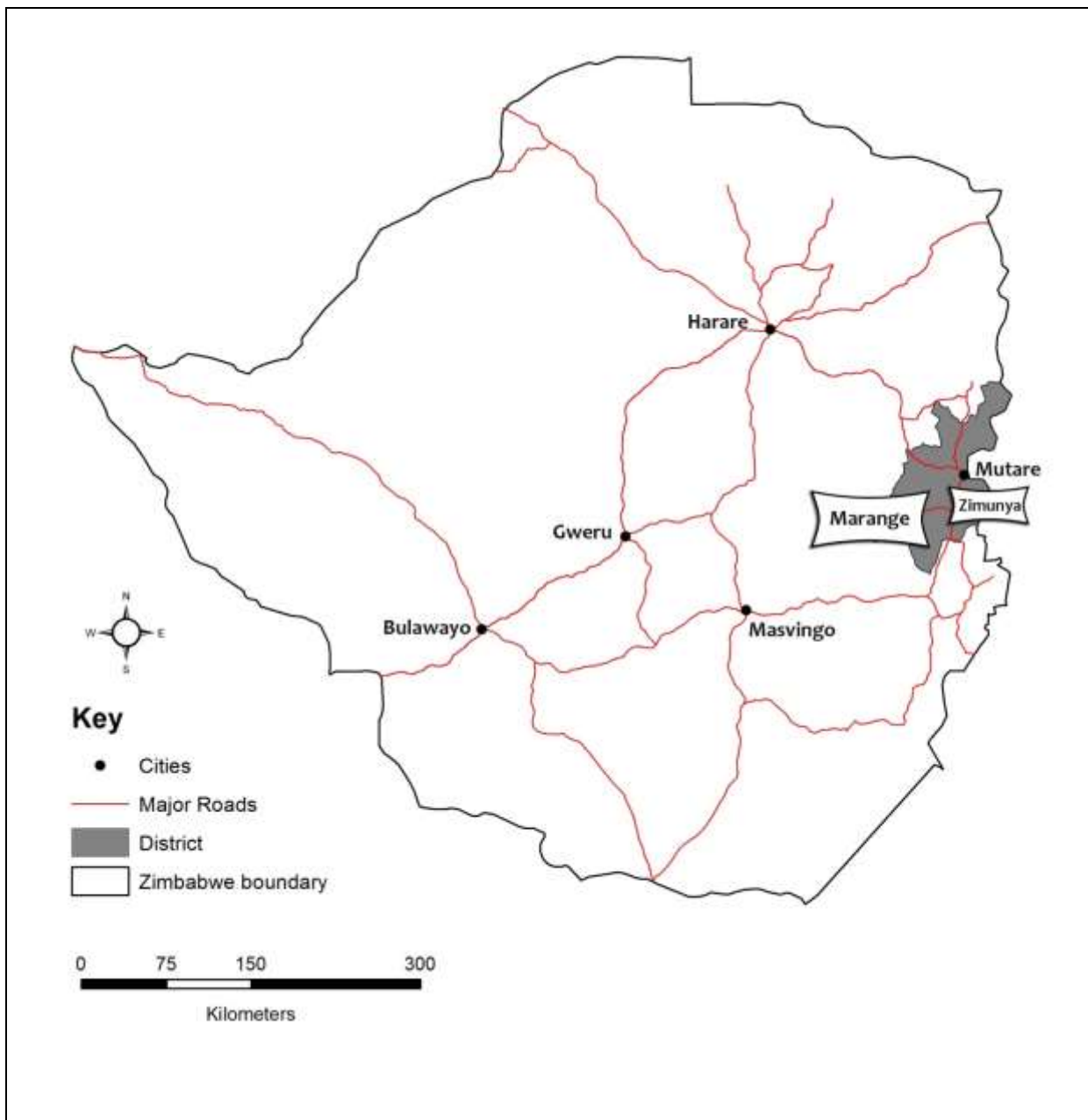
<sup>26</sup>The offices of the MRDC are located in Mutare Urban where local Councillors for various wards report on the economic and social conditions of the district. The MRDC coordinates programmes directed by central government, along with other government offices such as the Office of the Governor and Resident Minister for Manicaland Provincial Affairs, the District Administrator-Mutare and the Provincial Administrator-Manicaland.

Being part of the old colonial ‘native’ reserves, the overcrowded and mountainous Zimunya and Marange communal lands, invariably used in this thesis to mean Mutare District, were created by provisions of the 1930 Land Apportionment Act (LAA) which relegated many Africans to cheap labour reservoirs at a time when prime land was being expropriated by the colonial regime for selfish ends.<sup>27</sup> Broadly, Manicaland Province spans all the five ecological regions (briefly discussed below), which means that there is capacity for a wide range of agricultural activities from the high rainfall areas of Vumba Highlands in Region 1 to the dry and warm areas of Middle Save in Region V. The following map shows the location of Marange-Zimunya Communal Areas.

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<sup>27</sup>Many arguments about the exact import of the LAA and subsequent acts have been presented by scholars of different persuasions. Chapter 2 deals with some of these submissions in its assessment of the background to food insecurity before the 1947 drought.

**Fig. 1.** Map of Mutare District Showing the Marange-Zimunya Communal Areas



**Source:** Prepared by Archaeologist and Cartographer, Russell Kapumha, University of Zimbabwe.

In situating Mutare District within its agro-ecological context, a more sharpened focus on the disaggregated land use pattern in Zimbabwe by natural regions, based on soil type, rainfall and other climatic variables, is pertinent at this stage. The first of the five classifications, known as Natural Region I (Specialized and Diversified Farming), enjoys a relatively high rainfall of more than 1,000mm per annum on average. This enables forestation, fruit and intensive livestock



production, including plantation crops like tea, coffee, and macadamia nuts. Although precipitation occurs throughout the year, the region experiences relatively low temperatures. Natural Region II (Intensive Farming) has moderately high rainfall, between 750-1,000mm which is confined to the summer months. It can be divided into two sub-regions of varying characteristics. Sub-region IIA has generally reliable rainfall patterns and rarely experiences dry summer spells. It is suitable for intensive crop or livestock farming systems. Sub-region IIB is subject to severe dry spells during the rainy season or to the occurrence of relatively short rainy seasons. Crop yields are affected in certain years, but not frequently enough to justify a shift in cropping practices from intensive farming systems.

Natural Region III (Semi-Intensive Farming) has moderate precipitation of about 650-800mm and its productivity is limited by severe mid-season dry spells and high temperatures. Growing conditions are marginal for maize, tobacco, and cotton production. Farming systems are suited to livestock production, fodder and cash crops on soils with good moisture retention. Natural Region IV (Semi-Extensive Farming) is characterised by relatively low rainfall which ranges between 450-600mm. The region experiences periodic seasonal droughts and severe dry spells during the rainy season. Low and uncertain rainfall makes cash cropping risky except for drought-tolerant crops on soils with better water retention. Farming systems are suited for livestock production with some intensification possible for drought-resistant fodder crops. Finally, Natural Region V (Extensive Farming) experiences rainfall which is too low and erratic to permit reliable production of even drought-resistant fodder and grain crops. Included in this region are areas below 900m altitude, where the mean rainfall is below 650mm in the Zambezi and below 600mm in the Sabi-Limpopo valleys. Farming systems based on extensive cattle or

game ranching are best suited to these conditions.<sup>28</sup> Mutare Rural District shares, in part, characteristics of Regions IV and V.

### **Literature Review**

Before delving into a fully-fledged review of the emerging literature on Africa's food security, it is critical to briefly shed light on historical interpretations of hunger which evolved worldwide. The literature on the causation of food insecurity has been changing rapidly over time. Earlier literature framed hunger as a consequence of non-human factors, meaning that it was a natural or supernatural phenomenon or an act of God. This old work on food security was heavily influenced by Thomas Malthus who proposed that hunger and famine, which resulted from excessive population growth, served as a tool to keep the carrying capacity in check by reducing populations to a level that was consistent with food production.<sup>29</sup> The argument had arisen from the fact that food production was expanding at an arithmetic rate whereas population growth was progressing faster at a geometric rate. This conceptualisation placed greater emphasis on natural and physical factors, including drought, floods or demographic expansion to explain the phenomenon of food insecurity.<sup>30</sup> However, this thinking shifted to economic and socio-political reasons, and hunger and famines have actually not limited population growth with such anticipated magnitudes.<sup>31</sup> Developments in scientific methods of agriculture in time and space have brought new and exciting ways of producing surplus food in tandem with world demand, contrary to Malthus's proposition.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>World Bank, "Zimbabwe Agriculture Sector Memorandum," *Report No.9429-ZIM, Southern Africa Department of Agriculture Operations Division*, Vol. III, May 31, 1991, 12.

<sup>29</sup> Bashford Alison and Joyce E. Chaplin, *The New Worlds of Thomas Robert Malthus: Rereading the Principle of Population*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016.

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> Mamadou Baro and Tara F. Denbel, "Persistent Hunger: Perspectives on Vulnerability, Famine, and Food Security in Sub-Saharan Africa," *Review of Anthropology*, Vol. 35, 2006, pp. 521-538.

<sup>32</sup> Stephen Devereux, "Livelihood Insecurity and Social Protection: A Re-emerging Issue in Rural Development," *Development Policy Review*, Vol. 19, No. 4, 2001, pp. 507-519.

More importantly, Amartya Sen's subsequent ground-breaking work in *Poverty and Famines* introduced a new paradigm in food security studies by rejecting the Malthusian notions of food availability and decline. Sen's analysis replaced the non-human factors with market forces and emphasized the role of the state in determining individual entitlements to food.<sup>33</sup> He argued that hunger and famine affected populations invariably, depending on a household's ability to acquire food during a crisis. To reinforce this thesis, an example of the 1972/1974 famine in Ethiopia was given in which people succumbed to starvation despite the fact that there was no significant reduction in overall food output, with food prices remaining fairly stable.<sup>34</sup> Alison and Chaplin cite the example of the Sahel famine of the mid-1970s where a survey carried out by the Food and Agriculture Organisation determined that the most affected countries such as Mali, Mauritania and Niger produced enough grain to feed their populations except that the distribution of that food was poorly conducted.<sup>35</sup>

In spite of its centrality in food security researches and development studies, Sen's analysis has, however, been heavily criticised for its overemphasis on economic and market-driven causation while overlooking the salience of politics and other historical processes. In further shifting the focus of the debate, more recent scholarship warns that, we should examine the role of political agency in provoking and sustaining acute and chronic food insecurity.<sup>36</sup> This means that approaches to famine and hunger need to move away from the "emergency relief" and entitlement frameworks and begin to address the underlying conditions that make food shortages endemic.<sup>37</sup> For a start, therefore, Webb and von Braun would argue that food insecurity results

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<sup>33</sup> A. K. Sen, *Poverty and Famines: An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981.

<sup>34</sup> Where the term 'famine' appears in this thesis, it generally means extreme scarcity of food and may be used interchangeably with food insecurity, hunger or starvation.

<sup>35</sup> B. Alison and J. E. Chaplin, *Food Security in the Sahel*, London: Earthscan, 2005.

<sup>36</sup> Coleen Vogel and James Smith, "The Politics of Scarcity: Conceptualising the Current Food Security Crisis in Southern Africa," *South African Journal of Science*, Vol. 98, Issue 7-8, 2002, pp. 315-317.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

from a cumulative failure of production, distribution and consumption systems.<sup>38</sup> Their argument is supported by David who compares the ways in which individuals and states have responded to the threat of mass starvation and the relation of famine to political and social power.<sup>39</sup> By drawing upon the history of Asia, Africa, Latin America and Europe, David analyses the origins and characteristics of famine. He adds the dimension that people who were affected by famine were not passive victims, a view which resonates also with the experiences of peasants in Mutare District.<sup>40</sup>

Vogel and Smith actually further observe that food insecurity has multiple causes rooted in combined effects of political instability, environmental marginality and economic powerlessness.<sup>41</sup> They add that food security is no longer globally analysed merely in terms of lack of food, but is seen rather as the product of a complex set of interrelationships between society, economic development and the environment.<sup>42</sup> Devereux and Maxwell argue that food insecurity is no longer viewed as agriculture's failure to produce sufficient food at the household level.<sup>43</sup> They cite factors like volatile price swings, limited government capacity to provide food and agriculture support and the politicisation of land ownership as key determinants.<sup>44</sup> In addition, war situations could pose greater threat to food security as conditions deteriorate. For instance, writing on the Ethiopian war which stretched for almost two decades beginning in the early 1970s, Stewart, Huang and Wang cite the role of austerity and reduced consumption as methods employed by households in coping with the food dilemma occasioned by war. It is their conviction that when communities were racked by

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<sup>38</sup> P. Webb and J. von Braum, *Famine and Food Security in Ethiopia: Lessons for Africa*, New York: Wiley, 1989.

<sup>39</sup> A. David, *Famine: Social Crisis and Historical Change*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd, 1988.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> Vogel and Smith, "The Politics of Scarcity."

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> Stephen Devereux and Simon Maxwell (eds.), *Food Security in Sub-Saharan Africa*, London: Institute of Development Studies, 2001.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

hunger, resources were expected to last as long as possible, with the mix of food items sharply altered in its variety and quality.<sup>45</sup>

Rahmato makes a similar observation in that many of the affected Ethiopian families were treated to a monotonous diet of one or two simple and poorly processed items, often served once a day as household food stocks were exhausted.<sup>46</sup> Such an impact weighed heavily on women who would go out of their way to make food available in risky conditions of war. Mukwada alluded to the fact that women to provide for their families resulted in women taking risky ventures. Recall her mother was shot dead by the Rhodesian forces while weeding her fields in 1977 at which time her husband was receiving guerrilla military training in Mozambique.<sup>47</sup> The turbulent decade of the 1970s was, therefore, devastating to women's efforts at providing for their families. The combined effect of all these notorious factors is to create conditions of hunger and famine since people would have little or no resistance to disruptions in their normal activities by drought, poor harvest, economic crises, or price inflation.

Having shed light on the historical overview of the literature, it is now imperative to consider recent literature on food security. Maxwell Zhira has written on drought in the Gutu area of Masvingo in Zimbabwe. He argues that people were left devastated due to the absence of sufficient coping strategies.<sup>48</sup> The strength of his analysis lies in its application of the case study approach which provides the window with which to gain understandings of the overall impact of

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<sup>45</sup>F. Stewart, C. Huang and M. Wang, "Internal Wars in Developing Countries: An Empirical Overview of Economic and Social Consequences," In F. Stewart and V. Fitzgerald (eds.), *War and Underdevelopment, Volume 1: The Economic and Social Consequences of Conflict*, Oxford; Oxford University Press, 2001.

<sup>46</sup> D. Rahmato, *Famine and Survival Strategies: A Case Study from Northeast Ethiopia*, Uppsala: The Scandinavian Institute for African Studies, 1991.

<sup>47</sup>Interview with Masoko Mukwada.

<sup>48</sup>Maxwell Zhira, "Drought in Zimbabwe: A Case of Gutu District in 1947," (BA Honours Dissertation, Department of Economic History, University of Zimbabwe), 2002.

such emergencies on livelihoods.<sup>49</sup> However, Zhira does not go on to examine the role of the state in dealing with the phenomenon of drought in terms of the kind of capacity which it demonstrated. This thesis fills that gap by demonstrating that the huge impact of drought in many parts of Zimbabwe has been prompted by poor disaster-risk preparedness on the part of the state. Although people have put up some coping strategies in order to dispel the extreme effects of drought, the state has not done enough to address the potential effects of disasters as a nation.

Because of the synergies between the role of state policies on food security, on the one hand, and Mutare rural Africans' responses and coping strategies, on the other, the thesis is supported by several but partly related paradigms to examine issues at hand. Terence Ranger's argument on peasant consciousness whose earlier formulations dates back to the late 1970s, suggests that the colonial Zimbabwean peasantry had a consistent "political ideology and programme developed from the 1940s" to counter the state's perpetual disruption of its agricultural activities.<sup>50</sup> In other words, regardless of the nature of state policies on agriculture, Ranger argues that rural Africans were organised enough and were capable of responding to these harsh policies. Also the peasants in his case study of Chiduku area in Rusape were able to circumvent the colonial machinations by increasing their resilience. Although this perspective has its own limitations, which include the fact that not all peasants were able to withstand the impact of food insecurity owing to their diverse economic backgrounds, it has, nonetheless, been used advisedly as a starting point to examine agency on the part of Africans in Mutare District. They have not been passive agents but have adopted useful strategies to mitigate food security challenges.

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<sup>49</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> T. O. Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness and Guerrilla War in Zimbabwe: A Comparative Study*, London: James Currey, 1985, 284.

Scholars also discuss the impact of colonial legacy on postcolonial food security. While there have been some efforts by the post-colonial state to reconfigure the systems that would guarantee food security, they were, however, retarded by the inherited colonial agrarian systems. For instance, Philip Raikes clearly articulates that Africans were put in an invidious position by colonial policy because they “were forbidden to produce both export crops (as alternative income sources might reduce the supply of wage labour) and crops produced by settlers for domestic markets (for the same reason, as well as to prevent peasant competition from reducing prices).”<sup>51</sup> Surprisingly, the colonial model did not quickly disappear with independence due to the long-term effects of colonial intrusion on the capacity of the state to facilitate and promote economic development.<sup>52</sup> This thesis argues that the failure of the state to quickly and decisively deal with legacy challenges delayed post-colonial efforts in building a strong cropping framework, particularly because of the need to raise foreign currency through the same cash crops which they apparently despised before independence.

Drinkwater’s analysis of the effects of state policy on the changing social and economic dynamics in communal areas is quite instructive. Using the work of theorists like Habermas of the Frankfurt School of Social Sciences,<sup>53</sup> Drinkwater traces the roots of food insecurity back to the advent of colonialism in Zimbabwe. He argues that the whites were so racially biased against African practices that they hardly understood each other, let alone share knowledge systems for enhanced crop and livestock production.<sup>54</sup> This disparity in systems was a disguise by colonial

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<sup>51</sup>Philip Raikes, “Modernisation and Adjustment in African Peasant Agriculture,” In Deborah Bryceson, Christobal Kay and Jos Mooij (eds.), *Disappearing Peasantries? Rural Labour in Africa, Asia, and Latin America*, London: Intermediate Technology Publications, 2000, p. 71.

<sup>52</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup>For further readings on the critical theory, see Jurgen Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, London: Heinemann, 1972.

<sup>54</sup>Michael Drinkwater, *The State and Agrarian Change in Zimbabwe’s Communal Areas*, London: Macmillan, 1991, p. 9.

officials who actually intended to deprive Africans of fertile land as events later proved in the land segregation of the 1930s. Such an unfortunate background compromised co-operation where it was due between the two races. Indeed, the colonial agrarian structure did not “develop from within the Shona societies which predominated in the country, but was externally imposed by the white settlers.”<sup>55</sup> However, it was expected that this anomaly would end immediately after independence, which was not the case because the state still inherited the bureaucratic colonial structure that did not give agency to the grassroots.

Drinkwater further asserts that the agrarian policies which the settler community formulated and implemented ignored local and indigenous environmental knowledge which peasants possessed and applied in their own production systems.<sup>56</sup> These failures of colonial masters to integrate skills and allow smooth transfers of knowledge between different racial parties are echoed by Ponnambalam in his classic study of the Sri Lankan economy. He stresses that colonial models of production were couched in such a way as to create a dependent economy in which Sri Lanka’s role on the periphery of the world capitalist system was to export raw materials and import consumer and luxury goods.<sup>57</sup> For Zimbabwe, this model persisted well after independence from the British in 1980 because of the biased nature and lingering effects of the independence constitution on land. Although there was a serious reference to the will to do things differently, this proved to be mere rhetoric because the key pillars of the economy, particularly agriculture, remained in the hands of the white minority at this stage. The negative impact of these legacy constraints on agrarian production remained equally visible throughout the period covered by this thesis.

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<sup>55</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>57</sup> Sachi Ponnambalam, *Dependent Capitalism in Crisis: The Sri Lankan Economy, 1948-1980*, London: Zed Books, 1981, pp. 11-12



Also critical to this thesis is literature on land because of its centrality to the food security question. Right from the outset, land issues have been quite controversial, both in the colonial and post-colonial periods. Phimister has written extensively on land alienation where he touches on aspects such as the Land Apportionment Act of 1930 and the Native Land Husbandry Act (NLHA) of 1951.<sup>58</sup> In his review of the historiography of the NLHA, Phimister argues that such a historiography may have overestimated the actual impact of the Act while underestimating the extent of differentiation among the peasantry. It means that Africans were actually emboldened by the Act to prepare for the challenges ahead, including the liberation struggle that aimed to overthrow the whole racial segregationist system altogether.<sup>59</sup> Phimister's argument lays a foundation for further studies in rural development, particularly in the area of land husbandry where he offers a refreshing revision of its historiography. Given that the two pieces of legislation disadvantaged the African population with regards to access to arable land, Phimister's work is an important contribution to the discussion of food security because the two are basically inseparable. The work locates the socio-economic struggles of African people within the political economy of land access and distribution. These developments culminated in the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) whose negative effect on food security was immeasurable.

Sachikonye has also written extensively on the land question, arguing that 'at the height of the liberation struggle in the late 1970s and during the early independence years, the main debate in Zimbabwean politics revolved around 'socialism' and 'egalitarianism.'<sup>60</sup> He maintains that 'the land question' was actually central to the struggle for independence as well as the aspirations of

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<sup>58</sup> Ian Phimister, "Rethinking the Reserves: Southern Rhodesia's Land Husbandry Act Reviewed," *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 2, 1993, pp. 225-239.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> Lloyd, M. Sachikonye, From 'Growth with Equity' to 'Fast-Track' Reform: Zimbabwe's Land Question,' *Review of African Political Economy*, Vol. 30, No. 96, 2003, pp. 227-240.

the majority.<sup>61</sup> Some scholars who focused on the accelerated land reform programme support Sachikonye and other earlier scholars in concluding that, although land redistribution was crucial in addressing colonial imbalances, its timing and methodology proved quite political. For instance, Cliffe, Alexander, Cousins and Gaidzanwa argue that the debate on the impact of the FTLRP on the economy has been polarised between two extremes, one that considers it as a welcome reversal of the erstwhile racial distribution of land, and the other that bewails its manner of implementation. Other radical researchers have totally rejected claims that the FTLRP had some positive impacts on rural livelihoods.<sup>62</sup> This historicisation of the land issue has sustained this discussion on rural food security in Mutare District in a number of ways which include shedding light on the performance of African agriculture.

The early 2000s have actually been tough for the country in general and Mutare District in particular with respect to food security matters. This is because of the unprecedented twist of events around land reform which closely shaped the character of food production and markets. Looking at the accelerated land reform exercise, dubbed *Jambanja* because of its viciousness, there have been mixed feelings about the nature of contribution such programme would have on the economy.<sup>63</sup> Although some academics have sought to prove that the land reform process succeeded,<sup>64</sup> several others have concluded that this hastily implemented programme exacerbated food insecurity, especially between 2000 and 2008.<sup>65</sup> Arguments in support of the successes of the FTLRP are premised on the following statistics:

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<sup>61</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup>Lionel Cliffe, Jocelyn Alexander, Ben Cousins and Rudo Gaidzanwa, "An Overview of Fast Track Land Reform in Zimbabwe: Editorial Introduction," *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, Vol. 38, Issue, 5, 2011, pp. 907-939.

<sup>63</sup> A full discussion on this nomenclature and its relationship to the character of the violent land reform programme is held in one of the subsequent chapters.

<sup>64</sup> Joseph Hanlon, Jeanette Manjengwa and Teresa Smart, *Zimbabwe Takes Back Its Land*, Johannesburg: Kumarian Press, 2013.

<sup>65</sup> Brian Raftopoulos, "The Crisis in Zimbabwe, 1998-2008," In Brian Raftopoulos and Alois Mlambo (eds), *Becoming Zimbabwe: A History from the Pre-colonial Period to 2008*, Harare: Weaver Press, 2009, p. 217;

In the biggest land reform in Africa, 6,000 white farmers have been replaced by 245,000 Zimbabwean farmers. These are primarily ordinary poor people who have become more productive farmers. The change was inevitably disruptive at first, but production is increasing rapidly. Agricultural production is now returning to the 1990s level, and resettled farmers already grow 40% of the country's tobacco and 49% of its maize.<sup>66</sup>

Scholars who have contested this argument highlight the possibility of bias towards beneficiaries of the reform programme. They assert that some key authors in both *Zimbabwe Takes Back its Land* and *Zimbabwe's Land Reform: Myths and Realities* were direct beneficiaries of the process, a factor which might have naturally compromised their objectivity.<sup>67</sup>

The post-colonial state attempted to rethink its own position regarding the role women could play in the country's socio-economic development. It is worth briefly considering how the post-colonial state was reconfiguring beneficiation. The rationale for this discussion is located in the admission by the Utete Report that women had a big contribution to the economic progress of the country. Given their historically diverse and pivotal role in all aspects of communal agriculture and the need to strike an overall gender balance in this sector of the economy, "measures...should be implemented to ensure equity in, and the effectiveness of, the agrarian reform in the country."<sup>68</sup> These promising projections of the post-colonial state speak to the broader nationalist aspirations to emancipate and empower women as enunciated during the pre-independence period and which the war literature primarily foregrounds. Amanor and Moyo contribute to these debates by using the political economy approach to argue that land reform efforts in Zimbabwe and South Africa have actually been too slow. They stress that the colonial market forces of the 'willing-buyer-

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Colin Stoneman and T.A.S. Bowyer-Bower, (eds), *Land Reform in Zimbabwe*, London: Ashgate, 2000, among others.

<sup>66</sup> Hanlon *et al*, *Zimbabwe Takes Back its Land*, p. 209.

<sup>67</sup> <http://africanarguments.org/2010/12/15/zimbabwes-land-reform-challenging-the-myths/> (Accessed on 31 December 2016).

<sup>68</sup> Charles Utete, *Report of the Presidential Land Review Committee on the Implementation of the Fast Track Land Reform Programme, 2000-2002*, Harare: Government of Zimbabwe, 2003. Part IV.

willing-seller' upon which land reform had to be organised were not applicable if equitable distribution of land was to be achieved.<sup>69</sup>

The sacrifices made by women during and after the liberation war to maintain guarantees on rural food security should also be read in the context of changing household composition, with many women becoming heads of families due to various circumstances. The Utete Report captures these dynamics more realistically:

Moreover, in order to ensure the survival and stability of the growing number of families in rural areas now headed by women and even children as a result of the devastation wreaked on society by the AIDS pandemic, and in the light of the growing phenomenon of the feminisation of poverty among women-headed households, the gender dimension of the agrarian reform needs to be kept uppermost in the transformation of the sector in the context of the Fast Track. The agrarian reform, thus, constitutes an important vehicle for economically empowering women.<sup>70</sup>

This was an ideally important turning point in the history of post-war empowerment. If this had materialised, it had the effect of breaking the vicious cycle between hunger, conflict and displacement, while building resilience amongst rural populations in order to avert hunger. But the unfortunate thing is that these promises were not translated into worthwhile reality many years after the conflict. Women have actually been experiencing new challenges brought about by a series of economic misfortunes, including an unprecedented post-2000 economic crisis largely linked to the ambitious but ill-advised land reform, poor governance, lack of transparency and accountability, bribery and corruption, and other related factors.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> K. S. Amanor and S. Moyo, (eds.), *Land and Sustainable Development in Africa*, London: Zed Books, 2008.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>71</sup> For a detailed analysis of the economic crisis which rocked the post-colonial government, see Brian Raftopoulos and Alois Simon Mlambo (eds.), *Becoming Zimbabwe: A History from the Pre-Colonial Period to 2008*, Harare: Weaver Press, 2009.

The literature on the country's extractive industries is quite expansive and can broadly be subdivided into two categories. The first category entails work written from the perspective of mining communities and is embedded in a participatory action research approach. Some overarching themes of these works include land rights, social justice and the emancipation of women in rural communities. For instance, Mabhena examines the nexus between artisanal mining and rural livelihoods in southern Zimbabwe. His argument is that the land reform programme scuttled livelihoods patterns characteristic of this region from a dependence on livestock to that of artisanal mining. This is because it was so heavily politicised and haphazardly conducted that it failed to take into cognisance the people's hopes which were pinned on livestock. As a result, people took up artisanal mining as a preferable livelihood option to livestock production.<sup>72</sup>

While Mabhena considers the proliferation of artisanal mining activities in southern Matabeleland, Ruguwa's research focuses on the disruptive role of artisanal mining on Marange's social and community institutions. He stresses that artisanal mining had particularly devastating consequences for primary and secondary schooling in that both the pupils and teaching staff were involved.<sup>73</sup> However, Ruguwa's article focuses particularly on the impact of mining on local schools. It does not set out to establish the bigger issue of villager displacement which threatened food security in unprecedented ways, a gap which this thesis strives to cover. For Mabhena, the issue that seems to be overlooked is that both livestock rearing and artisanal mining complemented each other. Should one or either fail totally, villagers would always move to the other. In Marange, artisanal mining was a

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<sup>72</sup> Clifford Mabhena, "Mining with a 'Vuvuzela': Reconfiguring Artisanal Mining in Southern Zimbabwe and its Implications to Rural Livelihoods," *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, Vol. 30: Issue 2, 2012, pp. 219-233.

<sup>73</sup> Matthew Ruguwa, "The Social Impact of Mining on Schools in Marange, 2006-2013," In Saunders and Nyamunda, *Facets of Power*, pp. 135-156.

temporary phenomenon, and shortly after formal mining commenced, villagers fell back on crop cultivation, albeit with new challenges.

Closely aligned to the above first category of literature is the second one which is concerned with the governance and trade of high value and conflict-prone minerals. This literature accentuates the issues to do with conflict and violence around diamonds among other precious minerals. This ‘blood diamonds’ literature by Sachikonye,<sup>74</sup> Saunders,<sup>75</sup> Towriss<sup>76</sup> and Nyamunda and Mukwambo,<sup>77</sup> among others, deploys the tools of political economy, including issues of governance, participation, and empowerment, and highlights the potential for resource-fuelled ‘developmental states’ in the Global South. A key strength of this sub-category is in documenting and campaigning around diamond related human rights abuses. Saunders argues that during the four-year tenure of the Government of National Unity since 2009, diamond revenues from Marange were used to prop up the ruling ZANU (PF) party in order to maintain its hold on the levers of power and dominance ahead of other partners in the government.<sup>78</sup> Even beyond the subsistence of that government, security forces and factions of the ruling party elite continued to syphon diamond mining profits from Marange.

Nyamunda and Mukwambo have published accounts of artisanal diamond mining, cross-border networks and the informal economy associated with the first diamond rush in

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<sup>74</sup> Lloyd M. Sachikonye, *Diamonds in Zimbabwe*, Johannesburg: OSISA, 2007.

<sup>75</sup> Richard Saunders, “Geologies of Power: Blood Diamonds, Security, Politics and Zimbabwe’s Troubled Transition,” *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, Vol. 32, Issue 3, 2014, pp. 378-394.

<sup>76</sup> David Towriss, ‘Buying Loyalty: Zimbabwe’s Marange Diamonds,’ *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 1, pp. 99-117.

<sup>77</sup> Tinashe Nyamunda and Patience Mukwambo, “The State and the Bloody Diamond Rush in Chiadzwa: Unpacking the Contesting Interests in the Development of Illicit Mining and Trading, c.2006–2009,” *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Volume 38, Issue 1, 2012.

<sup>78</sup> Saunders, *Geologies of Power*.

Chiadzwa from 2006.<sup>79</sup> Their conceptualisation of the state is intriguing. Nyamunda and Mukwambo perceive the state as being chameleonic in its approach to diamond exploitation largely because of its lack of a proper mining policy. While it allows looting to prevail in order for its cronies to benefit, it tries to present itself as a responsible state by proclaiming police and military operations to ‘secure’ the diamond fields from illegal miners. However, not much of this literature emphasises rural agency. Saunders argues that the landscape of Marange was a ‘confluence of extraordinary conditions’ such as ‘a once-in-a-lifetime diamond strike, a state characterised by militarised partisan control, elite predation and withered professional capacity,’ and ‘willing partners in a shadowy international trade.’<sup>80</sup> He points out that the ‘the allure of enormous mineral wealth incentivized secretive, irregular and predatory behaviour by elites with access to the resource via state.’<sup>81</sup> This sad picture presents a state which was supposed to protect the interests of its people by channelling diamond proceeds to the national economy. For the local community faced with chronic food insecurity, this was even too bad.

For his part, Towriss examines the issue of diamonds in Marange and frames the corruption inherent in its extraction as a means by the state to buy loyalty from the military establishment through benefitting from the gems. He wonders why one of the world’s largest alluvial diamond deposits discovered in Marange would be allowed to be looted by ZANU (PF) politicians as well as both retired and serving members of the national security agencies. Towriss states that a wall of secrecy surrounds the looting of diamonds and that the fields have been completely sealed off in order to plunder the promising resource without trace.<sup>82</sup> His

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<sup>79</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> Richard Saunders, “Introduction: The Many Facets of Marange’s Diamonds.”

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>82</sup>*Ibid.*

work is important in this thesis in terms of its ability to demonstrate the misappropriation of Marange diamonds which were expected to bring relief to the poor people. Although his focus is not directly linked to the issue of food security, it clearly spells out what went wrong with Marange diamonds and why the local people could not benefit from it. His study does not address the impacts of this looting on communities within which the mining operations were being conducted.

Works by Towriss, Saunders and Nyamunda and Mukwambo help to bring out the dilemma which Mutare District faced in spite of the availability of mineral resources in their backyard. The discovery of diamonds in Marange actually led to colonial-type dispossessions whereby communities were evicted from their ancestral fields without compensation. In other words, dispossession, alienation, and selective application of law and other biased policies have continued since the colonial era and Mutare residents have responded to these issues in different ways. These works lay the foundations for a discussion of the irony of poverty amid plenty because communities from which this rich resource was being extracted remain worse off after the mining operations due to corruption. This work, is, however, a modest attempt to add a third category which has begun to focus on food security, community empowerment, environmental issues, including pollution control, water resource use and management, and environmental impacts and assessment. This category has to do with literature based on livelihoods and wealth creation in communities impacted by mining operations.

In the same vein, the literature on natural resources takes issue with the conduct of a predatory state which does not take into account the interests of the majority and concerns for environmentalism. In his discussion on ‘Marange Diamonds and Militarised Accumulation,’



Shumba points out that the state deployed violence and coercion in the pretext to stamp out informal and illegal diamond trade.<sup>83</sup> This violence culminated in the death of artisanal miners in various military and police operations. Senior ruling party officials, military elites and the security establishment were involved in one way or another in the extraction processes in secured zones.<sup>84</sup> It was on the basis of these illicit financial deals and human rights abuses that the Marange diamonds were considered to be ‘dirty’ and worth investigating.<sup>85</sup> The corresponding environmental impacts to this crude exploitation are disregarded which is what advocates of food sovereignty preach against. Food sovereignty aims to provide for the food needs of all people while respecting the principles of environmental sustainability, local empowerment and agrarian citizenship. They have set out parameters of a food system that puts the levers of food control in the hands of those that are hungry.<sup>86</sup>

Illustrating with empirical data and case studies across the sub-continent as a means to examine the role of the state in the food crisis, Devereux and Maxwell argue that the root cause of the food crisis in Africa has been the sheer negligence and lack of political will by the post-colonial state to give priority to smallholder agriculture.<sup>87</sup> The two scholars declare that, “sub-Saharan Africa is the only region in the world currently facing both widespread chronic food insecurity and threats of famine”, and offer to examine “why it is so and what can be done.”<sup>88</sup> They attempt to do this by drawing on a variety of disciplines spanning agricultural economics and nutrition in their analyses of wide-ranging perspectives on the causes of food

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<sup>83</sup> J. M. Shumba, “Zimbabwe’s Predatory State: Party, Military and Business Complex,”(PhD Thesis, Development Studies, School of Social Sciences School of Social Sciences, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 2016).

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>85</sup> Partnership Africa Canada 2009 Report, “Zimbabwe, Diamonds and the Wrong Side of History,” (Available at [http://www.pacweb.org/.../diamonds.../18\\_Zimbabwe-Diamonds\\_March09-Eng.pdf](http://www.pacweb.org/.../diamonds.../18_Zimbabwe-Diamonds_March09-Eng.pdf), (Retrieved on 14 February 2019).

<sup>86</sup> Wittman, Desmarais and Wiebe, *Food Sovereignty*.

<sup>87</sup> Devereux and Maxwell, *Food Security in Sub-Saharan Africa*.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid*, Cover Page.

insecurity and the role of planning and policy in food security. They offer an exciting dimension of the changing perspectives in the dynamics of food security by arguing that “food security is no longer seen simply as a failure of agriculture to produce sufficient food at the national level, but as a failure of livelihoods to guarantee access to sufficient food to people at the household level.”<sup>89</sup>

For Devereux and Maxwell, food security is no longer conceptualised as a problem of agriculture as well as a failure of national food production. Instead, they offer a convincing argument to say that food security reflects a failure not only of understandings of the various dimensions of food security but failures of intervention as well. Their approach, which is to analyse the role of the state in terms of policy formulation and implementation, is, therefore, targeted at contributing towards an improved understanding of food security and a more effective food security policy. This is achieved through empirical data and case studies within sub-Saharan Africa. Their analysis of the position of the state in contexts of food security is critical for this thesis in that it provides a window into the experiences of other people within the region who have gone through similar situations in fighting hunger and what sort of response or coping strategies such people have deployed.

The literature on food aid which suggests that donor countries have since the 1990s depoliticised food aid has not kept up with recent developments on the donor-recipient relations. This literature has focused mainly on the positive motivations for donating food aid as a humanitarian effort and for its potential as a development tool.<sup>90</sup> For instance, Uvin,

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<sup>89</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> Peter Uvin, “Regime, Surplus and Self Interest: The International Politics of Food Aid,” *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 36, No. 3, 1992, pp. 293-313; Raymond Hopkins, “Reform in the International Food Aid

Hopkins and Clay and Stokke have concurred that, although economic and political considerations are present to some degree in the motivation for giving food today, it is mainly given as part of a development regime that aims primarily to promote food security and rural development rather than as a means to serve the domestic economic and political interests of donor countries.<sup>91</sup> When Zimbabwe introduced its controversial land reform programme in 2000, Britain and the United States of America responded by suspending food aid, or imposing conditions for its distribution. Food aid was explicitly tied to political goals, in particular to bring back the government to legality in its approach to land reform. This changing framework is important in our understanding of food aid as a multi-purpose tool mainly used at the convenience of the donor community. This is why Cheru and Modi argue that a strong and effective development-oriented state needs to play a critical role in promoting fairer investment models that are structured to support local farmers using technologies that are compatible with African realities.<sup>92</sup>

However, the thesis is not blind to the literature that claims that food aid has a few advantages such as offsetting food shortages in low-income countries where fluctuations in domestic production threaten food security.<sup>93</sup> Shopouri and Missiaen argue that food aid practices since the 1990s were less motivated by the goal of disposing surpluses than they had been in earlier periods.<sup>94</sup> While the fact that the motivations for donors have rapidly changed in favour of

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Regime: The Role of Consensual Knowledge,” *International Organisation*, Vol. 46, No. 1, 1992, pp. 225-264; Raymond Hopkins, “The Evolution of Food Aid: Towards a Development-First Regime,” In Vernon Ruttan (ed.), *Why Food Aid?*, Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1993; and, Edward Clay and Olav Stokke (eds.), *Food Aid and Human Security*, London: Frank Cass, 2000.

<sup>91</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>92</sup> F. Cheru and R. Modi (eds.), *Agricultural Development and Food Security in Africa*, London: Zed Books, 2013,

<sup>93</sup> Shahla Shopouri and Margaret Missiaen, “Food Aid: Motivation and Allocation Criteria,” *Foreign Agricultural Economic Report No. 240*, Washington D.C: Economic Research Service, 1990, pp. 18-22.

<sup>94</sup>*Ibid.*

using food aid as an instrument for development in recipient countries is quite debatable, what is certain, though, is that food aid plays a controversial role in reducing hunger. By providing emergency food aid, donors have reportedly saved millions of lives where natural disasters or wars have threatened people's access to food. But, one remains cautious on the real intentions of the donor community as suggested by Issa Shivji who warns against judging the outcome of a process by the intentions of its authors, but by analysing the objective effect of actions regardless of intentions.<sup>95</sup> This comes in the wake of the fact that after decades of providing food aid, donor countries have not succeeded in eradicating hunger in many parts of Africa.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This thesis deploys the political economy framework as the dominant theory upon which complementary theories are anchored in order to analyse the relationship between political and economic forces that have shaped rural food security. This framework allows for fundamental concepts and questions about how this relationship has changed over time. The theory is strong insofar as it cultivates greater appreciation of relations of production in terms of which issues of power and the allocation of resources are examined. Such challenges as unemployment, poverty, food insecurity or inflation are central as concepts that affect the relationship between the role of government and class power in resource allocation in any economic system. As a multi-pronged perspective, the political economy theory examines how political force affects the choice of economic policies. In order to embrace the diversity of aspects of food security, it mainly looks at the role of the state in relation to food production, access, availability, marketing and distribution.

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<sup>95</sup>Issa G, Shivji, *Silences in NGO Discourse: The Role and Future of NGOs in Africa*, Nairobi: Pambazuka, 2007.

Then thesis further deploys conceptualisations by Stephen Devereux and Simon Maxwell that the absence of political will to transform livelihoods delays efforts at food security in southern Africa. The two scholars have identified southern Africa as the only region still struggling with food insecurity whereas other regions no longer consider this as a threat at all. They locate the problem in the absence of willpower in most independent states to eradicate poverty. They frame the unending episodes of hunger within the context of, among other factors, economic and political reasons, and very narrowly climatic hazards that may also cause a drastic impact on food secure regions. For instance, they demonstrate the potential impact of smallholder farming on rural households, due to the sheer unwillingness by the state to address this key issue. In the context of Zimbabwe, this framework of analysis finds expression in situations where in Mutare District, for instance, revenue from the recent discovery of diamonds have not been channelled towards increasing opportunities among rural farmers. The state has deliberately failed to account for such revenue given what Towriss unearths and calls securitisation of the gem by which he means the diversion of proceeds to groups within the echelons of the ruling ZANU (PF) party and the army.

The thesis builds on views presented by Devereux who, in his analysis of hunger, states that all famines are explained by a combination of ‘technical’ and ‘political’ factors, where political factors include bad government policies, failure of the international community to provide relief, and the instability created by prolonged episodes of war.<sup>96</sup> His position is that “national governments and the international community are increasingly held accountable for failing (or refusing) to prevent the drought from developing into famine.”<sup>97</sup> These observations also fit well into the Ethiopian famine cases of the early 1970s and 1980s when

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<sup>96</sup> Devereux, “Famine in Africa,” In Devereux and Maxwell (eds.), *Food Security in Sub-Saharan Africa*, p. 120.  
<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

an unprecedented famine rocked the country due, not only to the changing pattern of weather, but also because of the escalation of armed conflict.<sup>98</sup> Similarly, when the 1947 drought hit Mutare District in particular and the rest of the Sabi-Lundi area in general because of adverse weather phenomena, the mechanisms for drought mitigation were hardly in place, leading to hunger and starvation.<sup>99</sup> The district experienced massive losses of livestock and agricultural production in addition to which it succumbed to malnutrition and disease.

In some of its parts, the thesis also utilises the emerging theoretical framework of livelihoods vulnerability which provides a basis for tracing social causality, in addition to physical processes and how they are linked.<sup>100</sup> In this theory, vulnerability is understood as the direct opposite of security. This means that the impact of any threats to food security depends on pre-existing conditions and people's capacity to withstand them.<sup>101</sup> Such conditions or contexts are determined by political, cultural and physical factors. This is in addition to macro-economic conditions, terms of trade, demography or social differentiation. Herselberg and Yaro illustrate the nature of vulnerability framework more closely by treating it as a triad which comprises the threats faced by rural people, their resilience and sensitivity to shocks, and the outcome of peasant strategies.<sup>102</sup> Maxwell adds to this debate by stressing that the interaction between resilience and sensitivity provides a stronger framework for the analysis

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<sup>98</sup> Edmund J. Keller, "Drought, War, and the Politics of Famine in Ethiopia and Eritrea," *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol.30, No. 4 (December 1992), pp. 609-624.

<sup>99</sup> Government of Southern Rhodesia, *Sabi-Lundi Development; Second Interim Report*, Salisbury: Government Printers, June 1948. This Report was presented on 18<sup>th</sup> June, 1948 to the Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia by Sir Alexander Gibb & Partners, Consulting Engineers.

<sup>100</sup> J. Ribot, "The Causal Structure of Vulnerability: Its Application to Climate Impact Analysis," *GeoJournal*, Vol. 35, No. 2, 1995, pp. 119-122. See also Jan Herselberg and Joseph A. Yaro, "An Assessment of the Extent and Causes of Food Insecurity in Northern Ghana Using a Livelihood Vulnerability Framework," *GeoJournal*, Vol.67, No. 1, 2006, pp. 41-55.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*

of food insecurity over a period of time.<sup>103</sup> His proposition is that people's resilience to weather fluctuations or economic stress depends on their human, financial, physical or social capital base. It also depends on the nature of coping strategies which they adopt as they strive to recover from the effects of shocks.<sup>104</sup>

This sustainable livelihoods (or vulnerability) theory is critical to this thesis in a number of important ways. For instance, it provides that the economy of rural and even urban societies is no longer dependent only on farming, but, of late, includes non-farm activities. The fact that Mutare District continued to be vulnerable due to poor harvests has been quite baffling if not disturbing. It is surprising why local authorities still held on to the justification that drought and other emergencies were responsible for the erratic nature of rural food security. The thesis, therefore, makes use of this theoretical underpinning as a window to explore why non-farm activities were still undeveloped. Barrett, Peardon and Webb agree with Bryceson in demonstrating how other progressive societies have promoted the non-farm income as a growing source of livelihood in the global South.<sup>105</sup> When a livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets and activities required for a means of living, it is considered sustainable.<sup>106</sup> Thus, Lanjouw and Lanjouw submit that a secure livelihood is one that combines farm and

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<sup>103</sup> S, Maxwell, "The Evolution of Thinking about Food Security," In Devereux and Maxwell (eds.), *Food Security in Sub-Saharan Africa*.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>105</sup> C.B. Barrett, T. Reardon and P. Webb, "Non-farm Income Diversification and Household Livelihood Strategies in Rural Africa: Concepts, Dynamics, and Policy Implications," *Food Policy*, 26, pp. 315-331; D.E. Bryceson, "De-agrarianisation in Sub-Saharan Africa: Acknowledging the Inevitable," In D.F. Bryceson and V. Jamal (eds.), *Farewell to Farms: De-agrarianisation and Employment in Africa*, Leiden: Ashgate Publishing, 1997.

<sup>106</sup> Herselberg and Yaro, "An Assessment of the Extent and Causes of Food Insecurity in Northern Ghana Using a Livelihood Vulnerability Framework."

non-farm activities in order to tap on its envisaged advantage of providing a variety of procurement strategies for food and cash.<sup>107</sup>

The strength of the sustainable livelihood approach for this thesis lies in its provision of a broader perspective as compared to previous theories which tended to stress selected aspects of food insecurity while neglecting others. For example, during the Malthusian era, the “food first” theory erroneously viewed food insecurity as emanating from poor agricultural performance relative to increasing population.<sup>108</sup> Similarly, scholars such as Sen and Sijm overemphasized the entitlement approach in which they argued that poverty and lack of command over the resources required for producing food compromised food security.<sup>109</sup> More importantly, researchers such as Baumann and Sinha, Keen, and Rangasami provide a narrower prism through which to engage with the issues of hunger. This is mainly because they advance the political view which blames state policies for shortfalls in food security.<sup>110</sup> Conversely, Scoones argues that the livelihoods approach shows how sustainable livelihoods are achieved through access to a range of resources deployed in pursuit of livelihood strategies.<sup>111</sup> Hence, rural farmers can adapt through embracing multiple livelihoods relative to

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<sup>107</sup> J. O. Lanjouw and P. Lanjouw, “The Rural Non-Farm Sector: Issues and Evidence from Developing Countries,” *Agricultural Economics*, 26, pp. 1-23.

<sup>108</sup> P. Pinstrup-Andersen and R. Pandya-Lorch, *Agricultural Growth is the Key to Poverty Alleviation in Low-Income Developing Countries*, Washington DC: 2020 Vision Brief, 1995.

<sup>109</sup> Sen, *Poverty and Famines*; J. Sijm, *Food Security and Policy Interventions in Ghana*, Rotterdam: Netherlands Institute, 1993.

<sup>110</sup> P. Baumann and S. Sinha, “Linking Development with Democratic Processes in India: Political Capital and Sustainable Livelihoods Analysis, London: National Resources Perspectives,” 2001; D. Keen, *The Benefits of Famine: A Political Economy of Famine and Relief in South-western Sudan, 1983-1989*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994; and, A. Rangasami, “Failure of Exchange Entitlements: Theory of Famine: A Response Part One”, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 20, No. 41, pp. 1747-1751.

<sup>111</sup> I. Scoones, *Sustainable Rural Livelihoods: A Framework for Analysis*, Sussex: IDS Working Paper, 1998.



opportunities, constraints and changing social relations which are dictated by internal and external forces.<sup>112</sup>

In dealing with the theme of food aid, the thesis adopts the “follow the leader” theoretical conceptualisation advanced by Loman, Pop and Ruben. It demonstrates that the anatomy of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) is undermined by the fact that their external funding often comes with explicit conditions and expectations sometimes divorced from the actual needs of the intended recipients.<sup>113</sup> This theory assumes that public funding influences donor allocation choices about preferred recipient countries for development aid. Therefore, there is a dichotomy between ‘recipient needs’ and ‘donor-interest’ models. While the former model assumes that development aid is likely to focus on the poorest regions, the latter model asserts that donor aid allocation depends on priorities fixed by lead funding agencies.<sup>114</sup>

Further to this, external parties may influence and control NGOs through implying terms and conditions when donating funds, in the process missing out on the development needs of recipient communities. Their bargaining power is reduced by the extent of reliance on external funding, with the result that if such reliance is greater, the control of external parties over resources, decisions and activities of the NGOs increases. The sad reality is that NGOs that try to address immediate and compelling needs of societies facing emergencies may actually risk having their funding summarily withdrawn unless they seek approval first. Khivers and Isbister present a case of the 2011 famine that rocked the Horn of Africa where thousands of

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<sup>112</sup> Herselberg and Yaro, “An Assessment of the Extent and Causes of Food Insecurity in Northern Ghana Using a Livelihood Vulnerability Framework.”

<sup>113</sup> B. Loman, I. Pop, and R. Ruben, “Follow the Leader: How Dutch Development Non-Governmental Organisations Allocate their Resources-The Contradictory Influence of Donor Dependency,” *Journal of International Development*, Vol. 23, Issue 5, 2011, pp. 641-655.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*

people lost their lives partly due to delayed donor response.<sup>115</sup> In their analysis, they cite the damning report entitled, ‘A Dangerous Delay,’<sup>116</sup> which was jointly published by Save the Children and Oxfam and in which it was argued that the NGOs which attempted to mitigate this emergency responded too slowly. The NGOs working in that region required approval from government agencies before implementing disaster relief strategies. This contributed significantly to the deteriorating conditions which culminated in the deaths of approximately 50,000 to 100,000 people, of whom more than half were children under five.<sup>117</sup>

Throughout Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya, a combined figure of roughly thirteen million people, most of them women and children, were adversely affected. It follows that if appropriate action had been taken timeously, the negative consequences of the emergency would not have been severe. This is because the NGOs had access to accurate information about the growing crisis provided by early warning systems, in the process reducing the effectiveness of their interventions. The governments of the affected countries have a big share of the blame in that they did not put adequate measures in place to forestall the impending disaster. This is why Ruttan argues that food aid compromises governments in that they tend to shoulder their relief responsibilities to NGOs and relax to address the problem of hunger in the long-term.<sup>118</sup> However, these figures should not completely becloud some positive aspects of NGO in mitigating the impact of extreme hunger in contexts of emergency. As Harvey and Lind put it, food aid may be useful in ameliorating situations of famine where

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<sup>115</sup> R. Khivers and T. Isbister, “Resource Dependency and the Non-Governmental Organisation Response to Famine: A Theoretical Study,” *Corporate Ownership and Control*, Vol. 13, Issue 1, 2015, pp. 1-8.

<sup>116</sup> D. Hillier and B. Dempsey, *A Dangerous Delay: The Cost of Late Response to Early Warnings in the 2011 Drought in the Horn of Africa*, London: Save the Children and Oxfam, 2012.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>118</sup> H.W. Ruttan, (ed.), *Why Food Aid?* Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1993.

other relief programmes are inadequate, the temporary nature of this intervention notwithstanding.<sup>119</sup>

### **Chapter Synopsis**

Chapter 1 highlights the distinct food security issues affecting rural farmers in Zimbabwe with reference to Mutare District. It provides multiple scholarly perspectives on the definition of food security and on policy recommendations on how to address food insecurity. After its examination of key theoretical underpinnings of food security and coping strategies, the chapter then proceeds to an overview of the effectiveness of coping strategies mounted by people affected by persistent food insecurity. Having laid this t groundwork, Chapter 2 provides a historical background to the infamous 1947 drought and its aftermath which prompted the colonial state to rethink food security in order to strengthen its preparedness to confront future drought scenarios. In addition to this brief historical overview, this chapter also addresses the question of land alienation as well efforts to irrigate catchment areas of the Save and Odzi rivers that flank Mutare District. Chapter 3 examines debates on initiatives suggested by the Federal and Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) governments in addressing food insecurity up to the mid-1970s. It tackles widely popularised concepts of conservation and community development and their relationship to food security.

Thereafter, Chapter 4 provides an analysis of the impact of the liberation war on Mutare District food security. It demonstrates the contribution made by women in guaranteeing war-time food security. Chapter 5 explores the impact of shifting land policy as well as post-war efforts at eradicating hunger through co-operative work. Chapter 6 then discusses food security within the context of the discovery of diamonds in Marange which rekindled hopes for improved

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<sup>119</sup>Paul Harvey and Jeremy Lind, "Dependency and Humanitarian Relief: A Critical Analysis," *HPG Report 19*, London: Humanitarian Policy Group at ODI, July 2005.

livelihoods. Long suffering villagers anticipated that the availability of diamonds in their locality would narrow the gap of poverty and obviously overturn the misfortunes of food insecurity. However, as the chapter demonstrates, those hopes were misplaced and the diamonds turned out to be ‘a curse more than a blessing’ because of the vicious and uncompensated displacements of villagers and other forms victimisation which ensued.

Chapter 7 then focuses on the political economy of food aid, taking into account the impact of Plan International’s relief and emergency programmes in the district since 1986. The debate on food aid is centred on its sustainability given variables such as donor perception and control. Food aid is also subject to manipulation by politicians in recipient countries who may be seeking to buy votes especially from the rural electorate ahead of crunch elections.<sup>120</sup> While the chapter accedes that food aid might trigger a donor-dependence syndrome amongst beneficiaries, it, nonetheless, demonstrates its importance in temporarily cushioning desperate communities from starvation. In limited circumstances, recipient governments may also benefit by redirecting resources initially earmarked for emergency relief to other projects that may benefit entire populations. Finally, Chapter 8 provides the conclusion in which not only a summary of key points made across chapters is given, but also where the implications of the study are reaffirmed. It also highlights the study limitations in addition to recommending areas for future research.

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<sup>120</sup> Alexander, *The Unsettled Land: State-making and the Politics of Land in Zimbabwe, 1893-2003*, Oxford: James Currey, 2006, p. 187; See also, Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, ‘Vote ZANU (PF) or Starve’, Harare: ZLHR, 2002; Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition, ‘Zimbabwe Report’, Harare, 20 June 2002).

## CHAPTER TWO

### FOOD SECURITY AND THE COLONIAL STATE, 1930-1952

#### Introduction

Foregrounded by a historical overview of the impact of land alienation on the country's agricultural performance, this chapter first demonstrates that the absence of adequate mechanisms to confront the 1947 drought negatively affected food security in Mutare District. This analysis partly borrows from David Harvey's theoretical perspectives on primitive accumulation which Karl Marx originally advanced. According to Harvey, the practice of primitive accumulation would entail taking land through enclosing it or expelling its owner in order to create a landless proletariat before releasing such land into the privatised mainstream of capital accumulation.<sup>121</sup> As Harvey would note, this process can be accomplished through violence, war, enslavement and colonialism.<sup>122</sup> Due to the lack of will to support African food security, the skewed nature of colonial land policy which turned Africans into paupers and cheap labourers, and the prolonged impact of this drought, the state hardly designed effective tools to combat hunger and mitigate the crisis.<sup>123</sup>

Given this scenario, it was increasingly difficult for the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland to prepare more adequately to meet the demand for food as the Africans were disarticulated from their means of production. When this Federation came into effect in 1953, still Africans had not fully recovered from the effects of the 1947 drought. Significant reforms happened in the agricultural sector, with increased government interventionist measures enshrined in the Land Husbandry Act and growing conservationist ideas. One of these was the move to

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<sup>121</sup> David Harvey, *The New Imperialism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005, p. 149.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>123</sup> I. R. Phimister, *An Economic and Social History of Zimbabwe, 1890-1948: Capital Accumulation and Class Struggle*, London: Longman, 1988.

increasingly commercialise willing African farmers by introducing rural irrigation schemes. However, the implementation and distribution of irrigation equipment did not match demand. Moreover, the radical shift from indigenous crops involving small grains which at least tolerated adverse weather events to new varieties, including maize, exposed many rural cultivators to the risk of hunger during this period. The government promoted the growing of cash crops ahead of varieties that generated food such as millet and sorghum as part of its wider policy to earn foreign currency. This caused further discomfort and anger among rural producers whose nostalgic memories of erstwhile strategies of cropping and drought response mechanisms were increasingly evoked.

Given that drought events are natural hazards, many governments have set aside plans to adequately respond to them when they strike in order to reduce their effect on food security and nutrition.<sup>124</sup> For example, prediction, monitoring, impact assessment and response initiatives are clearly spelt out and budgeted for so that in the event of a drought, these components are invoked. The need for responsive mechanisms actually grew in this period within the African region, considering that the impact of climate change was being gradually felt. McCann notes that increasing concern over climate's historical role emerged as an immediate response to contemporary crises of drought in the Sahel, Ethiopia and southern Africa.<sup>125</sup> DeVries reiterates that climate can have indirect effects that can be short-term, conjunctural, or long-term; hence, it follows that climatic changes had important implications

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<sup>124</sup> For instance, Kenya and Uganda have a drought management authority responsible for drought risk and disaster management while Ethiopia has revised its disaster prevention and management policy in order to improve its preparedness and response systems.

<sup>125</sup> James C. McCann, "Climate and Causation in African History," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 2/3, 1999, pp. 261-279.

for African agrarian work within the Federation.<sup>126</sup> However, some governments are ill-equipped to address any such extreme effects of droughts. Ethiopia, for instance, has repeatedly been threatened by extreme hunger. Indeed, the famine of 1984/85, El Niño-induced crop failure claimed lives and livestock, an issue which remains imprinted in the memories of Ethiopians.<sup>127</sup> In colonial Zimbabwe, people suffered from extensive crop failures and struggled to recover beyond the occurrence of the 1947 drought.

Zimbabwe's drought preparedness and mitigation plans were hardly available for the benefit of Africans at the time. Households which depended on crop cultivation, livestock rearing and other ancillary branches of food security could not easily find alternative sources of food. Although Africans had their own local systems of responding to drought, they lacked capacity to withstand the impact of prolonged droughts. Palmer notes that, although mining, manufacturing and trade among local African people were developed as far as possible; they were unable to totally offset the limitations of agriculture.<sup>128</sup> This means that any occurrence of a drought, such as the 1947 one, was bound to push the district to the edges of survival in terms of food security and nutrition because of lack of alternatives required to cope with the consequences of drought.

Also his weak disaster-risk preparedness was compounded by the huge impact that the Second World War exacted on the Southern Rhodesian state which was prompted to contribute to the imperial war effort like other British colonies. Indeed, the war posed a great risk to African livelihoods in that the many Africans who were crowded in the reserves were driven into the labour market. The state's major preoccupation was more on meeting the wartime demands than

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<sup>126</sup>Jan DeVries, "Measuring the Impact of Climate on History: The Search for Appropriate Methodologies," In Robert Rotberg and Theodore Rabb (eds.), *Climate and History: An Interdisciplinary History*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981, p. 19.

<sup>127</sup> Webb and Von Braun, *Famine and Food Security in Ethiopia*.

<sup>128</sup> R. Palmer, "The Agricultural History of Rhodesia," Robin Palmer and Neil Parsons (eds.), *The Roots of Rural Poverty in Central and Southern Africa*, California: University of California Press, 1977.

in improving the indicators for food security and rural development. David Johnson observes that in 1942, the Rhodesian cabinet ‘resolved that legislation be prepared to enable native labour to be conscripted for civil work of national importance.’<sup>129</sup> Samasuwo also echoes this point by arguing that when Britain was faced with food shortages, she took steps to increase her extractive capacity so as to secure the much needed economic resources to finance the war.<sup>130</sup> These national developments cascaded into Mutare and various other districts of the country; hence, compromising the food security position of these districts. To this end, the first section of this chapter provides a historical overview of land alienation; the second one examines the actual drought experience and the food production drive. The third section focuses on irrigation efforts in the aftermath of the drought up to eve of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland.

### **Historical Background, 1930-1946**

In this section, an overview of the historical dynamics about land appropriation is given before an examination is made of the attempts by the Rhodesian government to set up irrigation schemes as a means to mitigate rural farmers from the adverse effects of the drought. On 12 September 1890, the British South Africa Company (BSAC) raised the British flag in what became known as Rhodesia. The original impetus was to make quick profit from the perceived “second Rand” or second “Johannesburg.”<sup>131</sup> After frantic efforts to prospect for gold, the Company government was left with no option but to turn to agriculture. This move was a clear indication of how food security was to be jeopardized, considering that the Colony’s future agricultural production was going to be organised by novices with rudimentary appreciation of

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<sup>129</sup> D. Johnson, “Settler Farmers and Coerced African Labour in Southern Rhodesia, 1936-46,” *Journal of African History*, Vol. 33, pp. 111-128.

<sup>130</sup> Nhamo Samasuwo, “Food Production and War Supplies: Rhodesia’s Beef Industry during the Second World War, 1939-1945,” *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 2, 2003, pp. 487-502.

<sup>131</sup> One of the major reasons for settler occupation was to extract vast mineral resources, especially gold since it was rumoured that the lands beyond the Limpopo were endowed with rich deposits. However, this turned out to be untrue and the Pioneer Column had no alternative but to venture into agriculture.



farming, let alone under unfamiliar Rhodesian ecological conditions.<sup>132</sup> Moreover, the BSAC's speculative holding of vast tracts of arable land occurred at the expense of food security. While such land remained idle and reserved for incoming, well-to-do settlers and the unborn, the majority of African farmers grappled with infertile soils in their effort to produce food.

The creation in 1894 of the Gwaai and Shangani Reserves and the subsequent acts to appropriate land disadvantaged Africans in terms of their agricultural economy. In spite of agriculture being the mainstay of not only enhanced food production, but also for the benefit of settler and indigenous economies as a whole, it is surprising to note that the foundations for fully-fledged agricultural operations and management, had barely been laid out by the end of Company rule in 1923 and beyond. Not only did these 'sudden farmers' struggle to acclimatize with new ecological and entomological conditions of Rhodesia; they also actually lacked the requisite political will to boost food productivity. In addition to land grabbing, the trial and error nature of agricultural policy in the early years of occupation culminated into loss of several opportunities by the state to address rural food security. After disbanding the Company Government in 1923, the incoming Responsible Government passed a series of other land acts, particularly the notorious Land Apportionment Act which further frustrated African agricultural life and exacerbated rural food insecurity. .

It is critical to briefly examine the relationship between food security and the Land Apportionment Act so as to gain a fuller appreciation of the root causes of food insecurity in Mutare District during the colonial era. This helps to clearly illuminate how African peasants were disconnected from productive land which was their key means of production. By legislating acts designed to acquire arable land, the Responsible Government moved speedily to

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<sup>132</sup>V.E.M. Machingaidze, "The Development of Settler Capitalist Agriculture in Southern Rhodesia with Particular Reference to the Role of the State: 1908-1939," (PhD Thesis, University of London), 1980.

dispossess Africans of prime land. Africans were settled in unproductive land, in tsetse fly-infested, dry, remote and infertile reserves, among numerous other areas with inherent limitations to human habitation and crop cultivation. According to Robin Palmer, this repressive Act demarcated European from African land, with the former getting upwards of 48 million acres, or half the country. It confined African purchasers to separate and largely non-productive areas, while it endeavoured to pack as many Africans as possible into the reserves, leaving behind only labour tenants.<sup>133</sup> The following table reflects the divisions of land resources by 1930.

**Table 1: Land Categories and Area in Southern Rhodesia, 1931**

	<b>(Million hectares)</b>
European Area	19.67
Native Reserves	8.64
Native Purchase Area	2.98
Unassigned Land	7.12
Forest Land	0.24
Undetermined Land	<u>0.03</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>38.68</u></b>

**Source:** World Bank, *Zimbabwe Land Subsector Study: Report 5878-Zim*, Harare: World Bank, 1986, p. 4.

In Mutare District, only a few pockets of land could be utilised effectively for farming. The areas demarcated as Native Purchase Areas occupied less than one tenth of the Zimunya and Marange communal lands. These included Mukuni North and South Division, Odzi, Bazeley Bridge and Mapembe in Marange; and Rowa, Chitora, Chinyauhvera, Mpudzi, Chigodora and Chitakatira in Zimunya.<sup>134</sup> Although a limited number of Africans were able to purchase land in this category, these were better rainfall areas compared to the rest of the areas in the Reserves, though soil fertility was generally poor in some places. Historically, African farmers were known to be good agriculturalists and this irked colonial officials who were worried that cheap labour would not be obtained if adequate and better land was given to Africans. This fact finds

<sup>133</sup> Palmer, "The Agricultural History of Rhodesia," In Palmer and Parsons (eds.), p. 244.

<sup>134</sup> NAZ, S160/AGR/16/1/54, Centralisation and Native Purchase, Umtali District, 1953-4.

resonance with Ranger's study on Manicaland Province's Chiduku Reserves where he deals with the African resentment of colonial land appropriation and their will to participate in the 1970s guerrilla war in order to overthrow the repressive system.<sup>135</sup> The eventual enactment of the LAA was a culmination of efforts by white settlers to limit African production and starve them so that they would be forthcoming in the labour market.<sup>136</sup> For example, 'Wiri' Edward, Native Commissioner (NC) for Mrewa, argued in 1906 that "the natives today are cultivating twice the amount they did when we came to the country, and so long as the land is unlimited and they have a market for their produce, will the labour supply suffer."<sup>137</sup> This had future consequences to the land question.

The implementation of the LAA severely compromised food security for Mutare District as more Africans were squeezed into the Zimunya and Marange reserves. Although the intention of this section is not to dwell on the nitty-gritty of the LAA, there is space here to argue that the relationship of crop cultivation to food security was clearly jeopardized by provisions of the LAA and other subsequent Acts. Even though this was the case, the Africans remained resolute in their response to these perpetual land expropriation moves by colonial regime. Actually, Ranger adds that market gardening gained increased favour among the Makoni peasants in Chiduku and that they were experimenting with a variety of crops such as maize.<sup>138</sup> By their own admission, Europeans found African farmers very skilled in, and knowledgeable about, crop varieties, soils, rainfall patterns and such other related agricultural data to see them through seasons. Suffice is this reflection by Nobbs, Rhodesia's first Director of Agriculture, that "the native methods of cultivation were frequently of a high order, and enabled a crop to be produced

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<sup>135</sup> Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness and Guerrilla War in Zimbabwe*.

<sup>136</sup> Phimister, *An Economic and Social History of Zimbabwe*.

<sup>137</sup> NAZ, N9/4/19, Report of the N/C Mrewa for the Month of June 1906.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*

under drought conditions when a large European acreage would have failed.”<sup>139</sup> Although Africans fiercely resisted the Act and expanded their yields in order to remain self-sufficient, their agricultural economy was eventually destroyed by the Act.

In the same vein, the admission by some key white officials that the African methods of cultivation were sustainable in their own right demonstrates how land dispossession affected food security.<sup>140</sup> Palmer quotes two renowned and experienced NCs, Posselt and Edwards, who concurred respectively in reference to African farmers that, “as far as their own crops are concerned, I do not think we can teach the Natives anything. The excellence of their crops around tree stumps is indisputable”, and, “While native methods of agriculture may be primitive in our eyes..., we must remember that they are the results of many generations of experience gained by their forefathers in agriculture, with the implements at their command.”<sup>141</sup> So, although European ideas on soils, crops and conservation as espoused by the LAA were welcome, they were supposed to complement, rather than conflict with those known to Africans. With the shifting of the BSAC’s focus from mineral exploitation to land transactions, Africans were priced out of relatively fertile highlands and had inferior lands at their disposal.

In pursuit of the need to produce food even for the basic purposes of subsistence, this forced Africans to spill over into undesignated areas, leading to overpopulation of those areas as well. The LAA partitioned all lands in the Colony into European and African reserves, including some 7.5 million acres as African freehold in the mould of the Native Purchase Areas. One gains fuller insight on the creation of Native Purchase areas in Manicaland province from Ranger’s following exposition:

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<sup>139</sup> Quoted by Palmer, “The Agricultural History of Rhodesia,” p. 246.

<sup>140</sup> NAZ, N9/1/3, Report of the N/C Umtali for the Year Ending March 1897.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*

The Native Purchase Areas were established as a result of the 1930 Land Apportionment Act, following the recommendations of the 1925 Morris Carter Commission. They were designed as compensation for the fact that Africans were not allowed to purchase land elsewhere. These were areas that had mostly been farmed by early settlers before the colony's land was carved up into racial designations. Africans were given the option of buying newly demarcated properties, but the land was often in remote areas and of poor quality.<sup>142</sup>

Interestingly, Ranger actually celebrates the resilience of Africans who were in reserves in resisting the intended effects of the LAA. The Africans put their whole weight on producing for subsistence and for the market, thus, frustrating the state's desire to limit African production. This failure by the settler regime to collapse African agricultural systems through this Act actually irked the state which hoped to get a steady labour supply shortly thereafter.

Arguably, the Land Apportionment Act handicapped the Africans from producing to their maximum best because of the nature of the soils and rainfall in most reserves.<sup>143</sup> Before this law was passed, Africans were at liberty to utilise the land in ways consistent with demand, leaving some of it to furrow, while they could reserve other areas for hunting and pastoralism. As Ranger argues, Shona communities were all basically agricultural and could produce food through growing crops and keeping livestock. Mining, gathering, hunting, trade and other activities were secondary.<sup>144</sup> Following the usurpation of land, their competitiveness was reduced by being increasingly forced off European land. Land was divided and distributed according to race, with the bigger chunk of fertile areas reserved for the whites. The Marange and Zimunya communal areas were born out of the LAA. The recommendations made by Morris Carter in 1925 resulted in land segregation in 1930. There was serious disagreement between blacks and whites over the division of land on racial

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<sup>142</sup> Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness and Guerrilla War in Zimbabwe*.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>144</sup> David Beach, "The Shona Economy: Branches of Production," In R. Palmer and N. Parsons, (eds.), *The Roots of Rural Poverty in Central and Sothern Africa*, California: University of California Press, 1977.

grounds. This also caused confusion and lack of a clear model on how the country's agricultural productivity was to be organized, leading to a serious compromise on food production and access during this period.

### **Drought and the Food Production Drive, 1947-1952**

The framing in this section links the question of drought to human agency and responsibility. It engages with Jesse Ribot's theoretical analysis of climatic events and associated suffering which he argues can no longer be cast as acts of God or nature.<sup>145</sup> Devereux and Maxwell also agree that the renewed focus on droughts as a cause of hunger and famine clouds the attention of researchers from the grounded political, economic and social aetiologies of precarity that expose rural farmers to hazards.<sup>146</sup> Ribot's perspective is that we should appreciate the pre-existing conditions of vulnerability which are inherent in a particular setting before a hazard arrives. For a disaster to cause an impact, such conditions should be studied in order to keep the underlying generative structures of vulnerability in frame, as well as to explain why rural farmers have limited assets and inadequate social protection. Drèze and Sen argue that blaming nature can be very consoling and comforting, while it can be of great use especially to those in positions of power and responsibility.<sup>147</sup> Ribot would conclude that the ability of vulnerable people to shape the political economy that shapes their securities and vulnerabilities is important.<sup>148</sup>

When the drought set in 1947, the settler government made some attempts to coordinate drought relief programmes in order to reduce its impact. The state immediately initiated a food production drive, an ambitious policy to address hunger by rallying every rural farmer to

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<sup>145</sup> Jesse Ribot, "Cause and Response: Vulnerability and Climate in the Anthropocene," *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, Vol. 1, Issue 5, 2014, pp. 667-705.

<sup>146</sup> Devereux and Maxwell, *Food Security in Sub-Saharan Africa*.

<sup>147</sup> J. Drèze and A. Sen, *Hunger and Public Action*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989.

<sup>148</sup> Ribot, "Cause and Response".

produce food crops. This entailed the expansion of the agricultural demonstration work across all areas of the district. In the 1947-48 agricultural season, the Land Development Officers (LDOs) reported that there was relative progress made in implementing this programme in Mutare District. For instance, it was stressed that all “demonstrators had been paving way for the food drive, laying particular stress on seed selection, winter ploughing and the necessity of making kraal compost-response was noticeable in fifty percent of the areas but still apathetic in the remainder.”<sup>149</sup> Further stress was put on “stumping in Maranke Reserve where nearly 100 percent of the land was still unstumped.”<sup>150</sup> Crop prospects generally remained unchanged, that is, fair in Purchase Areas to poor and bad in the Reserves. In terms of livestock, it was also reported that cattle and goats were in a fair condition and general rains had improved grazing slightly. Cattle sales were held in Marange and Zimunya Reserves, the numbers sold being 400 and 200 respectively, which, under local conditions, could be considered good average sales.<sup>151</sup>

In order to ensure that this food production drive was well received by African farmers, propaganda meetings were held. The state made an effort to put the Africans into the picture about the nature of this programme, particularly on the preparations expected during each agricultural season. For instance, in November 1948, four ‘before harvest meetings’ were held in the three areas of the district, the attendance varying between 40, 80 and 200 farmers in Rowa, Chinyauhvera and Mukuni areas, respectively. The table below captures the frequency of such meetings in Mutare District. Reports from LDOs suggested subtle victimisation visited upon the implementers of the policy, clearly showing hostility to farmers who opposed the policy. “General progress is noted in all three Purchase Areas in the

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<sup>149</sup> NAZ, S1012/AGR-4: Land Development Officers: Reports, 1948: NC-Umtali North, Land Development Officers Monthly Report, November 1948.

<sup>150</sup>Ibid. NB. Where the name Maranke appears as reflected in the colonial archive, it refers to Marange.

<sup>151</sup>NAZ, S1012/AGR-4: Land Development Officers: Reports, 1948: NC-Umtali North, Land Development Officers Monthly Report, November 1948.

District,” wrote the LDO. “Evictions of diehards and the cessation of demonstration plots in Purchase Areas are mainly responsible for this,” he concluded.<sup>152</sup> This was, indeed, a commendable gesture in that it was going to relieve the rural masses from starvation if the programme had been initiated from the grassroots and adequately funded.

**Table 2:** Land Development Officers Monthly Report, Zimunya-Maranke, November 1948

Visits Made By Demonstrators	443
Meetings Held	15
Lectures Given	39
<b>Total Attendance</b>	<b>1 044</b>

**Source:** AZ, S1012 /AGR-4: Land Development Officers: Reports, 1948: NC-Umtali North, Land Development Officers, Monthly Report, November 1948.

A couple of years later, the LDOs were to report in mid-1951 that this scheme was gradually well received by farmers in the Native Purchase Areas in Zimunya and Marange. “In Purchase Areas”, the report goes, “most of the Rowa farmers are keen in the food production drive and are putting a much greater effort into preparation of land than ever before.”<sup>153</sup> The food production drive was further reported to be embraced by the rest of the Zimunya area, with the July 1951 report emphasizing as follows:

With respect to agriculture, the response to the food production drive has been encouraging in all areas and is particularly noticeable in the Zimunya area under Demonstrator Mhlanga. In the 750 acres set aside for intensive work, every single landowner has winter ploughed and started compost making. Last season in the same area, the figure was roughly 5%.

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<sup>152</sup> Ibid.

<sup>153</sup> NAZ, S1012/AGR-4: Land Development Officers: Reports, 1952: NC-Umtali North, Land Development Officers Monthly Report, June-July; Umtali South, 1951.



The implication of this to food security in the aftermath of the drought was that the district was poised for better times. However, the emphasis on only hybrid maize while disregarding small grains compromised this otherwise important gesture.

In fact, the amount of effort put by the LDOs in the district to supervise and demonstrate the growing of hybrid maize and other commercial crops could have resulted in the district achieving food security if all crops were included. This is because a cursory look at the frequency of visits to the district by the officers reflects strong goodwill. Such vigorous attempts at promoting hybrid maize in spite of its vulnerability to weather shifts confirm the fact that the state was determined to replace traditional crops with hybrid. The state stepped up its deployment of LDOs and supernumeraries in Mutare District in order to demonstrate what they believed to be the “correct methods of planting.”<sup>154</sup> These officers reported that they had distributed seed for such crops like hybrid maize and that the seeds germinated well.<sup>155</sup> This systematic onslaught on traditional crops posed a serious threat to food security, particularly in the event of a drought. For example, the drought in 1947 had both a direct and indirect bearing on livelihoods. The maize crop did not withstand the heat and there was virtually nothing to harvest from the fields. It also impacted differently on households, with some facing extreme shortfalls of food while others experienced moderate shocks. The following table captures the activities done by the LDOs in 1951 and compiled for the Native Commissioner-Umtali.

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<sup>154</sup> NAZ, S1012/AGR-4: Land Development Officers: Reports, 1952: NC-Umtali North, Land Development Officers Monthly Report, November 1951.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid.

**Table 3: Activities by the Land Development Officer-Umtali, 1951.**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>SPEED &amp; DISTANCE</b>	<b>DETAILS</b>
23/1/51	3894-3930 (36)	Odzi to Rowa
24/1/51	3980-3963 (33)	Rowa to Umtali for cement
25/1/51	3963-4011 (48)	Cement to Mushunje Dams
25/1/51	4011-4035 (24)	Rowa and Zimunya Inspections
26/1/51	4035-4046 (11)	Rowa farm inspections
26/1/51	4046-4074 (28)	To Umtali
27/1/51	4074-4129 (55)	To Mushunje Dams
29/1/51	4129-4157 (28)	Rowa and Zimunya Inspections.
30/1/51	4157-4198 (41)	Rowa and Zimunya Inspections Carrying stones to Nyamavi Dam
31/1/51	4198-4230 (32)	Four trips to Nyamavi Dam
01/02/51	4230-4287 (57)	To Mushunje Dam, Rations, etc
02/02/51	4287-4313 (16)	Two trips to Nyamavi, etc
02/02/51	4313-4326 (approx.) (13)	Returning vehicle to Umtali

**Source:** NAZ, S1012/AGR-4: Land Development Officers: Reports, 1952: NC-Umtali North, Land Development Officers Monthly Report, 23 January-02 February; Umtali South, 1951.

Those that attempted to reserve some portion of their fields for small grains, particularly sorghum, managed to secure some yields.<sup>156</sup> Apparently, the impact could further be disaggregated in terms of gender because women and children seemed to bear the brunt of the disaster on account of their vulnerability. Faced with empty granaries, some women traversed

<sup>156</sup> NAZ, Records Centre, Box 78449, Location: 37.6.7F, File: 151V/F26, Committees: Sorghum Production. 1948-1953.

the length and breadth of the district begging for grain in order to feed their children.<sup>157</sup> Some men trekked to towns to provide labour while others took up menial jobs on nearby plantations.<sup>158</sup>

In terms of cropping, reports from both the Native Commissioner, Umtali and local leadership confirm the gravity of the situation.<sup>159</sup> For instance, the NC-Umtali would report in 1948 that crop yields throughout the districts “were below average for the 1947/1948 season. The season began with fairly good rains and natives were warned not to plant too early in case there was a dry spell. Many Africans who ignored this advice suffered accordingly when the expected dry spell came. Those who planted late had good yields, but the standards of agriculture amongst the reserves remained low.”<sup>160</sup> This mischievous blame on the Africans exposes the state’s refusal of the reality that it had failed to prepare adequately for the famine. The NC’s damning report also touched on the performance of Native Purchase Areas within Mutare, arguing that plot holders in Chinyauhwera and Rowa were facing hunger because of both the drought and poor farming practices. It stressed that farmers in those areas also ignored expert advice against early planting and that “agricultural shows and ‘before-harvest’ meetings held in the Zimunya and Marange reserves and in purchase areas were of little success.”<sup>161</sup> Arguably, this could have been done to prepare Africans for conservation policies which came in the aftermath of the drought, but this was a clear attempt by the state to abrogate itself of the responsibility and blame for failing to positively respond to the negative impacts of the drought, and for its preference of mostly non-food cash crops .

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<sup>157</sup> Interview with Chief Deketeke Zimunya, Zimunya Chief’s Court, Mutare, 12 July 2015.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>159</sup> NAZ S1563, Annual Report for Umtali, 1948, Vol. 2. See Also Interview with Chief Zimunya.

<sup>160</sup> NAZ S1563, Annual Report for Umtali, 1948, Vol. 2.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*

Although the growing of cash crops ahead of small grains was welcome as an ancillary scheme, it appears that the state indirectly frustrated the growing of small grains. This was done through the deliberate muting on reporting on the progress of such crops and escalating positive reporting on hybrid maize (instead of drought-tolerant small grains) and cotton. This was also evident in the commitment displayed by demonstrators. For instance, it was reported in October 1951 that demonstration work was eventually proceeding with greater momentum than before with the aid of supernumeraries.<sup>162</sup> The report went on to highlight that the distribution of fertiliser and seeds had taken place and that “generally, this had been met most enthusiastically by the natives.”<sup>163</sup> This interpretation misses the point in that it was the colonial policy of land alienation that had culminated into the loss of arable land in better rainfall areas rather than the poor response of African farmers to the suggestions offered by the LDOs. Whether or not the African farmers had planted earlier, it was neither here nor there with regards to the impact of the infamous drought; the capacity to withstand the effects of droughts had long been affected by years of colonial subjugation.

Although communal farmers were told about how to conserve soil, they were not provided with measures to meet the problems of drought. After all, soil was not much of value without water.”<sup>164</sup> In fact, there was a succession of three dry years in the country which culminated into the 1947 one and many farmers reaped practically nothing. Right up to the 1950s, the amount of rainfall received was not adequate enough to support agrarian work. Writing in 1949, one observer summed up the picture prevailing in 1947 by noting that “there was not even enough runoff to fill some surface dams. On the 27<sup>th</sup> of January 1950, it was reported that “good rains were needed to save the eastern districts crops,” highlighting that maize (and tobacco) had

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<sup>162</sup> NAZ, S1012/AGR-4: Land Development Officers: Reports, 1952: NC-Umtali South, Land Development Officers Monthly Report, October 1951.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

<sup>164</sup> NAZ, Box 96158, Location 7.5.7R. Drought Relief: “Drought in Rhodesia,” *The New Rhodesia*, 7 October 1949, p. 13.

begun to suffer.<sup>165</sup> This prompted farmers in most areas to become increasingly anxious as their crop situation became direr, especially in the absence of irrigation. It was reported by the Native Commissioner-Umtali that, “unless the eastern districts have substantial rains within the next week or ten days, crops in a number of areas, already showing signs of withering, will be doomed.”<sup>166</sup> In addition, “maize and tobacco have reached a stage at which they must have rain.” But, though the sky over most of the eastern districts is overcast, the prospects of immediate heavy rain seem remote.”<sup>167</sup> The impact of the dry spells before and after the severe drought could also be felt in the cattle economy. *The Umtali Post* later emphasized that grazing was deteriorating and was not sufficiently good to keep cattle in fit condition, further noting that “rivers were down and fears were high that, with the poor rains over the last five years, water tables must have dropped considerably.”<sup>168</sup>

Reports from the northern parts of Mutare District were more or less similar in their assessment of the dry weather event prevailing in the later part of the 1940s to the early 1950s. Rainfall was varied considerably, with some farmers having received below 8 inches, while those at Odzi station recorded a total of 16 inches. Although by January 1950 the water situation was still ‘good’, areas between Umtali and Penhalonga were increasingly becoming desperate. Mr. P.G. Deedes, Chairman of the Umtali North Intensive Conservation Area Committee stated that this was the worst season he had ever known in the 16 years which he had been keeping records. He pointed out that “crops are suffering and the mealies are wilting badly; grazing is drying up. In another 10 days or so, if we have no rain, the mealies will be lost; even if we get rain, the crop will be reduced. Our last good rain was on December 16 this year. Since then, we have had only

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<sup>165</sup>*The Umtali Post*, Friday 27 January 1950.

<sup>166</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>167</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>168</sup>*Ibid.*

one good fall, about fourteen days ago.”<sup>169</sup> An analysis of this statement will reveal that it was a naked decoy from the actual reasons bringing about this situation, which include the abrogation of African land rights in order to systematically impoverish them.

Though half-hearted his remarks could have been, what Mr. Deedes was raising was a reflection of what transpired in the Odzi area because it was more than just the effect of drought spells being experienced by farmers in area. The crux of the matter was that there was need to transform the water situation in Mutare, including in Intensive Conservation Areas within it such as Odzi through dam construction, among other alternatives. Many rivers, including Odzani, were slowly drying up mainly due to the decrease of rainfall over a period of time. Mr. Deedes was amenable to the issue of dam construction, arguing that the building of big dams in the district would enhance water conservation efforts in addition to raising the underground water table. His argument touched on the need for the state, through the authority of the Drought Relief Committee, to carry out such projects because ‘they were beyond the purse of the individual landowner’ and ‘because of their importance to the future of the colony.’<sup>170</sup>

While this section makes the case that it was the state’s responsibility to counter the effects of the 1947 drought which contributed to the declining food security conditions, it is also critical to show how farmers were actually affected in terms of their cultivation. African farmers in the lower part of the Sabi Valley received less than five inches of rainfall during the 1948/49 season, leading to conditions of starvation among households. The newspaper article maintained that the drought was so bad in parts of the Valley that some farmers did not even bother to plant crops.<sup>171</sup> Those who had planted mealies and the more drought-tolerant *mhunga* had their crops surviving only for a few more weeks. The crop outlook in most other areas of the district was

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<sup>169</sup>*The Umtali Post*, Tuesday 31 January, 1950.

<sup>170</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>171</sup>*Ibid.*

fairly depressing, except only in the irrigated areas where crops were coping. The farmers who had attempted to cultivate along the banks of the Odzi River had their sparse crops destroyed by elephants that were driven by dry conditions from their usual surroundings.<sup>172</sup> This compounded the already deteriorating food security conditions.

One of the state's responses to the drought was the introduction of more areas of focus within the food production drive such as conservation as a drought preparedness mechanism. This concept touched on a wide range of activities to be carried out by the local communal farmers with the guidance of the newly appointed LDOs. These programmes also included dam construction, clearance and stumping of new lands to be brought under the Maranke Canal, livestock management, roads rehabilitation and horticulture. The LDOs were expected to produce monthly progress reports on these initiatives intended at combating food shortages in the event of drought emergencies as well as eradicating poverty. For example, some of the issues are captured at length below:

The Soil Conservation Demonstrator has been fully employed in pegging on lands in the Purchase Areas; the erection of contours will be undertaken by the farmers themselves. Two sponge areas were fenced off and one small earth dam constructed. In Maranke, work has been confined to the reconstruction and drainage of the Masvaure Dip Road which is not yet complete. In Rowa area, work continues on the Rowa-Bazeley Bridge Road. An additional 2 miles of road, including four drifts and two culverts have been made. It is anticipated that this road should be completed before the end of June. Fire guards have been made round five plantations and nursery work is continued. Sowings of lemons, oranges and paw paws were made.<sup>173</sup>

These efforts were largely a response to the outcry in the communal areas about the lack of land resources following the Land Apportionment Act which brought about conditions of vulnerability. Given the poor ecological situation of most parts of the district, it was increasingly clear that conditions of precarity were inherent amongst the farmers who had earlier on been disenfranchised by colonial land policy.

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<sup>172</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>173</sup> NAZ S1012/AGR-4: Land Development Officers: Reports, 1952: NC-Umtali North, Land Development Officers Monthly Report, November 1951.

The state's 'modernist' ambitions were also dramatically expressed in the short-term public works projects such as road repairs in tandem with the infamous food-for-work programme. The pressure for more action from the state by starving people forced the state to expedite its response in what Manin and others would term as a public means to discipline government to respond to demands.<sup>174</sup> This is reflected in the LDOs' reports which also dealt with farm schools and vegetable gardens as part of efforts towards the food production drive. Some of the observations were as follows:

For the Maranke Canal, an additional 179 acres have been allocated to 47 new plot holders who are busy stumping the area. It is now thought that the total area of the scheme can be brought up to approximately 400 acres, the remaining ground being either too stony or too steep. With regards to the Maranke School, this is proving not only a success as far as the instruction of pupils is concerned, but also as a useful propaganda centre for the Reserve. During the month, three-quarters of the perimeter was fenced, a vegetable garden started lands winter-ploughed and levelled off and the dormitory block plastered externally.<sup>175</sup>

From the reading of these reports, however, it appears that the majority of the comments uncritically glorified the work of the LDOs at the expense of the realities of hunger still afflicting the rural farmer.

The work of the LDOs was top-down and neglected indigenous knowledge systems about land tenure and other agrarian systems. Alexander's work on this subject of land is critical in illuminating our understanding of the dynamics at hand. She argues that land continued to be a political and economic resource. Its ownership and utilisation was a contested terrain which manifested itself through local struggles.<sup>176</sup> Applied to the Zimunya and Marange areas, the role of the state in power struggles over land can be delineated in reports by LDOs which were top-

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<sup>174</sup> B. Manin, A. Przeworski, and S. Stokes, "Elections and Representation," In A. Przeworski, S. Stokes and B. Manin (eds.), *Democracy, Accountability and Representation*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, pp. 29-54.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>176</sup> Alexander, *The Unsettled Land*.



down in that they tended to overshadow the extent to which communities were affected by food shortage. For instance, Chief Zimunya indicated in his interview that the food situation in the early 1950s remained vulnerable in spite of efforts by the government to implement the food production drive.<sup>177</sup> Chief Zimunya recalled that in each of the wards in his area, one in every three households could skip the afternoon meals and settle only for the dinner, which was itself inadequate.<sup>178</sup> This sharply contrasted with the July 1951 Umtali South LDO Report which maintained that “the response to the food production drive has been encouraging in all areas and is particularly noticeable in the Zimunya area under Demonstrator Mhlanga,” and that, “in the 750 acres set aside for intensive work, every single landowner has ploughed and started compost making. Livestock are in good condition throughout the district and have not yet started to suffer from the drought.”<sup>179</sup> This Report, however, noted that, while great strides were made in winter ploughing and compost making in Rowa and Zimunya areas, “in Maranke Reserve, the Chief attempted to oppose Departmental propaganda on re-stumping and improved farming, but the matter was taken in hand by the Native Commissioner”.<sup>180</sup>

Subsequent reports continued to uncritically hail efforts by both LDOs and Demonstrators in spite of obvious challenges in some areas. These reports also continued to paint a bad picture about the lack of sufficient cooperation by Maranke Reserve where “99.9% of the land is still unstumped” and where “crop prospects remain unchanged.”<sup>181</sup> Although reasons for this were not provided in the reports, it is most probable that the communal farmers disliked the forcefulness of the programmes amid the knowledge that the newly constituted Native Land Husbandry Act of 1951 did not really target to address land shortage in the reserves but to

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<sup>177</sup> Interview with Chief Zimunya.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>179</sup> NAZ S1012/ AGR-4: Land Development Officers Reports, 1951: NC-Umtali South, July Monthly Report.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>181</sup> NAZ S1012/ AGR-4: Land Development Officers Reports, 1952: NC-Umtali South, April Monthly Report.

reinforce the previous land acts.<sup>182</sup> However, these reports clearly skirt the actual reasons behind the lack of cooperation by Africans in the implementation of the Act. Africans were opposed to the limits imposed by the Act on the number of cattle permissible at the household level which was between five and eight cattle. They also opposed the Act's eight-acre limit on land available to each household. Against this background, it was increasingly difficult for LDOs to secure adequate cooperation from a people already impoverished by the terms of the Act.<sup>183</sup>

In the same vein, though unrelated to the issue of land, dam construction was embarked upon as one of the surest ways to minimise the impact of the drought. This was to be made possible by ensuring that water was provided for livestock and that a perennial supply of water was available to water vegetable gardens. Four new dams were constructed and completed in the Maranke reserve during 1948.<sup>184</sup> A catchment furrow was constructed at Chiadzwa Dam in Marange South to help increase the water catchment. Similarly, the Nyachowa Furrow Project in Zimunya was dug during the course of 1948. This project was targeted at improving water supplies, so was the Maranke Irrigation Project whose development, however, was handicapped by construction work on the furrow which remained incomplete for some time.<sup>185</sup> Although some parts of Marange had portions of rich soil, the district often faced famine conditions due to uncertainty of rains, leading to scarcity conditions. The logic of building water reservoirs was based on this realisation, but the state hardly implemented some of these projections due to poor funding.

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<sup>182</sup> There is a wealth of literature on the NLHA, including works by Ian Phimister, and Jocelyn Alexander. See for instance, Alexander, *The Unsettled Land*, and Phimister, *The Economic and Social History of Zimbabwe*.

<sup>183</sup> Government of Southern Rhodesia, "The Native Land Husbandry Act," In Southern Rhodesia, *The Statute Law of Southern Rhodesia, 1951*, Salisbury: Government Printer, 1952, pp. 893-922.

<sup>184</sup> NAZ S1563, Annual Report, Umtali, Vol. 2, 1948.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*

However, dam construction was considered to be just a beginning because more promising results were anticipated to come from developing irrigation infrastructure in the Sabi Valley. This would also allow for commercial farming with an emphasis on crops such as tobacco. It was hoped that the profits accrued from irrigation-based commercial farming would be used for purposes of enhancing food security. E.R. Campbell, President of the Rhodesia Tobacco Association, told members of the Umtali Rotary Club at a luncheon meeting on January 20, 1953 that:

The colony's food production was alarming, and to prevent the danger of semi-starvation in the future, there were two obvious courses: development of the Sabi Valley as a long term policy, and the building up of the colony's food production potential from the profits from cash crops such as tobacco as an interim policy. The Sabi scheme was quite the biggest factor in the eventual solution of the colony's food problem, but it would take many years and many millions of pounds before this magnificent idea could be brought to fruition.<sup>186</sup>

In the meanwhile, water supply was to be guaranteed by increasing the number of dams across the district. *The Herald* later reported that the drought-hit farmers "started an unprecedented building spree which promised to be most extensive in the history of Southern Rhodesia water conservation".<sup>187</sup>

The impact of the drought was also being felt in areas of livestock management. In addition to unavailability of sufficient pasture, the animals were also hard-hit by the outbreak of foot and mouth disease in the Maranke and Zimunya reserves in April 1948. This prompted veterinary authorities to call for all cattle to be moved down to the southern parts of the reserve and concentrated in the vicinity of Mutsago dip tank where they were inoculated. A cordon was placed across the centre of the reserve from the Odzi to the Sabi Rivers and a cattle free belt established between the infected herds and the European farms lying along the northern border

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<sup>186</sup> "Obvious Courses for Staving off Starvation: Sabi Development and using Tobacco Profits for Food Production," *The Umtali Post*, Wednesday, 21 January 1953, p. 7.

<sup>187</sup> "Farmers Building Dams Galore," *The Herald*, Friday 15 January 1960, p. 8.

of the reserve.<sup>188</sup> These efforts were unsuccessful and the disease spread to the farms where it eventually decked. All the cattle in Zimunya and Maranke as well as adjoining purchase areas were moved to Muromo where they were quarantined and inoculated. These cattle were later moved back to their respective reserves in August 1948 but remained in quarantine until the end of February 1949.<sup>189</sup> African farmers clearly disliked this mass movement of their cattle because they could no longer easily access them for draught and milking purposes. However, cattle deaths as a result of the combination of drought and the foot-and-mouth disease were widespread in the district as evidenced by the statistics below.

**Table 4: Disposals of Cattle for 1948, Maranke/ Zimunya Reserves**

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Removals	479
Sold	2030
Dead	838
Killed for food	1 731
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5 078</b>

**Source:** NAZ, S1563, Annual Report, Umtali, Vol. 2, 1948.

The table above also reveals the desperate situation which prompted households to sell their cattle in order to raise money to purchase food. It also shows a big number of cattle that were killed for food in this tough period.

Livestock policy was also promulgated in Mutare with a view to destocking. This was sharply resented by Africans because of the age-long tradition whereby cattle were symbolically important and were also a store of wealth, which could only be solved in cases of emergency.

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<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*

The government was of the view that the destocking programme would go a long way in freeing up grazing space to the numerous 'scrub' African cattle which 'posed' serious husbandry challenges in the event of drought. In 1950, the NC-Umtali received confirmation from the Office of Native Area Administration about the official position regarding destocking in order for him to implement in his district:

With reference to your Minute No. 219/502/23/50 of the 16<sup>th</sup> February 1950, I have to inform you that this was duly before the Native Land Board who resolved that the maximum number of livestock which may be depastured by Crown lands tenants in the Rowa and Chinyauhwera Divisions shall be eight head of large stock, or the equivalent of small stock. Tenants may now be ordered by you to reduce their holdings to eight head within a reasonable period, which should be fixed by yourself. The decision has been made in terms of section 8(h) of Government Notice No.99 of 1945.<sup>190</sup>

What this meant was that, in addition to inadequate and uncertain rains characteristic of these areas, the destocking programme was bound to cause discomfort to Africans as it was directly speaking to conditions of scarcity which they were already facing. Garlake stresses this point more vividly by pointing out that "large numbers of cattle were kept by all the early Shona cultures, not only as a source of food, but also as a means of storing and accumulating wealth."<sup>191</sup> The programme was, therefore, inappropriate as a solution to the problems at hand.

Like the Chirumanzu case in which the destocking programme,<sup>192</sup> along with the 1947 drought, hampered the Shona practice of seeking to ameliorate the impact of drought through trading grain for livestock,<sup>193</sup> cattle were fast depleted in Mutare District. This was due to the regular sales in exchange for food and succumbing to poor pasture and water, prompting villagers to appeal to Government for other alternatives. This destocking exercise did not take

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<sup>190</sup> NAZ, S1012/23: Report: Destocking: Dated 08 March 1950 by the Native Area Administration to the Native Commissioner-Umtali: Re: Rowa and Chinyauhwera Divisions: Umtali District, Destocking of Natives Occupying Crown Land.

<sup>191</sup> P. Garlake, *Early Art and Architecture of Africa*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002, p. 156.

<sup>192</sup> Following the attempts by the colonial regime to address the problems of overgrazing in the Reserves owing to long-term impacts of the LAA, it was suggested through the Native Land Husbandry Bill that each family unit ought to reduce their cattle to five, a position that was fiercely resisted by Africans.

<sup>193</sup> Drinkwater, *The State and Agrarian Change in Zimbabwe*, p. 64.

into account the fact that Africans actually utilised their cattle as entitlements during droughts to cushion themselves from excessive food insecurity. While Chirumanzu lost over 1,000 cattle to destocking and drought in the first year of the drought,<sup>194</sup> many areas within Mutare District and the wider Sabi Valley had equally not recovered from the drought which extended into the early 1950s. The district received far much less rainfall than did its northern neighbours like Mutasa. This resulted in total crop failure in several areas of the district. In an article entitled, “Sabi Valley Failures Bring Threat to Africans of Semi-Starvation,” the colonial administration hastily and purportedly put up ‘arrangements to import food and sell it to Africans.’<sup>195</sup> Yet the biting effects of destocking were completely ignored.

Emphasis continued to be put by the colonial authorities on the desirability of strict monitoring of African methods of cultivation which were being blamed for the crop failure. Addressing farmers on irrigated lands on water rights which had become conditional on proper protection against erosion, the Umtali North Intensive Conservation Area Committee stressed the need to draw farmers’ attention to terracing and other suitable means of combating erosion. The Committee further alluded to the fact that “if accelerated run-off and other causes of erosion are to be arrested, the importance of proper control of the native’s methods of cultivation should be emphasized.”<sup>196</sup> While it can be admitted that great damage was done by some communal farmers who cultivated along stream banks and slopes which had to be left to grass, many farmers were alive to the dangers of such approaches to farming and had generally cautious by suspending cultivation in some parts of the land until it regained fertility.

The food production drive also encompassed dip tank and road construction and maintenance as well as other forms of community work under a food-for-work programme within the district.

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<sup>194</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>195</sup>*The Umtali Post*, Wednesday 14 April 1954, p. 1.

<sup>196</sup>*The Umtali Post*, Friday 10 February 1950, p. 8.

There was notable progress in these efforts in both the Maranke and Zimunya Reserves. The several monthly reports compiled by LDOs bear witness to this. For example, one of the reports noted that in Marange, six miles of road between Masvaure and Mutsago had been reconstructed and drained and several drifts improved. The road between Mutsago and Maponde had also been repaired and graded, while “work on the main road between Rowa (Zimunya) and Maranke Reserve was being graded, with approximately four and half miles having been completed in October 1951.<sup>197</sup> Further evidence of the ongoing efforts in face-lifting the district was given for road works on the Bazeley Bridge to Chipfatsura via Mushunje link as well as dip tank construction. In October 1951, for example, the LDO intimated that the dip tank at Muromo had been completed, though it was found to be leaking. The report went on to suggest the urgent need for remedy “as soon as the native builder responsible could be found”. In addition, “stone and sand had been carted to the site of a proposed new dip tank in Maranke and a trial pit has successfully been sunk”.<sup>198</sup> With respect to community work, the October 1951 Report stated that the construction of storerooms at Rowa was complete together with two demonstrators’ houses, one in Rowa and the other at the Maranke Canal.<sup>199</sup>

The positive impact of all these efforts on food security was negligible. Most Africans disdained these initiatives on account of their command structure from the top to the grassroots. The problem with LDOs and other policy implementers was that they did not consult. As a result, they met resistance from African farmers each time they introduced programmes of action targeted at soil and water conservation to improve yields. This tended to create animosity between them and communal farmers in executing the food production drive, resulting in the application of force in bringing African farmers into line. This is confirmed, for instance, in an

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<sup>197</sup>NAZ S1012/ AGR-4: Land Development Officers Reports, 1951: NC-Umtali South, October Monthly Report.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid.

April 1951 report in which three Native Purchase Areas in the district, that is, Mukuni (Marange), Chinyauhwera and Rowa (Zimunya) were said to have made ‘general’ progress in community projects, “courtesy of the eviction of ‘diehards’ who were reluctant to implement Government policy in these areas.”<sup>200</sup> The report concluded by stressing that only through force would some Africans cooperate, arguing that the successful projects“ had had a marked effect on the native mind, who now realized that such work was, in fact, to their advantage, although at the time of construction, they were hostile to the work.”<sup>201</sup> It was, therefore, ideal for the state to come up with properly scheduled awareness campaigns which integrated African experiences in order for them to participate and enjoy the envisaged advantages of these processes rather than to try and use force that characterised the implementation of most rural development projects during the era of the Land Husbandry Act.

### **Summer Irrigation and Renewed Food Production Calls**

The state tried to experiment with irrigation to deal with future food needs of the country. Considering the fact that the Mutare District was generally arid, there was a gesture to examine the possibility of setting up infrastructure to irrigate the lands using the waters from the Odzi River. In order to do this, the state carried out feasibility studies on the Sabi-Lundi area (which included Mutare).<sup>202</sup> For instance, in their Second Interim Report on the Sabi-Lundi Development, Sir Alexander Gibbs & Partners Consulting Engineers stressed the urgency for both a long and short-term policy to be implemented to “increase the agricultural output of Southern Rhodesia, if the gap between food production and food requirement is to be bridged.”<sup>203</sup> In the same Report, William Gavin, the Chief Agricultural Adviser to the British Ministry of Agriculture during the Second World War, confirmed, by personal observation, that

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<sup>200</sup> Ibid.

<sup>201</sup> NAZ S1012/ AGR-4: Land Development Officers Reports, 1951: NC-Umtali South, April Monthly Report.

<sup>202</sup> Government of Southern Rhodesia, *Sabi-Lundi Development: Second Interim Report*.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid.



there existed “large areas suitable for crop production under irrigation- of the order between a quarter and half-a-million acres” in the Lower Sabi-Lundi valleys.<sup>204</sup>

This situation succinctly captures the critical relationship between food security and agriculture. Based on the case study of the Bwanje Valley Irrigation Scheme in Malawi, Veldwisch, Bolding and Wester have noted that improvements in rural livelihoods may be better served by ensuring that new irrigation schemes are embedded in existing landscapes and that they should complement existing livelihood strategies rather than supplanting them.<sup>205</sup> One of the aspects of this Chapter is to analyse debates and contestations on the various attempts by the colonial state to address the critical food question through instituting summer irrigation infrastructure in Zimunya and Marange communal areas lying within the Sabi ecological belt. There was need to rally African farmers to appreciate the mechanics of this infrastructure to avoid a scenario where the project would not have takers. In the Bwanje Valley case, foreign interveners fixed an irrigation scheme that did not only defy the participatory irrigation development approach in Africa, but also one that was designed with the conventional irrigation factory mind-set which was ill-suited for creating durable water networks and not customised for local conditions.<sup>206</sup>

The desirability of an irrigation scheme that would include Zimunya and Marange reserves was stressed in 1948 by A. F. Russell, the Acting Governor of Southern Rhodesia. He echoed sentiments by the Agriculturist for Native Affairs and the Acting Chief Engineer, Irrigation Department, about the need to improve the agricultural capacity of the Sabi Valley. In his

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<sup>204</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>205</sup>Gert Jan Veldwisch, Alex Bolding and Philippus Wester, “Sand in the Engine: The Travails of an Irrigated Rice Scheme in Bwanje Valley, Malawi,” *The Journal of Development Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 45, pp. 197-226.

<sup>206</sup>*Ibid.*

address to the High Commissioner for South Africa, Russell highlighted the importance of erecting irrigation infrastructure, starting off with four schemes. According to him,

The project is to divert water from the rivers detailed below in order to irrigate lands occupied by Natives in the arid parts of the Native Reserves mentioned where the rainfall is so low that the production of ordinary Native food crops is very limited. The schemes selected for consideration, which have the recommendations of the Acting Chief Engineer, Irrigation Division, are as follows:-*Munyanyadzi River Scheme*: Mutambara Reserve, water for 200 acres; *Matikiti River Scheme*: Mutambara Reserve, water for 2,000 acres; *Sabi River Scheme*: Musikavantu Reserve, water for 2,000 acres, and; *Mvumvumvu River Scheme*: Mutambara Reserve, water for 500 acres.<sup>207</sup>

In order to stress the urgency of the programme, the Acting Governor recommended for consideration, the appointment of the Chief Native Commissioner or his deputy as an authorised Agent “for the purpose of carrying out the proposed schemes.”<sup>208</sup> Following the granting of this request on 12 October 1934, Prime Minister Godfrey Martin Huggins, and the Governor, was prompted to undertake the proposed schemes without further delay. Consultations with the High Commissioner were indispensable because the Reserves were vested in him.

In pursuing the option of summer irrigation, several other variables, particularly related to water issues, were taken on board as part of the detailed study of how the widening gap between food production and food requirements could be met in Zimunya and Marange. In some cases, access to water for purposes other than irrigation could be curtailed if the Water Court Judge felt that water levels would seriously be hampered; hence, exposing crops to vulnerability. The following remarks by the Chief Irrigation Engineer, C.L. Robertson, bear testimony to this: “In 1922, I inspected the Zimunya Reserve in connection with a proposal by the Umtali Municipality, to take 1000,000 (1 million) gallons from this stream for supply to the town”, he remarked. “That application was refused by the Water Court on grounds that it would interfere

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<sup>207</sup>NAZ S160/1P/5-104/1/50: Zimunya irrigation scheme, 1934: Letter dated 6 October, 1934 by A.F. Russell, Acting Governor, to His Excellency, the High Commissioner for South Africa, Pretoria.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid.

with potential irrigation requirements of Natives in the Zimunya Reserve, and; actually at that time, isolated small acres of land were being irrigated by the natives,” he concluded.<sup>209</sup>

A related situation arose where irrigation projects that depended on whims of other dominant players suffered prolonged periods of dryness. This was because such powerful farmers sought to quench their own water needs before they allowed excess flow proceed to projects other than theirs. For instance, the water situation in the 1940/41 season at the Mutema Irrigation Project south of Mutare was reported as critical following denial of access to the Tanganda River by the Sabi Estate. Due to the fact that the Sabi Estate had priority rights to the water in the Tanganda River, only a limited amount of water was available for irrigation on that project. The Agriculturist for Natives stressed that, as a result of this contestation, “very low yields were had and irrigated plots produced less than half a crop.”<sup>210</sup> He also expressed doubt whether such yields were ample enough to feed the plot holders, adding that crops on all other lands throughout that area were a complete failure and that emphasis should be put on irrigation.<sup>211</sup>

In other circumstances, the Water Court would not approve of more projects for African farmers until those that would have been approved were fully occupied. For example, the Agriculturist for Natives complained in 1939 that “The natives of the Melsetter sub-district have now had three years to take plots on the Umvumvumvu project and two years to take plots on the Nyanyadzi project and yet there are only a small number who have taken advantage of their opportunity.” He added that “The importance of getting these projects more fully occupied is further emphasized by a [recent] statement by an officer of the Irrigation Department that authority from the Water Court to start work on the proposed furrow for Musikavantu Reserve

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<sup>209</sup> Ibid.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid.

<sup>211</sup> NAZ S160/1P/5-104/1/50: Zimunya Irrigation Scheme: G/16/1.P.G/ Letter by the Agriculturist for Natives to the Chief Native Commissioner, Dated 2<sup>nd</sup> September, 1941: Famine Conditions: Sabi Valley.

this year was refused because so few plots had been taken up on the Nyanyadzi project.”<sup>212</sup> What the authorities were missing here was their lack of engagement with the targeted African beneficiaries with regards to the acreage entitled to them. Drawing from the experience of the adjacent Melsetter projects of Muwushu and Mutambara Reserves, it can be argued that people took long to occupy plots under irrigation, not because of their lack of knowledge of the agricultural value of those plots, but largely because of the colonial state’s failure to adequately consult with them in respect of their traditional forms of free-hold tenure. This resistance tended to slow the pace at which additional projects in the Zimunya and Marange areas of Mutare Rural District were to be implemented.

Given the critical link between crop cultivation and food production, research has shown that, where such crop production is threatened by “environmental perturbations, such as drought”, emphasis on irrigation should be placed.<sup>213</sup> Presenting the case for the Sokoto-Rima Valley in Nigeria and with reference to the Green Revolution strategy, Watts underscored the need for irrigation as an important pivot about which agrarian development rotated. This ambitious irrigation project fits neatly into the bigger post-World War 2 state-planned “modernisation” efforts replicated in British colonial Africa. Famously characterised as the “second colonial occupation,” Alexander argues that it drew on an empire-wide set of ideas that emphasised technical solutions to post-war economic and political problems besetting colonies.<sup>214</sup> Cooper echoes this by suggesting that the immediate post-war period, characterised by the Cold War, were a turbulent time during which state intervention across the whole spectrum of fields from

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<sup>212</sup>NAZ S160/1P/5-104/1/50/P/Gen 3/39: Agriculturist for Natives to the CNC, 24 August 1939: Allocation of Plots under Irrigation: Muwushu and Mutambara Reserves: Re-allotment of Plots.

<sup>213</sup> Michael Watts, *Silent Revolution: Food, Famine and Peasantry in Northern Nigeria*, California: University of California Press, 1983, 13.

<sup>214</sup> Jocelyn Alexander, “The Politics of States and Chiefs in Zimbabwe,” In John L. Comaroff and Jean Comaroff, *The Politics of Custom: Chiefship, Capital, and the State in Contemporary Africa*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018.

welfare and the environment to production was required.<sup>215</sup> For Watts, “the case for irrigation appears quite self-evident in an area subject to limited rainfall, recurrent drought and open, irrigable floodplains.”<sup>216</sup> With irrigation, the peasant, according to Berger, was bound to reduce the levels of vulnerability arising especially from the vagaries of climate. The peasant would at least strive to survive all the hazards of agriculture such as bad seasons, storms, droughts, floods, pests, accidents, impoverished soil, animal and plant diseases, and crop failures, in addition to other natural and man-made catastrophes.<sup>217</sup>

The proposal to implement irrigation schemes in Zimunya and Marange in particular and the rest of the Sabi Valley was supported by, and resonated with, the above framework of understanding. But this is not to say that there were no other variables affecting crop production since the irrigation projects could also be frustrated by water shortages in dry spells. Initial efforts by Alvord to train the first agricultural demonstrators and send them out to the reserves were not met with enthusiasm either by the African or the European because the latter feared African competition in the market place while the former protested against lack of consultation. Indeed, when Alvord encouraged Africans to grow maize, the European farmers complained and the training of demonstrators was temporarily suspended in 1934. In the process, this created confusion among the new irrigators.

For Mutare District, the dry ecological conditions were pushing families to the edge of survival. Although the colonial state admitted that crop failures occasioned by erratic rainfall patterns were placing local residents in a position of heightened vulnerability, efforts of installing irrigation infrastructure were proceeding very slowly and were inadequately funded. However, the gesture towards providing a scheme for irrigation in Zimunya and Marange areas was

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<sup>215</sup> Frederick Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society*, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1996.

<sup>216</sup> Watts, *Silent Revolution*.

<sup>217</sup> John Berger, Quoted by Watts, *Silent Revolution*, p. 12.

commendable. In his letter dated 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1936 to the Chief Native Commissioner, the Agriculturist, Native Affairs Department, stressed the need to draw examples of success stories of irrigation works in similarly hilly and mountainous areas. “As previously reported to you”, argued the Agriculturist, “I saw, while in America, works for utilization of flood waters for summer irrigation which gave excellent results”, and that the proposed plan “affords us an opportunity for construction of similar works on Zimunya Reserve.”<sup>218</sup> The Agriculturist further alluded to the fact that, “This part of the Reserve, west of the Mpudzi River, suffers from prolonged drought periods every year. It seems to be a dry sport and receives much less rain than the areas east of the river and scanty crops are grown every year. For this reason, irrigation for summer crops is warranted.”<sup>219</sup> It seems clear, therefore, that this acknowledgement strongly supports the conclusion that the inability of the state to progressively implement irrigation works in spite of glaring evidence of perennial crop failures in these areas exacerbated food insecurity.

Devereux also warns of dire consequences of poor harvests on food security. He has argued that the threat of crop failure continued to be the major source of vulnerability faced in non-conflict contexts by poor farmers. This is because their survival heavily depended on growing their own food without recourse to other alternatives.<sup>220</sup> This scenario significantly affects crop yields and compromises the carrying capacity of land in respect of livestock due to reduced availability of water. The Agriculturist for Natives was to report in 1941 about famine conditions in the Sabi Valley that “the rainfall throughout the Sabi Valley area for last season was, without question, the lowest ever experienced.” He further stated that there were rain gauges located at “Chibuwe, on Musikivantu Reserve, at the Sabi Estate adjoining Mutema Reserve, at Birchenough Bridge

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<sup>218</sup> NAZ S160/IP/5-104/1/50: Zimunya Irrigation Scheme: Letter Dated 28<sup>th</sup> March, 1936 by the Agriculturist, Department of Native Affairs, to the Chief Native Commissioner: Matikiti Irrigation Scheme.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid.

<sup>220</sup> Devereux, “Famine in Africa.”

and at Nyanyadzi Halt, Musikivantu Reserve. The recorded rainfall from October (1940) to March (1941) on these rain gauges was 9.68 inches; 7.92 inches; 6.89 inches and 7.86 inches respectively.”<sup>221</sup> The cropping situation in surrounding areas was equally bad as stunting was common due to erratic rainfall. About a quarter of this rain fell before the 10<sup>th</sup> November, 1940, which was too early to be of benefit to crops; the useful growing season rainfall was about 5 inches, about a fifth of the rainfall needed for good crop production. Owing to such scanty rains, African crops throughout this area were a total failure.<sup>222</sup> In view of the need for increased food production, the Sabi Valley project was critical in bringing huge acreages of land under irrigation. Conjointly with irrigation was the need to improve grazing in order to increase the output of the whole of the Sabi catchment area.

In keeping with these proposals, the colonial government was expected to promptly embark on setting up irrigation schemes especially in light of the urgency of the food position of the Colony in general and Mutare District in particular. In their view, Sir Alexander Gibbs and Partners Consulting Engineers argued that the Sabi Valley project could not be regarded purely as a local or an Eastern Province one, but one of national, even international, importance. The total area concerned “is nearly a quarter of the Colony and contains some of its most fertile soils; the estimated irrigable area of 500,000 acres would more than double the national output of crops.”<sup>223</sup> The envisaged benefits for such a project for Mutare is best captured by the Agriculturist’s comments on the performance of the adjacent Nyanyadzi and Umvumvumu Irrigation Schemes. He noted that:

Excellent yields were had from plots under irrigation. More than 4,000 bags of food crops were harvested. All crops in Native lands not under irrigation were complete failures, but crops grown under irrigation will feed all the people in the Mutambara Reserve and many in the Maranke and Sabi Reserves. Two furrows were extended

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<sup>221</sup>NAZ S160/1P/5-104/1/50: Zimunya Irrigation Scheme: G/16/1.P.G/ Agriculturist for Natives to the Chief Native Commissioner, Dated 2<sup>nd</sup> September, 1941: Famine Conditions: Sabi Valley.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid.

<sup>223</sup> Government of Southern Rhodesia, *Sabi-Lundi Development*, 1.

during this dry season, and all Natives in Mutambara and Muwushu Reserves can take up plots if they wish. Maize planted during September and October will be ripe in December and January when a crop of more than 5,000 bags can be expected. Thanks to irrigation, no famine relief work will be required in this area.<sup>224</sup>

Although in some seasons these irrigation projects were at the mercy of limited amounts of water, their importance to food security could not be overshadowed.

Reporting in the same letter above, the Agriculturist succinctly captured the poor status of crops in unirrigated areas resulting from the extreme water shortage by highlighting: “Crops on all other lands in the Musikivantu Reserve and throughout the large area south of it were complete failures and, little or nothing remains of the previous year’s crop.”<sup>225</sup> He indicated that elderly men told him that they had never before experienced such a dry season and that conditions were worse than in 1912 or 1923, the two previous “mutendeni famine” years and that, “Unless grain is available for these people, serious conditions will follow and many will die of famine.”<sup>226</sup> This precarious position compromised food security in seriously alarming ways. He also highlighted the challenges posed by contestations over water rights, citing the case of the Mutema Irrigation Project where severe water shortages affected crops under irrigation.

Due to the fact that the Sabi Estate had priority rights to the water in the Tanganda River, only a limited amount of water was available the previous season for irrigation on that project, while very low yields were achieved and irrigated plots produced less than half the crop. It was doubted whether the yields were ample to feed the plot holders.<sup>227</sup> The Report concluded by pointing out that crops on all other lands throughout that area were a complete failure and a serious condition existed which needed urgent redress. The standard procedure with regards

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<sup>224</sup>NAZ S160/1P/5-104/1/50: Zimunya Irrigation Scheme: G/16/1.P.G/ Agriculturist for Natives to the Chief Native Commissioner, Dated 2<sup>nd</sup> September, 1941: Famine Conditions: Sabi Valley.

<sup>225</sup>Ibid.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid.



irrigation water was that, under the Water Act, 1927, applications for the use of public water had to be made to the Water Court by the owner of the land, or his duly authorized agent. It was, therefore, recommended that His Excellency, the Governor appoint the Chief Native Commissioner or his duly authorized agent of the High Commissioner “for the purpose of acquiring the right to use water from the rivers mentioned above, for irrigation of Native lands.”<sup>228</sup>

A key question, however, was the limited total acreage covered by these proposed summer irrigation schemes in Mutare district. Considering the ballooning African population looking up to this irrigation facility, the envisaged acreage fell far too short of expectations. For instance, only 500 acres of irrigable land were being reserved for the Zimunya irrigation scheme.<sup>229</sup> In fact, there were debates over the capability of the Zimunya area to accommodate irrigation projects exceeding 500 acres owing to its mountainous nature. On the one hand, the Chief Irrigation Engineer expressed pessimism about the viability of the Zimunya project, citing a number of factors including the fact that the “majority of this land is, however, too steep to be suitable for irrigation, with the exception of the land adjacent to the Mpudzi River.”<sup>230</sup> He remarked that, “I am doubtful, therefore, whether an area of 500 acres of suitable irrigable land is available and in addition whether there is normally sufficient water for the irrigation of such an area”.<sup>231</sup>

On the other hand, the Agriculturist in the Native Affairs Department, in his assurance letter to C, Bullock, the Chief Native Commissioner, allayed the Chief Irrigation Engineer’s fears by

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<sup>228</sup>NAZ S160/1P/5-104/1/50: Zimunya Irrigation Scheme, 1934: Letter Dated 6 October, 1934 by A.F. Russell, Acting Governor, to His Excellency, The High Commissioner for South Africa, Pretoria.

<sup>229</sup> NAZ S160/1P/5-104/1/50: Letter Dated 7 December 1932: C.L. Robertson, Chief Engineer, Office of the Irrigation Division, Department of Agriculture, Salisbury, to the Chief Native Commissioner: Proposed Irrigation Scheme: Zimunya Reserve.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid.

emphatically presenting evidence of the availability of vast irrigable land in Zimunya: “I would state in reply to your request for reasonable proof that 500 acres of suitable land are commanded by this scheme that the area possible to irrigate is at least 1000 acres.”<sup>232</sup> He elaborated that approximately 200 acres of all bench land above the bluffs east of the Native Commissioner’s Camp under Chief Chigodora, was suitable for irrigation. This land lay in Chief Chigodora area, and was approximately 200 acres. A further 300 to 400 acres belonging to Headmen Nehwangura and Chitakatira could also be put under irrigation, in addition to which 500 to 600 acres of irrigable land around the area bordering Mvududu to the northwest could equally be explored for to ascertain feasibility.<sup>233</sup>

From his assessment, the Agriculturist noted that “additional lands south of Mvududu in the area occupied by Buwerimwe and his people along the east bank of the Mpudzi River” to the tune of about 200 acres were readily available for irrigation.<sup>234</sup> It was further indicated that there was “a suitable area west of the camp on the road and lying between the Nyambira and Nyachowa Rivers which may also be irrigated.”<sup>235</sup> Although the hilly and mountainous Zimunya and Marange areas were set aside as Reserves under the notorious Land Apportionment Act, the colonial state was reluctant to speedily institute remedial action to address food security in the district already teetering on the brink of disaster emanating from land dispossession.<sup>236</sup> The concluding remarks by the Agriculturist in the Native Affairs Department clearly capture this reluctance; “It will be seen from this that the question of whether or not 500 acres may be

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<sup>232</sup>NAZ S160/1P/5-104/1/50: Zimunya Irrigation Scheme: Letter Dated 22<sup>nd</sup> December, 1932 by the Agriculturist, Department of Native Development, to the Chief Native Commissioner: Proposed Irrigation Scheme: Zimunya Reserve.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid.

<sup>236</sup> For more detailed information on land dispossession, see Alexander, *The Unsettled Land*; Montague Yudelman, *Africans on the Land*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964; Phimister, *An Economic and Social History of Zimbabwe*.

commanded by the scheme is of minor importance. The chief matter is whether or not there will be sufficient water to serve all the land that may come under the irrigation scheme.”<sup>237</sup>

An interesting issue at hand was the politics of funding for these various summer irrigation projects. Due to a number of factors, the funds set aside for irrigation were not fully utilised while in some cases, it was the African labourers who subsidised the cost of such projects through doing unpaid work. Writing in 1935 to the NC-Umtali, the CNC approved of the Matikiti Irrigation Scheme in Zimunya with the assurance that £100 was almost certainly adequate to cover the cost of that project, especially considering unpaid African labour to subsidize costs.<sup>238</sup> The Reserves Trust Fund Committee presided over applications for funds reserved for the development of irrigation in the district. For the Matikiti scheme, the CNC advised the NC-Umtali in 1935 to apply at once to the Secretary of the Reserves Trust Fund for the sum of £100 to be transferred to him for, “if it is left until March, it will expire as unused and a new application will have to be made. Upon its receipt, you will be in a position to inform the Natives that they may proceed at once with the preliminary work of stumping and clearing along the lines of furrow.”<sup>239</sup>

Although in his earlier correspondence to the CNC dated 3<sup>rd</sup> November, 1932 the NC- Umtali expressed uncertainty over the cost of the proposed irrigation scheme at Nyachowa River in Zimunya Reserve, his calculations clearly overlooked labour costs to be incurred. His remarks support this conclusion:

It is difficult to estimate the cost but it should not be excessive. The natives doubtless will agree to do most of the work without wages but they should be given food and an

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<sup>237</sup>NAZ S160/1P/5-104/1/50: Zimunya Irrigation Scheme: Letter Dated 22<sup>nd</sup> December, 1932 by the Agriculturist, Department of Native Development, to the Chief Native Commissioner: Proposed Irrigation Scheme: Zimunya Reserve.

<sup>238</sup>NAZ S160/1P/5-104/1/50: Zimunya Irrigation Scheme: Letter Dated 4<sup>th</sup> February, 1935, from the Chief Native Commissioner to the Native Commissioner-Umtali: Matikiti Irrigation Scheme.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid.

occasional beast for meat. A good boss-boy will have to be engaged and also a native to sharpen drills with perhaps a few drill-boys....Mr. Alvord now points out that most of the streams can be negotiated by taking the furrow into them and out again at convenient points. It will therefore be necessary to spend much on cement culverts or spillways. I am of the opinion that £100 would be quite sufficient. I beg to apply for a grant from the Native Reserves Trust for this amount.<sup>240</sup>

In some extreme cases, even the little budgeted expenditure could not be fully utilized, prompting the Native Affairs Department to switch the unused funds to purposes other than irrigation; hence, frustrating the timely completion of projects concerned. For instance, the funds that had been applied for in 1932 to cater for use in the Marange Reserve were not fully exhausted as evidenced by the NC's acknowledgement to the Chief Native Commissioner (CNC) of receipt of "£200 in April last for the improvement of water supplies in the Maranke Reserve", but some of which funds remained unused. The NC explained that, "Owing to the transfer of Mr. Speares and for other reasons, only £76.18.3. of this amount has been expended and I can see no hope of being able to do any further work in the Maranke Reserve till the next dry season."<sup>241</sup> Although this was the case, the NC still underscored the urgency of the Zimunya/Marange cases as "likely to benefit a greater number of natives."<sup>242</sup>

Arguments about the application for water authority persisted throughout this whole period of setting up irrigation schemes in Mutare rural district. In some instances, the proposed schemes interfered with already existing water arrangements entered into by the Water Court and settler farmers operating in Zimunya and Marange. In other circumstances, it was about proposed furrows cutting through other people's farms, a case in point being the 'Farm Chigodora' in the Zimunya Reserve which was owned by T.C. Hulley. In his communication to the CNC, the Agriculturist in the Native Affairs Department proposed ways to circumvent the huddle of

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<sup>240</sup>NAZ S160/1P/5-104/1/50: Zimunya Irrigation Scheme: Letter Dated 3<sup>rd</sup> November, 1932 by the NC-Umtali (W. Selwyn Bazeley) to the CNC, Salisbury: Proposed Irrigation Scheme: River Nyachowa: Zimunya Reserve.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid.

<sup>242</sup> Ibid.

convincing the owner of this farm against obstructing progress in setting up an irrigation project around this farm;

I wish to report to you that, in view of the decided opposition by Mr. T.C. Hulley, owner of the farm “Shigodora” on which the proposed out-take for the furrow is located and the serious condition of crops on the Reserve this year with the natives confronted with certain famine if not relieved by Government, the Native Commissioner, Umtali, and myself, visited this Reserve on March 31<sup>st</sup> (1933) and investigated the possibility of taking out the proposed water furrow at a point located inside the Reserve boundary.<sup>243</sup>

The investigation brought important results in as far as the irrigation scheme was concerned. One of them was that most of the irrigable lands which fell under Headman Chigodora would not be affected since the proposed out-take on the Reserve boundary was far lower in elevation than the site above the waterfall where Hulley operated from. Instead, these lands could be irrigated from a furrow taken out from the Nyarutimba River at the Reserve boundary.<sup>244</sup>

However, this arrangement failed to fully resolve the impasse because Hulley still contested it on the grounds that his grazing land could be interfered with. In any case, the furrow could be difficult to maintain in the face of huge numbers of cattle inundating it. By his own admission, the Agriculturist observed that, “It should be remembered that Hulley is very much opposed to this furrow and that the area through which it will be run on his farm is being used by him for grazing cattle. These cattle in the furrow will be a continual course of trouble and expense in the maintenance of this furrow.”<sup>245</sup> In presenting his argument for a furrow inside rather than outside the Zimunya Reserve boundary, the Agriculturist stressed that the project was even going to be cheaper, considering that no concrete dam wall was still necessary there, save for an ordinary dam constructed of timbers cut on the spot and banked with brush, grass and earth. He maintained that such dams were used successfully throughout the rocky mountain areas of the

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<sup>243</sup>NAZ S160/1P/5-104/1/50: Zimunya Irrigation Scheme: Letter Dated 22<sup>nd</sup> December, 1932 by the Agriculturist, Department of Native Development, to the Chief Native Commissioner: Proposed Irrigation Scheme: Zimunya Reserve.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid.

<sup>245</sup> Ibid.

United States in taking out water furrows from small streams, adding that they were inexpensive, serviceable and could be easily repaired if damaged by heavy rains.

With this reasoning in mind, the Agriculturist implored for imperativeness in reconsidering drawing water from the Nyarutimba and Nyachowa Rivers in order to solve this problem. He wrote to the effect that, “in consideration of the details given above, the decided opposition from Mr. Hulley and the serious shortage of crops on this Reserve which may, to a large extent, be remedied this year if this furrow is constructed at an early date.”<sup>246</sup> He added that he wished to recommend for consideration that the original application to the Water Board to take out a furrow above the waterfall on “Shigodora” farm be withdrawn. This would be substituted for by an application to take out water from the Nyachowa and Nyarutimba Rivers at points inside the Reserve boundaries. He concluded that work on that furrow “had to be undertaken not later than May this year in accordance with the scheme outlined.”<sup>247</sup> Boundary and water rights issues, therefore, continued to significantly delay implementation of proposals for irrigation, much to the suffering of targeted beneficiaries of those schemes.

### **Conclusion**

The period leading to the 1947 drought and shortly afterwards proved to be of great significance to the district’s food security. The fact that the country was still reeling in the burden of World War 2 costs limited its ability to respond to the drought more effectively. From a climatic point of view, the greater part of this period was a generally dry one, with only three of the seventeen seasons being what one could call good agricultural years.<sup>248</sup> The drought heightened the possibility of hunger, prompting the state to chip in with drought

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<sup>246</sup> Ibid.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid.

<sup>248</sup> NAZ, Box 97846, Location: 37.4.7F; RTN3/58; Director of Agriculture Circulars, 1949-1963.

relief projects such as the food production drive.<sup>249</sup> This drive did not yield immediate results as it sidelined small grains in favour of maize and other commercial crops. This chapter concluded by a discussion on the preliminary efforts by the colonial government to tame the vast area of the Sabi Valley along which Mutare District lay for purposes of boosting food production. The watering of the Sabi Valley was considered to be the best example where scarce materials and limited resources could fully be used to disperse the risk of crop failure. Admittedly, the Sabi Valley was a large area of fertile soil capable of growing good crops under irrigation as the basis for the development both of crops and livestock. Therefore, the state dismally failed to deal with the drought, largely because of its lack of political will and partly due to wartime commitments and skewed land policy. Some of the debates spilled on into the Federal period beginning in 1953 and further still to the UD in 1965.

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<sup>249</sup> NAZ, S2500: Drought Relief, 1949-1960.

## CHAPTER THREE

### FEDERATION, UDI AND RETHINKING FOOD SECURITY, 1953-1975

#### Introduction

The overarching argument for this chapter is that the problem of hunger and malnutrition in Mutare District remained unresolved despite the emergence of Southern Rhodesia as the chief beneficiary of the spoils of the Central African Federation. It illustrates how the broader plans for British capital investment and development through a federation of its African territories were hopelessly out of touch with indigenous African economic interests. In addition, the Rhodesia Front Party's growing obsession with the policy of community development from 1962 and its flagrant disregard of African demands for equal opportunities following its November 1965 Declaration, provided no remedy to rural starvation. This is not only because the programme was imposed on Africans without their input, but also that its objectives of rethinking the African role in the post-World War Two industrialisation efforts were half-hearted, more so as a tactic to rationalise and enhance white control of economic and political power.<sup>250</sup> For his part, Ian Smith's eagerness to protect narrow and selfish white minority interests at all costs, as well as his unflinching opposition to majority rule at a time when other territories were achieving their independence, compounded the problem of rural food security.

This study demonstrates that the Rhodesian state did not demonstrate serious commitment to meet the agricultural and food security needs of Mutare District. The move by Southern Rhodesia, Northern Rhodesia, and Nyasaland to combine efforts at this material time offers an interesting context within which to explore the structural weaknesses of colonial policy which contemplated that a federation would make economies more viable while promoting "racial partnerships" between whites and blacks. The practical experiences of Africans in

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<sup>250</sup> Graham C. Kinloch, "Problems of Community Development in Rhodesia," *Community Development Journal*, Vol. 7, No. 3, 1972, pp. 189-193.



Mutare District vis-a-vis the wider goals of this Federation help to explain why this colonial project had little to offer for the critical African constituency, not least in terms of rural development, but more essentially food security. Roger Howman, Southern Rhodesia's Deputy Secretary for Internal Affairs, and a leading exponent of Community Development, envisaged a situation in which Africans had to be treated as an organic whole rather than as individuals.<sup>251</sup> This framing provides useful insight into an analysis of the political economy of rural food security.

The state sought to establish why previous policies, particularly the NLHA, were exceedingly difficult to implement. In the European eyes, the poor agricultural performance of the 1950s was perceived to have resulted from application of policies affecting Africans on an individual rather than group basis.<sup>252</sup> By contrast, the 1960s witnessed a policy shift towards "development within the context of the African's communal culture," apparently little affected by decades of contact with Europeans.<sup>253</sup> The African community was then viewed as capable of being 'developed' as a collective body, on the basis of communal self-help and self-control of its own affairs, but without endangering white hegemony.<sup>254</sup> This was done to give a semblance of a community working in the common good, bound by its culture. But this is why Alexander argues that neither councils nor community boards and the entire traditional leadership could deliver land and control over land and people. The effort to establish customary authority marked only a "theoretical withdrawal of what remained an interventionist state, weakly rooted in African society."<sup>255</sup> The programme was seen as a smokescreen for the dreaded policy of separate development. This changing ideological

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<sup>251</sup> R. Howman, "Economic Growth and Community Development in African Areas," *Native Administration Department Annual*, X. 1. 1969, p. 3.

<sup>252</sup> Kinloch, "Problems of Community Development in Rhodesia."

<sup>253</sup> Howman, "Economic Growth and Community Development in African Areas."

<sup>254</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>255</sup> Alexander, J, *The Unsettled Land*.

framework had serious consequences for Mutare District as Africans strongly felt that the oppressive system was still intact and worth dislodging in tandem with the growing wave of nationalism sweeping across the colony during this period.

When the country joined the Federation with its northern neighbours, the question of territorial food security only briefly featured. More generally, the Federal government had the onerous task to encourage territorial governments to work together in various areas affecting food production. These included cropping, livestock management, soil and water conservation, drought mitigation systems and control of disease and armyworm that compromised yields.<sup>256</sup> These policies would then cascade to the grassroots where implementation was carried out and with varying outcomes. For Southern Rhodesia, the racial issue continued to place Africans at a disadvantage because of its impact on how resources were shared and distributed. As a result, most benefits of policy that accrued to Africans were incidental rather than intended. Such a situation arose from the inherently problematic framing of the relationship between blacks and whites within the Federation as ‘horse and rider’ respectively.<sup>257</sup> From the outset, this ill-fated merger was conspicuous for its racial discrimination despite being touted as a partnership between Europeans and Africans. Its inaugural Prime Minister, Huggins, had obviously been attracted by the anticipated economic returns of the Federation.<sup>258</sup> The implication of this unholy wedlock was that Africans had to bear the brunt of segregation across all facets of the rural economy.

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<sup>256</sup> NAZ, Records Centre, Box 96158: Location: 7.5.6F. Departmental Policy, 24/01/57-17/07/63: Agriculture (Federal Ministry of Agriculture: Conservation Policy for Northern and Southern Rhodesia).

<sup>257</sup> A. Cohen, ‘Settler Power, African Nationalism and British Interests in the Central African Federation: 1957-1963’, (PhD Thesis, University of Sheffield, 2008).

<sup>258</sup> For some insights of on the mechanics of the Federation, see also relatively older texts like A. Hazelwood and P.D. Henderson, *Nyasaland: The Economics of Federation*, Oxford: Oxford Bulletin of Economic and Statistics, 1960.

With regards to community development, the idea was initially popularised by the United Nations and the British Colonial Office as an object of theoretical and practical study in matters of rural development. The United States Agency for International Development also assisted its implementation in many British colonies. Community development was then officially adopted in Rhodesia in May 1962 as a major instrument for rural development.<sup>259</sup> The implementation of community development was largely focused on the African areas, primarily known as the Tribal Trust Lands, “holding nearly eighty per cent of the total Rhodesian rural population, and in the much smaller African Purchase Areas.”<sup>260</sup> By studying the impact of the community development initiative on Mutare District food security, important issues have emerged. These include, for instance, the essential characteristics of community development as a planning policy, and the historical background of its adoption and implementation in Rhodesia. Against this brief background, the first section of this chapter focuses on the Federal period while the second deals with the ambiguities and contradictions of colonial policy within the changing political context.

### **Rural Food Security and the Political Economy of Federation**

From 1953 up to 1963, Southern Rhodesia’s economy was heavily influenced by developments that occurred with the coming of the Central African Federation. This period coincided with the thrust in the 1950s of the Southern Rhodesian government policy towards the creation of an African middle class and a period in which international capitalist interests fostered a shift from the ideology of separate development to one of “racial partnership.”<sup>261</sup> The country entered into the Federation with the hope to facilitate economic diversification through attracting investment

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<sup>259</sup> N.D. Mutizwa-Mangiza, “Community Development in Pre-Independence Zimbabwe: A Study of Policy with Special Reference to Rural Land,” *Zambezia*, Harare: University of Zimbabwe, 1985.

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>261</sup> Gallen Hull, “The Political Economy of Zimbabwe: Implications for the Internal Settlement,” *Africa Today*, Vol. 25, No. 2, 1978, pp. 27-44.

capital.<sup>262</sup> In this new dispensation, territorial governments continued to independently administer local food policies. Southern Rhodesia's preoccupation with ways to bring the country to food self-sufficiency, and to increase the country's resilience to shocks, particularly for its white and not African communities, remained high on its agenda. While Federal food policies were not entirely divorced from territorial food projections, it has be highlighted that territories embarked on home-grown programmes of action with regards to cropping and other agricultural matters that had a bearing on food security.

One of the key areas of focus for the policy makers was the promotion of crop varieties that thrived in dry environments. This was a significant climb-down from previous policy which focused exclusively on hybrid maize production while neglecting traditional African crops such as *mhunga* (finger millet/kaffir corn), *rukezwa* (bulrush millet), and *mapfunde* (sorghum), among others. Soil analyses were conducted by the Agricultural Chemist to determine their competitiveness for malting in the local and international markets besides their nutritive value. For instance, groundwork had already been made for the promotion of *mhunga*, sorghum, and *rapoko*, following the chemical analysis of the composition of these 'native' grains. The Agricultural Chemist wrote to the Native Commissioner-Umtali to the effect that "I enclose herewith for your information, analyses recently made in this laboratory to determine the composition of *nyouti* and *rapoko*. I think you inquired a few months back if I had analysed these native grains. To judge from their respective composition, *nyouti* appears to have a higher feeding value, being richer in albuminoids and fat, and lower in fibre."<sup>263</sup> The table below illustrates results of such experiments.

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<sup>262</sup>Carl G. Rosberg, "The Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland: Problems of Democratic Government," *The Annals of the American Academy of Democratic Government*, Vol. 306, 1956, pp. 98-105 (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1030739> (Accessed on 13/02/2018)).

<sup>263</sup> NAZ, Records Centre, Box 24933, Location: 1.16.2F, No. 64: Native Grains, March 1955-1962: Letter Dated 2<sup>nd</sup> March 1955 by the Agricultural Chemist to Lesser-Cooper, Estates Office-Umtali: Composition of Native Grains.

**Table 5:** Composition of *Nyouti* and *Rapoko*: Samples No. 88 and 90

<b>ANALYSIS (Digestible and Palatable)</b>	<b>NYOUTI %</b>	<b>RAPOKO %</b>
Moisture	9.42	10.58
Ash	2.18	3.16
Albuminoids (nitrogen 6.25)	11.37	7.62
Fat	4.31	1.30
Fibre	1.57	3.88
Carbohydrates	71.15	74.46
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b><u>100.00</u></b>	<b><u>100.00</u></b>

**Source:** NAZ, Records Centre, Box 24933, Location: 1.16.2F, No. 64: Native Grains, March 1955-1962: Letter Dated 2<sup>nd</sup> March 1955 by the Agricultural Chemist to Lesser-Cooper, Estates Office-Umtali: Composition of Native Grains.

These particulars were critical for estimating the feeding value of the grains, the results of which indicated that the higher proportion of nitrogenous constituents meant a high feeding value. In a letter dated 28<sup>th</sup> October 1954 by the Acting Chief Chemist of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture to B. M. Cairns of Southern Rhodesia, the constituent parts of ‘kaffir’ corn were acknowledged as desirable for the malting industry within the Federation. The analysis showed the following breakdown: Moisture-9%, Ash-8.8%, Crude Protein-9.1%, Ether soluble extract-4.0, Crude Fibre-10.3 and Carbohydrates (by difference) -58.8, and the total 100.00%.<sup>264</sup> The same experiments were carried out for *nyimo* which was found to be highly nutritious and worth cultivating. The significance of these laboratory analyses can be traced in the admission by malsters that the corn already grown by Africans was suitable for malting.<sup>265</sup> This was the case

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<sup>264</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>265</sup>A malster is a person who makes or deals in malt. Malt could be barley or other grain that has been steeped, germinated, and dried. It is used for brewing, distilling or vinegar-making. Malting is the process which

to the extent that “if steps were taken to keep good corn, together with that marketed by Europeans, it should, in a normal year, suffice to meet the requirements of malsters.”<sup>266</sup> The only challenge, though, was that different types were mixed by buying agents, sometimes with corn of inferior quality, which would, in turn, affect malting and filling processes which gave beer its taste and colour.<sup>267</sup> But the cultivation of such grains would not only displace maize in lower rainfall areas such as Kurauone or Chiadzwa in Mutare District, but would provide additional income to purchase maize for those who preferred maize meal to traditional grain.

Given the increasing demand for small grains in the Federal economy, African farmers in the three territories were challenged to produce such foodstuffs as they were also important for their meals. In a Circular dated 17<sup>th</sup> July 1963, J. J. Duvenage, Director of Conservation and Extension, made a belated acknowledgement of the importance of sorghum production in lower rainfall areas, stressing that “this crop could play a more important role in our production than it has done in the past.”<sup>268</sup> This realisation was also an indirect response to the increasing agitation by Africans against the Federation itself, considered to be an impediment to traditional cropping. The state had to be seen to be responding to African demands for their full participation in the country’s agricultural economy. This is why Duvenage later suggested that “farmers should be provided with all the latest information on sorghum production and should be encouraged to use seed from new hybrid varieties which would ensure a much higher yield.”<sup>269</sup> Although we need not belabour the obvious advantages of small grains to food security, millet and sorghum offered much more hope to the people of Mutare than any other

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involves germinating cereal grain by soaking in water, and halting further germination by drying with hot air in order to produce a malt.

<sup>266</sup> NAZ, Records Centre, Box 78449, Location: 37.6.7F, File 151V/F26, Committees: Sorghum Production, Grain Marketing Board of Southern Rhodesia, Minutes of Meetings: Evidence to Agricultural Marketing Council: Kaffir Corn.

<sup>267</sup> Ibid.

<sup>268</sup> NAZ, Records Centre, Box 96158: Location: 7.5.6F, Departmental Policy; 24 January 1957-17 July 1963; Agriculture: Circular No. 16 of 1963, Dated 17<sup>th</sup> July 1963: To All Officers: Policy Statement, 1963/1964.

<sup>269</sup> Ibid.

crop because of their resilience to dry spells. It should be recalled that the erstwhile colonial policy disrupted cultivation of small grains in favour of commercial crops and hybrid maize in complete disregard of its debilitating consequences on African food security.

Indeed, the cultivation of small grains, particularly millet and sorghum, in Mutare District continued to be the major preoccupation among rural households during the Federal period and after.<sup>270</sup> Apart from their stronger genetic potential to perform significantly better than maize in the drier parts of the district, these crops were particularly cultivated to offset the risks of post-harvest storage which were largely associated with maize. Although the Federal policy shifted emphasis to small grains, the issue of storage did not come up in the debates. From a practical perspective, small grains had a stronger competitive advantage over maize in terms of utility and storability, though they were an underutilised resource in the cereal subsector of the food supply chain.<sup>271</sup> Bulrush and finger millet could be stored for extended periods until the pre-harvest period when it was increasingly clear that the new crop was ready enough to take households to the next season. They were an insurance against shortfalls especially in those parts of the district with a high probability for drought. This means that the most competitive niche for sorghum and millet was the rural market itself. It, therefore, called for the state to continue to suggest ways of improving this competitive position through modern storage facilities and improved hybrid varieties for enhanced food security. In any case, rural farmers had long since demonstrated willingness to try new seeds and improved granaries to enhance storability.

Whereas the Southern Rhodesian state was supposed to map strategies for the development of the sorghum and millet subsector in line with its rhetoric to promote small grains, the maize economy continued to dominate the food system. The reason for this was that small grains were

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<sup>270</sup> Interview with Rosemary Chikitora, Agricultural Extension Officer, Manzununu Agritex Office, Zimunya, 12 July 2015.

<sup>271</sup> *Ibid.*

still perceived as ‘primitive’ because of the constraints associated with their conversion to usable products.<sup>272</sup> The difficulty of hand processing inevitably pushed rural farmers to plant and consume maize. A major disincentive to the production of sorghum and millet was the constraint associated with their conversion into mealie-meal which emanated from the lengthy and cumbersome task of processing them. Technological advances were, therefore, required to introduce small grain dehullers into the market system of the country and to find ways of extending the post-harvest life of rural grain supplies. Hedden-Dunkhorst suggests that the perishability of small grains could be controlled through various ways, including improving the quality of the storage bins, fumigation, appropriate grading and preventing germination.<sup>273</sup> Against this backdrop, the Federal state failed in its bid to promote the growing of small grains without sufficiently financing the rural sector.

Notwithstanding their known medicinal advantages such as being a remedy to ailments, small grains have generally lost their competitive domain since the colonial days.<sup>274</sup> As highlighted above, millet and sorghum, unlike maize which could be taken directly to the grinding meal, had to be thrashed in order to remove the husks. It would then take two to three days to dry the grain before grinding it into mealie-meal, or *maheu* (nutritious African brew). Many communal farmers had been cultivating small grains before the colonial era and had been harvesting some yields even in dry weather. The continual preference of maize by rural consumers over small grains brought renewed challenges to food security not only because of the vulnerability of maize to drought conditions, but also due to the increasing demand for food by the expanding rural population. The state’s clarion call for the cultivation of small grains should have been accompanied by wider efforts towards developing the district’s semi-arid areas as exclusively

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<sup>272</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>273</sup> B. Hedden-Dunkhorst, *The Role of Small Grains in the Semi-Arid Farming Systems of Smallholders in Zimbabwe-Preliminary Findings*, Harare: SADCC/ICRISAT, 1990.

<sup>274</sup>*Ibid.*



sorghum and millet producing areas. Emphasis on the small grains at this point grew out of the realization that food security would not be guaranteed without indigenous crops. However, due to the fact that a number of rural households had been accustomed to maize meal, the promotion of small and traditional grains unsurprisingly met with some reluctance in spite of their increasing importance to food security.

Admittedly, small grains presented unique challenges for African consumers at the household level due to wide-ranging factors. The most critical one had to do with how to achieve high quality grain, free of sand and other impurities which resulted from the traditional hand processing of the grains.<sup>275</sup> The Food and Agricultural Organisation reported that millers, brewers, or other industrial processors were increasingly wary about the quality of the grains at a time when such grain was expected to meet the test in terms of the specific and stringent quality standards required for raw materials.<sup>276</sup> This implied that unreliable quality of sorghum and millet would discourage and frustrate commercial processors attempting to use them. The much needed forward and backward linkages between farmers and the processors naturally fell away on account of poor grain quality. This also complicated the process of fully integrating small grains into the mainstream of cereal use and trade. Because of this, some farmers continued to plant maize even in the district's driest parts despite repeated incidents of crop failure.<sup>277</sup> In many cases, the maize variety succumbed to prolonged dry spells at a time when yield levels for small grains remained high under similar ecological conditions.

The contradictions in colonial policy on cropping clearly manifest themselves in the renewed emphasis on African maize growing from the 1950s to the mid-1960s. Earlier on, that is, in the

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<sup>275</sup> Interview with Headman Piano Chipindirwe, Chipindirwe Village, Marange, 13 July 2015.

<sup>276</sup> Food and Agriculture Organisation, *Policy Issues in the Small Grains Sector of Southern Africa*, Rome: FAO, 1990.

<sup>277</sup> Interview with Rosemary Chikotora.

period extending from the 1930s, African maize production had been seriously curtailed by the provisions of the successive Maize Control Acts of 1931 and 1934 which systematically discriminated against African producers. These Acts were designed primarily to limit competition between African and European producers on the market through biased maize grading criteria.<sup>278</sup> Robin Palmer demonstrates how Africans were later encouraged to produce maize for the home market during periods when white farmers were concentrating on export crops like tobacco.<sup>279</sup> The Second World War had ushered in new demands, and created new market opportunities for both African and European farmers alike. Following the growing demand for tobacco since then, the state was under increasing pressure to meet local consumption needs for food crops; hence, a new call for maize and small grains to be produced in huge quantities. The food security gap had, therefore, been widened by those European farmers who had moved into the more lucrative business of tobacco farming, described by Clements and Harben as “a leaf of gold” and by Steven Rubert as “a most promising weed” due to the enormous dividends tobacco fetched on the international market.<sup>280</sup>

However, the concentration on export crops was short-lived when the UDI and the subsequent international sanctions imposed against the Smith administration made it harder for Rhodesia to export agricultural commodities.<sup>281</sup> According to Ranger, white farmers switched back to domestic markets at the expense of the rural African producers.<sup>282</sup> Accordingly, the paradigm shift with regards to cropping in this period should be contextualised against this background. Here lay the puzzle; tobacco, like cotton farming (briefly examined below), had just been

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<sup>278</sup>Carl Frederick Keyter, *Maize Control in Southern Rhodesia, 1931-1941: The African Contribution to White Survival*, Salisbury: Central Africa Historical Association, 1978.

<sup>279</sup> Robin Palmer, “Land Reform in Zimbabwe, 1890-1990,” *African Affairs*, Vol. 89, No. 355, 1990.

<sup>280</sup>Frank Clements and Edward Harben, *Leaf of Gold: The Story of Rhodesian Tobacco*, London: Methuen, 1962; Steven C. Rubert, *A Most Promising Weed: A History of Tobacco Farming and Labour in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1890-1945*, Athens: Ohio University Centre for International Studies, 1998.

<sup>281</sup>Palmer, “Land Reform in Zimbabwe.”

<sup>282</sup> T.O. Ranger, “Growing from the Roots: Reflections on Peasant Research in Central and Southern Africa,” *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 5, 1978, pp. 119-20. See also, Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness and Guerrilla War in Zimbabwe*.

encouraged for purposes of meeting local and international demand for raw materials. The extension of the crop from Native Purchase Areas to Reserves had increased the number of growers.<sup>283</sup> This was in further anticipation that the tremendous potential of the crop in these areas would then be fully exploited, particularly when “staff had dealt with more urgent requirements of the NLHA, so as to give new growers the supervision required.”<sup>284</sup> But, while the interest in the crop increased markedly, it coincided with the diminishing returns the crop offered due to these changes. Compounding this nascent venture was the impact of uncertain weather conditions which led to too many disappointments because of the ‘false ripening’ of the tobacco crop itself. Although the prospects of expanding this crop in ‘native’ areas initially appeared to be extremely promising, the fluctuating character of local and regional markets, among other impediments, prohibited further progress insofar as peasant tobacco production was concerned.

Renewed calls that were made to increase maize and small grain yields in Mutare District were by no means an isolated event. The northern parts of the district such as Odzi were targeted for maize production owing to the better rainfall conditions prevalent there when compared with other areas to the south which encompassed ‘red zones’ like Chiadzwa and Mapfunde.<sup>285</sup> The district was rallied into the production of both maize and small grains for the benefit of the local market. In order to stimulate this production, the state was determined to increase producer prices for maize and small grains; hence, taking advantage of the removal of market restrictions previously imposed by the Maize Control Acts. The policy further “encouraged maize farmers to intensify production and ensure that they aimed at a minimum of thirty bags per acre.”<sup>286</sup> A Cost of Survey Report attached to the Policy Statement of 1963/64 indicated that a profit of

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<sup>283</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>284</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>285</sup> Interview with Brian Masvaure, Ward 19 Councillor, Mutare Rural District Council Offices, 21 July 2016.

<sup>286</sup> NAZ, Records Centre, Box 96158: Location: 7.5.6F, Departmental Policy; 24 January 1957-17 July 1963; Agriculture: Circular No. 16 Of 1963, Dated 17<sup>th</sup> July 1963: To All Officers: Policy Statement, 1963/1964.

7/9d. per bag could be realized if the yields were in the vicinity of thirty bags per acre. This projection was based on the basic price of 25/- per bag, considered competitive to give African farmers incentive to grow more.<sup>287</sup> Farmers were encouraged to form maize clubs focused on meeting the proposed target.

Elsewhere, these clubs had proved invaluable, particularly in the United States of America and South Africa, where increased yields and better management had resulted from close association between interested members. A proposal was made to come up with what was later referred to as a '30 Bag Per Acre Maize Club' based on an Intensive Conservation Area or group basis for purposes of holding discussion groups, field days and other functions relating to the production of maize throughout the season.<sup>288</sup> This included the need to share agronomic data relating to crop protection and management. Although many farmers in Mutare District had ventured into flue-cured tobacco growing, albeit unsuccessfully, due to market instability, they did not give up on the need to improve their crop breeding and weed management systems which the state was seized with. Nevertheless, the fact that the state did not extend resources to the rural-based farmers in the district continued to hamper their efforts to boost their food reserves and build surplus for the market.<sup>289</sup> It did not come up with a comprehensive approach for the strengthening of local initiatives that aimed to improve yields. Similarly, the emphasis on cash cropping disregarded the environmental impacts caused by clearance of large tracts of land using the slash and burn method. This led to deforestation, erosion and other forms of environmental degradation since the focus was to generate income.

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<sup>287</sup> Ibid.

<sup>288</sup> While this was earmarked for the African Purchase Areas, the idea was also extended to farmers in the rest of the reserves, albeit with some modifications.

<sup>289</sup> Interview with Joseph Gumbo, Former Agritex Officer, Bambazonke Shopping Centre, 23 July 2016.

An interesting development during these turbulent years, however, was the demonstration by Africans that they could do well with other indigenous crops such as groundnuts besides millet and sorghum, capable enough to improve their dietary regimes. More importantly, this was done amidst the chilling effects of the NHLA which, according to Guy Thompson, had continuously “undermined farmers’ production strategies and ecological management techniques rooted in indigenous knowledge.”<sup>290</sup> By his own admission, the Native Commissioner-Umtali echoed the achievements made in such crops in his quarterly reports, highlighting that other crops were progressing fairly well.<sup>291</sup> Other reports confirmed this awesome African capability. In one of the reports, for instance, it was noted that “the groundnut crop during the past season has on the whole been very successful, and here again; it is a most suitable crop to follow tobacco in the tobacco areas.”<sup>292</sup> The report concluded that, “with more experience available, the farmers should be in a position to continue production on a satisfactory basis, while every encouragement should be given for the increased production of this crop.”<sup>293</sup> The good news was that communal farmers in Mutare District had enjoyed the fruits of groundnuts cultivation even before the state had moved in to make it a policy issue.

In nearby Buhera District, which shares boundaries with Marange to the west, communal farmers there had even earned a moniker *KumaHwera kudovi*, meaning, ‘Buhera, Land of Peanut Butter,’ because of their specialisation in groundnuts production.<sup>294</sup> Even in the post-colonial period, Buhera District continued to thrive largely on groundnuts income. No doubt, Mutare District farmers were influenced to do likewise, with some of them affording fees at the

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<sup>290</sup> Guy Thompson, “Cultivating Conflict: Agricultural ‘Betterment’, the Native Husbandry Act (NLHA) and Ungovernability in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1951-1962,” *Africa Development*, Vol. 29, No. 3, 2004, pp. 1-39.

<sup>291</sup> NAZ, S2827/3/3, Native Commissioners Quarterly Reports, 1959.

<sup>292</sup> NAZ, Records Centre, Box 69545, Location: 38.6.10F: Federal Department of Conservation and Extension, Crops and Crop Diseases: Agriculture: Southern Rhodesia.

<sup>293</sup> Ibid.

<sup>294</sup> Interview with Chief Gilbert Marange, Marange Local Community Court, Mutare, 13 July 2015.

local Marange and Nyashanu Mission Centres.<sup>295</sup> At Betera village in Marange, such farmers as Gideon Betera, Hapadyiwi Garanewako, Robson Dara and Mujeni Chikamba were leading groundnuts cultivators. They were among the first parents in the 1960s to send their children to boarding schools through cultivation of groundnuts.<sup>296</sup> Many other farmers could reap rich rewards in investing in this crop within the district. The good news is that peanuts are actually better suited for sandy soils, and both Buhera and Mutare continued to be ideal districts for groundnut production since their soils are predominantly sandy. But, we should not lose sight of the fact that the state did not envisage a situation where rural producers of peanuts would transform their work from being providers of raw materials to any higher level of beneficiation.

In his analysis of groundnuts cultivation in Nigeria, Allister Hinds reminds us that colonial policies were geared towards ensuring that their African colonies remained primarily suppliers of raw groundnuts, rather than producers of groundnut oil for export.<sup>297</sup> For similar reasons, crops such as sunflowers, round nuts, and beans were also encouraged in Rhodesia. The state reiterated that “every endeavour had to be made to assist farmers with the necessary information relating to these crops such as production techniques, suitable varieties and careful management.”<sup>298</sup> Throughout the Federal period, experimentation with various cash crops resulted in policy declarations that cascaded down to territories where some of these crops were hoped would alter the pattern of production for the benefit of food security and household income. Two crops featured most in these experiments, and these were cotton and soya bean. However, soya bean did not gain popularity because farmers got disappointing yields as they were not sufficiently acquainted with the prescribed production methods of the crop. Colonial

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<sup>295</sup> Interview with Danford Muperere, Groundnuts Farmer, Muperere Village, Marange, 13 July 2016.

<sup>296</sup> Interview with Hapadyiwi Betera, Betera Primary School, Marange, Mutare, 10 July 2015.

<sup>297</sup> Allister E. Hinds, “Colonial Policy and the Processing of Groundnuts: The Case of Georges Calil,” *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 19, No .2, 1986, pp. 261-273.

<sup>298</sup> NAZ, Records Centre, Box 69545, Location: 38.6.10F: Federal Department of Conservation and Extension, Crops and Crop Diseases: Agriculture: Southern Rhodesia.

authorities anticipated that crops such as these would not only boost the export sector and local industry, but also increase rural household incomes, thereby building and strengthening community capacities to withstand recurring threats of hunger.

Generally, households were not necessarily opposed to the cultivation of cash crops *per se*; it was actually their imposition that led to the subsequent upsurge in rural mobilisation against them. The state did not make an impact assessment before pushing hard for rural farmers to implement its cropping policies. However, some farmers took to cotton production in Mutare District as a trial and error response to the call by the state for rural farmers to undertake to cultivate them irrespective of the risks to food security. But the scale of cotton growing there was not comparable to that of Gokwe in the country's Midlands Province which produced lots of cotton during this period.<sup>299</sup> Gaylord Musademba, an Agritex Officer, confirmed that such farmers took the risk to try cotton growing on the balance of probabilities that things would work out in their favour.<sup>300</sup> The initial results were encouraging as the new farmers were able to harvest some few bales of cotton which sold well on the market.

However, policy makers were too quick to judge that this initial success was a sign that cotton production was a venture worth pursuing in some parts of the district. This prompted them to prematurely conclude that "there has been an encouraging expansion in the production of cotton during the past season and in most areas, farmers have utilized the latest techniques and methods for the control of insect pests, with the result that high yields and good quality were

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<sup>299</sup> For a detailed discussion on the dynamics of cotton production, see P.S. Nyambara, "Madheruka and Shangwe: Ethnic Identities and the Culture of Modernity in Gokwe, North-western Zimbabwe, 1963-1979," *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 43, No. 2, 2002, pp. 287-306. On page 288, Nyambara raises pertinent questions about the reception of cotton agriculture by indigenous Africans.

<sup>300</sup> Interview with Gaylord Musademba, Agritex Officer, Gonora Agricultural Training Centre, Marange, 14 July 2016.

obtained.”<sup>301</sup> The state recommended that every endeavour had to be made to encourage the production of cotton in all the areas of the district which proved suitable for this crop. Spurred by the initial results, policy makers hinted that this crop that “had a big future in the country, in view of the fact that the price is good.”<sup>302</sup> But the unfolding events such as the growing discomfort with the implementation of the NLHA, the fall of cotton and tobacco prices and the outbreak of the guerrilla war were to prove that these projections were illusory. Rural opposition to this Act, according to Thompson, threatened state control of the countryside, “creating a state of ungovernability in many reserves.”<sup>303</sup> Although Africans initially tried to evade the imposition of the NLHA, they eventually lost patience and took to confrontation when the enforcement of this law intensified.

Nevertheless, there is space here to briefly explore the dynamics of the cotton production in Mutare District in order to bring out its impact on rural food security. Literature is abundant on the political economy of cotton production in the agricultural history of the country and the region,<sup>304</sup> with the most recent on Southern Rhodesia moving beyond the paradigm of peasant exploitation to emphasize peasant agency.<sup>305</sup> Nyambara’s work on colonial policy and rural cotton production provides an interesting vantage point for an analysis of the differential impact of cotton cultivation on rural farmers. He notes that some farmers benefitted disproportionately from colonial agricultural schemes, while the majority were disadvantaged, adding that in the

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<sup>301</sup> NAZ, Records Centre, Box 96158: Location: 7.5.6F, Departmental Policy; 24 January 1957-17 July 1963; Agriculture: Circular No. 16 Of 1963, Dated 17<sup>th</sup> July 1963: To all officers: Policy Statement, 1963/1964.

<sup>302</sup> Ibid.

<sup>303</sup> Thompson, “Cultivating Conflict...”

<sup>304</sup> For further readings on cotton, see for instance, Allen Isaacman and Richard Roberts (eds.), *Cotton, Colonialism and Social History in Sub-Saharan Africa*, Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1995; Allen Isaacman, *Cotton Is the Mother of Poverty: Peasants, Work and Rural Struggle in Colonial Mozambique, 1938-1961*, Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1995; and, among others, Osumaka Likaka, *Rural Society and Cotton in Colonial Zaire*, Madison: Heinemann, 1997.

<sup>305</sup> P.S. Nyambara, “Colonial Policy and Peasant Agriculture in Southern Rhodesia, 1904-1953,” *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 1, 2000, pp. 81-111.



early years of colonial rule, cotton production was forced on unwilling Africans.<sup>306</sup> Allen Isaacman has written extensively about the various forms of resistance to forced cotton production because of its severe consequences on livelihoods. His conceptualisation of cotton as the “the mother of poverty” gives insight into why Africans went out of their way to frustrate colonial efforts at introducing cotton cultivation within their rural agrarian settings because of what his analysis of cotton as.<sup>307</sup> However, for Southern Rhodesia, Nyambara maintains that peasant cotton production was not characterised by the same degree of viciousness as exacted on their Mozambican or Belgian Congo counterparts.<sup>308</sup>

While African resentment for cotton production was looming large as a result of its forced implementation, some rural farmers demonstrated a desire to grow it, its potential impact to food security notwithstanding. It was generally hoped that such farmers would convert their incomes into entitlements and still guarantee food security for their households. This venture would lead the state to shoot two birds with one stone by creating a wider source of raw materials for its local industries, especially as a sanctions-bursting measure, and to try and reduce African woes of hunger through improved rural wages. The Master Farmer concept was emerging in which communities would gather at the fields of successful farmers to witness the possibilities of commercial farming at those local levels. The Cotton Advisory Officers and Agricultural Demonstrators were immediately tasked to support efforts of farmers who showed interest in cotton farming through such initiatives as the Master Farmer.<sup>309</sup>

Cotton was the main crop for this Master Farmer initiative, following which were millet, sorghum and groundnuts. Interested cotton farmers would receive training in various aspects of

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<sup>306</sup> Nyambara, “Colonial Policy and Peasant Agriculture in Southern Rhodesia”

<sup>307</sup> Isaacman, *Cotton Is the Mother of Poverty*

<sup>308</sup> Nyambara, “Colonial Policy and Peasant Agriculture in Southern Rhodesia.”

<sup>309</sup> NAZ, Records Centre, Box 69545, Location: 38.6.10F: Federal Department of Conservation and Extension, Crops and Crop Diseases: Agriculture: Southern Rhodesia.

its production, particularly the control of insect pests. From the interview held with Chendinofira Daara, one of the earliest cotton farmers in Chipfatsura, it emerged that more income could be generated than from other crops.<sup>310</sup> Nyambara's work confirms that African households refused to be mere pawns in the harsh colonial economy by taking up cotton cultivation, some of whom prospered from the opportunities and threats brought along with cotton farming.<sup>311</sup> However, farmers who took up cotton cultivation made little inroads insofar as rural food security was concerned as it proved increasingly difficult for them to live off purely on a cotton economy. This is why some of Daara's friends remained apprehensive, fearing that cotton cultivation would jeopardise food production and place entire households into starvation.<sup>312</sup> He had committed his whole field to cotton production, having been impressed by initial successes.

There were also other problems which rural farmers encountered that prompted them to abandon cotton production. The main one was that of pests and the costs of spraying such crops. Writing at the end of 1957, the Secretary for Native Affairs expressed concern over the growing of cotton amid these challenges, arguing that "cotton, which originally promised so well as a cash crop, has been abandoned by the native farmer; so beset has it been with destructive pests."<sup>313</sup> The Report went on to project that "if we are able to build up substitutes which will not only take its place, but also promote other avenues of native agriculture along progressive lines, we must find additional crops which will be manageable and bring in ready cash."<sup>314</sup> Despite the fact that cotton production in Mutare District could be a potential revenue earner for the economy in general and households in particular, the virtual cessation of production diminished

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<sup>310</sup> Interview with Chendinofira Daara, Cotton Farmer, Chipfatsura Village, Marange, Mutare, 14 July 2015.

<sup>311</sup> Nyambara, "Colonial Policy and Peasant Agriculture in Southern Rhodesia, p. 83.

<sup>312</sup> Interview with Daara.

<sup>313</sup> Annual Report, Report of the Secretary for Native Affairs, Chief Native Commissioner and Director of Native Development for the Year 1957; Presented to the Legislative Assembly, 1958, Salisbury: Government Printer, 1958, p.18.

<sup>314</sup> Ibid.

its prospects for being established as a viable and reliable crop within these areas. The combined effect of crop disease and insect pests on cotton production, both of which built up rapidly to a stage where they caused a serious drop in yield and quality, resulted in poor returns for African growers who lost faith in the crop and sought other attractive alternatives.

The situation was not pleasing as well for the rest of the other crops which were also devoured by army worm during this period. The army worm phenomenon has been with farmers from as far back as anyone can remember and the impact thereof has always been disastrous to food production efforts. In January 1954, the *Umtali Post* reported a sporadic army worm invasion across the district. The report clearly ruled out possibilities of a bumper harvest owing to the army worm menace, indicating that a second army worm invasion, “far worse than the present one, will threaten farmers throughout the colony in about a month, unless the majority of the worms are destroyed now.”<sup>315</sup> The greatest danger lay in the Reserves, where “Africans could not afford to combat the infestation or were too apathetic, and on farms where outbreaks are comparatively slight,” said the Report, concluding that, “since Monday, new outbreaks have been reported at Odzi.”<sup>316</sup> Interestingly, *mhunga*, *rapoko* and other indigenous crops remained unaffected by pests despite the fact that the colonial state shunned them till then when it sought to revive and promote them to a negligible extent.

With regards to the increasing threat of crop diseases and armyworm, the state’s response was half-hearted, if not indifferent, since it directly affected African farmers, though concerns were raised about adjacent white farms where army worm could encroach. Instead of reacting swiftly with more modern and scientific means of destroying the mass of army worm, it only

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<sup>315</sup> “Farmers Face Threat of a Worse Invasion by Army Worm in a Month,” *The Umtali Post*, Wednesday, 20 January 1954, p. 1.

<sup>316</sup>*Ibid.*

encouraged rural farmers to use physical means to destroy them. As far back as 1916, William Randolph Walton, an American farmer, suggested that army worm could be checked by digging trenches to demarcate areas unaffected from those already infested, or alternatively to poison the army worm.<sup>317</sup> But by the 1960s, better ways of combating army worm were already widely practised worldwide, with potential side effects taken cognisance of. All what the state did was to advise African farmers to kill army worm one by one to forestall further movement to new crops. A January 1954 newspaper article stated, for instance, that:

Though appeal after appeal has been issued to farmers and plot holders to destroy all army worms on their land, there are still many who have nothing to combat the outbreak. The position is serious because unless as many worms are killed as possible, it is likely that the infestation may carry on for several more weeks, perhaps even months.<sup>318</sup>

For their part, white farmers had conducted an extensive campaign against worms on their farms where there was danger of moths to lay eggs. The worst damage had been done in the district where the entire maize crops had been wiped out by the time similar campaigns were made.

It is important, however, to point out that rural farmers in Mutare District continued to explore ways of diversifying into other seemingly neglected areas of the food economy. Whereas some of them reverted exclusively to traditional crops following the challenges encountered with cotton production, others explored horticulture and beekeeping in order to forestall the risk of starvation. Literature is still very scant on the district's preoccupation with these exciting supplements in spite of their immense contribution to the dietary, nutritional and medicinal needs for rural households.<sup>319</sup> The foregoing analysis provides a brief overview of the

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<sup>317</sup> W. R. Walton, "The True Army Worm and Its Control," *Farmers Bulletin*, Issue 731, (1960), Digitised by Harvard University Press, 19 July 2008, pp. 1-12.

<sup>318</sup> "Some Farmers Still Not Combating Army Worm," *The Umtali Post*, Friday 22 January 1954, p. 1.

<sup>319</sup> For recent readings around Mutare District Horticulture Initiatives, see, for instance, B. Kusena, "Intangible Heritage and Food Security in Zimbabwe: The Economics of Horticulture in the Fight against Hunger and Malnutrition in Marange-Zimunya, 2000-2015," *Zambezia*, Vol.44, No. 1, 2017, pp. 59-76.

supplementary livelihood option of beekeeping. Honey and honey products had always been considered supplements to cereal food in many rural localities. Although the practice of beekeeping was mistakenly thought to be new in Southern Rhodesia by the white apiculturists,<sup>320</sup> Honest Koke identifies the benefits accruing to African beekeepers who were routinely providing local clients with honey well before the advent of colonial rule.<sup>321</sup> In dispelling those unfounded colonial claims, he elaborates on the place which honey and its various products occupied to fill the gaps in food security. He argues that the refurbishment of the apiculture business by the white beekeepers did not in itself necessarily amount to an introduction of that enterprise for the first time.<sup>322</sup>

The immediate post-Federation food security policy of 1963/1964 captured the issue of beekeeping as a response to the call to bring variety in the food industry. Duvenage succinctly summed up its provisions:

It is no exaggeration to say that a very great potential in the sphere of honey and beeswax production lays waiting to be developed in the two Rhodesias. This has become increasingly clear since the secondment to this Department of an Apiculturist in July, 1962. To develop this potential requires a knowledge which, unfortunately, most of the Department's staff do not possess. The aim must be to acquire this knowledge and a modicum of skill so that officers can help in the task of handling the simpler queries that now pour into head office from beekeepers in a never-ending stream.<sup>323</sup>

This was in tandem with the confession by the policy makers that “agricultural development in Southern Rhodesia was as yet in its infancy,” considering that such enterprises as beekeeping were not commercialised in spite of the potential that they had to transform rural economies.<sup>324</sup>

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<sup>320</sup> For readings on the debates among colonial beekeepers, see Rhodesia Beekeepers' Association, *Rhodesian Beekeeping: The Journal of the Rhodesia Beekeepers' Association, Vols.1-2*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, (1960), Digitised 2009.

<sup>321</sup>H. Koke, “The Development of the Beekeeping Industry in Southern Rhodesia, 1965-1980,” (BA Honours Dissertation, Department of Economic History, University of Zimbabwe), 2015

<sup>322</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>323</sup> NAZ, Records Centre, Box 96158: Location: 7.5.6F, Departmental Policy; 24 January 1957-17 July 1963; Agriculture: Circular No. 16 Of 1963, dated 17<sup>th</sup> July 1963: To All Officers: Policy Statement, 1963/1964.

<sup>324</sup> *Ibid.*

Although the thrust of the 1963/64 policy was on conservation, it also “anticipated tremendous expansion and intensification of every aspect of agricultural production for the future.”<sup>325</sup> In fact, a fully-equipped bee-house was erected at Henderson Research Station in July 1962 where short courses in beekeeping were conducted for officers of the Department of Conservation and Extension in order to lay the foundations for beekeeping development as a commercial entity.<sup>326</sup> The newly engaged female apiculturist who had come into the country was expected to “devote an increasing amount of her time to this internal training and less to visits to individual beekeepers,” plus she was supposed to be available to give talks and demonstration to groups of beekeepers when requested to do so.<sup>327</sup> Robson Magwere, a local honey producer based at Chipindirwe village in Marange, revealed that beekeeping was more than just a pastime for him because he could save money from honey sales to purchase maize from the country’s better rainfall areas.<sup>328</sup> Magwere further alluded to the fact that he was willing to get training in order to enhance his commercial beekeeping interests. Already, many other bee farmers had made some fortune, and beekeeping had contributed most significantly to their household food security, over and above surplus income for other social and economic needs, particularly school fees and clothing.

### **Community Development and Rural Food Security**

In this section, the discussion shifts to an analysis of the Rhodesian Front policy of Community Development and its impact on Mutare District rural food security. African opposition to Federation gained momentum by the beginning of the 1960s which eventually culminated in its dissolution in 1963. There was, therefore, uncertainty as to the future food

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<sup>325</sup> Ibid.

<sup>326</sup> NAZ, Records Centre, Box 96158: Location: 7.5.6F, Departmental Policy; 24 January 1957-17 July 1963; Agriculture: Circular No. 16 Of 1963, Dated 17<sup>th</sup> July 1963: The Policy of the Department of Conservation and Extension.

<sup>327</sup> Ibid.

<sup>328</sup> Interview with Robson Magwere, Honey Producer, Chipindirwe Primary School, Mutare, 11 July 2016.

security policy to be pursued by territorial governments. Earlier on in 1962, Southern Rhodesia had proposed an ambitious, but controversial, programme of community development, touted by Roger Howman as an apolitical and democratic policy which was a bottom-up approach to development planning and administration.<sup>329</sup> Older literature presents a more or less similar picture to Howman's conceptualisation which erroneously viewed community development as a non-racial issue in spite of glaring evidence of its selective application and implementation only to African areas.<sup>330</sup> Passmore, for instance, hailed the policy of community development as a culmination of long periods of experimentation to influence the African population to follow 'more progressive ways of living.'<sup>331</sup> Fronted by Jocelyn Alexander's *Unsettled Land*,<sup>332</sup> a growing body of literature has demonstrated that the policy of community development was not only contradictory and segregationist, but also hopelessly out of touch with African demands for equity, especially in terms of land.<sup>333</sup>

The community development programme was initiated formally in India in 1952 and had since come into international prominence. According to Passmore, more than eighty countries had introduced community development in one form or another, with forty of them having nationally-sponsored programmes by 1962.<sup>334</sup> Following this community development drive, the Southern Rhodesian Ministry of Agriculture, which was established on 1 September 1962, adopted as its main policy the 'elevation' of African farmers from their subsistence economy.<sup>335</sup> But the overarching issue of land ownership and utilisation did not change; hence, confounding

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<sup>329</sup>Howman, "Economic Growth and Community Development in African Areas."

<sup>330</sup> Gloria C. Passmore, *Historical Rationale of the Policy of Community Development in the African Rural Areas of Rhodesia*, Harare: University of Rhodesia, 1965.

<sup>331</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>332</sup> Alexander, *The Unsettled Land*.

<sup>333</sup> For criticisms of the community development policy, see also Naison Mutizwa-Mangiza and Diana Conyers, "Review: Provincialisation in Rhodesia, 1968-1969: Rational and Irrational Elements," by H.R.G. Howman and Gloria C. Passmore," *Community Development Journal*, Vol. 22, No. 1, 1987, pp. 68-71.

<sup>334</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>335</sup> NAZ, S3454/1/5 Establishment of the Ministry of Agriculture and Transfer of Native Economics and Marketing: 1962-1964.

the persistent instability of agrarian institutions. Whereas local authority and power ought to have been rooted in local structures, this policy reflected a continuous negative trend where all state-making initiatives extended from the centre and not the grassroots as claimed in the policy. Alexander argues that the policy introduced a traditionalist conceptualisation of African society in which renewed impetus was thrust upon chiefs and headmen as both land and judicial authorities.<sup>336</sup> The hope was to provide a strong buffer against local antagonisms towards District Commissioners in communal areas.

In order to effectively implement this policy, a number of initiatives were lined up at the national level which had strong bearing on Mutare District food security. For instance, an Agricultural Loan Fund was created for the purpose of making credit available to African farmers. This was, however, a mask to the continuing policy of racial segregation and dispossession. Other important developments during 1964 were the formation of the Rhodesia Freedom from Hunger Campaign Committee to eliminate malnutrition in certain parts of the Colony, and the transfer of the Natural Resources Board from the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources to the Ministry of Agriculture.<sup>337</sup> A growing number of Africans were emerging from the Chibero College with agricultural diplomas by 1965. Coupled with the increasing emphasis on the development of African areas, the Ministry appointed six African Conservation and Extension Officers to work among the African farmers. It is Alexander's conviction that community development policies did not operate in a vacuum, but within the context of a particular power structure designed to serve a white political elite.<sup>338</sup> In her review of Alexander's *Unsettled Land*, Amanda Hammar stresses the half-hearted nature of this colonial drive, arguing that it amounted to just putting a

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<sup>336</sup> Alexander, *The Unsettled Land*.

<sup>337</sup>NAZ, S3454/1/5 Establishment of the Ministry of Agriculture and Transfer of Native Economics and Marketing: 1962-1964.

<sup>338</sup> Alexander, *The Unsettled Land*.



‘human face’ on a clearly visible unflinching racial state whose effects could not be disguised.<sup>339</sup> This means that it was not only the land that was unsettled, but the social and political institutions and sources of authority were also constantly negotiated.

Theoretically, community development was to conform to Howman’s metaphor of the ‘three-legged pot’, by which it referred to councils and community boards as the first leg, while chiefs and headmen acted as the second and third legs with regards to ‘tribal’ courts and ‘tribal’ land authority.<sup>340</sup> It was envisaged that these councils and community boards would provide a secular and elected authority which was responsible for ‘modern services’ and with the express intention to ‘keep pace with the advanced fellow.’<sup>341</sup> Chiefs and headmen would sit as ex-officio members of councils to deal with the fundamental question of land distribution and preside over judicial matters.<sup>342</sup> According to Alexander, this wholesome transition ‘required that African society be reconceptualised once again as communal, bound by irrational beliefs, and so incapable of modernisation.’<sup>343</sup> The failures of the NLHA were, therefore, ‘laid at the doorsteps of Africans, not technical officials’, leading to a situation where Africans were ‘reified as essentially different from Europeans, notably in regard to their relationship to the land.’<sup>344</sup> This contextual framing of community development helps to shape our understanding of the contradictory nature of the state and its inherent penchant to shoulder blame for policy failure on Africans.

Indeed, the contradictions within the state did not manifest themselves for the first time with the advent of community development. The implementation of the infamous NLHA was

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<sup>339</sup> Amanda Hammer, *Book Reviews: The Unsettled Land: State-making and the Politics of Land in Zimbabwe, 1893-2003*, by Jocelyn Alexander, Oxford: James Currey, 2006.

<sup>340</sup> Alexander, *The Unsettled Land*, p. 72.

<sup>341</sup> NAZ, S2820/x150, Community Development Meeting, Department of Internal Affairs, 9 September 1963.

<sup>342</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>343</sup> Alexander, *The Unsettled Land*, p. 63.

<sup>344</sup> *Ibid.*

equally fraught with miscalculations and misjudgements which attracted unprecedented opposition from Africans.<sup>345</sup> Hammar reminds us that the Act attracted an angry response from Africans because of its ‘high modernist’ aims and highly ‘technical’ interventions in agrarian production which undermined ‘customary’ forms of tenure in the Reserves in favour of individual titling.<sup>346</sup> Its clumsy and uneven implementation also stepped up Africans’ strategies of non-compliance and an intensification of nationalist sentiments in the countryside.<sup>347</sup> Against this unsettling background, the ensuing panic caused by the inability of the state to enforce the Act prompted the state to swiftly implement the policy of community development with a view to checking the rapid expansion of African nationalism.<sup>348</sup> These contradictory policies were partly explained by the fact that the state’s interests were themselves not homogenous. In fact, the state was not a monolithic entity, and it did not have a coherent policy towards its ‘subjects’ as Mahmood Mamdani recently claimed.<sup>349</sup> Alexander dispels Mamdani’s theorisation of the local state as a ‘one-size-fits-all’ model, while she engages with Munro who agrees that different agencies within the state and government advanced alternative strategies and visions of state building.<sup>350</sup> This important insight presents interesting platforms for our analysis of the discourse of community development

In order to gain fuller insight into the colonial perception of the African community, and the increasing militancy and subversion by Africans in response to this framing of community, it is

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<sup>345</sup> Thompson, “Cultivating Conflict...”

<sup>346</sup> Hammer, *Book Reviews*.

<sup>347</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>348</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>349</sup> Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*, London: James Currey, 1996.

<sup>350</sup> William A. Munro, *Moral Economy of the State: Conservation, Community Development and State-making in Zimbabwe*, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1998.

possible to glean evidence from the remarks by Ian Smith, the Prime Minister, in his recent memoirs.

When you live in Africa, where the majority of the adult population is still illiterate and does not understand a Western democratic system that is foreign to it, and where the vast majority of the people live in rural areas with no electricity, minimal means of communication, where the forces of law and order are few and far apart, the ground is fertile for terrorists.<sup>351</sup>

This thinking influenced the Rhodesia Front's adamant refusal to consider land redistribution to Africans since its assumption of power in December 1962, and Smith's subsequent focus on pleasing his white constituency of farmers, workers and petty bourgeoisie since UDI.<sup>352</sup> Little wonder why community development was beginning to be seen by Africans as a subtle way of withdrawing government commitment to African rural development. The dramatic mushrooming of rural district councils across the country was not matched with the resources required to address the heavy responsibility quickly transferred to them, particularly in areas of food security, education, health and rural road services. Far from its claimed goals of inclusive social engineering, the policy of community development further impoverished Africans because it undermined key rural farming practices and survival strategies within the colonial order.

The complex issue of community development and its problems for rural food security should be read closely with the unfolding political events of the mid-1960s and beyond. The Rhodesian Front party unilaterally declared independence from Britain on 11 November 1965, arguing that the British had reneged on their commitment to grant independence to Rhodesia's white minority in the event of the break-up of the Federation.<sup>353</sup> In response, the imposition of sanctions on the country by Britain and others had consequences on the overall

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<sup>351</sup> I. D. Smith, *Bitter Harvest: Zimbabwe and the Aftermath of Its Independence*, London: John Blake, 2008, p. 79.

<sup>352</sup> Alexander, *The Unsettled Land*, p. 71.

<sup>353</sup> Smith, *Bitter Harvest*.

economic performance of the state.<sup>354</sup> Some important agricultural commodities such as poultry products and vegetables were being denied entry into the regional market previously enjoyed by Southern Rhodesia. The severing of important market outlets because of trade embargoes appeared rather small in impact.<sup>355</sup> The brunt of the sanctions, for instance, was strongly felt in tobacco production which had, in 1965, accounted for \$66 million dollars, almost half of the European agricultural industry's output.<sup>356</sup> Cotton and tobacco farmers in Mutare District were hard-hit as the inputs which the state sometimes extended to them instantly dried up.<sup>357</sup> It will be recalled that African producers had taken heed of calls by the colonial state to experiment with cash crops for improved household incomes. They felt short-changed by the sudden loss of income generated by those crops at a time when they were getting experienced in producing them.<sup>358</sup>

Although there has been a dearth of sources on the period between 1965 and 1975, sanctions-induced inflation around that time also caused distress to the farming populations in Mutare District. R.A. Burrell, Chairman of the Eastern Districts Branch of the Rhodesian National Farmers' Union, for instance, reported in 1975 to the Umtali District Farmers' Association that "inflation appeared to have hit agriculture like a tidal wave." He added that the cost of inputs were "soaring to unprecedented levels out of all proportions to the income farmers could expect from their produce."<sup>359</sup> Several problems were cited which compromised operational efficiency which included high cost of fuel, delays in railings exports and imports,

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<sup>354</sup> For a fuller discussion on the impact of the sanctions on the performance of Rhodesian agricultural economy, see Victor Chamisa, "Sanctions-Busting Measures with Particular Reference to the Automobile Industry in Rhodesia, 1965-79," (BA Honours Dissertation, Department of Economic History, University of Zimbabwe), 2013. See also, Joseph Kurebwa, *The Politics of Economic Sanctions on Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), 1965-1979*, Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications, 2012.

<sup>355</sup> There was uncertainty as to the effect of the future agricultural policy on the Rhodesian industry by Zambia whose aim was to achieve a greater measure of self-sufficiency in agricultural commodities which had previously been supplied by Rhodesia. This important outlet was severed along with others.

<sup>356</sup> Chamisa, "Sanctions-Busting Measures with Particular Reference to the Automobile Industry in Rhodesia."

<sup>357</sup> Interview with Daara.

<sup>358</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>359</sup> "Inflation Has Hit Agriculture Like A Tidal Wave," *The Umtali Post*, Friday 20 June 1975, p. 4.

and the general impact of negative internal liquidity. Rural farmers were no longer effectively apprised of the future agrarian policy which could give them some indication of how to plan ahead. With the increasing intensity of the war, the inflation also spiralled, prompting J. H. Kemple, Chief Economist of the Agricultural Marketing Board, to report that, even for white farmers, the situation was unbearable. He noted that:

We have a very sad position today where many farmers have been killed; many had to leave their farms, owing to their labour being intimidated by terrorists while others left due to increased costs of farming which were in no way covered by Government. These farmers were left with no money to carry them on to other seasons.<sup>360</sup>

But Kemple missed the point that Africans were equally displaced due to the conflict. For example, there is the sad story of Banda villagers in Marange who were forced to accommodate hundreds of Africans who had been displaced by war from Nyanga.<sup>361</sup> This had the immediate effect of overcrowding people without sufficient land to cultivate crops and build homes. All this translated to increase the risk factors for rural food security.

Whereas the policy of community development could not successfully deal with fundamentals that it sought to establish, a couple of other interesting points regarding drought and the guerrilla war which broke out in 1966 need to be briefly examined as they also invariably contributed to the problem of food security during this period. Prolonged periods of dry spell, for example, affected food production trajectories in the district. Reporting on the impact of the 1972/73 agricultural season on food security, for instance, J.M. Williamson, Director of Veterinary Services, argued that, although “drought was no stranger to Rhodesia,” it had devastating effects on crop production.<sup>362</sup> In terms of grazing, Williamson reported that African areas were in bad shape, and this the position was naturally aggravated by lack of open water. As a result, “regular dipping of cattle had to be abandoned in most Tribal Trust

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<sup>360</sup> “Farmers Need Better Prices,” *The Herald*, Monday, 14 May 1979, p. 6.

<sup>361</sup> Interview with Rebecca Mawoyo, Chingome Shopping Centre, Banda Village, Mutare, 15 July 2015.

<sup>362</sup> NAZ, S3454, Report of the Secretary for Agriculture for the Period 1<sup>st</sup> October, 1970 to 30<sup>th</sup> September, 1971, p. 51.

Lands.”<sup>363</sup> Huge numbers of African-owned stock died, although the drought was most serious in respect of crop yields. This Report, however, showed progress in goat-keeping in the district, stressing that those animals were a very useful and economical source of meat to their African owners.<sup>364</sup>

While the above Report provided refreshing insights into the food and livestock situation, it, however, omitted important aspects of the complex processes then at hand. For example, beef export abattoirs were not prepared to deal with goats, and private abattoirs lacked the necessary chilling and freezing facilities. It also overlooked the issue of war which caused renewed challenges to rural food security. The drought alone might not have impacted so negatively on African producers had it not been that the war reduced opportunities for Africans to concentrate on one problem at a time. But, as will be argued in Chapter Four, emerging literature demonstrates that ‘mass starvation as a consequence of the weather has very nearly disappeared; today’s famines are all caused by political decisions.’<sup>365</sup> The impact of the war grew with the escalation of hostilities since the mid-1970s when the district was opened up as part of the new war zone. It follows that the war formed part of the context within which to assess the position of food security in relation to the programme of community development. Given that state efforts were of late being directed to the war, the emphasis on community development at that particular time inevitably spurred Africans to suspect that it was the state’s subtle way of withdrawing its full commitment to rural food security and development.

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<sup>363</sup>Ibid.

<sup>364</sup> Ibid.

<sup>365</sup>Alexander de Waal, “‘The Nazis Used It, We Use It’”: Alex de Waal on the Return of Famine,” *London Review of Books*, Vol. 39, No. 12, 2017, pp. 9-12.

At every level of these tense, complex, economic and political developments, however, the colonial state continued to explore new ways of tackling the agrarian question and contain restive Africans. With regards to the problems of cropping, there was a tremendous reorientation of the agricultural industry towards diversification, including balancing between food and commercial crops. R.A. Griffith, Secretary for Agriculture, remarked that “the problems of diversification have been manifold, but resolved basically into two issues, namely marketing and production”.<sup>366</sup> The distortions in both production and marketing of crops as a result of the changing policy had resulted in many farmers frustrated, leading to agricultural stagnation which impeded local efforts at food security.<sup>367</sup> For instance, the state was no longer in a position to provide complementary supporting services to rural populations. Ironically, Griffith was emphasizing the need to increase the production of food stuffs and raw materials which had been previously imported, all of which effort required an expansion of land under crops at a time when the increasing rural population was no longer matched with available land.<sup>368</sup> These were serious contradictions within the colonial state which did not bode well for rural food security.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter has demonstrated the growing impact of bad policy frameworks by the Federal and UDI Governments. For Mutare District, two key policies which bred opposition were the emphasis on cash crops rather than food crops, as well as community development. Colonial policy on traditional small grains was not effectively followed up with the necessary support schemes in order to effectively implement the policy. This resulted in rural farmers struggling to produce even the barest minimum with regards to household food requirements. It has been

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<sup>366</sup> NAZ, S3454, Report of the Secretary for Agriculture for the Period 1<sup>st</sup> October, 1970 to 30<sup>th</sup> September, 1971.

<sup>367</sup> Interview with Noel Betera, Master Farmer, Betera Village, Marange, Mutare, 10 July 2015.

<sup>368</sup> NAZ, S3454, Report of the Secretary for Agriculture for the Period 1<sup>st</sup> October, 1970 to 30<sup>th</sup> September, 1971.

further illustrated that the art of state-making ought to have begun with local people in the grassroots rather than the top-down approach around which the ambitious community development policy revolved. This policy had substantial limitations, particularly because of its exclusion of Africans in its planning and execution stages, added to the conundrums of the NLHA. African indigenous cropping initiatives were seriously hampered by the restricting nature of this Act, particularly in view of the growing need for land. This issue laid the basis for the subsequent outbreak of guerrilla war that erupted shortly after the UDI, bringing renewed concerns about rural food security.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### GUERRILLA WAR, WOMEN AND MUTARE DISTRICT FOOD SECURITY, 1975-1980

#### Introduction

This chapter explores the role thrust by war upon women on matters of food security, highlighting the immense, but somewhat unheralded, contribution which they made in mitigating the impact of hunger within their households in contexts of conflict. This interpretation comes in the wake of the inherent shortcomings of the grand narrative about the guerrilla war which tends to gloss over such an important role and which paints the picture that those men and women who carried guns were the only bona fide veterans of the war.<sup>369</sup> By examining such a role, this chapter demonstrates that women were not passive victims of the challenges of conflict in that they worked so hard to restore rural food security under adverse circumstances. In as much as Munochiveyi “seeks to tell the story of colonial Rhodesia’s political captives, stories that have remained in the shadows of dominant nationalist and state narratives,” this chapter strives to bring out women’s participation as an equally suppressed constituency that also “lived in the fringes of history for a long time.”<sup>370</sup> This chapter engages with Hancock’s interpretation of the relationship between war and food security which he illustrated using his case study of the Ethiopian famine. Hancock frames the issue of war-induced hunger as a consequence of a deliberate military tactic to starve opponents.<sup>371</sup> The strength of this approach lies in its examination of the historical nuances and political struggles around food as a weapon of war.

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<sup>369</sup> Blessing B. Muringapasi, “The Development of ZANLA Strategy of Guerrilla Warfare”, (BA Honours Dissertation, University of Zimbabwe, Department of History), 1983.

<sup>370</sup> Munochiveyi, *Prisoners of Rhodesia*, p. 1.

<sup>371</sup> G. Hancock, *Ethiopia: The Challenge of Hunger*, London: V. Gollancz, 1985.

In situations of conflict the world over, women often bear the brunt of the fighting, and in Southern Africa, some of those conflicts have arisen out of, and have been legitimised by, the compelling need to overthrow colonial subjugation in its entirety.<sup>372</sup> When civilians are trapped in the throes of war, the impact is felt differently between men and women. Generally women tend to be more susceptible to the extreme effects of conflict than men, although the impact among women themselves is also diverse. The displacement of women from their routine household chores at the home front pushes them to the edges of survival and strongly amplifies their vulnerability. In turn, this leads to extreme discomfort and hunger among households. Traditionally, women face the realities of having to put food on the table in family environments, or even to produce the food itself, a common experience especially in women-headed households. Women's lives are also put at great risk when they attempt to increase their concentration on local livelihoods at certain intervals of the war, particularly when belligerents engage in armed skirmishes within their rural spaces.

Most households, however, have both men and women jointly working together in order to reap good harvests during each rainy season. Whereas women weed fields, men often preoccupy themselves with heavier tasks such as clearing land, although in some cases, they may even be away searching for better incomes in towns. Such a routine in which men and women complement each other becomes fragile in the face of outbreaks of hostilities sparked by wide-ranging factors. When the guerrilla war of the 1970s broke out in Rhodesia, it was predominantly men who were conscripted into the nationalist army before women's subsequent military contributions to the war as armed combatants. This presented new

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<sup>372</sup>See, for instance, J. Allman and V. Tashjian, *I Will Not Eat Stone: A Women's History of Colonial Asante*, Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2000; S. Geiger, *TANU Women: Gender and Culture in the Making of Tanganyikan Nationalism, 1955-1965*, Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1997; C. Walker, *Women and Resistance in South Africa*, London: Onyx Press, 1982; S. Urdang, *Fighting Two Colonialisms*, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1979, and "Women in National Liberation Movements", In M. Hay and S. Stichter (eds.), *African Women South of the Sahara*, New York: Longman, 1984, pp. 156-69; and Mary Ann Tetreault (ed.), *Women and Revolution in Africa, Asia and the New World*, Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1994.

challenges for farm labour, and, shortly afterwards, the dire impact of the war on agriculture and food security was strongly felt among rural populations. Equally disruptive were the rapidly deteriorating conditions of peace as tilling became risky due to land mining and frequent curfews. Ironically, preoccupation with farming was the major route to African survival and the traditional livelihood option for many rural households. For Mutare District, the opening of the Manicaland Provincial War Zone in 1976 brought with it renewed threats of hunger.<sup>373</sup> Not only did the district suffer from rapid conscription of labour that could otherwise have been deployed in food production, it was also exposed to the multiple risks of violence since it served onerously as a transit route for combatants traversing the porous Mozambican border.

When the country eventually attained its independence from the British in 1980 after the protracted war, the government's post-war packages for war veterans were strictly extended to those who were at the battlefield. Other categories of participants such as restrictees and detainees, as well as women behind the scenes, did not benefit. Although such benefits would not ordinarily be financial due to the numbers involved, the work done by rural women in feeding members of their households as well as guerrillas deserves to be recognised. Perhaps, what could be in dispute is the nature of reward such women may be given, but they deserve to be weaved into any history of Zimbabwe with men alike, at least more than just a footnote. Awarding hefty pay-outs only to armed combatants without acknowledging other women's contribution to rural food security amounts to a misrepresentation of reality.<sup>374</sup> The absence of a bold reference to such unparalleled sacrifice towards the political economy of food security in conflict-affected contexts is a complete misrepresentation of reality insofar as the discourse of the struggle for independence is concerned.

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<sup>373</sup> Interview with Sarudzai Gwite, Ex-Female Combatant, Chirasika Primary School, Mutare, 15 August, 2015.

<sup>374</sup> The Zimbabwean Government bowed to pressure from war veterans to pay gratuities of ZW\$50,000-00 for participating in the war.

Whereas old scholarship has tended to give a blanket narrative of the war history,<sup>375</sup> newer literature has marshalled evidence which disentangles these complex nuances and re-package the analyses of the war history.<sup>376</sup> Within this framework, this chapter adds another neglected angle of this narrative by making a more disaggregated reassessment of the various sources of support for the liberation struggle, focusing on women and their role in rural food security. In the process, this helps to bring out the subaltern voice. This approach is important in that it clearly reveals the extent to which women sacrificed and risked their lives in order to reduce the increasing impact of hunger in those strenuous and hazardous circumstances of war. Many villages were stripped of assets, income and food while farms and markets were destroyed by the war. The whole discourse on war-induced hunger fits into the broader literature about famines that some African countries have experienced in time and space. For example, the literature refreshingly engages with Alex de Waal's thesis on the underlying causes of the Ethiopian famine in which he has ruled out droughts and floods as leading causes of food insecurity.<sup>377</sup> Instead, he conceptualises the problem of hunger within the context of deliberate political decisions to starve the masses as a military tactic utilised by parties to a conflict.<sup>378</sup> It also briefly engages with de Waal and the Human Rights Watch's earlier work which demonstrates the food insecurity and conflict nexus and the challenges it presented to the civilian population.<sup>379</sup>

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<sup>375</sup> Cnaan S. Banana, *Turmoil and Tenacity: Zimbabwe, 1890-1990*, Harare: ZPH, 1989.

<sup>376</sup> Joshua Chakawa, "Themes in Zimbabwe's War of Liberation, 1966-1979," *Journal of History and Development*, Vol. 2, No. 2, 2011, pp. 50-70; and, Munochiveyi, *Prisoners of Rhodesia*, among others, have fleshed out interesting dynamics and situations in the discourse of the liberation history.

<sup>377</sup> Alexander de Waal, *Famine Crimes: Politics and the Disaster Relief Industry in Africa*, London: James Currey, 1997.

<sup>378</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>379</sup> A. de Waal and Human Rights Watch, *Evil Days: Thirty Years of War and Famine in Ethiopia*, Addis Ababa: Human Rights Watch, 1991, p. 386.

The chapter begins with an overview of the food security situation in the Mutare District shortly after the outbreak of hostilities between the nationalists and Smith's Rhodesia Front regime. It then proceeds to demonstrate the changing food security dynamics following the opening of the area as a war zone in 1976. It reveals how women (including the elderly) in the district bore the brunt of the vicissitudes of the war. This echoes the Ethiopian situation as analysed by Keller where horrible images of emaciated children who had become the silent victims in the civil war were captured.<sup>380</sup> The chapter illuminates a neglected but crucial narrative on women's efforts to fend for their households under wartime conditions. The war zone brought renewed challenges to the district's food security efforts, especially given the fact that the district had hardly recovered from the impact of a series of misfortunes, including droughts, and the effects of radicalized land deprivation which threatened food security.

Few historians have investigated the impact of the war on rural food security. Most of the literature seems to give only peripheral treatment to this aspect of the war and the African women's response to it.<sup>381</sup> Indeed, the transformation of the area into a theatre of war caused disruption of crop cultivation and destruction of granaries on the one hand, and the conscription of mostly male members of households into guerrilla armies, on the other. This prompted women in many households to double as heads of families and single-handed cultivators of land. The chapter stresses that many women in the Mutare District in particular, and the rest of the country in general, played a critical role in fighting hunger during the war.<sup>382</sup> However, they ultimately gained much less than they had anticipated at its inception,

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<sup>380</sup> Keller, "Drought, War, and the Politics of Famine in Ethiopia and Eritrea."

<sup>381</sup> K. D. Manungo, "The Role Peasants Played in the Zimbabwe War of Liberation, With Special Emphasis on Chiweshe District", (PhD Dissertation, University of Ohio), 1991.

<sup>382</sup> See conclusions about women agency drawn by, for instance, S. Ranchod-Wilson, Gender Politics and the Pendulum of Political and Social Transformation in Zimbabwe, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 1, (Mar., 2006), pp. 49-67; Josephine, Nhongo-Simbanegavi, *For Better or Worse? Women and ZANLA in*

although only a few of them, particularly those who were at the battlefield, received wider recognition and compensation. Both archival sources and informants have been used in streamlining the evidence for this study, over and above secondary sources.

Nevertheless, the overarching issue which remains unaddressed by the literature on the guerrilla war is the explicit role women played in mobilising local support for the freedom fighter over and above the compelling demands for household food security. Save for a few historians who have studied the broader participation of women across the spectrum of wartime roles and preoccupations,<sup>383</sup> the critical issue of women and food security has actually escaped scholarly appraisal. At least Nhongo-Simbanegavi demonstrated the shortfalls of feminist scholarship written in collaboration with ZANU-PF leaders which did not capture the actual dynamics of African women's participation in the war. This actually leads her to question whether the war truly provided a platform for women's emancipation which Aquina Weinrich, among others, had envisaged in their literature.<sup>384</sup> There was a broad consensus amongst historians that the emancipation of the country's African women had begun with the national liberation movement and was going to be completed immediately after the war.

### **Women and Food Security in the Context of War**

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*Zimbabwe's Liberation Struggle*, Harare: Weaver Press, 2000; Tanya Julie Lyons, *Guns and Guerrilla Girls: Women in the Zimbabwean Liberation Struggle*, Trenton: Africa World Press, 2004; and, Eleanor O'Gorman, *The Front Line Runs Through Every Woman: Women & Local Resistance in the Zimbabwean Liberation War*, London: James Currey, 2011.

<sup>383</sup> Tanya Lyons, "The Forgotten Soldiers: Women in Zimbabwe's Liberation War", *Southern African Report*, Vol. 12, No. 2, 1997; Ngwabi Bhebe and Terence O. Ranger, *Society in Zimbabwe's Liberation War*, Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1996; and, Elizabeth Schmidt, "Review Article: For Better or Worse? Women and ZANLA in Zimbabwe's Liberation Struggle," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 2001, Vol. 34, No. 2, pp. 416-417.

<sup>384</sup> Aquina Weinrich, *Women and Racial Discrimination in Rhodesia*, Paris: UNESCO, 1979.

According to Jeremy Jackson, quite a number of people moved out of the rural areas in Zimbabwe between 1977 and 1978 to escape the multiple effects of conflict. This internal displacement also included those who were going out of the country to train or contribute to the armed struggle.<sup>385</sup> Two main factors necessitated the numerical imbalance between men and women; first, the need to search for work which prompted men to flock to urban centres, farms and mines while leaving behind women to cultivate the land; and, second, the voluntary or forced conscription of young men into the guerrilla military establishment to stave off Smith's regime.<sup>386</sup> To close the labour gap prompted by these factors, women and children cultivated lands to produce food which was undoubtedly indispensable for household survival. In addition to this unfolding burden, some women cooked for the guerrillas, in which process they invariably sustained injuries or died altogether in the crossfire.<sup>387</sup> Under the threat of starvation, rural populations in the district adopted survival strategies which were unreliable because of the impact of the violence.

The emergence of Mutare District as part of the zone of war towards the last segment of the liberation war brought about profound changes to the way in which the question of food security was to be handled. Whereas previously both women and men combined efforts in their households to ensure that their families were food secure, the war actually altered this scenario in big ways. Traditionally, women would concentrate on weeding while men involved themselves with more arduous tasks like fencing the fields, clearing off new agricultural lands, ox-drawn ploughing and erecting granaries, although some of these roles were interchangeable, depending on circumstances. Boys of school-going age were responsible for herding cattle and goats while girls assisted their mothers with household

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<sup>385</sup> Jeremy Jackson, "Repatriation and Reconstruction in Zimbabwe during the 1980s," In Tim Allen and Hubert Morsink (eds.), *When Refugees Go Home: African Experience*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994, pp. 126-166.

<sup>386</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>387</sup> Interview with Gwite.

chores. The conscription of mainly male freedom fighters in the Mutare District transformed these roles, prompting women, as well as children, to immediately shoulder the huge responsibility of cultivating lands in order to produce food for household survival.

Compounding the threat of hunger during this period were the actions of the colonial state in politicising food as an instrument of war. The rural citizenry was subjected to increasingly tortuous and retaliatory measures in an effort to turn back the tide of guerrilla infiltration in the district. It consistently attempted to deny food to ‘rebel’ forces and their supporters through the ‘scorched earth policy.’<sup>388</sup> Rosina Zimunya, an elderly local resident, sums up the feelings of many such victims by saying that “our granaries were doused by fire and landmines were planted into our fields. We had to face realities of putting up families together as our men had joined the war.”<sup>389</sup> This situation compares well with the Ethiopian famine case of the 1970s and 1980s where scholars like Hancock and de Waal contextualise the consequent crisis as a political gimmick by the state to deny opponents the opportunity to access food aid or to cultivate the land. The Ethiopian state ensured that the agricultural system of farmers in opposition strongholds was disrupted. Alex de Waal and the Human Rights Watch report its infamous 1979 bombing as a strategy not just to kill or displace civilian populations, but also to instil fear in them and cause severe disruption of their livelihoods.<sup>390</sup> Hancock adds that the deliberate atrocities committed by the Ethiopian state led to civilian casualties and the general breakdown of their agricultural pattern of life.<sup>391</sup> This use of starvation as an instrument of war was, thus, quite deplorable.

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<sup>388</sup> Interview with Rosin Zimunya, Local Resident, Madewokunze Primary School, 18 July 2015.

<sup>389</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>390</sup> Hancock, *Ethiopia*.

<sup>391</sup> de Waal and Human Rights Watch, *Evil Days*.



The plight of women can also be best analysed by looking at their situation when the war escalated on the eve of independence and when food scarcity reached unprecedented proportions. In what appears to be an attempt to deny guerrillas food, reported Caryle Murphy in February 1979, shops were closed and granaries destroyed. Buses were stopped and passengers told to eat or dispose of the food they were carrying wherever guerrilla presence was suspected.<sup>392</sup> Women had a dual burden of providing for their families and serving guerrillas voluntarily, or forcibly, whichever applicable. They had the obligation to assist materially. Some of them placed their lives at even greater risk by refusing to expose the whereabouts of guerrillas, or offer food and laundry to guerrillas. As Jephias Dzimbanhete has put it, the white minority regime “unleashed indiscriminate violence against the civilian population. The intention was to glean information about the freedom fighters and punish the rural population for cooperating with the liberation fighters.”<sup>393</sup> But, this violence was not limited only to white Rhodesians as guerrillas also unleashed torture in cases where the civilian population failed to heed their warnings. However, the guerrillas “used violence on civilians sparingly because they could not afford to lose the priceless support they rendered them.”<sup>394</sup>

Several cases of victimisation were reported across the Mutare District. For instance, John Ratanga of Banda in Marange vividly recalls the victimisation of several women (and men) in his area for failing to account for food suspected to be reserved for guerrillas.<sup>395</sup> The story is told of a woman who made frantic efforts to conceal a bowl of *sadza* in the ground after she

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<sup>392</sup> Caryle Murphy, “Rural Blacks in Rhodesia Targets of Guerrillas, Army,” *The Washington Post*, 3 February, 1979.

<sup>393</sup> Jephias. E. Dzimbanhete, “Drawing Lessons from Zimbabwe's War of Liberation: Efficacious Use of Propaganda and Violence,” <https://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/drawing-lessons-from-zimbabwes-war-of-liberation> (Accessed on 12 March 2019).

<sup>394</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>395</sup> Interview with John Ratanga, Banda Primary School, 15 July 2015.

had spotted security forces approaching her. Unbeknown to her that she had already been detected, she pretended that nothing had happened. She was, however, forced to retrieve the bowl and show cause why she could not be suspected of harbouring guerrillas, to which out of fear she naturally stammered. Predictably, she was heavily assaulted and subsequently died of injuries sustained therefrom.<sup>396</sup> These and other related stories involving crude interrogation, torture and other war-time abuses of civilians by Rhodesian forces were confirmed by other oral testimonies. For instance, Zimunya narrated that such incidences were also common in the Zimunya area where security forces assaulted civilians on a glimmer of suspicion that they concealed the whereabouts of guerrillas or that they were secretly providing them with services.<sup>397</sup> Dzimbanhete observes that this conduct by Rhodesian forces was different from that of the guerrillas “who were cognisant of the significant role of the subaltern group, the peasants, with whom they collaborated, did not propagate delusive propaganda.”<sup>398</sup>

Yet this relationship between the local people and the guerrillas was the cornerstone of the liberation war as the two could not be separated since they were fighting for the same cause. Matthew Preston makes the interesting point that there were no set-piece battles between the security forces and the nationalist armies because these would have cost heavy guerrilla casualties. Rather, there were a series of small-unit actions, ambushes and counter-raids which were usually carried out between mid-November and August of each year in order to avoid the dry season when the absence of vegetation in the bush deprived the guerrillas of cover. To this end, guerrillas infiltrated the communal lands to subvert the organs of the

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<sup>396</sup> Interview with Rudo Mupande, Garanewako Village, Marange, 14 July 2015.

<sup>397</sup> Interview with Zimunya.

<sup>398</sup> Dzimbanhete, “Drawing Lessons from Zimbabwe's War of Liberation....”

Rhodesian state.<sup>399</sup> This means that they had to be aided by the local population to get food and clothing. The actions of the unfortunate woman cited above were, therefore, consistent with that propaganda. For its part, the guerrilla army's military ideology was modelled along Mao Zedong's three-phase-strategy of warfare which stated that "the guerrilla must move amongst the people as a fish swims in the sea."<sup>400</sup> Guided by this framework of relations, the interface between freedom fighters and the villagers illustrated deep levels of collaboration, particularly in the area of food security, a role actively conducted by women. In reciprocity, the guerrillas would strive to protect civilians, particularly through minimizing interruption of crop cultivation in the face of the prevailing environment of conflict.

Although not focusing primarily on women and food security which this study is seized with, prominent historians have acknowledged the important role peasants in general have played in making the objectives of the Second Chimurenga achievable. Lan maintains that the anti-colonial struggle succeeded because of the co-operation between the guerrillas and the local peasantry. This co-operation entailed the provision of practical help and support by the local people and spirit mediums to the guerrillas in order to do away with the economic domination of the whites. Writing from the vantage point of political anthropology, Lan argues that it was necessary first for guerrillas to win the approval of the ancestors, to be seen as their tools, or as the positive medium of their will.<sup>401</sup> Equally outstanding in terms of its contribution to the literature of the political economy of peasants during wartime is Ranger's analysis which captures guerrillas' admiration of the determination of the peasantry to withstand colonial

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<sup>399</sup> Matthew Preston, "Stalemate and the Termination of Civil War: Rhodesia Reassessed," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 41, No. 1, 2004, pp. 65-83.

<sup>400</sup> Paresh, *Mao Tse-tung and Chimurenga: An Investigation into ZANU's Strategies*, Braamfontein: Skotaville Publishers, 1988.

<sup>401</sup> David Lan, *Guns and Rain: Guerrillas and the Spirit Mediums in Zimbabwe*, London: James Currey, 1985, pp. 225-6

interference in production.<sup>402</sup> Referring to the presence of guerrillas in the Makoni District in Manicaland Province, Ranger briefly touches on the salient roles played by women and girls during the war, stressing the fact that the guerrillas called upon the unmarried women of Makoni to act as their cooks, informants and messengers.<sup>403</sup> This seemingly sound working relationship between villagers and comrades was promoted in order to confront the colonial regime from a position of unity and strength.

Such collaborative experiences were replicated in Mutare District as confirmed from interviews. Huge numbers of women participated in social committees set up by the guerrillas to spearhead the process of extracting food and other stuff from the local population. “We provided laundry, cooking and other services to guerrillas,” remarked female war veterans, “and these duties were almost always acknowledged at *pungwes* at Chishingwi and Gonora.”<sup>404</sup> Preston weighs in to strengthen the view that guerrilla action was strongest in the 1970s along the eastern border, which means that many more local people had to assist in whichever way the guerrillas would benefit.<sup>405</sup> On entering a region, guerrillas would come up with a list of names of already known to be sympathisers, and they were aided by *mujibhas*, local unarmed boys who acted as informants, to traverse the length and breadth of the district in order to mobilise pockets of support, homestead by homestead.<sup>406</sup> Alexander, McGregor and Ranger point out the risks associated with this war, focusing on experiences in Matabeleland. It is their strong conviction that food preparation was not an easy task, particularly in the ‘yellow’ zones where Rhodesian forces still patrolled.<sup>407</sup> However, it

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<sup>402</sup>Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness and Guerrilla War in Zimbabwe*, p. 182.

<sup>403</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 207.

<sup>404</sup> Interview with Prisca Ruturuko, Joyline Mwapiyei and Sarudzai Chishingwi, Female Revolutionaries Based at Chishingwi and Gonora Villages in Marange, 27 July 2015.

<sup>405</sup> Preston, “Stalemate and the Termination of Civil War: Rhodesia Reassessed.”

<sup>406</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>407</sup> Alexander, J., McGregor, J., and Ranger, T.O., *Violence and Memory: One Hundred Years in the ‘Dark Forests’ of Matabeleland*, Harare: Weaver Press, 2000.

should be borne in mind that these relations had a flip side as they were partly based on power relations and fear. Guerrillas wielded so much power as they possessed grenades, the dreaded AK-47 and LMG machine guns, and other artillery barrage which enhanced their standing, power and authority over civilians. Chakawa's doctoral thesis explores these relationships more closely.<sup>408</sup>

Broadly speaking, these experiences resonate with Sherilynn Young's observations in her study of southern Mozambique where women were increasingly expected "to fulfil all home duties and supply food without the assistance of men", and with increasing uncertainty as to whether the men would in fact ever return or what they would do to their women when they did.<sup>409</sup> Young presents the emerging picture about the plight of women who, at the beginning of the twentieth century, faced a series of difficult situations in which their economic obligations and expectations in the community were altered. In addition, she sheds more light on migration and forced labour of men which kept more than half of the adult males away from home at most times.<sup>410</sup> In Mutare District, like in southern Mozambique, this gap created problems for food security and unusual challenges on female cultivators, although this did not deter women from confronting the situation with boldness, showing their ingenuity and coping strategies as opposed to being vulnerable.<sup>411</sup> Women in Mutare did not give up tending for their families in the face of these disruptions of local livelihoods. Interestingly, Young also gives agency to the women in her study, demonstrating that that were not merely passive victims. This is consistent with Ranger's analysis of 'peasant

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<sup>408</sup> Joshua Chakawa, "Abel Muzorewa's Security Force Auxiliaries (SFAs) during and after the War of Liberation in Hurungwe District, Zimbabwe," (Unpublished D.Phil. Thesis, Department of History, Midlands State University, Gweru, Zimbabwe, April 2015).

<sup>409</sup> Sherilynn Young, "Fertility and Famine: Women's Agricultural History in Southern Mozambique," In Robin Palmer and Neil Parsons (eds.), *The Roots of Rural Poverty in Central and Southern Africa*, California: University of California Press, 1977, p. 75.

<sup>410</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>411</sup> Interview with Marylyn Mhembere, Ex-Combatant, Masvaure Ward 24, Marange, 17 July 2015.

consciousness during the Rhodesian guerrilla war where peasants intervened in their own production to stave off starvation despite the shenanigans of the Rhodesian state.<sup>412</sup>

Although studies such as these are important in our understanding of the dynamics at play between villagers, particularly women, and the fighters, there is still a huge knowledge gap about the impact of such interactions on rural food security. The growing scarcity of food in Mutare District due to war meant that the guerrillas and the local people had to share whatever the situation offered in a spirit of egalitarianism wherever possible.<sup>413</sup> However, this strained most households that barely had enough food resources to keep their families alive even before being prompted to contribute towards the war.<sup>414</sup> Other local people confirmed this, highlighting that households which did not have sufficient means to provide for the guerrillas were required to prove this through liaising with their village heads. Sadly, conditions for a humanitarian crisis were manifest in some women-headed households facing acute shortage of food. In their reference to Matabeleland, Alexander, McGregor and Ranger observe that studies of the relationships between guerrillas and the civilians expounded diverse and sometimes contradictory arguments, although guerrillas' entry into rural communities demanded an adaptation to local agendas and ideas.<sup>415</sup> This is echoed by Lan who states that almost every anti-colonial struggle in the 20<sup>th</sup> century was led by an army of guerrillas without whose co-operation with the local peasantry no such struggle would have succeeded.<sup>416</sup> Equally, civilian support was the linchpin of guerrilla survival in Mutare District.<sup>417</sup>

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<sup>412</sup> Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness and Guerrilla War in Zimbabwe*, p. 177.

<sup>413</sup> Interview with Mhembere.

<sup>414</sup> Interview with Zach Chinyauhwera, War Veteran, Chinyauhwera Secondary School, Zimunya, 27 July 2015.

<sup>415</sup> Alexander, *et al*, *Violence and Memory*, p. 159.

<sup>416</sup> Lan, *Guns and Rain*.

<sup>417</sup> Interview with Mhembere.

Some households which were unable to raise food and other requirements got sanctioned or were exposed at night rallies commonly known as *pungwes* where they were labelled as sell-outs.<sup>418</sup> Norma Kriger echoes these findings in her study of Mutoko where she has argued that coercion and material calculation played a key role in civilian support, while guerrillas and youth used coercive power to attain higher levels of consumption.”<sup>419</sup> Informants cited in *Violence and Memory* brought out revealing insights into the relationships between households and the guerrillas. They could demand chicken which some households could provide while others were unable to meet their demands.<sup>420</sup> They added that the guerrillas were expected to consume the same food as civilians, and not to demand special treatment.<sup>421</sup> In these roles, women were joined by the young boys and girls who were “charged with scouting and carrying messages, delivering food and supplies to guerrillas and a host of other activities.”<sup>422</sup> The Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace has rich narratives of the nasty experiences by people who were subjected to torture; both by the guerrillas and the government forces, depending on the perceived nature of their participation in the war, either as collaborators or traitors.<sup>423</sup> In Mutare District, therefore, women whose husbands were working in towns were expected to contribute financially to the welfare of guerrillas, in addition to what the rest were pledging, failing which would place their households at risk of being labelled traitors.<sup>424</sup>

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<sup>418</sup> Interview with Rarami Mukwada, Nyamariya Village, Marange, 15 July 2015.

<sup>419</sup> Norma Kriger, *Zimbabwe's Guerrilla War: Peasant Voices*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, p. 19.

<sup>420</sup> Interviews conducted by Alexander, McGregor and Ranger with Musa Dube, Aaron Dube and Ken Moyo in February 1996 at Lake Alice, Quoted in *Violence and Memory*, p. 144.

<sup>421</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>422</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>423</sup> Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace, *The Man in the Middle: Torture, Resettlement and Eviction*, Salisbury: Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Rhodesia, 1975.

<sup>424</sup> Interview with Sarudzai Mwaimbodeyi, Manzununu Primary School, Zimunya, 12 July 2015.

The failure of the post-colonial state to acknowledge the full contribution of women both at the battlefield and the home front is explained by the patriarchal nature of the Zimbabwean society. Schmidt argues that women continued to be subordinate to men in both military and civilian life despite ZANU (PF)'s claim to be a force for women emancipation.<sup>425</sup> She argues that the independent Zimbabwean state neglected to address the specific needs of female ex-combatants.<sup>426</sup> Nhongo-Simbanegavi concurs that the nationalist movement's rhetoric that women's role was indispensable has not been matched by reality. This is because the extensive mobilisation of women porters, nurses, teachers, secretaries and cooks as a war effort was not heralded as a critical contribution in the immediate post-conflict period because women's activities were perceived as secondary to those of men.<sup>427</sup> This is why Nhongo-Simbanegavi challenges the official orthodoxy which suggests that a gender revolution occurred as a result of the war of independence. Yet, Alexander, McGregor and Ranger make the important submission that, "with many men absent in detention or because they had joined the guerrilla forces, women's responsibilities increased, extending even to decisions about allowing guerrillas to cache arms within their yards."<sup>428</sup> This leads Ruth Weiss to conclude that it was hardly surprising that women should have been playing such important and progressive roles because it was their society that was raped, if not destroyed, by colonialism.<sup>429</sup> The livelihood situation for many households remained desperate because of the impact of the prolonged fighting.

Another area which left a permanent imprint on women is the issue of war-time sexual abuse which resulted in a sizeable number of them getting impregnated. In Mutare District, civilian girls (*chimbwindos*) and some married women were sought after for sexual gratification by

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<sup>425</sup> Schmidt, "Review Article: For Better or Worse?"

<sup>426</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>427</sup> Nhongo-Simbanegavi, *For Better or Worse?*

<sup>428</sup> Alexander, *et al*, *Violence and Memory*. 159.

<sup>429</sup> Ruth Weiss, *The Women of Zimbabwe*, Nairobi: Kesho Publishers, 1986, p. 7.



both freedom fighters and even the Smith auxiliaries, with many of the victims having unwanted pregnancies.<sup>430</sup> In Chief Zimunya's Chinyauhvera village, Monica Zvinyangarwa (now deceased) was impregnated by a guerrilla comrade, a case which ruffled feathers in her married life since her real husband later went on to marry another wife for failing to come to terms with the harsh realities of this matter. The offspring also had a raw deal as other siblings tended to sideline him way after the war.<sup>431</sup> Other women confided that they had been left with children from the war and lost track of the culprits.<sup>432</sup> The affected women had the added burden of sustaining children whose fathers were not available to provide food and other social and economic needs for them.

Like civilian women in the rural areas, those at the battlefield also experienced abuses. For instance, Tanya Lyons states that, while many women felt that in the bush training camps they had been treated as equals with men for the first time, "many of them suffered unspeakable abuse."<sup>433</sup> However, other women voluntarily or involuntarily entered into relationships with guerrillas, although such relationships were not an acceptable part of the struggle.<sup>434</sup> The scholars also agree that there were harsh punishments for rape, pointing out that some held that many relationships were not forced. From their rich collection of interviews, they argue that, "indeed, some guerrillas returned after the war's end to marry and pay *lobola* to the families of women with whom they had had wartime relationships."<sup>435</sup> In Mutare District, the relationship between the guerrillas and households was also characterised by both turbulence and co-operation, depending on the circumstances. But the important

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<sup>430</sup> Interview with Rangarirai Marahwa, Village Head, Marahwa Village, Marange, 13 July 2015.

<sup>431</sup> Interview with the Joel Mhondiwa, Cousin to Monica, Chinyauhvera Secondary School, 27 July 2015.

<sup>432</sup> Interview with Veronica Reveso, Chinyauhvera Secondary School, 27 July 2015.

<sup>433</sup> Lyons, "The Forgotten Soldiers, 12.

<sup>434</sup> Alexander, *et al*, *Violence and Memory*, p. 164.

<sup>435</sup> *Ibid*.

thing to note is that these relationships had consequences for rural women with regards to their socio-economic status, and which in turn affected their livelihoods patterns.

However, it is important to recognise that women were themselves not a single homogenous group in terms of their actions and responses to the war and its attendant demands. They were shaped by social and economic cleavages such as age, class and experiences in their interactions with the guerrillas. Those who were co-opted into the guerrilla army experienced the war differently when compared with those who remained behind. The thrust of this chapter is on the women who remained civilians and their contribution to the war with particular emphasis on rural food security. Viewed in overall terms, women both at home and at the warfront contributed in unique ways to the demands of the war; hence, each contribution had its own merit. There are parallels that can be drawn between the experiences in Mutare District and those of Nkayi District in Matabeleland which are captured by Alexander, McGregor and Ranger. These scholars were able to delineate from their sources the fact that women's roles differed from situation to situation. While providing food to guerrillas was the most common role played by women in the war, it was not the only one. Others would assist the guerrillas with information useful for guerrilla operation.<sup>436</sup> This is why Bhebe and Ranger conclude that "the wartime experience of women was so varied and contradictory that no simple discontinuities or continuities can be discerned"<sup>437</sup>

### **Landmines, Drought and Displacement**

The displacement of villagers by the war and the resultant disturbances to farming proved to be one of the most serious impacts of the war on household food security. This displacement

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<sup>436</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>437</sup> Bhebe and Ranger, *Society in Zimbabwe's Liberation War*.

took many forms. In some cases, it involved whole families flocking into mountains and thick forests to hide by the day and return at night. The fields were therefore left unattended, leading to a situation where livestock easily devoured the crops.<sup>438</sup> Male adults who had not been conscripted into the guerrilla army or who were at home for various reasons were particularly targeted and harassed by the Smith regime as they were thought to be assisting guerrillas with logistics.<sup>439</sup> The district became a theatre of war in many respects. For example, the Nyamariya and Dhaure areas of Marange were host to an increasing number of comrades because of their strategic location as they were flanked by mountains and hills. Displacement also entailed flocking to urban areas for safety. Some men skipped the border into Mozambique while others relocated to towns to seek refuge or work. They would, thus, avoid forced military conscription by the guerrillas as well as to raise incomes for their families back home, thereby lessening the burden of caring for their children and elderly on women.<sup>440</sup>

However, there was also another kind of displacement. In 1977, the Banda and Chibiya areas of Marange near Chiadzwa had to accommodate evicted people from districts as far afield as Nyanga and Makoni. Given that these areas were already overcrowded, it became even more difficult to share land for cultivation.<sup>441</sup> These places remained overcrowded even after independence. Combined, all these forms of displacement had the effect of putting people at the risk of starvation as they limited people's ability to concentrate on farming. For Nyamariya, the nearby Makate Mountain offered the necessary cover for guerrilla operations during close combat due to its dense vegetation and caves. At Mutsago, the Rhodesian regime erected a camp from which they would launch their offensive into areas further south

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<sup>438</sup>Interview with Chinyauhvera.

<sup>439</sup> Interview with Chief Marange.

<sup>440</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>441</sup>*Ibid.*

of the district. This camp was a central target for guerrillas and it was frequently bombed.<sup>442</sup> It is this constant bombing of the Mutsago camp that led to the displacement of adjacent communities. The result of this displacement was forced abandonment of livelihoods, assets, crops and land, thus, exposing people to hunger due to absence of safety nets.

The interconnection between hunger, displacement and conflict can be fully tackled by making an analysis of the impact of curfews imposed in the district. Partly these curfews were aimed at giving the security forces an opportunity to trek recruits proceeding into neighbouring Mozambique for guerrilla training, and partly to understand guerrilla movements within these areas. This scenario was not conducive for farming because crops were destroyed and fields were inundated with landmines. In some cases, it was no longer safe to weed the fields and this compromised the overall yield for those who managed to plant. This was because of the constant outbreaks of fighting in which several members of the civilian population were caught in the crossfire, especially where they failed to strictly observe curfews.<sup>443</sup> For instance, the death of one Mrs. Masoko Mukwada in December 1977 resulted from the serious oversight she had made about the stipulated curfew times imposed in her area. As she set off to weed her maize crop, she was shot dead.<sup>444</sup> Villagers were suspected of providing temporary shelter to recruits in transit to Mozambique. Although there were no “keeps” or “protected villages” in Mutare District such as were found in the Chiweshe, Nyanga or Madziwa in Bindura, these restrictions aggravated the suffering of households because of the limited time in which to farm.<sup>445</sup> Werbner argues that such curfews were part of the extreme measures that the Rhodesian state took in order to punish

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<sup>442</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>443</sup>For detailed information on “protected villages” and their purpose, see, for instance, Dzimbanhete, “Drawing Lessons from Zimbabwe's War of Liberation....”

<sup>444</sup> Interview with Masoko Mukwada, Mukwada Primary School, 22 July 2016.

<sup>445</sup>Dzimbanhete, “Drawing Lessons from Zimbabwe's War of Liberation....”

whole communities for various trumped-up offences.<sup>446</sup> This was the pattern across the entire district where civilians were at risk of being killed as they attempted to till their land; hence, making them severely food insecure.

The militarisation of the countryside in Mutare District made the framework for responding to hunger deteriorate dramatically for many households. In Zimunya, for instance, the Mambwere and Chitora areas were heavily infested with landmines. In the closing years of the war, soldiers used grenades and also planted landmines which would explode at the time.<sup>447</sup> Some of these dangerous objects remained unearthed way after independence, with isolated cases of their explosion reported from time to time, killing humans and livestock in the affected areas. The mine-infested land obviously became uncultivable in spite of the potential that it previously displayed in producing crops. This placed huge limits to the acreages available for cultivation and grazing. I had the opportunity to interview a victim, Erina Betera, who was disfigured by the explosion as she planted crops in her field. She hit a grenade with the hoe and it detonated, causing serious injuries to her face.<sup>448</sup> Crops had not been planted in many places for fear of explosions. The obvious consequence to food security was that households' options were narrowed. The mobility of people from one local area to another at the height of the war was curtailed because of curfews and the threat of landmines. Women were also constantly on the run, sometimes with children on their backs and heavy loads on their heads as they traversed the district for safety or for begging.<sup>449</sup>

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<sup>446</sup>R. P. Werbner, "In Memory: A Heritage of War in South-western Zimbabwe," In Bhebe and Ranger (eds.), *Society in Zimbabwe's Liberation War*, London: James Currey, 1996.

<sup>447</sup> Interview with Chief Zimunya.

<sup>448</sup> Interview with Erina Betera, Dora Community Clinic, Zimunya, 10 July 2016.

<sup>449</sup> *Ibid.*

The number of internally displaced persons grew towards the last two years of the war due to sharp political disagreements, particularly among rival nationalist parties. This emanated from the outright rejection by Joshua Nkomo and Robert Mugabe of the 1978/79 political settlement which the Smith regime proposed. This political outfit, dubbed Zimbabwe-Rhodesia, was actually intended to hoodwink Africans into ending hostilities by accommodating a compromise transitional regime under Bishop Abel Muzorewa and other blacks vying for power.<sup>450</sup> It was reported that commercial farming was the sector of the economy most affected by war, particularly because of its dependency on foreign trade and the nature of its markets.<sup>451</sup> The nation depended on the success or failure of efforts in commercial farming for the future wellbeing of its citizens. Some Africans responded by invading those commercial farms for food grain. There were increasing calls for conditions of peace, law and order to be urgently restored in farming districts in order to sustain high levels of production and low consumer prices, failing which “would result in food shortages, massive increases in food costs and even widespread malnutrition and starvation.”<sup>452</sup>

Following the intensification of hostilities, many households were left stranded because it was increasingly becoming difficult to till the land owing to various insecurities caused by the war. In his reference to the 1988 Sudanese conflict, Roger Winter explains the link between refugees, war and famine, arguing that the deaths which were reported resulted more from war-induced starvation than from drought-related problems.<sup>453</sup> Similarly, depletion of assets in Mutare District became rampant as households struggled to make ends meet.<sup>454</sup> The

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<sup>450</sup>Chakawa, “Abel Muzorewa’s Security Force Auxiliaries (SFAs) during and after the War of Liberation in Hurungwe District, Zimbabwe.”

<sup>451</sup> “The Sleeping Giant Waits for Peace and Free Market,” *The Herald*, Tuesday 26 June 1979, p. 30.

<sup>452</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>453</sup> Roger P. Winter, “Refugees, War and Famine in the Sudan,” *Issue: A Journal of Opinion*, Vol. 19, No. 2, 1991, pp. 56-61.

<sup>454</sup> Interview with Chief Zimunya.

ability of communities to engage in food production was frustrated by the reduction of cattle for draught power which were sold off to purchase food. Added to this were other factors such as the destruction of the physical and social infrastructure by the war and the renewed impetus to recruit more persons into the guerrilla army to rebut the Internal Settlement. These problems rippled into the larger economy in general and women's productive capacities in particular. This forced some women to adopt risky survival strategies in order to address two main issues; to feed their families in the absence of their husbands who were conscripted into the ZANLA army, and to circumvent the total collapse of the food security system due to war and recurring droughts.

Given this high rate of disinvestment of assets by households, women's options were be narrowed.<sup>455</sup> Some may attempt to supplement their diets with a variety of edible plants, roots, berries, wild vegetables and fruits. Teodosijevic argues that, during war, food production is usually reduced and it collapses, leading to hunger and starvation while forcing large numbers of people to migrate in pursuit of safety.<sup>456</sup> These factors set the stage for prolonged periods of food scarcity, particularly where conflicts interact with natural disasters such as droughts. Cliffe discusses the Ethiopian war against Eritrean independence and observes that the long-term impact of armed conflicts on agriculture is the disruption of farming systems operated by households. He further points out that isolated disease attacks linked to the destruction of health facilities, hardship and hunger also reduced people's capacities for food production.<sup>457</sup> These issues are taken further by Webb and Braun who provide statistics about the cost of the Ethiopian conflict in which they highlight that, in terms

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<sup>455</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>456</sup>S.B. Teodosijevic, "Armed Conflicts and Food Security", *ESA Working Paper*, No.03-11, Rome: FAO, 2011.

<sup>457</sup>L. Cliffe, "The Impact of War on Food Security in Eritrea: Prospects for Recovery," In J. Macrae, A. Zwi, M. Duffield and M. Shim (eds.), *War and Hunger: Rethinking International Responses to Complex Emergencies*, London: Zed Books, 1994.

of food production, it was estimated that the tonnage of lost annual production amounted to between 65,000 and 95,000.<sup>458</sup> This disappointing picture sets huge numbers of people in motion to search for food.

With respect to Mutare District, a closer look at the pattern of raids and counter-raids between the warring parties offers a proper analysis of factors impacting hunger during this period. Bombing attacks became a regular part of the war of intimidation and attrition, and many women were forced to abandon farming altogether. Both parties to the war placed landmines at strategic military points such as Mutsago, Kurauone, and Muperere, among others, in order to cause devastation to opposing forces. Some of the landmines caused severe harm to civilian populations when they exploded during and after the war. In their own study of famines, de Waal and the Human Rights Watch capture the issue of the impact of landmines and bombings on food security more succinctly. They point out that the growing numbers of civilian casualties between 1979 and 1984 were presumably due to hunger and displacement associated with the attacks.<sup>459</sup> In a strategy dubbed “Bombing Everything that Moves,” de Waal captures the confessions of one Major Petros, a pilot who was shot down and captured by the enemy forces in 1984. In captivity, he had this to say about bombing: “We definitely know civilians will get hurt. But, knowing that the people sympathise with the rebels, the order is to bomb everything that moves.”<sup>460</sup> Informed by this comparison, the Mutare District case reveals that almost ten percent of the war zone had been rendered completely off-limits due to mining.<sup>461</sup>

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<sup>458</sup>Webb and Braun, *Famine and Food Security in Ethiopia*.

<sup>459</sup> de Waal, *Evil Days*, p.53.

<sup>460</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>461</sup> Interview with Chief Marange.



One should, however, not lose sight of the fact that, although it was not intended to cause harm to African households, sabotage was also an effective tool used by the guerrillas. For example, a number of bridges were destroyed by guerrillas in their effort to prevent the colonial forces and white business from free passage. These included the Chiure, Hotsprings and Bazeley bridges, among others in the district. Inadvertently, this military strategy disadvantaged local communities from using the same infrastructure to bring in relief materials from areas which produced better yields. The destruction of the Chiure and Hotsprings bridges posed a great challenge for villagers served by the bridges to access food from Nyanyadzi where irrigation schemes were thriving. This meant that people in Chishingwi and Kurauone villages had to walk distances of upwards of fifty kilometres round-trip to obtain grain. They could no longer use scotch-carts any more to cross the Odzi River.<sup>462</sup> Women were the major victims in this situation, particularly those who had to travel with babies.

Briefly turning to other variables which compound food insecurity, reference can be made to the late 1970s eastern and southern African famine to confirm that hunger is aggravated when bad weather combines with war-induced challenges. The 1977 drought caused famine conditions in war-torn Mozambique, but not in its more politically stable neighbours like Botswana and Zambia.<sup>463</sup> Mutare District experienced heightened food insecurity owing to its nearness to the Mozambican border where many combatants were crossing into the country for military training. As alluded to earlier on, this tended to give local women an added burden to provide food to recruits in transit; hence, exacerbating the deteriorating situation.<sup>464</sup> In coping with these challenges, women were able to extensively use only those portions of

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<sup>462</sup> Interview with Rarami Mukwada.

<sup>463</sup> Teodosijevic, "Armed Conflicts and Food Security," p. 23.

<sup>464</sup> Interview with Masoko Mukwada.

land available to them which they believed were not infested with landmines to grow drought-tolerant varieties which included sorghum and millet.<sup>465</sup> This enabled a number of households to spread risks over wider crop varieties in the hope to tame the droughts, while in some cases, teenagers took up hunting of wild game and fishing with greater intensity.

The food security picture remained acute when the 1977 dry spell was followed by an all-out drought in 1979.<sup>466</sup> The impact of the drought on productivity was high while pasturage for the livestock shrank. The number of people facing extreme hunger also increased and women were on the forefront to rescue the plight of children and ageing members of their households. Food prices soared during and in the immediate aftermath of the drought.<sup>467</sup> For many households, particularly those headed by women, this drought came as a shock because heavy rains had earlier on been received.<sup>468</sup> This sudden change of conditions is also captured by the 1978/79 Report of the Secretary for Agriculture on the provincial picture in which he echoed that the season had started off extremely well. Problems, however, came when rains virtually ceased in late January (1979), leading to the failure of crops to fill out to their full potential. The Report noted that what in January promised to be a bumper harvest became a year of just above average yields, and that “although early plantings came through, late planted crops failed.”<sup>469</sup> This signalled difficult times ahead, pushing households to the brink of starvation, particularly considering also that the war was still raging on.

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<sup>465</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>466</sup> NAZ, S1502/F6, Drought (Scheme and Matters Pertaining to) 1978/79, Vol. 17. Ref H/0/103: Drought Relief Grant Scheme: Phase II.

<sup>467</sup> Teodosijevic, “Armed Conflicts and Food Security”, p. 23.

<sup>468</sup> Interview with Douglas Phiri, Former Freedom Fighter and Agritex Officer, Mukwada Ward 29, Marange, Mutare, 16 July 2015.

<sup>469</sup> NAZ, S3454, Report of the Secretary for Agriculture for the Period 1<sup>st</sup> October, 1978 to 30<sup>th</sup> September, 1979.

For populations trapped in conflict, the compounding effects of drought were strongly felt in areas of Mutare District that had traditionally been receiving little annual rainfall. These included Chiadzwa, Chirasika, Manzununu and Tonhorai and their prospects to reap good harvests were strangled by the drought.<sup>470</sup> Although the Sahel could be a bit far-fetched to compare with the Mutare District, the situation partly mirrors the kind of suffering which the rural populations there experienced when the region was hit by successive droughts in the 1970s. There were huge displacements of people and shattered economies which caused distress, particularly among women and children.<sup>471</sup> Mutare District was equally exposed to renewed threats of hunger because of the drought which came amid an ongoing conflict. This is because local efforts to micro-manage the hazard coincided with the need to deal with the continuing impacts of the war, thereby making it difficult to confront the two ‘wars’ simultaneously. This prompted villagers to reduce their intake of food as one of the coping measures, the effects of undernourishment and malnutrition notwithstanding. Therefore, the drought overshadowed the growing impact of the war since the two forces were interacting to produce this high level of vulnerability.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter has demonstrated that narratives on the economics of women participation in food security during contexts of war have conspicuously escaped scholarly attention. Accounts of elite groups and individuals who have been exclusively singled out as key players in the Second Chimurenga ahead of all other contributors have dominated this literature. Two main issues have been raised; firstly, the war stretched capacities for traditionally constrained rural households to guarantee food security, particularly through organized farming. People were generally unsettled, seeking safety and peace first ahead of

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<sup>470</sup> Interview with Douglas Phiri.

<sup>471</sup> J. G. Charney, “Dynamics of Deserts and Drought in the Sahel,” *Quarterly Journal of the Royal Meteorological Society*, Vol. 101, Issue 428, pp. 193-202.

other concerns such as how to avert starvation. Popular sentiment that tends to paint the picture of an independence brought about exclusively by the barrel of the gun conceals the immense, but unheralded, impact of women's war-time role in food security. Their efforts are particularly remarkable in building resilience within households and among guerrillas under fragile conditions of human and livestock security. Added to this are the huge efforts made by other women who joined the war front along with men as a result of being fed up with oppression and colonialism, among other reasons. Secondly, exogenous factors, especially drought, compounded the deteriorating livelihoods options to the extent of overburdening women. Whereas the drought and the dramatic escalation in the intensity of the war combined to put rural livelihoods at risk, women, however, stood firm in their resolution to eradicate hunger, a contribution for which they deserve to be applauded because this is a clear story of persistence in the face of adversity.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### MUTARE DISTRICT FOOD SECURITY AND THE FLEDGLING POST-COLONIAL ECONOMY, 1980-2005

#### Introduction

This chapter argues that the much-vaunted co-operative movement which was deployed as a post-colonial instrumental for enhancing women's livelihoods did not achieve its goals. This was partly because of the country's shift from the socialist experiment in the first decade of independence (1980-1990). Also it was prematurely disbanded before its true impact could be analysed. Thus, the chapter analyses the impact of agricultural co-operatives and financing on peasant production and marketing as part of efforts to re-gear rural food security. The chapter then explores the land question in order to illustrate how the post-2000 land reform programme equally failed to bring the food security problem to finality. This chapter, therefore, explores the impact of policy shifts on Mutare District food security in the aftermath of the liberation war to the end of 2005. This was barely a year before the Marange diamonds were discovered, a development that completely changed the livelihoods trajectory of local people.

The chapter captures post-colonial dynamics of household food security, while also examining the role of the newly independent state in promoting equal opportunities between men and women through participation in decision-making and empowerment. Mandaza aptly shows that the fulcrum of these issues was the independence constitution which provided the historically based parameters for political, economic and social action of the post-colonial state.<sup>472</sup> The country's emergence from conditions of colonial domination into independence reflected a serious compromise of broad class interests. This is evidenced by the fact that the state was

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<sup>472</sup> Ibbo Mandaza, "Introduction: The Political Economy of Transition," In I. Mandaza (ed.), *Zimbabwe: The Political Economy of Transition, 1980-86*, Dakar: CODESRIA, 1987.

faced with the compelling need to pursue the developmental objectives of independence in response to the popular expectations of the masses, while at the same time entertaining international capital interests.<sup>473</sup> This contradictory character of the state continually shaped the way in which the question of food security was handled throughout this period.

Focused on the role of agricultural co-operatives and financing in rural development and food security, the opening section of this chapter builds on the conceptual framework by Maleko and Msunya who argue that women's growing interest and participation in community activities can no longer be taken merely to be a matter of welfare.<sup>474</sup> Of late, women have been agents of change and innovation, as well as key participants in the process of socio-economic development.<sup>475</sup> This section also deals with the political economy of agricultural financing, illustrating that rural transformation requires support from the state in the area of inputs and marketing. However, despite their apparent advantages, co-operatives and rural financing schemes were prematurely abandoned, marginalised or considered ineffective, the reasons of which can be located in the shifts in policy emphasis from the socialist to the neo-liberal, market-oriented economic framework.<sup>476</sup> The post-colonial state at this stage, argues Mkandawire, begins to develop an ideological superstructure within which to accommodate the increasing disparity between popular demands and the harsh economic dictates of the neo-colonial situation.<sup>477</sup> All this has had future consequences for rural food security.

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<sup>473</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>474</sup> G. Maleko and R. Msunya, "Women Participation in Co-operatives-Challenges and Prospects: The Case of Selected Saccos and Amcos in Kilimanjaro and Arusha Region, Tanzania, East Africa," *Journal of Business Administration and Education*, Vol. 7. No. 1, 2015, pp. 81-111.

<sup>475</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>476</sup> For a detailed analysis of this shift in ideology, see, for instance, Mandaza (ed.), *Zimbabwe: The Political Economy of Transition*.

<sup>477</sup> Thandika Mkandawire, "State Policy Responses to Economic Crises in Africa," *East Africa Social Science Research Review*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 1985, pp. 31-51.

The concluding section addresses the complex link between land reform and food security in Mutare District. In the unfolding debate, the land question placed a strain on the capacities of rural farmers to restore food security because it continued turgidly unresolved right up to the turn of the New Millennium, despite being the linchpin of the post-colonial establishment. Actually, this issue remained embarrassingly inconclusive, leading to a violent and state-sponsored seizure of white-owned farms in the early 2000s. Not only does this section examine the serious repercussions of the accelerated land reform programme on the district's food security, it also represents an attempt to explain the changing and competing strands of the debates surrounding the land question as it unfolded in the first decades of independence. During the liberation war, hopes were pinned on a society which was based primarily on principles of socialism and egalitarianism, riding on the back of a fair land redistribution process. Ironically, the independence constitution, as Lionel Cliffe puts it, "tied government's hands by entrenching property rights so that only underutilised land could be compulsorily purchased and only by immediate payment of the full value in foreign exchange."<sup>478</sup> Given this limiting provision and the unavailability of adequate funds for the nascent state to buy land, it is hardly surprising that the structure of land ownership and utilisation remained skewed way after independence

### **Agricultural Co-operatives and Women as Agents of Social Change**

This section explores women's exposure to, and ability to take advantage of, agricultural co-operatives in Mutare District in the aftermath of the guerrilla war. This comes against the backdrop of the fact that rural co-operatives, like other farmer organisations, played a critical role in improving food security and local livelihoods. By seeking to involve women at every stage of farming partly through co-operatives, it was envisaged that they would emerge as vibrant small agricultural producers and complement their male counterparts in the efforts to end hunger.

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<sup>478</sup> Lionel Cliffe, "Zimbabwe's Agricultural 'Success' and Food Security in Southern Africa," *Review of African Political Economy*, Vol. 15, Issue 43, 1988, pp. 4-25.

Imbued by the long held view that combined effort brings positive results, the role played by co-operatives and related associations in safeguarding rural food security cannot be overemphasized. Like the proverbial statement which says that whoever educates a woman educates whole nations, empowering women farmers through the tool of agricultural co-operatives improves food security for all. The section, however, demonstrates that, despite showing signs of usefulness at the local level, the state dumped co-operatives following its transition from the inaugural socialist blueprint to a market-based approach by the beginning of the 1990s. This means that the decision to curtail the co-operative movement occurred without a forensic assessment of its spatial, differentiated and disaggregated impact on rural food security.

Writing on Kilimanjaro and Arusha regions in Tanzania, Maleko and Msunya have attempted to unbundle the concept of co-operatives. They submit that co-operatives are an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise.<sup>479</sup> They further illustrate that in Tanzania, co-operatives, which have recently come to be associated with the introduction of cash crops, especially coffee, cotton and tobacco, started in 1925 in the Kilimanjaro area by which time indigenous people organised themselves to deal with production and marketing problems from a position of strength.<sup>480</sup> In a related study on food marketing, Baulch frames co-operatives as marketing enterprises that are owned by, and operated on behalf of, those who use their services.<sup>481</sup> They allow their members to attain economies of scale and scope in input procurement and output marketing, among other advantages.<sup>482</sup> Given this background, the task ahead will be to explore the position of women in the gender matrix in Mutare District and determine how food security was influenced by the co-operative movement.

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<sup>479</sup> Maleko and Msunya, "Women Participation in Co-operatives- Challenges and Prospects."

<sup>480</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>481</sup> B, Baulch, "Food Marketing," In Devereux and Maxwell, *Food Security in Sub-Saharan Africa*, p. 155.

<sup>482</sup> *Ibid.*



Soon after independence, Prime Minister Robert Mugabe made an urgent call for the introduction of viable agricultural projects that could stimulate food productivity.<sup>483</sup> Placed within the purview of the Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rural Development, this newly unveiled programme of action targeted a number of priorities to eradicate poverty and food insecurity. Besides the central issue of acquiring land to resettle refugees, these priorities encompassed the establishment of co-operatives. In outlining this ambitious project, the Prime Minister stated:

The emphasis of the new government would first be in the Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rural Development, headed by Dr. Sydney Sekeramayi. Here, we must proceed with speed to acquire land for the resettlement of many displaced persons....This Ministry, working jointly with the Ministry of Agriculture, will also carry out the programme of co-operatives and collectives.<sup>484</sup>

The underlying view was to meet the demands for land and to rehabilitate and employ former guerrillas, refugees and the unemployed public, particularly those interested in agriculture. Looking at the immediate post-war demands, one vehicle of achieving these aims was to embark on co-operatives run by local people in a participatory development model.<sup>485</sup> Their design also had to be simple, with suitable grouping for people with same interests, while cropping had to be related to the ecology of the area, although it was possible that the co-operatives would be established in Purchase Areas as well, that is, those areas where Africans could buy land exclusively reserved for them. Over and above all, their projects had to be multi-crop oriented to meet the cash and food production roles of the economy.

In keeping with the programme of co-operatives, the Minister of Agriculture, Denis Norman, also hoped to introduce a “rehabilitation fund” to assist farmers who were forced off their land by war

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<sup>483</sup> Government of Zimbabwe, *Government Policy on Co-operative Development*, Harare: Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rural Development, 1983; See also, “Collective Farming: The People Will Have A Choice,” *The Herald*, Thursday, 17 April 1980, p. 5.

<sup>484</sup> “Emphasis on Refugee Resettlement and Collective Farms: Mugabe Unveils Priorities,” *The Herald*, Friday 14 March 1980, p. 1.

<sup>485</sup> Government of Zimbabwe, *Government Policy on Co-operative Development*.

to return to their normal farming operations. Norman believed that the country had a moral obligation to help such farmers, both black and white. He argued that, although many farmers were compensated for their losses, they still had to leave the land, while the costs had to be borne by the state under its obligation to provide support to the displaced.<sup>486</sup> Against this understanding, Norman was, thus, “looking at a rehabilitation plan to farmers,” promising that African farmers would be the main beneficiaries.<sup>487</sup> This proposal partly came in the wake of the realisation that about forty percent of the African Purchase Area farmers had been badly affected by the war, some of whom had either seriously cut back their farm operations or left the land entirely. In the final analysis, it was purely an agricultural scheme that was aimed at making the land productive and to give the farmer a chance to “take his coat off and get cracking-to have a chance in the new order of society-and he is entitled to that.”<sup>488</sup> Theoretically, co-operatives were not only aimed at fostering bring huge economic benefit to rural farmers, but were also expected to meet the aspirations of the grassroots for them to maintain viable.

The idea of co-operatives came under full force with central government directing provinces and districts to embrace the concept. Manicaland Provincial Governor, Joshua Dube, took opportunity to highlight the advantages of co-operatives ahead of individualism in tandem with the socialist stance.<sup>489</sup> He observed that, apart from co-operatives being a means to generate income for people, they stand out as “forums for learning, leadership and creation of friendship that makes our people cling together in the spirit of oneness,” highlighting that, “co-operatives summon a spirit which treats hatred among us as anathema,” and that such spirit instead “calls upon us to put our resources together to better ourselves.”<sup>490</sup> These characteristics are echoed by

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<sup>486</sup> “Plan to Aid Farmers Hit by the War Obligation,” Denis Norman, *The Herald*, Saturday, 29 March 1980, p. 5.

<sup>487</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>488</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>489</sup> “Co-operatives: Vital Instrument for Eliminating Capitalism,” *The Manica Post*, Friday 7 September 1984, p.

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<sup>490</sup> *Ibid.*

Huppi and Feder who concur that co-operatives enable rural farmers to be neatly integrated into the national economy.<sup>491</sup> The Provincial Governor also drew the farmers' attention to the importance attached to co-operatives as a socialist tool for eliminating capitalism and which sought to make "the means of production such that the co-operators were the owners and managers of the enterprise while the distribution of their labour became theirs".<sup>492</sup> It was Dube's conviction that since political emancipation was gained, the country faced another 'battle' for economic control, arguing that one of the effective means was for the people to involve themselves in productive and income-generating projects, whether industrial, agricultural or commercial.<sup>493</sup>

Zimbabwe's co-operative movement borrowed heavily from regional and international experience, albeit with mixed results. For instance, Deschamps describes successful credit union projects in Cameroon and Malawi and unsuccessful results in Kenya and Lesotho.<sup>494</sup> Rochin and Nyborg also discuss problems with co-operatives in Egypt, India and Venezuela, while they alert us to the success stories of Bangladesh, Taiwan and, among others, the Republic of Korea.<sup>495</sup> In these case studies, the overarching issue was that of training which either lacked in some co-operatives or was integrated in those that succeeded. Huppi and Feder maintain that the success of co-operatives requires training of members as well as management for them to perform effectively.<sup>496</sup> The reason for this was to provide sufficient orientation to groups on group consensus, aims and objectives, diversifying investments and how to deal with defaulting peers. In Mutare District's Gonon'ono village, a thriving co-operative was set up in which the members

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<sup>491</sup> Monika Huppi and Gershon Feder, "The Role of Groups and Credit Co-operatives in Rural Lending," *The World Bank Research Observer*, Vol. 5, No. 2, 1990, pp. 187-204.

<sup>492</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>493</sup> *The Manica Post*, Friday 7 September 1984, p. 2.

<sup>494</sup> Jean-Jacques Deschamps, "Credit for the Rural Poor: The Experience in Six African Countries: Synthesis Report", *Development Alternatives*, Washington D.C., 1989.

<sup>495</sup> Refugio Rochin and Ingrid Nyborg, "Organising Credit Co-operatives for Smallholder Farmers: Factors Conducive for Operational Success", *Journal of Rural Co-operation*, Vol. 26, Nos. 1-2, 1989, pp. 57-87.

<sup>496</sup> Huppi and Feder, "The Role of Groups and Credit Co-operatives in Rural Lending."

of the group were alive to the overall goals of their organisation. Joyline Mhandarume, Ward Councillor for Gonon'ono-Musharu, argued that their erstwhile co-operative group only collapsed after nearly ten years of operation when the country introduced the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP),<sup>497</sup> whose effects wiped out whatever gains the group had accumulated.<sup>498</sup>

An interesting feature of the community-based credit or agricultural co-operatives was their ability to work closely together on ways to boost food security. Reggie Mafunde, founding member of the now defunct Mushandirapamwe Co-operative Society based at Mafunde village in Marange, recalled that their group was able to use its savings to hire scotch-carts laden with manure to be spread over their fields in advance of the rainy season. By the early 1990s, this group had been able to purchase fertilisers, ploughs, hoes and other farm equipment by pooling resources together.<sup>499</sup> The Shundure Village Co-op, located near the local primary school in Marange, also produced excellent results in gardening since its inception in 1983 due to group cohesion until it succumbed to the gruelling impact of ESAP.<sup>500</sup> Its Inaugural Chairperson, Danford Shundure, spoke glowingly about the advantages of risk pooling through joint liability by group members. Shundure made the point that group members would put pressure on defaulters who threatened the group's interests. In addition, increased membership also meant that the risk of defaulting would diminish because of the penalties that they imposed on delinquent borrowers within their circles.<sup>501</sup> The most striking part of their operations was that by the time of extinction of their co-operatives, they had developed elaborate recovery systems and enforcement rules, knowing pretty well that costs of defaulters were borne by the whole group.

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<sup>497</sup> For a detailed discussion on the impact of ESAP on the rural economy and society, see Alois S. Mlambo, *The Economic Structural Adjustment Programme: The Case of Zimbabwe, 1990-1995*, Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications, 1997.

<sup>498</sup> Interview with Joyline Mhandarume, Gonon'ono Central Market, Marange, 14 June 2016.

<sup>499</sup> Interview with Reggie Mafunde, Mafunde Primary School, 23 July 2016.

<sup>500</sup> Interview with Danford Shundure, Bazeley Bridge, Marange, 14 June 2016.

<sup>501</sup> *Ibid.*

Although it is unfortunate that the literature provides scant information on the operational challenges of co-operative groups in Mutare District, we were able to glean important aspects of the schemes from the interview conducted with local villagers whose groups have since been disbanded. It emerged, for instance, that one of the key issues which affected their performance and viability was the membership structure of such groups.<sup>502</sup> The problem arose when a co-operative group or club borrowed funds from rural finance institutions or if members borrowed from the funds deposited by each of the members on a rotational basis known as *mukando* and then failed to repay the loan. When this happened, it was difficult for the group to retrieve its funds, a situation that could be worsened if other members, especially in large groups, could also default payment.<sup>503</sup> Yet the strength of a co-operative society depended hugely on ability to service loans. During the first decade of independence, observes Mandivamba Rukuni, there was a dramatic increase in total productivity in the smallholder sector due not only to the provision of a whole package of support services which included technical research, extension, price support, and marketing infrastructure, but also finance.<sup>504</sup> The financial package had to be, therefore, administered in ways that promoted viability.

There has been consensus among scholars on the need for co-operative groups to rethink their composition, objectivity and focus if they were to remain viable. Writing on the Ghanaian experience, Owusu and Tetteh argue that the performance of large groups with close to a hundred members was markedly worse than that of groups with ten to twenty members.<sup>505</sup> In Dominican Republic, Desai observes that loan recovery rates dropped significantly as group size

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<sup>502</sup> Interview with Pemhenayi Makaza, Makomwe Primary School, Marange, 10 July 2016.

<sup>503</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>504</sup> Mandivamba Rukuni, *Report on the Commission of Inquiry into the Appropriate Agricultural Land Tenure Systems, Volume 2; Technical Reports*, Harare: Government Printers, 1994, p. 19.

<sup>505</sup> Kwame Opoku Owusu and William Tetteh, "An Experiment in Agricultural Credit: The Small Farmer Group Lending Programme in Ghana, 1969-1980," *Savings and Development*, 2009, Vol. 1, pp. 67-83.

increased.<sup>506</sup> These points help to explain that small groups were ideal in fostering ties among members, although it remained questionable whether very small groups allowed for effective economies of scale and cut down on costs of transaction. In Zimbabwe, Michael Bratton demonstrates that groups with more than twenty members proved especially more susceptible to default than smaller groups.<sup>507</sup> Given that the country's agricultural policy statements since 1980 were dominated by the need to increase productivity and improve the standard of living in the smallholder sector through access to credit as Rukuni puts it, such poor performing groups posed a moral hazard. Jasper Chitora, a farmer in Zimunya, echoes this by pointing out that even groups of ten were too large to guarantee cohesiveness and joint accountability.<sup>508</sup> A five-person group was seen to be advantageous in making loan supervision and imposition of accountability on members easier.<sup>509</sup> Hence, accountability was critical in the delivery of agreed goals.

It was also not all rosy with co-operatives because some of them relied heavily on kinship and other social affiliations which compromised the system of joint liability. For example, Tafadzwa Masvaure, a local village head, complained that it was difficult for the top management of various groups and clubs in his village to penalise defaulters where borrowers were linked through kinship networks.<sup>510</sup> The money which was supposed to rotate among such members could end up misappropriated by members who knew that no follow-up was possible under the kind of relations prevailing within their groups. The behaviour of peer defaulters could only have been easily eliminated by controlling the composition of membership. Group cohesiveness could only be strong where members unanimously felt that they had the responsibility over the effect of

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<sup>506</sup> B. M. Desai, "Group Lending in Rural Areas," In J. D. Von Pischke, D. W. Adams, and G. Donald (eds.), *Rural Financial Markets in Developing Countries: Their Use and Abuse*, Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1983.

<sup>507</sup> Michael Bratton, "Financing Smallholder Production: A Comparison of Individual and Group Schemes in Zimbabwe", *Public Administration and Development*, Vol. 6, 1986, pp. 115-132.

<sup>508</sup> Interview with Jasper Chitora, Local Villager, Himalaya Community Hall, Zimunya, 13 June 2016.

<sup>509</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>510</sup> Interview with Tafadzwa Masvaure, Masvaure Village Court, 6 June 2016.

their actions on others. This is why some groups accepted the view that the size and composition of groups was crucial for enhanced performance. These were the sort of dilemmas rural farmers had to address in tandem with the views of the state which considered the formation of cooperatives as an effective strategy towards self-reliance and food security.

This is why the Governor for Manicaland Province belaboured the point that co-operatives “were a permanent feature that released newly independent people from the fetters of colonialism and its capitalist ideology which “impoverished the country for over ninety years.”<sup>511</sup> These new approaches to co-operative movement predominated in the speeches of the state officials in pursuit of Mugabe’s short-lived socialist ideology. The following subsection briefly interrogates the dynamics of funding under the auspices of the Agricultural Finance Corporation (AFC), the parastatal which was responsible for extending agricultural credit, before it proceeds to the concluding section of this chapter that illustrates the impact of land reform on rural food security .Spurred by the 1980/85 economic policy, the state recommended the need for farmers to apply for credit in order to further support local efforts.<sup>512</sup> Drinkwater also concurs that this new and ambitious drive to achieve rural food security was manifested in a policy where pressure was put on farmers to adopt inputs, particularly hybrid seed, fertiliser and pesticide.<sup>513</sup> This is why farmers were encouraged to apply for credit finance their use of these packages as the AFC had substantially increased its lending to communal and resettlement farmers.

### **The Agricultural Finance Corporation and Rural Capacity Building**

This subsection explore the impact of agricultural financing on rural livelihoods in order to suggest that the post-colonial state did not adequately and transparently finance communal

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<sup>511</sup>*The Manica Post*, Friday 7 September 1984, p. 2.

<sup>512</sup> Government of Zimbabwe, *Socio-economic Review of Zimbabwe, 1980-1985*, Harare, Government Printers, 1986.

<sup>513</sup>Drinkwater, *The State and Agrarian Change in Zimbabwe’s Communal Areas*.

farmers in Mutare District despite the opportunity presented by the Agricultural Finance Corporation. The distribution modalities of the loan facility were marred by the deepening political bias and growing nepotism, delays and corruption alike. At the same time, women continued to suffer disproportionately in their confrontation with the patriarchal society which increasingly frustrated their efforts to borrow funds for their farming projects independent of male dominance and approval. This conversation ties in with the preceding analysis on the political economy of co-operatives since emerging community groups anticipated to ride on this newly bankrolled agricultural finance facility that was designed to meet their agricultural needs. The discussion is situated within the broader discourse of everyday forms of collaboration among rural farmers in pursuit of effective solutions to their struggles against poverty and chronic food insecurity.

In streamlining an examination of the economics of agricultural financing, we reiterate the socio-economic context within which this scheme operated. According to Rukuni, agriculture was expected to be the dominant sector in terms of export growth and income generation for rural households, thus, making it imperative for the country to adopt a policy which strongly supported this sector.<sup>514</sup> It was contemplated that such a strategy would reduce rural-urban migration and increase land productivity. In addition, this would promote investment in rural irrigation schemes in order to augment land shortages.<sup>515</sup> In view of these projections, it was critical to increase awareness of women's contribution to this agricultural development effort for them to be sufficiently motivated to serve as agents of change. Jiggins closely reflects on these issues by highlighting that the strength of women's networks often lies in the fact that "individually, each appears to be marginalised, but together they can spread costs, pool savings, and diversify

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<sup>514</sup> Rukuni, *Report on the Commission of Inquiry into the Appropriate Agricultural Land Tenure Systems*, p. 11.

<sup>515</sup> *Ibid.*



enterprises without the risks and uncertainties of dependence on men folk.”<sup>516</sup> For this reason, this subsection places profound emphasis on the dramatic forms of collective effort and resistance by women against threats to livelihoods. It illustrates the fact that any agricultural credit which precluded women had little impact, if any, on food security and rural development.

Against this important background, we deeply engage with Walton and Seddon’s theorisation of women’s role in shaping and expanding economic activity that makes the securing of livelihoods increasingly easier.<sup>517</sup> Walton and Seddon challenge the literature which frames women’s participation and involvement in community projects in terms only of strategies for survival rather than sustainable solutions to the bigger question of hunger and malnutrition. Instead, the two scholars view women’s participation as a consequence of both “defensive and “offensive” attempts against forces that jeopardize their livelihoods at the household level, including the exploitative and oppressive nature of the patriarchal environments within which they operate.<sup>518</sup> This implies that fiscal interventions such as the AFC loan facility would rapidly expand the room for women and other vulnerable sections of the rural population to manoeuvre in the face of changing dynamics. Writing on sub-Saharan Africa, Jiggins further supports these observations by arguing that women’s attempts to ensure and maintain an adequate livelihood for themselves and their households have been undermined by the deteriorating economic conditions.<sup>519</sup> Since women make up the larger part of agricultural labour, it is critical to reduce those impediments by providing access to rural finance, production inputs and land in order to boost productivity.

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<sup>516</sup> J, Jiggins, “How Poor Women Earn Income in Sub-Saharan Africa and What Works against Them,” *World Development*, Vol.17, No. 7, 1989, pp.953-63.

<sup>517</sup> John Walton and David Seddon, *Free Markets and Food Riots: The Politics of Global Adjustment*, Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, 1994.

<sup>518</sup> *Ibid*, p. 66.

<sup>519</sup> Jiggins, “How Poor Women Earn Income in Sub-Saharan Africa and What Works against Them.”

With respect to post-colonial agricultural financing, the state immediately explored mechanisms for supporting rural producers in sync with its inaugural vision to improve rural food security. Where farmers were organised into co-operatives, it was possible that they could secure funding for agricultural inputs, among other expenditures. Funding was more readily availed under this scheme for farmers who formed savings clubs or agricultural co-operatives to respond promptly to the increasing calls for rural empowerment. The AFC started disbursing loans to farmers who were affiliated with such groups or clubs since January 1982, in which year, there was, incidentally, a severe famine which startled farmers since agriculture dominated the economy.<sup>520</sup> But, this offers no grounds to assert that the problems of rural farming began and ended with natural disasters like this drought. As Adera has argued, the alienation of Africans from their land and other unfair practices of the erstwhile colonial system actually amplified the impact of drought and a radical change was required to resolve this dilemma.<sup>521</sup>

The severe drought notwithstanding, the AFC, however, released additional loans with a view to offset growing demand. For instance, in 1982, the Corporation loaned out \$134m to upwards of 70,000 farmers countrywide.<sup>522</sup> Of that amount, \$35m was extended to farmers who were in the small-scale commercial, communal and resettlement areas. At least \$2.2m of this figure was granted to 425 groups of farmers in communal areas in Manicaland Province with a combined membership of 8,868 farmers while a further \$0.7m was loaned to Mutare District where 16 co-operatives with a total membership of slightly below a thousand farmers benefitted.<sup>523</sup> Nevertheless, this effort was still quite negligible in view of the prevailing demand by farmers who wanted to utilise the loans for crop production and expenses.

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<sup>520</sup> “More Farmers Turning to the AFC for Loans,” *The Manica Post*, Friday 6 January 1984, p. 5.

<sup>521</sup> Adebe Adera, “Agricultural Credit and the Mobilisation of Resources in Rural Africa,” *Savings and Development*, Vol. 11, No. 1, 1987, pp. 29-75.

<sup>522</sup> NAZ, BOX 347344, Location R24-9-1 8R, Agritex Registry Policy Files, B9/F6-1088/F4, 1966-1997.

<sup>523</sup> *Ibid.*

As demonstrated by the above statistics, the need for funding remained high on rural food security agenda by the end of the first half of the independence decade. For example, in the 1984/5 season, the AFC increased its lending to communal and resettlement farmers from Z\$14.7 million in the 1983/1984 agricultural season.<sup>524</sup> In the 1984/1985 agricultural year, this amount was raised again to an estimated Z\$53.9 million.<sup>525</sup> Robinson Gapara, President of the National Farmers' Association, succinctly made a call to relevant arms of state for agricultural financing. His view was that communal farmers needed an effective backup in order to become more effective and that, while many communal farmers were very hardworking, competent, and willing to learn new and better farming techniques, "they lacked the money for farming projects."<sup>526</sup> But broadly speaking, this call was a fig leaf beneath which a lot of mischief was concealed; it was nothing more than a call used to sustain the elite in various ways including to address foreign currency shortfalls or sustain growing urban agriculture. Mavis Nhando, former member of the Betera Co-operative Society and renowned groundnuts grower, echoed that infertile soils were the key challenging aspect of their farming experience as crops would hardly thrive in the absence of fertilizers.<sup>527</sup> She concurred with Gapara on the need for loans to purchase fertilizer for rural farmers in order to increase their yields.

In fact, one of the major areas of focus which the state hoped to address through the aid of funding was that of conservation to improve soil quality. Conservation tillage was fast becoming the most desirable solution to the problem of soil erosion on cropland.<sup>528</sup> Conservation tillage involved leaving the previous year's crop residue, especially corn stalks, on the fields before and after planting the next crop in order to reduce soil erosion and runoff. This also offered relief to

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<sup>524</sup> Government of Zimbabwe, *Socio-economic Review of Zimbabwe*, p. 107.

<sup>525</sup> Danish International Development Agency, *Zimbabwe: Assistance to the Resettlement Credit Scheme*, Copenhagen, DANIDA, 1985, p. 15.

<sup>526</sup> "Peasant Farmers Need Cash Help," *The Herald*, Monday 22 February 1982, p. 5.

<sup>527</sup> Interview with Mavis Nhando, Betera Village, Marange, 10 July 2015.

<sup>528</sup> NAZ, BOX 347344, Location R24-9-1 8R, Agritex Registry Policy Files, B9/F6-1088/F4, 1966-1997.

farmers by significantly minimizing the frequency with which they needed to work on the land as demanded by other mechanical methods of erosion control. Mutare District rural farmers demonstrated a readiness to embrace advice on ways to enhance food security, including volunteering to promote conservation tillage in many parts of the district.<sup>529</sup> In many crop fields, quality top soil in many fields was rapidly eroded, particularly given that many areas in Mutare had loose sandy soils and limited vegetation cover, and more importantly, the effect of overgrazing.<sup>530</sup> Farmers were constantly advised to reduce ploughing, disking, harrowing and cultivating in order to control weeds.<sup>531</sup> However, other elements of conservation tillage such as the application of herbicides and insecticides to control weeds and insects had the effect of making rural farming more expensive.

A holistic approach was required to achieve conservation goals, with the state playing its role by extending training opportunities to communities so that rural farmers would gain rudimentary technical knowledge of implements considered key to better farming. At the national level, selected companies were tasked to research on ways to reach rural outposts and encourage farmers to partner each other in purchasing low-cost equipment to aid their tillage systems. Duly and Company Power Farming Equipment Service Manager, Rolf Witthoft, reinforced this call by adding that “agricultural equipment distribution in Zimbabwe could only improve farming operations in the long run if technical knowledge of the products and implements marketed were locally available.”<sup>532</sup> He made these remarks as a feedback from his return from an important international service and maintenance instruction course held overseas. In fact, Witthoft returned from the United Kingdom where he was the guest of honour at the Ford Motor Company and for

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<sup>529</sup>“Conservation Tillage: Effective Solution to Soil Erosion: Battle to Save Soil, Fuel and Labour,” *The Manica Post*, Friday 3 August 1984, p. 18.

<sup>530</sup> NAZ, BOX 347344, Location R24-9-1 8R, Agritex Registry Policy Files, B9/F6-1088/F4, 1966-1997.

<sup>531</sup>“Conservation Tillage: Effective Solution to Soil Erosion: Battle to Save Soil, Fuel and Labour,” *The Manica Post*, Friday 3 August 1984, p. 18.

<sup>532</sup>*Ibid.*

Tractor Service Seminar held at the Ford Training School in Essex. His company's Mutare branch made aggressive efforts to disseminate information to farmers on the use of tractors and other equipment which it assembled.<sup>533</sup> However, these proposals still carried traits of the erstwhile top-down approach which disenfranchised rural farmers as they were not participatory.

It was also still unclear how rural farmers in Mutare District would suddenly manage to purchase both expensive pesticides and tractors to aid their farming when they had been struggling all along to purchase draught cattle and seeds.<sup>534</sup> Although the initial picture looked promising, the availability of loans to women farmers in rural Mutare remained limited and rather controversial. Some men were opposed to a farming process initiated by women due to reasons associated with the patriarchal nature of the society. Many female applicants for whom the funds were designed received little assistance, despite the fact that this pattern of borrowing reflected the AFC's ability to assist an even greater number of such farmers. There was general fear by AFC in disbursing funds to women's co-operatives, a move which entrenched gender disparity. The issue of gender inclusivity in the uptake of agricultural loans to focus on mechanised farming was still rhetoric. It actually resonates with Alison Goebel's thesis on gender and land reform in which she foregrounds women's struggles to access key factors of the rural economy, including farming equipment, land and autonomous decision making.<sup>535</sup> Goebel submits that women and men's relationships to agricultural land (and even agricultural credit) were fundamentally different, and such disparities had serious ramifications for the standard of living, status and survival of women.<sup>536</sup> The post-colonial state failed to mount improved gender and regulatory frameworks.

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<sup>533</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>534</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>535</sup> Allison Goebel, *Gender and Reform: The Zimbabwe Experience*, London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005.

<sup>536</sup> *Ibid.*

There were also escalating concerns about Mutare District's 'ineligibility' to continue to access loans owing to erratic ecological conditions and this was compounded by reports on frequent crop failure. Unlike the Mashonaland and Midlands provinces which had greater chances of harvesting higher yields, Mutare District was more prone to dry spells, implying that it was considered a high risk borrower.<sup>537</sup> This prompted farmers in the resettlement areas of Mukuni, Odzi and Nyagundi to enter into contract farming schemes where the beneficiary farmers would be obliged to sell their produce directly to designated agents of the AFC.<sup>538</sup> It was from these sales that their dues owing to AFC would then be deducted before renewing the loans once again. Yet this was complicated by transport delays and bureaucratic delays in the distribution of inputs. For instance, women's co-operatives at Mukwada, Nyagundi, Chipendeke and Himalaya complained that their applications for funding received either half or less of their total requirements, or turned down altogether.<sup>539</sup> This compromised the preparations that they were making in tilling the land and applying fertilisers. In the 1989/90 agricultural season, for instance, fertiliser deliveries were made when it was already harvest time.<sup>540</sup> This poor timing of resource provisions defeated the urgency of the schedule to boost food security. Despite these challenges, the AFC had disbursed huge sums of loans by the close of the first decade of independence, although most of them were basically concentrated on commercial farms.

The Agricultural Finance Corporation was, however, not alone in the efforts towards funding Mutare District rural producers. The Seed Company of Zimbabwe (SEDCO) also weighed in heavily to assist farmers with loans to purchase agricultural inputs. This gesture was envisaged to be critical in mapping strategies for combating hunger. These funds were supposed to be repaid over agreed periods and before the commencement of each farming season. The money would

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<sup>537</sup> Interview with Chief Zimunya.

<sup>538</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>539</sup> Interview with Phiri.

<sup>540</sup> *Ibid.*

then be recycled as a revolving fund for new other farmers under the same scheme of operation. Some loans were intended to cover even the purchase of tractors, draught cattle and financing contract farming logistics. Problems arose, however, in terms of access and distribution of SEDCO loans, with some needy farmers in the entire district having been skipped for unclear reasons. This emerged in a seminar held on 6 September 1984 in Mutare where participants echoed that the provincial distribution process was riddled with faults. During the question and answer session at the seminar, Silas Chipunza, Provincial Administrator for Manicaland, received complaints from farmers in Mutare District. He was told that SEDCO was not “giving any loans to co-operatives in Mutare like it was doing in other districts.”<sup>541</sup> They cited Makoni, Nyanga and Mutasa districts as the main beneficiaries ahead of other districts in the province, perhaps because of their ecological advantage.

The Administrator’s response to these pertinent criticisms was, however, unconvincing and disquieting to concerned farmers. “Maybe it is a problem in Mutare alone because other parts of the country were securing loans,” remarked Chipunza. “There must be some fishy goings-on because not a single cooperative in Mutare has secured a loan with SEDCO,” he concluded.<sup>542</sup> There was no effort to trace the problem thereafter. The Provincial Administrator went out of his way to stress the importance of these funds to rural food security without addressing why the district remained marginalised and ‘excluded’ from accessing the funds. He only reiterated that “SEDCO was a government arm to help such people as co-operatives and small businessmen,” instead of explaining how the problem raised by concerned farmers was likely to be rectified, choosing to be suspect.<sup>543</sup> The whole concept of co-operatives for which that seminar was organised would not make sense if there was no transparency as to who were benefitting from the funds. These problems eventually compromised the efficient operation of the co-operatives,

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<sup>541</sup> “Co-operatives: Vital Instrument for Eliminating Capitalism,” p. 2.

<sup>542</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>543</sup> *Ibid.*

many of which then existed in name. Giovanni Cornia contends that when this happens, targeted beneficiaries of rural development policies can be altered, further demonstrating that attempts by the state to expand economic activity are thwarted by corruption.<sup>544</sup> At the end of the day, it was the rich farmers who got the cheap loans and the fertiliser subsidies at the expense of rural producers.

Repayment of agricultural loans faced two possibilities; first, that some farmers were able to service their loans within agreed timeframes, fulfilling requirements of terms of contract; and second, that there could be cases of default. Some farmers clearly struggled with repayment of loans due to a wide range of factors. The Betera Co-operative Society reported, for instance, in 1982 that it was in default of payment due to poor harvests, following a devastating drought in that year.<sup>545</sup> It frustrated projected harvests for the groundnuts crop which the creditors had targeted as the basis for extending the loan. Elsewhere, this problem was also highlighted in Magali's conclusion about factors affecting the credit risks for rural Savings and Credit Co-operatives Societies in Tanzania. Magali notes that since rain fed agriculture is the main activity for rural people, it is more risky to lend them.<sup>546</sup> Whereas unforeseen events, including floods, cattle diseases or invasion by armyworm, militated hugely against effective repayment of loans in Mutare District, some beneficiaries diverted funds for purposes other than those agreed.<sup>547</sup> This is why creditors would deal with defaulters on a case by case basis in order to determine any unique circumstances affecting rural producers.

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<sup>544</sup> Giovanni Andrea Cornia, "Adjustment at the Household Level: Potentials and Limitations of Survival Strategies," In Giovanni A. Cornia, Richard Jolly, and Frances Stewart (eds.), *Adjustment with a Human Face*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990, pp. 57-92.

<sup>545</sup> Interview with Mavis Nhando.

<sup>546</sup> J. J. Magali, "Factors Affecting Credit Default Risks for Rural Savings and Credits Cooperative Societies (SACCOS) in Tanzania", *European Journal of Business and Management*, Vol. 5, No. 32, 2013.

<sup>547</sup> Interview with Gloria Chitakatira, Former Secretary of the Kubatapamwe Savings Cub, Chitakatira Rural Service Centre, Zimunya, 05 July 2015.



In response to growing cases of non-performing loans, the Agricultural Finance Corporation closely interrogated defaulters in order to determine the heterogeneity of impact of these factors on individual farmers. Farmers with genuine excuses could then be distinguished from those defaulters who might have converted loans for purposes other than farming. The lending institution actually made calls to farmers to exercise utmost care and diligence when handling loans to avoid worst-case scenarios necessitating legal recourse and litigation. Its spokesperson stressed to borrowers that, in order to establish and maintain an enduring relationship with its clients, “the Corporation calls upon the farming community to appreciate that a high degree of self-management and discipline over the use of, and obligation towards, loans provided was required.”<sup>548</sup> He applauded farmers who strove to meet their targets, highlighting that “it is with some measure of satisfaction to note that generally communal farmers are making considerable efforts to repay their loans, drought notwithstanding.”<sup>549</sup> The future of the district lay in the continual interaction between farmers and the financial organisations on how to secure and manage agricultural loans in order to reduce hunger and malnutrition.

### **Rural Food Security and the Shifting Land Matrix**

This concluding section assesses the impact of the country’s post-colonial approach to the land question on Mutare District’s food security and general economic conditions. Guided by Sam Moyo’s understandings of the political economy of land reform, the section demonstrates the impact of the shifting post-colonial land use and resettlement patterns on the district’s food security.<sup>550</sup> The new government outlined its plan of action to undertake the onerous task of revisiting the land issue as a means to tackle the long-standing dilemma of land redistribution which the colonial Rhodesian state deliberately delayed to undertake. The immediate task facing

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<sup>548</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>549</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>550</sup> In addition to his other more recent works on the land issue, see also Sam Moyo, *The Land Question in Zimbabwe*, Harare: Sapes, 1994.

this administration was to restore land rights to the black majority. The people who were crowded in the mountainous lands of Zimunya and Marange had to be resettled promptly in order to give them leverage in crop cultivation. Although the literature suggests that some progress was achieved at the national level in resettling farmers between 1980 and 1990, vis-a-vis the restrictions imposed by the willing-buyer willing-seller policy (discussed below), there is scanty evidence to illustrate that Mutare District benefitted materially, neither is there substantial literature to suggest that it got relief from subsequent land acquisitions.

For purposes of fully exploring the viability of the development models that the state charted at this material time, it is useful to briefly highlight the policies which were crafted in this period. On assuming power in 1980, the state's number one priority was to design and implement policies that sought to address past wrongs across the economic, social and political terrain. As early as 1981, it put up an ambitious economic and social blueprint<sup>551</sup> whose thrust was to outline strategies for achieving 'growth with equity' through planned change in order to arrest a situation of 'growth with widening inequalities.'<sup>552</sup> Moyo states that the state intended to tackle the problem of hunger by reducing inherent "imbalances in land distribution and ensuring full utilisation of agricultural land."<sup>553</sup> The political and academic conceptualisations of the country's land question and reform during the early years of independence tended to focus on this logic of redressing past grievances of land alienation.<sup>554</sup> To a large extent, therefore, rural food security in Mutare District continues to be a microcosm of the wider historical land and agricultural scene within which it should be conceptualised.

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<sup>551</sup> Government of Zimbabwe, *Growth with Equity: An Economic Policy Statement*, Harare: Government Printers, 1981.

<sup>552</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>553</sup> S. Moyo, *Land Reform under Structural Adjustment in Zimbabwe: Land Use Change in the Mashonaland Provinces*, Uppsala: Nordic Africa Institute, 2002, pp. 14-15.

<sup>554</sup> *Ibid.*

In order to bring out a more realistic picture about state's commitment to redressing historical imbalances on food security, this section roughly divides the post-independent period into two distinct, but interrelated phases; the first ten years of independence, 1980 to 1990, and then the period from 1991 to 2005. In the initial phase, the resettlement drive dominated the efforts of the state within the confines of the legal provisions, while the latter period shows increased and aggressive efforts towards full throttle land reform. To this end, the section examines the limitations of the 1980 'willing-seller, willing buyer' constitutional clause, and the 1992 Land Acquisition Act before it briefly demonstrates the overall impact of the controversial post-2000 accelerated land reform programme on food (in) security in Mutare District.<sup>555</sup> In a statement issued on the 11<sup>th</sup> October 1979, Lord Carrington, Chairman of the Lancaster House Conference, acknowledged the centrality of the land question and the enormity of the resources needed to redress the colonial legacy:

We recognise that the future of Zimbabwe, whatever its political complexion, will wish to extend landownership. The costs would be very substantial indeed, well beyond the capacity, in our judgement, of any individual donor country, and the British Government cannot commit itself at this stage to a specific share in them. We should, however, be ready to support the efforts of the Government of Independent Zimbabwe to obtain international assistance for these purposes.<sup>556</sup>

Carrington's overtures provide a foundation on which to frame discussions on the political economy of land reform and resettlement. The Lancaster Agreement had far-reaching consequences for rural food security and development since it influenced the state's roadmap towards a sustained programme for decongesting and relieving pressure in crowded rural areas.

Guided by the socialist principle dubbed *Gutsaruzhinji* (literally meaning 'meet the needs of the majority'), Government sought to embark on ways that would decisively deal with hunger and

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<sup>555</sup> Utete, 'Partial record of the Lancaster House Negotiations,' In *The Report of the Presidential Land Review Committee on the Implementation of the Fast Track Land Reform Programme*, p.15.

<sup>556</sup> Cited in the Utete Report, 'Partial record of the Lancaster House Negotiations,' p. 14.

poverty in its rural communities. These calls looked promising because struggling farmers whose land had been usurped anticipated a quick overhaul of the land situation within their rural settlements. The state's obligation to guarantee its citizens food security while de-racialising the society became the bedrock of its aspirations that manifested themselves in the proposed ambitious programmes of the 1980s. Whereas the *Transitional National Development Plan* (1982-1985) targeted to redistribute and develop land for resettling the maximum possible number of families during the plan period,<sup>557</sup> the *First Five-Year National Development Plan* (1986-1990) placed emphasis on efficient utilisation of land.<sup>558</sup> These reforms were prioritised because of the urgent need to change the existing ownership structure as well as promoting proper land management. The policies were streamlined to be compatible with the aim of strengthening state capacity to address the many gaps in the economy which compromised food security in the country's districts.

Coupled with this was the need to reboot the agricultural potential of the district by retooling existing but obsolete irrigation infrastructure. In October 1984, senior officers from the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture and Water Development were dispatched from Harare to Ngomasha Ward near Bazeley Bridge in Mutare District to deliberate on plans to resuscitate and develop the Marange Irrigation Scheme which was defunct.<sup>559</sup> A Committee comprising some members of the local community was already on the ground, monitoring the implementation of the first phase of the scheme that targeted to rehabilitate the schemes and create centres of intensive crop production organised and dominated by women. Chairperson of the Committee, Priscilla Mashingaidze, said that there were sub-committees in charge of Finance, Maintenance, Security, Production, Marketing and Transport. Work on the development of the first phase of this project

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<sup>557</sup> Government of Zimbabwe, *Transitional National Development Plan, 1982/83-1984/85*, Harare: Government Printers, 1982, p. 23.

<sup>558</sup> Government of Zimbabwe, *First Five-Year National Development Plan, 1986-1990*, Harare: Government Printers, 1986, pp. 3; 10-11.

<sup>559</sup> "Irrigation Scheme Planned," *The Manica Post*, Friday 21 October 1984, p. 8.

which covered 40 ha of land began on the 8<sup>th</sup> September to 31<sup>st</sup> October 1984.<sup>560</sup> A total of 165 female-dominated workers from Dora in Zimunya were assisting with the installation of concrete lining of canals. As projected, electrification of the scheme followed in the second phase where a further 260 ha of land was put to utility. Neighbouring farmers from were incorporated to expand the Marange scheme, making it more viable.<sup>561</sup> By the 1990s, this project had achieved notable success. Kumbirai Kangai, Minister of Lands, Agriculture and Water Development, gave the Marange scheme a ministerial right to receive 40 litres of water per second from the Osborne Dam.<sup>562</sup> This went a long way in creating opportunities for the district to address food insecurity.

With regard to land redistribution, it was provided that the state would acquire land on a willing buyer-willing seller basis for a continuous period of ten years.<sup>563</sup> This clause placed limits on efforts to expeditiously acquire sufficient land for resettlement purposes. This is because the availability of land was dependent upon willing sellers who were not forthcoming, thus, frustrating the urgency of the programme. The government was literally tied 'hands and feet' from initiating any land acquisition under such a restrictive setting. These limitations seriously affected the state's ability to meet its resettlement targets for Mutare District. Rural farmers at Mambwere, Chitakatira, Himalaya and other mountainous places of Zimunya, for example, continued to till hilly and rocky plains at a time when their population was exploding.<sup>564</sup> The failure to resettle them affected their hopes to secure and guarantee food. By obligating the state to acquire land only on a willing buyer, willing seller basis during the first ten years of independence, it effectively delayed resettlement.<sup>565</sup> Thus, between 1980 and 1990 Government

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<sup>560</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>561</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>562</sup> NAZ, BOX 347344, Location R24-9-1 8R, Agriculture/Arex Registry Policy Files, B9/F6-1088/F4, 1966-1997.

<sup>563</sup> Lancaster House Constitution, Annex C. Summary of the Independence Constitution.

<sup>564</sup> Government of Zimbabwe, *Agricultural and Rural Development of the Communal Areas of Manicaland Province*, Harare: Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Development, 1982.

<sup>565</sup> Utete, *Report of the Presidential Land Review Committee on the Implementation of the Fast Track Land Reform Programme*, p. 15.

only managed to acquire upwards of 3, 5million hectares and resettled 71,000 households on the national scale.<sup>566</sup> Where land was offered to the state, it was, in most cases, expensive, marginal and occurred in pockets around the country, making it difficult to embark on a systematic and managed land reform.

The second question to this problem was why, even after the deregulation of the above limiting clause by the 1990s, the Government could not participate more strongly as a buyer.<sup>567</sup> At the national level, many possible reasons were proffered for the slow progress on resettlement, including the high cost of land and the location of that land across the five climatic regions. In that light, it was increasingly difficult for the state to purchase enough land. It sought to repeal discriminatory legislation while initiating an ambitious programme of land reform.<sup>568</sup> Alexander tackles this post-colonial crisis of balancing interests by arguing that the ‘resettlement policy vividly illustrated the contradictory forces with which the Zimbabwean state and polity grappled’, adding that, ‘nationalism had promised a return of the land, and it had promised it on people’s own terms.’<sup>569</sup> Her conclusion dovetails with Goebel’s interpretation of the state’s diminishing commitment in the 1990s to the large-scale resettlement of the peasantry as partly “a response to the reality of the macro-economic forces.”<sup>570</sup> This transition changed the discourse on rural resettlement as such an exercise was now considered predominantly social and political, but economically sterile.

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<sup>566</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>567</sup> World Bank, “Zimbabwe Agriculture Sector Memorandum,” *Report No.9429-ZIM, Southern Africa Department of Agriculture Operations Division*, Vol. III, May 31, 1991, p. 12.

<sup>568</sup> Alexander, *The Unsettled Land*, p. 111.

<sup>569</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 113.

<sup>570</sup> Goebel, *Gender and Land Reform*, p. 21.

Yet, although the state strove to meet popular demands, especially about land, ‘only the state was deemed capable of ensuring that redistribution occurred in ‘a rational and productive manner.’<sup>571</sup> While the government sought to address the discriminatory legacy of the colonial policy, ‘the resettlement policy offered redistribution, but cast the land not as the historical right of a disposed people, but as productive space in need of close state regulation.’<sup>572</sup> Raymond Makaza, Councillor for Mutare District’s ward 29, expressed hope that the legislature would press for the speedy amendment of the problematic constitutional clauses in order to make more land available to farmers. He noted that the overcrowded parts of the district were no longer able to cater for the rapidly growing population.<sup>573</sup> His sentiments were further echoed by Councillor Simon Manzununu of Zimunya who intimated that the newly married couples in his area did not have anywhere to erect homes and cultivate crops, except to continue to carve higher up the rocky and mountainous landscape.<sup>574</sup> He even sarcastically remarked that the new settlements around hills and mountain tops were more appropriate for baboons which were known to occupy such landscapes.<sup>575</sup> But, it should be stated that these newly married couples were not necessarily being moved into those new areas under the resettlement scheme, but as part of the communal landholding structure where local village heads would make such land allocations.

The Ministry of Lands, Natural Resources and Rural Development announced on 5 February 1980 that it had set aside 30,000 hectares of land for redistribution to subsistence farmers in Mutare District.<sup>576</sup> This land, though inadequate, had been acquired by the state as part of efforts to purchase large tracts of land formerly owned by white commercial farmers in the better rainfall areas of the district such as Odzi. The District Commissioner for Mutare, Frank Taylor,

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<sup>571</sup> Alexander, *The Unsettled Land*, p. 111.

<sup>572</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>573</sup> Interview with Councillor Raymond Makaza, Kurauone Ward, Marange, 10 July 2015.

<sup>574</sup> Interview with Councillor Simon Manzununu, Manzununu Primary School, Zimunya, 12 July 2015.

<sup>575</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>576</sup> Government Moves to Allay Land Hunger: New Areas for TTL People,” *The Herald*, Friday 8 February 1980, p. 3.

took journalists on a tour of an 800ha Tyrone farm which was purchased from K. McKelvie. It was one of the few farms which the government brought in pursuit of its goal of resettling 162,000 families nationwide in three years in a roll between 1982 and 1984.<sup>577</sup> The other farms were Stewarton South, Stewarton North and Ranelia, all of which covered a total area of 4,154ha. Chief Timothy Garwi Zimunya also toured Tyrone Farm with the Press party because his people were earmarked to occupy that land. The land was considered nutritious for cattle due to the star grass pasture that it supported. When asked to comment about the farm, Chief Zimunya apparently stated that there was nothing wrong he could see, and that he was pleased to have been given more land for his Jindwi people.<sup>578</sup> But even though Chief Zimunya expressed ‘gratitude’ to the government’s efforts, it appears that he did not wish to delve into the real issue about lack of transparency in the allocation of land.

In a bid to cover up for the regional imbalance and corruption in land resettlement, the state proceeded to purchase three other farms in Mutare District, bringing the total number of acquired farms to eleven. These included the 16,772ha in the Clydesdale-Makore area and a further nine farms in the Odzi farming area, north of Marange ‘Tribal Trust Lands’ (as communal areas were then called), making a combined total of 8,356 ha. Some of these farms were Kothwick (519ha), Inyamando (1 986ha), Helena (529ha), Gwawawa (753ha), Sawambeva (1 214ha), Maraleli (1 063ha) and Wild Park A (511ha), all of which were purchased at Z\$25 per hectare.<sup>579</sup> Cynthia Brodie, newspaper correspondent, sought to magnify these initial successes in rapidly acquiring farms, yet the true picture was that this was grossly inadequate to meet the growing demand for cultivable land. Goebel reveals that there were constant whispers of corruption since the 1980s, and state officials were said to have acquired vast parcels of land originally designated for

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<sup>577</sup> Utete, *Report of the Presidential Land Review Committee on the Implementation of the Fast Track Land Reform Programme*.

<sup>578</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>579</sup> *Ibid.*



peasant farmers.<sup>580</sup>In fact, this matter was settled by Mandaza's thesis on the political economy of transition in which it was established that continued white presence in independent Zimbabwe served as a convenient excuse for delaying resettlement.<sup>581</sup> The state could use continued white control as a scapegoat for its inability to change the lot of the black majority.<sup>582</sup> In fact, redistribution of land was marred by regional, ethnic, and class biases that favoured elite blacks from the regions and ethnic groups which dominated in the ruling party.<sup>583</sup> There was, thus, growing restlessness among the crowded farmers in the district. But whether or not the land sought after by the state at the expiry of the willing seller-willing buyer provision was to be redistributed transparently, the key issue facing the state in the 1990s was how to acquire it from commercial farmers.

To speed up this process of land acquisition and resettlement vis-a-vis rural food security, the government passed the Land Acquisition Act of 1992, following the introduction in 1990 of Constitutional Amendment Number 11.<sup>584</sup> The government advanced several arguments before the courts to justify its increasing interest in designating rural land.<sup>585</sup> It stressed that it was in the best interests of the public to pursue "the resettlement programme designed to meet post-independence expectations of black farmers who had been largely disposed of the most fertile land under colonial and minority rule."<sup>586</sup> The state was prompted to invoke the principle of eminent domain in which it reserved the sovereign power to take private property for public use

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<sup>580</sup> Goebel, *Gender and Land Reform*, p. 20.

<sup>581</sup> Mandaza, *The Political Economy of Transition in Zimbabwe*.

<sup>582</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>583</sup> Sam Moyo, "The Land Question," In Mandaza (ed.), *The Political Economy of Transition*.

<sup>584</sup> G. J. Naldi, "Constitutional Challenge to Land Reform in Zimbabwe," *The Comparative and International Law Journal of Southern Africa*, Vol. 31, No. 1, 1998, pp. 78-91.

<sup>585</sup> The Land Acquisition Act, 1992, according to Naldi (cited above), was adopted with the "purpose of accomplishing the regime's land redistribution policy, authorizing the state to expropriate rural land for resettlement purposes and establishing an administrative system for the assessment of compensation. The Act makes provision for the assessment and payment of compensation."

<sup>586</sup> *Ibid.*

even without the owner's consent.<sup>587</sup> Representing white farmers, the Commercial Farmers' Union (CFU) was opposed to meaningful land redistribution. This prompted Joshua Nkomo, the country's Vice President, to remark in his address of a gathering of the CFU that: "I don't think we are being unreasonable if we say, you commercial farmers, who own the best and the bulk of Zimbabwe's land because of history, should share part of it with the indigenous, displaced and landless blacks who are the majority."<sup>588</sup> The call was made to appeal to holders of vast tracts of land to begin to realise the desirability of sharing land for the greater good of the country.

It later turned out that ZANU (PF) deliberately planned to use the land question as a campaign gimmick to secure poll victory in 2000 against the threat of opposition Movement for Democratic Change and the increasing calls by the war veterans to rethink land redistribution. This provoked new debates in Government about the need to grab land, even by force, if necessary, to quench the dissenting voices. The impact of land reform on Mutare District was more strongly felt at the turn of the New Millennium when the Fast Track Land Reform Programme was proclaimed. The Utete Commission was to later argue in justification of *jambanja*, the moniker for this violent programme, that pressure was mounting on the government to accelerate its land reform programme.<sup>589</sup> This was not surprising considering that, elsewhere in Sri Lanka, the British had imposed such a system in which the imperatives of the colonial structures still wrecked progress well after independence. The dependent economy which colonisation created for the extraction of surplus value, the stagnation which it caused in the traditional sector, and the dependence on imports which the war imposed, argues Sachi Ponnambalam on the Sri Lankan case, were not corrected in the post-war years or even after independence.<sup>590</sup> Real productive forces were kept in bondage, and the economic problems of Sri Lanka, as they surfaced in the early phase of

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<sup>587</sup>Naldi, "Constitutional Challenge to Land Reform in Zimbabwe," p. 80.

<sup>588</sup> "Joshua Nkomo Addresses Commercial Farmers in Matabeleland," *The Sunday Mail*, 9 July 1989.

<sup>589</sup> Utete, *Report of the Presidential Land Review Committee on the Implementation of the Fast Track Land Reform Programme*, p.15.

<sup>590</sup> Ponnambalam, *Dependent Capitalism in Crisis*.

independence, seemed symptomatic of the structural deformities of a colonial economy. Moreover, according to reports, the Utete Commission on the Zimbabwean situation noted that land supply failed to match the demand for land for resettlement.<sup>591</sup> Added to these complicating factors was the absence of international support to fund land acquisition.

While there is very little space here to provide a full account of the 2000 land reform,<sup>592</sup> it is rather imperative to briefly highlight a few nuggets about the programme in order to locate its impact on rural food security in Mutare District. Matambirofa observes that the entire project of land reform was precipitated by crisscrossing causes which touched on political anger by all parties involved with land reform.<sup>593</sup> These parties comprised the state which took issue with Britain and the local white farmers for supporting the opposition party; war veterans and peasants who were weary at the slow pace in resettling people; and Britain which was irritated by abuses of grants for land reform.<sup>594</sup> The country's Constitution was amended a staggering nineteen times by 2010, with several of these efforts targeted at land acquisition.<sup>595</sup> Some of the pertinent amendments affecting the land question included: Amendment 11 (Act 30 of 1990) which terminated land provisions for the 'willing-buyer-willing seller' in favour of 'fair compensation'. This amendment sought to ouster the jurisdiction of the courts in deciding whether compensation for land that was compulsorily acquired for purposes of resettlement was fair or not; Amendment 16 of 2000, therefore, further limited such 'unjusticiable' compensation to improvements on the land and transferred responsibility for compensation from the state: Amendment No.17 of 2005 paved way for the state to rationalise farms seized from white farmers. It was promulgated to

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<sup>591</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>592</sup> For detailed discussions on the FTLRP, see, Ian Scoones, *et al*, *Zimbabwe's Land Reform: Myths and Realities*, Woodbridge: James Currey, 2010, and Sam Moyo, *Reclaiming the Land*, London: Zed Books, 2005.

<sup>593</sup> Francis Matambirofa, "Sowing Political Capital and Harvesting Economic Regression: White Commercial Farm Seizures in Zimbabwe," In Evans Osabuohien, (ed.), *Handbook of Research on In-Country Determinants and Implications of Foreign Land Acquisitions*, Hershey: IGI Global Business Science Reference, 2015, pp. 338-353.

<sup>594</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>595</sup> Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights Website, (Accessed on 18 April 2017)

entirely oust the jurisdiction of the courts over cases of acquisition of land by the state, thus rendering impotent national and international protections of the fundamental right to protection of the law, a fair hearing, and the independence of the judiciary.<sup>596</sup>

Whereas a handful of families were moved to the Odzi and Mapembe resettlement areas, commonly called *minda mirefu* (colloquially meaning long and wide fields'), more than sixty percent of the villagers seeking relief remained stuck in the rocky hills of Zimunya and Marange. Some beneficiaries granted us interviews in which we sought to establish how far their newly acquired farms had impacted food security. First, it emerged that they were card-carrying members of ZANU (PF). Second, and more importantly, most of them only had the capacity to till a very small area and not the whole land given to them.<sup>597</sup> The net effect of this was to compromise efforts in restoring food security. This is best explained by the fact that such farmers called for food aid as they could neither produce adequate grain nor deal with the threats of drought in this period. In its desire to maintain a stronghold on these future voters, the ruling party went out of its way to politicise food hand-outs which it sourced from donors. Alexander has more systematically explored these issues by revealing that, "as food shortages hit owing to a combination of drought and the land occupations, food was used as a political weapon."<sup>598</sup> The broad country picture in which food security was severely affected by the haphazard and violent nature of the land reform helps to explain the deteriorating livelihoods of the people in Mutare District.

With the passage of time though, some positive aspects about the FTLRP were beginning to show up. Reporting progress in their newly resettled areas in 2005, some *jambanja* farmers

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<sup>596</sup>Naldi, "Constitutional Challenge to Land Reform in Zimbabwe," p. 80.

<sup>597</sup> Interview with Emmanuel Ngaikekere, Beneficiary of the Land Reform, Clare Farm, Mutare, 24 July 2016.

<sup>598</sup> Alexander, *The Unsettled Land*.

predicted a good harvest of 30 bags per hectare as their crop was showing potential.<sup>599</sup> Looking at her maize crop which was already at an advanced stage in growth, Everesca Tasiyeniyika, a staunch supporter of ZANU (PF) and beneficiary of the FTLRP, claimed;

I think if we will all harvest as to our expectations, there will be a bumper harvest and no imports, but exports for maize instead....I was given land in April 2001 and I first produced beans, about 25 bags. I sold 6 bags and made Z\$24,000, and those elements who go about saying that there is going to be starvation because of land reform were enemies of Zimbabwe.<sup>600</sup>

There are two possibilities reflected in her statement, one that she was really getting acclimatised to the demands of farm ownership, and the other, that she could not speak against her benefactors even if the situation was different. There were unverified reports about the benefactors threatening to dispossess them of their newly acquired plots should they ‘sell out’ to critics. However, her version of the story about the rewards of land reform could be given benefit of doubt because it feeds directly into Sam Moyo’s bold contention that, apart from the redistributive strength of land reform, “productivity of small producers had grown slowly with output escalating recently.”<sup>601</sup> Moyo further argues that “three decades of land reform had recast land-based social relations in important ways, with the poor gaining more than previously believed.”<sup>602</sup> This is also consistent with conclusions reached by Hanlon, Manjengwa and Smart who claim that the new black farm owners had regained ground following teething problems in setting up farms and equipment for food production.<sup>603</sup>

The literature that supports the view that land reform was beneficial to the country’s efforts towards economic empowerment has been widely criticised. For instance, submissions by Hanlon, Manjengwa and Smart have been contested by, among other scholars, Rory

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<sup>599</sup> Interview with Paul Masvaure, Farm Worker at Formerly Kondozi Farm, Odzi, 09 March 2015.

<sup>600</sup> “Newly Resettled Farmers Predict Bumper Harvest,” *The Manica Post*, 25-31 January 2002, p. 6.

<sup>601</sup> Moyo, “Three Decades of Agrarian Reform in Zimbabwe,” p. 499.

<sup>602</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>603</sup> Hanlon, Manjengwa and Smart, *Zimbabwe Takes Back Its Land*.

Pilossof<sup>604</sup> and Tinashe Nyamunda,<sup>605</sup> both of whom question the success of the land reform by citing its conspicuous failure to utilize a bigger and much more representative sample that could give a better and more accurate picture. Whereas Moyo places heavy emphasis on the distributional character of land reform, we examine the impact of this land reform exercise in terms of household food security, in the process, noting serious shortfalls of the programme. We reject part of Moyo's call for scholars to put aside the downside of the land reform process in examining its impact as that would not provide a strong foundation upon which to reflect on the cumulative processes leading to rural food insecurity. Moyo challenges the selective approach to agrarian reform which, in his view, highlights the FTLRP's negative aspects of 'violence', 'disorder', and 'chaos' and which claimed that the ruling ZANU (PF) elite and the state "instrumentalised the FTLRP for electoral support and that only ZANU (PF) cronies benefitted."<sup>606</sup> His submission is that, by approaching the land reform from this plane of analysis, the agrarian reform literature is deprived of crucial perspectives bordering on the character and scale of redistribution of the FTLRP.

Moyo's findings are, however, relatively incongruent when applied to some farmers (including those who remained behind) who lacked support in their endeavours to till the land in Mutare District. Progress Maminimini, a 'new' farmer, argued that, although the newly resettled farmers were willing to expand their productivity and increase yields, they lacked adequate support from financial institutions that were apprehensive about collateral security for loans.<sup>607</sup> Yet Moyo's argument largely focuses on the political mileage achieved through land reform, arguing that the land reform caused "a net transfer of wealth and power from a racial minority

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<sup>604</sup> R. Pilossof, *The Unbearable Whiteness of Being: Farmers' Voices from Zimbabwe*, Harare: Weaver Press, 2012.

<sup>605</sup> T. Nyamunda, "Did Zimbabweans Take their Land Back?" *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 40, No. 4, 2014, pp. 886-888.

<sup>606</sup> Moyo, "Three Decades of Agrarian Reform in Zimbabwe," p. 499

<sup>607</sup> Interview with Progress Maminimini, Co-ordinator, Newly Resettled Farmers' Club, Nyagundi Secondary School, Marange, 24 July 2015.

of landed persons to mostly landless and land-poor classes and a substantial number of low-income-earning workers.”<sup>608</sup> This interpretation is strong only as it relates to the growing numerical figures of beneficiaries, but it does not adequately reveal how rural food security was impacted by this programme. While it is tricky to apply Moyo’s contention to the case of Mutare District, other scholars like Kufakurinani and Bamu actually warn that the inherent contradictions and conflicts spurred by the land reform exercise have not only had far-reaching consequences for rural food security, but also a huge potential to derail the resettlement programme altogether.<sup>609</sup>

Indeed, the land reform programme had a notable impact on other areas of its objectives, especially political grandstanding and the desire by the ruling ZANU (PF) party to control the rural constituency through dishing out land, irrespective of the economics of such a random distribution. Moyo’s submission is mainly important insofar as it reflects on relief ushered in by land reform with regards to overcrowding in rural areas. Indeed, some farmers who were held up in mountainous areas like Mambwere, Chitora, Chitakatira and so on were relieved of the pressure of overcrowding as they got A1 farms near and around Odzi.<sup>610</sup> A lot still had to be done to arrest food insecurity in the newly resettled communities.<sup>611</sup> This arises from the fact that some beneficiaries were still unable to utilise the greater portions of their land five years after seizing farms.<sup>612</sup> Over and above all, the gender dimension to land reform has still not been adequately addressed. As Goebel notes in her discussion of the implications for women and

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<sup>608</sup> Goebel, *Gender and Land Reform*.

<sup>609</sup> U. Kufakurinani and W. Bamu, “Resettled and Yet Unsettled? Land Conflicts and Food (In) Security in Insiza North, Zimbabwe, 2005-2013,” In Z. Makwarara, R. Magosvongwe and O. B. Mlambo (eds.), *Dialoguing Land and Indigenisation in Zimbabwe and Other Developing Countries: Emerging Perspectives*, Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications, 2015, pp. 272-290.

<sup>610</sup> The A1 farms were the small plots allocated to households while the A2 farms were relatively large-scale commercial type farms requiring irrigation infrastructure for effective production.

<sup>611</sup> See, for instance, R. Pilosof, *The Unbearable Whiteness of Being: Farmers’ Voices from Zimbabwe*, Harare: Weaver Press, 2012.

<sup>612</sup> Interview with Raymond Mafarachisi, War Veteran and Beneficiary of the FTLRP, Mapembe Resettlement Scheme, Odzi, 25 July 2015.

gender of this land reform process, women's perspectives and needs have been marginalised by the state.<sup>613</sup> This section has, therefore, shed light on the trajectories of the ongoing struggles for land in Zimbabwe which are at the heart of efforts to guarantee rural food security.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter has first illustrated the important role played by agricultural co-operatives and rural financing schemes in Mutare District food security. It has been argued that, although the inclusion of women in rural development programmes has aided efforts to improve food security, the co-operative movement has not been followed to its logical conclusion due to the transition from the socialist to the neo-liberal ideology. The agricultural loan facility has also proved unsuccessful owing to misallocation of loans. A number of farmers complained that such loans were not easily accessible, citing lack of transparency in the manner in which they were being administered. Amid the independence euphoria, women have been seen to be the greatest losers due to the inherent structure of the economy and the impact of hardened African patriarchies. The chapter has then placed the discussion of food security within the broader framework of the political economy of land reform. It has interrogated literature on the land question, gaining further insight from Moyo and Alexander, among others, in providing an update on the short-term repercussions of the fast-track land reform programme on the agricultural sector, food security and the wider economy.

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<sup>613</sup> Goebel, *Gender and Land Reform*.



## CHAPTER SIX

### FOOD SECURITY AND THE DISCOVERY OF DIAMONDS IN MARANGE, 2006-2010

#### Introduction

This chapter argues that the discovery of diamonds in Marange did not bring the much-anticipated relief in terms rural food security. Instead, local communities were pushed further into the peripheries with regards to beneficiation due largely to what Jabusile Shumba has characterised as the power dynamics of a predatory state.<sup>614</sup> This is where the state, military and business elite adopted anti-developmental accumulation patterns across key economic sectors such as transport, energy, land, agriculture, mining and banking.<sup>615</sup> This model of accumulation and dominance by the predatory state had serious implications for the district's development outcomes since the relations of production were continuously being shaped and reshaped by violence and patronage. Building on this framework of analysis, this chapter, therefore, draws a link between diamond exploitation and the profound changes which occurred in rural food security in Mutare District within the intervening years in order to demonstrate how food could not have been secured under such an environment of corruption and cronyism

This chapter particularly illustrates that, whereas international best practices on corporate social responsibility provide that communities within which natural resources are located should enjoy the benefits of opportunities presented to them by the exploitation of such resources, the recent discovery of diamonds in Marange actually further impoverished the

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<sup>614</sup> Shumba, "Zimbabwe's Predatory State".

<sup>615</sup> *Ibid.*

local people.<sup>616</sup> This resulted from the fact that the mines took away pastures and farmland, while local communities were excluded from taking up even low-skilled jobs on the mines.<sup>617</sup> This is in addition to police and military brutality that locals endured as they were being evicted from the mining area by the state.<sup>618</sup> The chapter extends Saunders and Nyamunda's argument on the exploitative nature of the country's extractive industry in which they presented evidence for the state-led, informal syndicates that were organised primarily for purposes of looting. They have also documented atrocities that were unleashed on small-scale artisanal miners by the security establishment. Thus this chapter closely examines various ways in which biased political and military deployment in key institutions of the state has frustrated efforts towards sustainable rural food security.<sup>619</sup>

Although the emerging mineral-based economy raised the district's hopes for a more sustainable answer to its chronic food dilemma, those hopes were misplaced.<sup>620</sup> The mandatory percentage remittances from mining proceeds designated for use by local communities through approved entities like Mutare Rural District Council, the area's responsible authority, were hardly delivered. In turn, this stifled food security and poverty-reduction projects that had been lined up for implementation in the district. For their part, the Marange and Zimunya communities continued to clamour for transparency in the extractive processes. They also insisted on the newly-licensed diamond mining companies to adhere to

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<sup>616</sup> Concerns about corporate social responsibility in which communities affected by the exploitation of natural resources have become an increasingly high profile issue in extractive industries globally. For a detailed discussion on corporate social responsibility, see Paul Kapelus, "Corporate Social Responsibility and the "Community": The Case of Rio Tinto, Richards Bay Minerals and the Mbonambi," *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 39, No. 3, 2002, pp. 275-296. For efforts to bring Marange diamonds to compliance with conflict-free trading in diamonds, see Shamiso Mtisi, "Enforcer or Enabler?" Rethinking the Kimberley Process in the Shadow of Marange," In Richard Saunders and Tinashe Nyamunda (eds.), *Facets of Power: Politics, Profits and People in the Making of Zimbabwe's Blood Diamonds*, Harare; Weaver Press, 2016, pp. 67-91.

<sup>617</sup> Melanie Chiponda, CCDT Correspondence Files, 2013.

<sup>618</sup> Throughout the period covered by this Chapter, armed state security personnel unleashed violence on suspected diamond dealers and artisanal miners as well as locals who were caught in the crossfire.

<sup>619</sup> Saunders and Nyamunda (eds.), *Facets of Power*.

<sup>620</sup> Maguwu, "Marange Diamonds and the Kimberley Process."

environmental impact assessment obligations as pre-requisites to mining. However, such calls did not attract the attention of both the state and mining giants. Towriss examines reasons why security agencies were allowed to loot diamonds, including the need by senior members of the Zimbabwe National Army to become “military entrepreneurs.”<sup>621</sup> The corresponding negative consequences for food security were predictable under these circumstances.

The chapter then concludes by analysing at the tensions between diamond mining companies and local people over utilisation of land lately demarcated as a no-go area, but which was, hitherto, cultivated by affected communities. In this contestation, the state tended to side with diamond mining companies while sacrificing local interests,<sup>622</sup> the latter being victims of state sponsored violence administered under the facade of ‘cleansing’ the area and ridding it of artisanal miners in favour of competent miners.<sup>623</sup> As a means to divert the attention of critics from scrutinising the opaque nature of prevailing mining activities, the state consistently made unfulfilled promises to install new irrigation equipment and restore defunct infrastructure in order to leverage local farming.<sup>624</sup> With these issues at hand, the chapter initially provides an analysis of the early dynamics of diamond exploitation. It then focuses on the livelihood options and experiences of evicted villagers, after which it interrogates how food security and nutrition was compromised rather than enhanced by the discovery of diamonds.

With respect to the methodology for the section which deals with displacement of villagers, interviews with affected inhabitants were carried out due to scarcity of other forms of primary evidence. . While food deficits were not necessarily uncommon in Chiadzwa before the

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<sup>621</sup> Towriss, ‘Buying Loyalty: Zimbabwe’s Marange Diamonds.

<sup>622</sup> For works dealing directly with Marange diamonds, see Saunders and Nyamunda (eds.), *Facets of Power*.

<sup>623</sup> Nyamunda and Mukwambo, “The State and the Bloody Diamond Rush in Chiadzwa.”

<sup>624</sup> *Ibid.*

‘discovery’ of diamonds in the area, residents used various ‘sustainable’ coping mechanisms in order to meet their daily food requirements. However, after their relocation, these victim villagers quickly became impoverished and food insecure, having been far removed from their known traditional sources of livelihood. Initial attempts by both the government and mining giants like Mbada Diamonds, Anjin Investments and Marange Resources to serve each of the relocated households with monthly food hampers were abandoned a few months down the line under unclear circumstances, rendering innocent villagers vulnerable and clueless about what coping strategies to adopt. In some incidences, some households reverted to begging for food within and around the Greater Odzi Resettlement Area indicated on the map below.<sup>625</sup>

### **Marange Diamonds and the Paradox of Poverty amid Plenty**

Invoking the Fanonian concept of “the wretched of the earth” which captures the post-independence disenfranchisement of the African masses by the corrupt and violent elites,<sup>626</sup> this section examines the dire food security situation prevailing in Mutare District during the early years of the discovery of diamonds, invariably known in vernacular as *ngoda*.<sup>627</sup> When rumours spread in June 2006 about the existence of diamonds in Marange’s Chiadzwa Ward artisanal miners immediately inundated the area to pick up the alluvial gem.<sup>628</sup> Nyamunda and Mukwambo observe that competing interests converged to get the spoils, particularly in the ‘free-for-all period of its discovery between 2006 and 2008.’<sup>629</sup> These included the state, through statutory corporations like the Minerals Marketing Corporation of Zimbabwe (MMCZ) and the Zimbabwe Mining Development Corporation (ZMDC), the Army and the

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<sup>625</sup>Evidence for these claims is provided in the section on displacements below.

<sup>626</sup> Franz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, London: Penguin, 1963.

<sup>627</sup> Broadly, this term referred to both industrial and clear gems found in Chiadzwa by participants in the rush for diamonds in 2006. However, when later on a new term *magirazi* was coined for clear diamonds, the term *ngoda* exclusively referred to only industrial, low-quality diamond.

<sup>628</sup> Maguwu, “Marange Diamonds and the Kimberley Process.”

<sup>629</sup> Nyamunda and Mukwambo, “The State and the Bloody Diamond Rush in Chiadzwa,” p. 145.

Police (ostensibly brought in to protect the area against illegal activities), artisanal miners and informal traders and buyers.<sup>630</sup>

In order to grapple with the issue of diamonds more effectively, it is critical to briefly highlight in this paragraph the dynamics in Marange, then proceed to look at each of them in greater depth. At the height of the ‘invasion’ by ‘swarms’ of illegal diggers, buyers, state security agents (purported to be protecting the area, yet forming illegal mining syndicates with artisanal diggers), and informal traders in 2008, over 30,000 outsiders traversed the length and breadth of Chiadzwa at any given point, far exceeding its natural carrying capacity.<sup>631</sup> Crops were badly damaged in the process. The Chiadzwa Community Development Trust (CCDT), a local lobby group, reported that, in addition to being destroyed, edible crops were looted by the artisanal miners.<sup>632</sup> The militarisation of the area in October 2009 sealed off people from freely accessing their fields, thereby compounding food insecurity as they could no longer trade in diamonds in order to secure food.<sup>633</sup>

Parties that converged to exploit diamonds had vested interests which distorted the whole picture about quantities of unaccounted diamonds lost through shady deals. Leverages of diamonds through illegal activities affected food security in that such diamonds could have improved revenues which in turn could have rekindled hope for enhanced food security. In the citation below, Carmody links Africa’s poverty and food security to the exploitative

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<sup>630</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>631</sup> Farai Maguwu, “Marange Diamonds and the Kimberly Process,” p. 92.

<sup>632</sup> CCDT File, *Notarial Deed of Trust of the Chiadzwa Community Development Trust*, Protocol No.6, Harare, 2009.

<sup>633</sup> Nyamunda and Mukwambo, “The State and the Bloody Diamond Rush in Chiadzwa,” p. 164.

relationship into which it entered with the world's capitalist system and over which it had little or no control.<sup>634</sup>

African development is defined by the 'paradox of plenty'; that is, that it is a very resource-rich continent, but economically poor. Africa is thought to contain 42% of the world's bauxite, 38% of its uranium, 42% of its gold, 73% of its platinum, 88% of its diamonds and around 10% of its oil. Nonetheless, over 40% of the population of Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) live on the equivalent of less than what US\$1.90 a day would buy in the United States-not even enough to buy a cup of coffee in many places there. This is an outcome of the way in which Africa has been integrated into the global economy, which is heavily influenced by its colonial history.<sup>635</sup>

This observation dovetails with findings made by Nyamunda and Mukwambo on the ills associated with unregulated diamond mining, which include denying weaker, voiceless and vulnerable groups a say in the beneficiation discourses involving natural resources.<sup>636</sup>

From the point of view of the Environmental Management Authority (EMA), environmental degradation was equally alarming, an issue which later dominated the efforts of Marange Development Trust, another community-based organisation in this area to pressure the government to rectify the anomalies. In spite of acknowledging the rapidly degraded environment caused by mining companies which were discharging effluent into the nearby rivers, it is curious why EMA took no action to bring them to book. Assuming that villagers were to be given a leeway to grow crops if relocation was postponed (which is what later happened), farming was no longer tenable in view of the unfolding environmental disaster caused by the open cast nature of alluvial diamond which created scars on the land. Mining companies were on record for causing environmental degradation, especially land and water pollution.<sup>637</sup> The number of traders and artisanal miners climbed to way above 25,000 by

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<sup>634</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>635</sup> Pdraig Carmody, *The New Scramble for Africa*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2016.

<sup>636</sup> Nyamunda and Mukwambo, "The State and the Bloody Diamond Rush in Chiadzwa."

<sup>637</sup> There were numerous scars on the portal mined by DMC and several trucks traversed the mining concession, offloading effluent in the Odzi River.

2008, causing serious environmental damage due to unreclaimed pits and lack of sanitary amenities. Overall, cultivation of crops became impossible in 2008 and it was subsequently suspended.

To kick-start the proposed relocation exercise, mining giants were given the onerous task to design and construct housing units to accommodate the displaced villagers. These companies included Mbada Diamonds, Anjin Investments, Kusena Diamonds, Jinan, Gye Nyame, Marange Resources and Diamond Mining Company (DMC).<sup>638</sup> In addition to this corporate social responsibility obligation, the companies were expected to sign agreements with the government in which they would undertake to provide monthly food hampers to affected households until such a time when villagers would be able to cultivate their own crops with the aid of a proposed irrigation scheme. The District Administrator teamed up with soldiers manning diamond fields to warn villagers against further cultivation of crops in anticipation of the imminent relocation. Villagers were ‘persuaded’ to appreciate the envisaged ‘advantages’ of relocation as village heads and a few influential people were bussed to Odzi to ‘inspect’ their newly built housing units. The hope was to convince them to give the much needed ‘positive’ feedback and encouragement to the rest of the villagers at Chiadzwa who might have been apprehensive about relocation so that they would be amenable to the idea.

For its part, the government pretended as if the situation was manageable when in fact it was not. There was renewed propaganda about the advantages of resettlement, with emphasis placed on the promises of irrigation infrastructure to be laid at the new site, only to discover afterwards that this was not the case.<sup>639</sup> Presenting a case about Burkina Faso’s economic performance between 1994 and 1998, economists Michael Grimm and Isabel Gunther show

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<sup>638</sup>*Zimbabwean Situation*, 13 March, 2013.

<sup>639</sup> “Displaced Marange Families Threaten to Return,” *The Zimbabwean*, 12 June 2013

how the state can rely on propaganda to give a false hope to needy communities while secretly advancing its selfish exploitative interests. In that period, Burkina Faso appeared to be on a pro-poor growth path, following positive structural reforms, but the gains did not cascade down to the population which remained vulnerable to various shocks.<sup>640</sup> Several explanations can be given for such a paradox in Zimbabwe. Food security in Marange remained critical well after diamond mining operations had commenced. Lack of commitment by the predatory state to confront food insecurity through utilisation of diamonds short-changed Mutare District and shattered its hope for improved livelihoods. .

In addition, the government's excuse for failing to implement sustainable irrigation projects to aid agriculture was that diamond companies were not remitting the taxes and royalties as required, mining operations were expanding and diamonds were being siphoned out through illegal channels in which the state itself was involved..<sup>641</sup> Instead of confronting these challenges, the government ironically fast-tracked the relocation of villagers to Odzi Transau, off Mutare-Harare highway, without compensation. Governor Mushohwe also made public pronouncements in 2009 that people within the vicinity of Chiadzwa diamond fields were expected to comply with urgent calls for relocation.<sup>642</sup>

The deployment of the country's security forces in Marange should be read within the context of the violence and patronage attributes of a predatory state. Several meetings with villagers were coordinated and chaired by armed soldiers, one of the reasons being to intimidate villagers into compliance with relocation orders.<sup>643</sup> In spite of very tight and threatening

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<sup>640</sup> Michael Grimm and Isabel Gunther, *The Economic Conditions in Burkina Faso*, London: Methuen, 1999.

<sup>641</sup> Interview with Chief Chiadzwa, Diamond Mining Company premises in which the Chief's homestead is eclipsed, 19 July 2015.

<sup>642</sup><https://www.hrw.org/report/2009/06/26/diamonds-rough/human-rights-abuses-marange-diamond-fields-zimbabwe>

<sup>643</sup> Interview with Headman Hondo Mukwada, Mukwada Primary School, Marange, 15 July 2015.



security mounted at Chiadzwa, I secured permission to proceed into Diamond Mining Company premises. The area was cordoned off and visitors into the diamond mining area peremptorily needed to satisfy rigorous body and vehicle security checks, with many being turned back on any suspicion by the army and the police at Mukwada T-junction and Hotsprings and Chirasika entry points. Even local residents were expected to be carrying identity documents any given time as they did their daily chores, a position which remained unchanged well after 2010. Between 2008 and 2009, the army scheduled meetings with villagers at Chiadzwa, Betera, Mukwada, Chishingwi, Kurauone and Chipindirwe to address them on the imminent relocation, hence, losing precious man-hours reserved for farming.

However, the discovery and exploitation of diamonds brought unprecedented challenges to local inhabitants, particularly with regards to food security.<sup>644</sup> Residents expected the state to regulate diamond exploitation with a view to creating a fund that would cater for the implementation of food security projects.<sup>645</sup> Although this fund was subsequently set up in 2012, that is the Zimunya-Marange Community Share Ownership Trust (ZMCSOT) under the stewardship of the Mutare Rural District Council, companies did not remit any funds into it, rendering it useless. They also hoped that since Chiadzwa lay within the confines of two major rivers, Save to the West and Odzi to the East, revenue from diamond mining would be channelled into water harvesting schemes from these perennial water bodies to boost agricultural productivity, rather than relying only on rain-fed cultivation as proclaimed by the Minister of Mines and Mining Development, Walter Chidhakwa.<sup>646</sup> The state's promises for irrigation infrastructure even extended to as recent as 2016, with Minister Chidhakwa saying:

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<sup>644</sup>The diamonds had long been discovered by De Beers in the colonial period, although this was only made public in June 2006. For the various contestations between the State and De Beers and African Consolidated Resources (ACR) over licensing and ownership of diamond claims in Marange, see section entitled, "Expiry of the De Beers Licence, the ACR Factor and the Rush into Chiadzwa, 2006-2007," In Nyamunda and Mukwambo, "The State and the Diamond Rush in Chiadzwa," p. 150.

<sup>645</sup> Interview with Simon Marange, Schoolteacher, Mafarikwa Secondary School, Marange, 17 July 2015.

<sup>646</sup> "Diamond Proceeds to Go Directly to the Fiscus: Minister," *The Herald*, Wednesday 2 March 2016.

“There is no reason why people of Marange, the people of Chiadzwa themselves, should not have an irrigation system that can enable them to produce agricultural commodities for themselves because the diamonds are now used for national responsibilities.<sup>647</sup>

Signs were already showing that the opposite was true as the State initially turned a blind eye to illegal activities of artisanal miners, commonly known as *gwejas* (male miners) and *gwejelines* (female diggers) to scrunch up for diamonds, and later on enlisted the services of poorly-equipped diamond mining firms to mine for diamonds.<sup>648</sup> Already, some physically challenged, elderly, blind, maimed and young people were further disadvantaged by the initial ‘free-for-all,’ ‘survival of the fittest’ approach because they could not participate in illegal diamond mining for the obvious reasons of incapacitation. In addition to these uncertainties, the on-and-off panning activities that characterised Chiadzwa diamonds since June 2006 resulted in unusually high numbers of people in need of food. The 2009/2010 agricultural season was, therefore, a wasted one as households within the radius of Chiadzwa were warned not to cultivate crops since they were expected to have vacated initially by 12 November 2009, and subsequently, on a continually postponed date.

The Chiadzwa community, however, made strides to have their grievances heard for they could not just sit idle watching the total collapse of social and economic fabric. The formation in 2009 of the Chiadzwa Community Development Trust by local members under the Chairmanship of Newman Chiadzwa brought in the opportunity to dialogue with Government over the need to arrest the declining environment.<sup>649</sup> At the heart of the CCDT

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<sup>647</sup> These words were spoken ten years later after the discovery (and full-scale mining) of Marange diamonds as a reassurance to restive villagers in Mutare district that they were ‘still’ on Government’s ‘development’ agenda.

<sup>648</sup> Nyamunda and Mukwambo, “The State and the Bloody Diamond Rush in Chiadzwa,” p. 147.

<sup>649</sup> CCDT File, *Notarial Deed of Trust of the Chiadzwa Community Development Trust*, Protocol No.6, Harare, 2009. The Founders of the Trust were Shuah Mudiwa, Newman Chiadzwa, and Malvern Mudiwa. The Trustees

lobby was the issue of compensation for all people awaiting relocation and restoration of the agrarian infrastructure for all those remaining behind. Clause 7.7 of the CCDT's Deed of Trust provides for the Trust to "initiate, support and encourage community-based initiatives that aim towards the poverty alleviation of the beneficiaries in their respective wards and the sustainable development of the areas covered by the respective wards."<sup>650</sup> The Trust grappled with a wide range of issues brought before its attention, particularly cases of abuse of locals by security agents and problems of relocation.

In terms of food security, the Chiadzwa Community Development Trust spearheaded campaigns against politicisation of hand-outs received from the mining companies or any other sources. The organization was seized with concerns raised by villagers against shifting boundaries caused by mining companies extending their exploratory activities into their fields. They were being squeezed out gradually, leaving them with little or no hope to remain with viable acreages to meet their food demands. It also engaged local council authorities to look into cases of abuse of locals at the hands of the security forces.<sup>651</sup> With the psychological feeling of communities in transit, most wards around Chiadzwa failed to put the land available to them under cultivation. This exacerbated the food insecurity situation already gripping Marange owing to droughts and other variables. Some households had, between 2007 and 2010, already sought alternative 'homes' in response to perpetual threats from the Resident Minister about resettlement, amid disharmony and victimisation occasioned by security forces dotted around Chiadzwa. Given the amount of both

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were Benny Matambudze, Tichafa Kusena, Rubby Muchena, Nyamadzawo Mutunhu, Phillimon Taerengera Chiadzwa, Edna Kusena, Jemusaita Tasweranadzo, Batsirai Eric Betera, John Gohwa, Blessing Mufute, Peter Mwaamba and Lovemore Mukwada. The Beneficiaries of the Trust were the people and residents of Chiadzwa, Mukwada and Mutsago wards in Mutare District.

<sup>650</sup> CCDT File, *Notarial Deed of Trust of the Chiadzwa Community Development Trust*, Protocol No. 6, Harare, 2009.

<sup>651</sup> Interview with Malvern Mudiwa, Founding Member of the CCDT, at Mutsago Rural Service Centre, Marange, 14 July 2013. (Note that Malvern Mudiwa later formed the Marange Development Trust in March 2014).

psychological and physiological preparation needed towards cultivation, the zeal to work the land was perpetually worn out by the volatility surrounding the Chiadzwa issue. Severe impoverishment and social disintegration ensued.

The plight of women was worsened by those malicious speculations, leading to increased physical and social stress of having to provide food for families while no longer having access to their fields and gardens. By August 2010, the official position regarding these issues of resettlement was still unclear. People shelved long-term plans for investment or sustainable food production, awaiting their fate to be decided. Meanwhile, the government promised whole panoply of social and economic improvements attached to relocation to which the villagers remained sceptical. Combining all this with the effect of erratic rainfall patterns and weak soils, the future of food security was not guaranteed. Villagers did not only scale down on their ambitions to improve themselves within their communities because of the proposed programme of relocation, but they also became increasingly suspicious of the state's intention in displacing them after having neglected them for years.

The proceeds from diamond mining at Chiadzwa did not help matters either in the period under review. It was increasingly difficult, not only for ordinary people within the vicinity of Chiadzwa, but also in the rest of the country, to believe that there were any profits being yielded from the mining operations because no tangible dividend reached them. Evidence was there of vast mining work at Chiadzwa being carried out round the clock, with excavators, graders, and haulage trucks laden with raw ore being spotted all over the mining area; a fact which suggested that something seriously economic was taking place. Four years of continuous activity, however, showed no material difference in the lives of the supposed

beneficiaries.<sup>652</sup> When a Unity Government was conceived in 2009 between ZANU (PF) and two MDC parties, economic programmes to be rolled out by the new political arrangement were expected to be firmly anchored on revenue from Marange diamonds.<sup>653</sup> It later turned out that Mugabe defended the opaque nature of mining and sale of diamonds by arguing that western ‘detractors’ would interfere with the processes. When pressed to justify the trickles of revenue reaching state coffers, Obert Mpfu, Minister of Mines and Mining Development, maintained that the operations at Chiadzwa had to remain shadowy as a sanction-busting measure.<sup>654</sup> His excuse was that it was ideal to shroud diamond operations in secrecy in order to shut out those ‘enemies’ while ensuring that food security, among other areas of Government priority, would be guaranteed.

The Kimberly Process Certification Scheme,<sup>655</sup> responsible for regulating against the sale of conflict diamonds, and to which Zimbabwe is signatory, urged the Zimbabwean government to adhere to agreed benchmarks such as the withdrawal of the army from the mines in order for it to certify Marange diamonds as fully compliant with its provisions. The idea was to stop “conflict diamonds” from going into mainstream marketing of diamonds. All diamond producing areas had to seek certification before selling gems onto the market for reasons of accountability and transparency. But this was happening at a time when there were strong indications that human rights in Chiadzwa were trampled upon. The government was slow in removing its security forces from Chiadzwa who were argued to be the chief perpetrators of violence that ripped through Chiadzwa, especially following the first phase of the notorious

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<sup>652</sup> Many reports were confirmed by the article which appeared in the *Zimbabwean Situation*, 10 November, 2013.

<sup>653</sup> Edward Chindori Chininga, *First Report of the Portfolio Committee on Mines and Energy on Diamond Mining (With Special Reference to Marange Diamond Fields), 2009-2013*, Harare: Parliament of Zimbabwe, 2013.

<sup>654</sup> Interview with MDC Councillor for Chiadzwa Ward, Chiadzwa Primary School, 23 August, 2013.

<sup>655</sup> For a detailed discussion on the operations of the KPCS, see Maguwu, “Marange Diamonds and the Kimberly Process.”

*Operation Hakudzokwi* on 27<sup>th</sup> October 2008.<sup>656</sup> With increasing numbers of artisanal miners in Chiadzwa, Government responded by unleashing the army on the civilian population, resulting in casualties and deaths.

Meanwhile, locals were neither employed by the mining companies, nor benefitted from the Zimunya-Marange Community Share Ownership Trust set up to provide them with the requisite loans for income-generating projects.<sup>657</sup> The argument presented for shunning locals was that they could hardly administer any arrests if their counterparts stole diamonds and that they had previously participated in illegal diamond trade prior to official mining; hence, they were prone to the temptation of smuggling diamonds.<sup>658</sup> At its launch in 2012, ZMCSOT was earmarked to receive upwards of \$50 million from the various mining companies operating in Chiadzwa as part of their corporate social responsibility. However, since its inception, no serious commitment had been shown to fulfil this obligation because only about US\$400, 000 was delivered by 2015, with Mbada Diamonds having remitted no single cent towards this otherwise critical gesture to assist those communities resident within the mining areas.<sup>659</sup> The government had a fifty per cent shareholding stake in these companies and it wholly owned Marange Resources, thus, it could be expecting too much if any action to fund the Trust was required because of those interests. Although the idea of the ZMCSOT was noble since residents hoped to reorganize their economic lives through putting the money held in trust to

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<sup>656</sup>Partnership Africa Canada, *Reap What You Sow: Greed and Corruption in Zimbabwe's Marange Diamond Fields*, Ontario: Pan Africa Canada, 2012.

<sup>656</sup>*Newsday Zimbabwe*, 2 December, 2013.

<sup>657</sup> Although its final launch in 2012 falls out of the purview of this thesis, talks over the establishment of ZMCSOT had already been established in 2010 and a care-taker committee under the Chairmanship of Shepherd Chinaka, Chief Executive Officer of Mutare Rural District Council, was set up to deliberate on its affairs.

<sup>658</sup> Interview with Dr. Morris Mpofu, Chief Executive of the Zimbabwe Consolidated Diamond Company (ZCDC), ZCDC Headquarters, Borrowdale, Harare, 05 April 2018.

<sup>659</sup> Interview with Chief Zimunya.

good use, it amounted to nothing in spite of glaring evidence that the companies were obviously making money.<sup>660</sup>

### **Eviction, Displacement and Fresh Threats of Hunger**

Following long periods of resistance to forced relocation spanning over three years, the communities of Chiadzwa, Chirasika, Betera, Chishingwi, Kurauone, Tonhorai, Banda and parts of Mukwada and Chipindirwe eventually lost the struggle. Forced relocation was executed in mid-2009 and only US\$1,000-00 was extended to each family as disturbance allowance.<sup>661</sup> Full compensation was promised on arrival, but this never happened. This section, therefore, analyses the problem of acute food shortage endured by displaced households of Chiadzwa Ward of Marange in Zimbabwe, following the establishment of diamond mining operations there in 2006. It examines how these people responded to new threats of food vulnerability at their new location, Agricultural Development Authority (ARDA) Odzi Transau.

Ray and Saini shed light on the concept of displacement and development. Writing on the case study of Orissa in India about the open cast mining project which displaced local communities, the researchers argue that displacement of this nature usually demonstrates power relations. They maintain that the involuntary displacement and resettlement of people by the state for development purposes is reflective of the dialectical relationship between the state's use of coercive capacity against its citizens, particularly the poorer sections, and its

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<sup>660</sup>Global Witness, *Return of the Blood Diamond: The Deadly Race to Control Zimbabwe's New-Found Diamond Wealth*, London: Global Witness, 2013.

<sup>661</sup> Interview with Miriam Magobeya, Chairperson, Transau Relocation Development Trust, Transau Secondary School, Odzi, 01 July 2015. It should be noted that on arrival, the forcibly relocated villagers immediately formed a Trust to speak with one voice about their unfulfilled compensation promises and property broken in transit along with inadequate grazing land for their livestock.

relatively autonomous power to give concessions to them.<sup>662</sup> Their study focuses on the extent to which the displaced benefit from the policies purportedly designed to help them. They achieve this by examining the contradictory role of the state which, while simultaneously trying to moderate exclusion through its resettlement policies, actually systematically seeks to deny agency and freedom to the displaced.<sup>663</sup> James Scott has offered similar insights, demonstrating ‘how certain schemes to improve the human condition have failed’ ostensibly because of the contradictions inherent in the state.<sup>664</sup> Forced removals are, therefore, a global problem, and in the absence of a food backup plan from Government, these communities become even more vulnerable.

In as much as people who remained behind at Chiadzwa were deprived of their farm lands, those villagers who had already been relocated also perceived themselves as cursed due to a string of misfortunes affecting their destiny.<sup>665</sup> Considering that Chiadzwa is an arid area, suitable for cultivation of drought-tolerant crops like millet and sorghum due to low and erratic annual rainfall, its inhabitants had always experimented with various coping strategies in order to tame their harsh environment.<sup>666</sup> This also included the identification of, and subsequent concentration on, collection of wild fruits and trade in baskets in exchange for food.<sup>667</sup> Before the discovery of diamonds in 2006, Chiadzwa was hardly under spotlight even though colonial and post-colonial governments missed the opportunity to mount

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<sup>662</sup> S. Ray and S. Saini, ‘Development and Displacement: The Case of Opencast Coal Mining Project in Orissa’, *Sociological Bulletin*, Vol. 60. No. 1, 2011, pp. 45-64.

<sup>663</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>664</sup> J. Scott, *Seeing like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition have Failed*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998.

<sup>665</sup> Interview with Fred Magwere, Transau Secondary School, Odzi, 16 August 2013.

<sup>666</sup> NAZ, S160/1P/S, Zimunya Irrigation Scheme, 1934.

<sup>667</sup> B. Tavuyanago, *et al.*, “Traditional Grain Crops in Pre-colonial and Colonial Zimbabwe: A Factor for Food Security and Social Cohesion and the Shona People,” *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*, Volume 12, No. 6, 2010.



irrigation facilities directly across the Odzi River, overlooking the Nyanyadzi, Nenohwe and Chakohwa areas where irrigation schemes were already thriving.<sup>668</sup>

This section argues that the provision of accommodation to the displaced or relocated families was a positive move on the part of Government and mining companies, but the question of livelihood, particularly their food security was scarcely tackled. Nearly four thousand families had been relocated into the newly-built housing units by 2010, with a further two thousand placed on stand-by.<sup>669</sup> At first, the affected people expressed optimism that the mining companies were sincere, especially owing to the apparently decent accommodation at the new site plus the promise of food aid. No sooner did people settle than they were already accusing the state and mining companies of renegeing on their undertaking to feed them. Most of the promises proved to be paper commitments which hardly went beyond mere expression of sentiment as they were not transformed into practical action.<sup>670</sup>

The facilities at Odzi did not measure up to expectations because they lacked alternative means of livelihood compared to those at Chiadzwa where sustainable options such as fruit collection, basketry and animal rearing were readily available to complement crop cultivation. This placed the newly-resettled inhabitants in a precarious position as they were confronted with a hugely compromised food and water supply situation. “I left all my livestock in Chiadzwa and other wealth, only to dump my family here,” remarked Farai Shundure, a disgruntled relocated villager. “My family was happy when we were in Chiadzwa. There were a lot of opportunities and we made some money there, but these people ZANU (PF) Government) want to benefit at the expense of the innocent people of

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<sup>668</sup> Estella Musiiwa, “The Development of the Nyanyadzi Irrigation Scheme, Chimanimani, Zimbabwe”, (BA Honours Dissertation, University of Zimbabwe, Department of Economic History), 1988.

<sup>669</sup> Interview with Fred Magwere.

<sup>670</sup> Popular belief was for this view, including the *Zimbabwean Situation*, 23 October, 2013.

Chiadzwa,” he concluded.<sup>671</sup> Attempts by these displaced villagers to approach relevant authorities for clarification failed to yield positive results as those stakeholders were not only evasive, but also arrogant and unwilling to shed light on the rapidly changing economics of relocation.<sup>672</sup>

The key problem confronting relocated villagers was the sheer absence of mechanisms to deal with the rapidly declining food security. This was particularly caused by the haphazard nature of the relocation programme which was imposed on the unsuspecting residents. The focus of this programme was to urgently move people into Odzi before the Government changed its position.<sup>673</sup> It appears that since the award of mining contracts was itself shrouded in secrecy, coupled with the state’s shifting position on the *modus operandi* of mining capital, companies, especially Anjin, adopted a migratory acquisition approach, fearing that anything could disrupt their mining activities.<sup>674</sup> This could have been the reason why those companies quickly embarked on day and night shifts in order to accumulate as much alluvial diamond as possible within the shortest possible time.

At Odzi Transau, the cultivable area of only six hectares could have been increased in order to give room for families to continue with growing of crops for their own survival without anticipating getting it all the time from the companies. Critics of this relocation policy condemn it on grounds that it resulted primarily in the alienation of villagers from their

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<sup>671</sup>“Zimbabwe: Relocated Chiadzwa Villagers - A Tale of False Promises,” *Relief Web*, 13 February 2011.

<sup>672</sup>Interview with Fred Magwere.

<sup>673</sup> Due to the volatility of the licensing criteria, many companies were apprehensive about how long they would be allowed in Chiadzwa. Indeed, these fears were confirmed by the abrupt disbandment of all mining companies in Chiadzwa in February 2016. We had the opportunity to visit Marange in February 2017 to pay condolences to Chief Gilbert Marange who had passed on hardly two years after granting us an instructive interview. Virtually no mining activity was taking place except at Marange Resources which was amalgamated with smaller concerns into one entity called the Zimbabwe Consolidated Diamond Company which was poorly equipped.

<sup>674</sup>The licensing procedures for the companies operating in Chiadzwa were a preserve of the Zimbabwe Mining Development Corporation which was not at liberty to prove transparency.

means of production.<sup>675</sup> “As you can see, we were just dumped here. We never thought we would end up living like this,” argued David Buwerimwe, a respected displaced elder. “They forced us to vacate our ancestral land and only to dump us like this. What wrong have we done?” he rhetorically asked.<sup>676</sup> This strongly supports findings by Ray and Saini that there is nothing that illustrates the role of structural inequalities and poor dynamics better than a development-induced displacement and resettlement project, wherein the poor who live in resource rich areas are specified and intervened upon for resource extraction from their land.<sup>677</sup> Fig. 2 is a sketch map of ARDA Transau where evicted villagers were resettled.

**Fig. 2.** Sketch Map of Odzi Transau, New Resettlement Area for Displaced Villagers



**Source:** Prepared by Archaeologist and Cartographer, Russell Kapumha, University of Zimbabwe.

<sup>675</sup> Interview with Magobeya.

<sup>676</sup> *Relief Web*.

<sup>677</sup> Ray and Saini, “Development and Displacement.”

In addition, a large number of relocated people, particularly those from the Chirasika area of Chiadzwa, were members of the Johanne Marange Apostolic Sect that approved of polygamous marriages. This meant that each of the wives of a particular family head and numerous children were expected to get their own separate house, something which was strongly resisted by the mining companies because some men had up to ten wives each. On allocating houses and plots, little or no consideration was given on the need to accommodate these people in separate dwelling units for reasons of decency and avoidance of disputes among family members.<sup>678</sup> Especially given that some households had over sixty children requiring nourishment, owing to the fact that birth control measures were taboo to the disposition of this religion, the plots allotted to them were grossly inadequate in meeting desired results in so far as food production was concerned.

The critical water shortage at Odzi was equally frustrating as it failed to match demand. The villagers could fetch water from a common borehole situated some very long distance away from their homes.<sup>679</sup> This explains why it was becoming increasingly difficult for the inhabitants to embark on gardening and other related food-producing enterprises requiring a reliable supply of water. Unlike the sloppy ARDA terrain where the water table was far deep, people at Chiadzwa had the option of sinking their own boreholes, wells and dams where they felt they could erect fences for gardens and use the water all year round for their vegetables, tomatoes, onions, cassava and other greens for both consumption and sale. Conversely, the waterholes at Odzi were not only inadequate, but the resources to drill more were unavailable. The space to expand farming activities was just too small to meet demand, hence, compounding the livelihood challenges of the new population. The greater part of

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<sup>678</sup>Interview with Sarudzai Gwite.

<sup>679</sup>Interview with Alice Tanaka, Gwirindindi Secondary School, 16 August, 2013.

these newly resettled villagers' precious and productive time was, therefore, taken doing virtually nothing to reverse food shortage through innovativeness.

The provision of houses, regardless of their attraction, could not address basic food requirements for households occupying them, particularly against the background of the usurpation of their traditional means of livelihood. The soils at Odzi were far more fertile than those at Chiadzwa, meaning that they could support crops such as maize, but the six hectare plots reserved for cultivation were insufficient. One villager argued that, at least the setting up of irrigation infrastructure as envisaged would have strengthened people's resolve to produce sufficient food by fully utilising those small plots throughout seasons.<sup>680</sup> Numerous promises for erection of irrigation works were made by the government during pre-relocation meetings with local government authorities.<sup>681</sup> It later turned out that this was done to diffuse negative criticism and to while up time. Governor Mushohwe ironically hailed the government for resettling those villagers, but in the process missed the point that the provision of housing units had to be supported by structures that consistently guaranteed food security such as irrigation facilities for crop cultivation. People required food at all times and all other needs paled into insignificance if this equation was improperly balanced.<sup>682</sup>

From the government's standpoint, food scarcity at Odzi arose mainly from 'unforeseen' circumstances in the relocation exercise that needed to be appreciated in their own context. The state maintained that the transfer of people to areas far away from Chiadzwa was done above board and in the national economic interest.<sup>683</sup> Considering also the environmental and health risks posed by mining operations, the need to relocate villagers was critical. Indeed,

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<sup>680</sup>Interview with Farai Chirasika, Rombe Secondary School, 16 August, 2013.

<sup>681</sup>Interview with Chief Robert Chiadzwa, Diamond Mining Company Premises, 20 July 2015.

<sup>682</sup> Sen, *Poverty and Famine*; Devereux and Maxwell, *Food Security in Sub-Saharan Africa*.

<sup>683</sup>Interview with Batsirai Betera, Betera Shopping Centre, Marange, 10 July 2015.

this was undeniable given the level of water pollution at Odzi River where initial washing of rubble from the mines was carried out before further processing of the ore took place. Downstream users of these waters, including their livestock, were seriously threatened by the unfolding environmental risks as toxic waste was dumped into the river. Some people were being diagnosed for new infections arising from use of mining waste contaminated water. ZELA pointed out that “the problems of water quality and environmental degradation need to be addressed in the Marange area before there is irreparable damage to the environment and people’s livelihoods.” In addition, the heavy drilling and blasting machinery caused unbearable noise.

This increased the urgency for the relocation programme to take off, hence, pushing inhabitants off their ancestral lands with which they had huge sentimental attachment. The results of the study by ZELA on the Odzi-Save water quality clearly showed “the environmental and potential health risks to people and their livelihoods as a result of poor mining practices in the Marange diamond region.”<sup>684</sup> Confirming these reports were the testimonies later given in Parliament by Governor Mushohwe, who emphasised that, “people have no food, not because they are lazy but because their fields have been turned into mining gullies by the (mining) companies. They have no fields.”<sup>685</sup> All this helps to buttress the conclusion that the mining operations at Chiadzwa were hastily embarked upon without taking into consideration questions of sustainability and sustainable development, particularly at the level of food security.

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<sup>684</sup>ZELA, *Report on the Scientific Investigation of the Impact of Marange Diamond Mining Operations on Water Quality in the Save and Odzi Rivers: Including an Assessment of the Health, Environmental and Livelihoods Impacts*, Harare: Andy Whitmore, 2012.

<sup>685</sup>*The Herald*, 24 April 2014.

However, a closer look at the main reason for the villagers not to resist the government efforts at relocating them was to do with the increasing torture perpetuated on them by state security agents.<sup>686</sup> In the period June, 2006 to September, 2008, it was the police chasing after artisanal miners, with a number of *gwejas* and *gwejelines* getting seriously injured. In some cases, miners sought refuge in local households, seeking to be identified as bona-fide villagers of Chiadzwa to avoid security searches which sometimes skipped local inhabitants. Due to the rise of numbers benefitting from such arrangements, the police, and later the military, became suspicious and; hence, they embarked on often violent and unsettling search operations within and around local villagers' homes.

The recurring instances of victimisation by security personnel eventually forced villagers to 'appreciate' being relocated at the earliest chance. Since the deployment of the military towards the end of 2008, "communities living in the Chiadzwa district, either on or near the diamond fields, were violently displaced and forcibly relocated without due process and consultation on the destination site or the timing of the relocation; without receiving adequate compensation and without the relocation site having been adequately prepared."<sup>687</sup> Ray and Saini would conclude that if displacement was a manifestation of powerlessness as it constituted a loss of control over one's physical space by constraining their agency and freedom, then state resettlement policies resulted in displaced persons' further lack of development.<sup>688</sup> This forced migration had the direct consequence of tipping the already extremely tense food situation over the edge, considering that the local people had long been forbidden to cultivate lands closer to the diamond mining area, pending relocation.

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<sup>686</sup>*The Daily News Zimbabwe*, 17 July 2013.

<sup>687</sup>Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 'Evictions from Mining Areas (including *Operation Chikorokoza Chapera* and *Operation Hakudzokwi*)', *IDMC News*, Geneva: NRC, 2011.

<sup>688</sup> Ray and Saini, "Development and Displacement."

The entry into Chiadzwa of armed forces worsened the already deteriorating human rights situation as excessive abuse of artisanal miners and villagers was intensified. Reports indicate that over two hundred people died in these circumstances.<sup>689</sup> One of the cases recorded at the High Court of Zimbabwe involved the gruesome death of a villager, one Tsorosai of Betera Village near Chiadzwa in 2009, at the hands of one Chani, a Chief Superintendent of Police stationed at Chiadzwa. He was beaten along with his two brothers, Onesai and Pikirai, and their uncle, John, after being suspected of scouting for diamonds in their own maize field where they were digging a waterhole. Although this senior police officer was jailed for eighteen years, it could still be argued that this was a tip of the iceberg as many villagers were too afraid to raise complaints of torture.<sup>690</sup> The necessity to move out of Chiadzwa could not be left to conjecture any more. The level of intimidation was so high that villagers were stripped of their ability to voice their concerns about compensation and their future at Odzi.<sup>691</sup> Newly resettled villagers at Odzi yearned to return to Chiadzwa after experiencing the worst food crisis in their memory.

Nevertheless, the call to be relocated back to Chiadzwa by people at Odzi was quite unfortunate given the new state of affairs then obtaining there. As soon as they left, the mining companies immediately ripped into their former fields, doing great harm to the environment in the process. Admittedly, the attractive housing units at the new site might have had some positive influence to a number of immigrants, especially those who had not been privileged to dwell in such standard units before. These somehow divided villagers, with some rendering support to the relocation programme regardless of the uncertainties of

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<sup>689</sup> Interview with Chief Chiadzwa. Other interviews held with Magwere and Magobeya corroborated Chief Marange's account.

<sup>690</sup> *The Manica Post*, 22 July 2011.

<sup>691</sup> Farai Maguwu, "Marange Diamonds and the Kimberly Process," In ZELA, "Report on the Scientific Investigation of the Impact of Marange Diamond Mining Operations on Water Quality in the Save and Odzi River," p. 92.



new sources of livelihood at Odzi Transau. The majority of those who offered little resistance to the call for relocation were those who lived in pole and dagga houses at Chiadzwa due to poverty.<sup>692</sup> By virtue of quickly embracing relocation, food security and other livelihood concerns were left to chance.

It appears that the state failed to consider the fact that the villagers were not homogenous because some of them were well-to-do families who had far bigger and better accommodation than the structures that were built for them at Odzi. The survey that was carried out to determine their original property values at Chiadzwa for purposes of compensation was not considered at the time of relocation. Earlier on, we highlighted that everyone, rich or poor, received only the initial USD\$1,000-00 once-off payment as a ‘disturbance allowance’ with the promise of substantive compensation shortly afterwards, which never came forth. This substantive compensation was supposed to be paid in lieu of loss of property which villagers had accumulated over many years, including fences, boreholes, granaries, pigsties, fruit trees and so on. At the promise of further reimbursements and the provision of the initial food hand-outs, it appeared as if everything was on course; hence, people’s speculation for worst-case scenarios was curtailed. But, the reality of hunger and starvation was beginning to be felt as the stipend was clearly inadequate to meet the new cost of living being experienced.

Turning to survival strategies, Odzi Transau villagers faced extreme challenges in coping with the conundrums of displacement. At the time these people were slowly adapting to their new circumstances, the mining companies were already fast withdrawing their corporate responsibility from them, arguing that it was no longer within their interest to continue

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<sup>692</sup> Interview with Magobeya.

meeting the food needs of relocated households beyond what they had done.<sup>693</sup> Villagers were left to fend for themselves in circumstances unfamiliar to them. The situation was made worse by the fact that only few of them were lucky to get job opportunities at the Chiadzwa mines. Many people from provinces as far afield as Mashonaland provinces inundated the mines for menial jobs that included building, providing security and operating dampers, front-end loaders and so on. While this was largely true of Mbada Diamonds, Marange Resources and DMC, the Chinese controlled Anjin Investments hired most of its labour from China, even for jobs requiring minimal skills. All this weighed heavily against villagers' aspirations to benefit directly and indirectly from the diamonds being mined in their area.

Many able-bodied men and women at Odzi Transau were idle, especially because, after failing to secure jobs at the newly established mines, they could not turn to crop cultivation since the available acreage was just too small for that. Even the collection of wild fruits such as *nyii*, *shumha*, *mauyu* or *mandidwe* that used to be sources of additional nutritious food was no longer practised at Odzi because the fruit trees were unavailable.<sup>694</sup> Hunting, which the younger men were generally accustomed to the range of mountains in Chiadzwa, was also not feasible. Virtually, the state inadvertently created hopeless individuals with nothing to look up to, save for just becoming owners by default of five-roomed core houses. The housing units were themselves planned in a manner suggestive of a town set up. Normally, the assumption is that people in towns would be employed in the industries and factories; hence, would afford to purchase their food. At Odzi Transau, no known economic enterprise was envisaged other than the small plots meant at best for gardening purposes. People were impoverished since no provision was made for them to remain responsible for their own upkeep except to look to Government and mining companies back at Chiadzwa to feed them.

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<sup>693</sup> *Zimbabwean Situation*, 23 October 2013.

<sup>694</sup> Tavuyanago, *et al*, "Traditional Grain Crops in Pre-colonial and Colonial Zimbabwe," p. 25.

However, by nature, human beings are innovative in the face of renewed threats against their survival.<sup>695</sup> After having been satisfied that they had been dumped, some people embarked on buying and selling of wares in nearby City of Mutare. Some women crossed borders, especially into Mozambique through the nearby Forbes (Zimbabwean side) and Machipanda (Mozambican side) Border Posts, and South Africa (via Beitbridge Border Post), to buy food items and other goods for sale. One or two men who owned small trucks plied the Odzi-Mutare route, ferrying travellers. Others went to crop-producing areas of Nyanga and Honde Valley to seek domestic work as means to eke out a living. The Machipanda border with Mozambique also provided the much-needed safety net for these desperate villagers.

As a coping strategy, smuggling of goods became rampant during this period. Due to the porous nature of the Mozambican border, (commonly known as ‘Border Machipanda’ as its moniker by touts), a number of newly resettled Odzi Transau villagers joined in the already existing smuggling business in order to gain livelihood. The relocation exercise coincided roughly with the crisis period in Zimbabwe which had set in around 2007 and reached its peak in 2008.<sup>696</sup> In response to this economic meltdown, many people in Mutare embarked on the dangerous and illegal, but somewhat rewarding business of smuggling goods for resale or for exchange with food items. Duri has tackled the question of smuggling prevalent at the Mozambican border, highlighting the irregular and intricate ways through which it was conducted.<sup>697</sup> He stresses the risks associated with smuggling, including sneaking in and out of the border using footpaths along dense forests or hiding smuggled goods in haulage trucks. Duri further alludes to the fact that women dominated the smuggling trade following the

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<sup>695</sup> Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness and Guerrilla War in Zimbabwe*.

<sup>696</sup> J. Muzondidya, “The Zimbabwean Crisis and the Unresolved Conundrum of Race in the Post-colonial Period,” *Journal of Developing Societies*, Vol. 26. No. 1, 2010, pp. 5-38.

<sup>697</sup> F. Duri, “Informal Navigation of the Zimbabwe-Mozambican Border for Survival by Mutare’s Marginalised People,” *Journal of Developing Societies*, Vol. 26. No. 1, 2010, pp. 125-163.

deteriorating economic and social conditions in the country.<sup>698</sup> This trend seemed to have been replicated in Odzi where more women than men participated in both legal and clandestine cross-border activities.

A key feature of this survival strategy was its potential for promoting the escalation of criminal activities, which is why the Southern African Police Chiefs Co-operation Organisation was established to combat transnational crime committed by clandestine migrants.<sup>699</sup> Like many other smugglers across the southern African region, cross-border migrants who traversed the Mozambican territory from Odzi were without relevant documents such as passports and appropriate trading licences required for one to proceed beyond borders at the designated entry and exit points. Such situations were, however, a global issue. For instance, Fox, Lutton and Tanton estimated that one or two persons could have been escaping detection for every visible undocumented migrant worker who entered the European Union in 1995.<sup>700</sup> Similarly, Gastrow admits that the sub-region was increasingly becoming a common market for criminals because of cross-border migration which was prompted by the harsh socio-economic conditions in Zimbabwe particularly.<sup>701</sup> Klipin and Harrison also confirm the upsurge in cross-border activities as a means to survive, but which has led to crimes like vehicle theft, illegal trade (even in harmful substances and firearms) and other fraudulent offences.<sup>702</sup> These were some of the realities confronting the displaced residents from Marange who were at risk of starvation at ARDA Transau.

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<sup>698</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>699</sup> R. Fox, W. Lutton, and J. Tanton, "Immigration from South to North should be Curbed," In J. S. Petrikin (ed.), *The Third World: Opposing Viewpoints*, Diego: Greenhaven Press, 1995, pp. 254-58.

<sup>700</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>701</sup> P. Gastrow, "The SADC Region: A Common Market for Criminals?" *African Security Review*, Vol. 10, No.4, 2001, pp. 1-3.

<sup>702</sup> J. Klipin and K. Harrison, *The Failure of Policing and Crime Prevention in SADC*, Montreal: International Crime Prevention Centre, 2003.

The elderly and the disabled people, however, bore the brunt of these complexities of relocation as it was increasingly difficult for them to come to terms with their new environment and to make plans on how to keep alive. When they were still at Chiadzwa, they could depend on their livestock as well as income-generating projects long established at their homes such as running chickens, tending gardens or weaving. All these activities were untenable at Odzi. The cattle population declined fast due to stock theft rampant at Odzi and the absence of sufficient grazing land to allow for their reproduction at the rate comparable to Chiadzwa. A good number of cattle and goats were traded through barter exchange as people's desperation and vulnerability in the face of extreme food shortage was being taken advantage of by unscrupulous traders.<sup>703</sup>

Following 'firm' pledges made by mining companies to support people's livelihoods, NGOs that used to provide food aid at Chiadzwa were no longer doing so. For example, Plan International-Zimbabwe, which established its offices in Mutare in 1986, ran a food aid programme as an Implementing Partner of the WFP.<sup>704</sup> This eased pressure, especially during those agricultural seasons when harvests were poor. In some instances, school pupils and even adults went on a feeding programme. Plan International's assistance programmes extended to construction of classroom blocks and teachers' houses in most schools in Marange. Distances walked by pupils to schools had also been significantly reduced when several new schools had been built at the donation of whole infrastructure by Plan International, including a systematic school feeding programme for the children.<sup>705</sup>

However, at ARDA Odzi Transau, the situation virtually changed. The distance to the only two schools serving the newly established communities increased with the expanding housing

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<sup>703</sup> Interview with Magobeya.

<sup>704</sup> Interview with Chief Chiadzwa.

<sup>705</sup> Ruguwa, "The Social Impact of Mining on Schools in Marange."

programme as people were being relocated in batches, pending completion of construction work in progress. While at Chiadzwa pupils received *maheu*, porridge and beans during tea break, courtesy of NGOs, at Odzi, the companies were unable to do likewise in spite of their promises, forcing many pupils out of school as they almost always went out hungry.<sup>706</sup> Surprisingly, the state pretended as if all was well in spite of obvious evidence that whole communities were facing extreme hunger. It should be stressed, however, that every effort was being put by villagers themselves to make do with their new situation by embarking on a wide range of activities aimed at restoring their food security, although this proved very difficult.<sup>707</sup> Residents were keen to engage and implore the Government and humanitarian organisations to look into their case with the urgency it deserved.

### Conclusion

The chapter has argued that the roots of rural food insecurity are traced back to mismanagement of natural resources as opposed to just failure of agriculture. Scholars who call for future food security for Africa to depend on good governance, sound economic growth policies, and active preparedness are justified.<sup>708</sup> In this context, it has been demonstrated that food security is a man-made rather than just or predominantly natural issue. The chapter has grappled with the multiple, interlocking interpretations of the economic impact of diamonds discovered in Marange, in the process, illuminating the predatory nature of the state that disregarded the suffering of ordinary people in whose communities diamonds were discovered. It has established that political influence diverted mining dividends to enrich the powerful elite. Whereas this group of elites lived far afield in cities, local villagers were exposed to the risk of environmental degradation. For displaced villagers, the scale of poverty

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<sup>706</sup>Interview with Magwere.

<sup>707</sup> Interview with Magobeya

<sup>708</sup> Webb and von Braun, *Famine and Food Security in Ethiopia*.

and food insecurity was daunting as nearly all households had their food economy shattered.<sup>709</sup>

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<sup>709</sup> Interview with Magwere.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### PLAN INTERNATIONAL-MUTARE AND THE ECONOMICS OF FOOD AID, 1986-2010

#### Introduction

This chapter demonstrates how food aid could be a very effective tool with which international donors advance their ulterior script, notwithstanding its ameliorative impact on hungry populations during emergencies. It deploys the case study of Plan International (whose brief historical overview is provided below) to reveal the general tendency for donors to manipulate governments when strong monitoring and evaluation systems are absent within the targeting and distribution spectrum.<sup>710</sup> Food aid does not only stifle local initiatives, but also hollows out local economies by promoting labour and production disincentives, inducing a donor syndrome, driving down prices of local producers where such producers may not be beneficiaries of food aid, or providing infrastructure which donors might need for resource extraction from the beneficiary country. The study of food aid helps flesh out the true nature and impact of NGO work in Africa. For instance, where food is secured through aid, there is a tendency that recipients ‘retire’ from their search for more sustainable solutions to food insecurity. Governments may equally warm up to the advantages of burden sharing brought about by aid. Thus, this chapter argues that the negative consequences of food aid on recipients far outweigh the envisaged benefits.

This argument comes in the wake of conclusions drawn by Singer and Ruttan that food aid “reduces the government's priority for national food production, as well as the incentive to exert its own fiscal effort to mobilise money for agricultural and other development.”<sup>711</sup> In

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<sup>710</sup> Camilo Nieto and Luis Schenoni, “Backing Despots?” *Democracy and Security*, Vol. **14**, No. 1, 2018, pp. 153–184.

<sup>711</sup>Ruttan (ed.), *Why Food Aid?*



addition, whereas it should fill development ‘gaps,’ “food aid actually widens those gaps by perpetuating dependency, inefficiency, and a statist mentality in developing countries.”<sup>712</sup> Melissa Leach locates this problem in the conduct of NGOs which fail to adequately involve recipients of aid at all levels of decision-making. Also their “silver bullets” continuously miss the target of reducing poverty and food insecurity, resulting in billions of funds being wasted because of the failure to respond to local needs.<sup>713</sup> Situations have also arisen when the ineffectiveness of food aid have been exposed by corrupt distribution criteria where targeted food-insecure households have been excluded. In other circumstances, the timing of the distribution has rendered the food aid process ineffective.

The rationale behind focusing on Plan International-Mutare lies in the need to appreciate the exact nature of the food security puzzle in which Mutare District finds itself ostensibly because of the many years of direct experience the organisation has had with Mutare communities. There is no other NGO that has spent a greater deal of time with food-insecure households in the district than has done Plan International. For this reason, it is imperative to build our analysis of the district’s food security position for the period 1986 to 2010 inclusive around the work of Plan International. This is made possible by critically examining monthly and annual reports compiled by the organisation and also various other correspondences which reflect its activities and experiences with these communities. This chapter is divided roughly into four sections, beginning with an overview of debates on the political economy of food aid. Focus then shifts to an examination of the actual work of Plan International in Mutare district, including a detailed discussion on the logistics of distribution and food politicisation, and then ending with a critique of women’s relationship with food aid.

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<sup>712</sup> Michael P. Todaro, *Population and Development Review*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (Mar., 1994), pp. 231.

<sup>713</sup> Shepherd Jessica, “Melissa Leach: Village Voice,” *The Guardian*, 17 July 2007 (Retrieved 10 July 2018).

To a limited extent, the chapter, however, demonstrates how food aid is critical in situations of acute risks to survival in spite of its inherent shortfalls. This position is based on submissions by Harvey and Lind who warn against overemphasizing the potential disincentive effects of relief.<sup>714</sup> Although proponents to this theory require a great deal of evidence to sustain their argument, they stress that the focus should not be on avoiding dependency, but rather on reaching out more precisely to those who most need the aid in order for them to recover from crisis. Such aid advocates argue that there is little evidence to support the widely-acclaimed view that relief undermines initiative, or that food aid is delivered in a sufficiently reliable or transparent manner for people to depend on it.

The chapter also examines the processes of food aid targeting and distribution in order to stress that such processes are complicated, contrary to long-held beliefs and assumptions that supposed beneficiaries are readily identifiable and can automatically access their allotments.<sup>715</sup> Susanne Jaspars and Jeremy Shoham emphasize the need for vulnerability analysis in the targeting process, and this includes the risks faced by particular population groups and the means they have to cope with such risks.<sup>716</sup> Even knowledge of political vulnerability was essential in developing methods that ensured that the most vulnerable were reached.<sup>717</sup> For its part, however, Plan International strives to update its food aid beneficiary identification, targeting, and distribution registers in an effort to and capture fresh needy

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<sup>714</sup> P. Harvey and J. Lind, *Dependency and Humanitarian Relief: A Critical Analysis*, London: Human Policy Group, 2005, p. 19.

<sup>715</sup> Interview with Jeremiah Munjoma, A Beneficiary of Plan International Food Aid, Mukwada Ward 29, 10 July 2015. In actual fact, many respondents to the interviews which we conducted in 2015 were of the view that they readily knew the households that were in the most-food insecure categories and that they were surprised to see undeserving individuals getting food aid ahead of targeted ones. Unbeknown to them, however, the process was far from easy because of many variables that this chapter discusses.

<sup>716</sup> Susanne Jaspars and Jeremy Shoham, "Targeting the Vulnerable: A Review of the Necessity and Feasibility of Targeting Vulnerable Households," *Disasters*, Vol. 23, No. 4, 1999, pp. 359-372.

<sup>717</sup> *Ibid*, p.370.

cases.<sup>718</sup> While it is not possible to accurately identify those most desperately in need of food aid due to factors such as double-dipping, political interference, and manipulation of beneficiary registers by persons on the ground, there have been calls for Plan international's monitoring and evaluation systems to be designed in such a way as to eradicate cases of diversion of food aid to unintended beneficiaries.<sup>719</sup> This is partly explained by the fact that the organisation strongly encouraged community participation as a prerequisite for effective targeting and distribution which could be further improved by involving women at every stage of the process.

### **Overview of Debates on Food Aid**

Interpreting the worth of food aid to recipients remains a complex matrix which varies from individual to individual and from situation to situation. Glennie poses pertinent questions about the role of aid in development or lack thereof in Africa:

Is aid reducing poverty? Is it contributing to economic growth and strengthening institutions?' In addition, 'Is it helping poor and marginalised Africans access their rights? Or is it actually increasing poverty and causing economic decline while hampering the development of accountable institutions? Or (more likely) is it doing both? What are its positive and negative effects? Overall, just how important is aid to development in Africa?'<sup>720</sup>

The strength of Glennie's analysis is seen in its ability to touch on the various aspects of the effect of aid. He argues that aid has 'many impacts, some obvious, some subtle, some quantifiable, some hard to measure, some not really important, some fundamental.' His study categorises strands of analyses of the effectiveness of aid into two camps; the aid optimists and the aid pessimists. He further argues that the history of aid analysis was one of 'see-sawing' between the two camps, concluding that 'analyses of either type, optimistic or

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<sup>718</sup> Interview with Whatmore Gamunorwa, Councillor for Mukwada Ward 29, 10 July 2015.

<sup>719</sup> Plan International-Mutare File, PO# 2983/2984: Correspondence from WFP: WFP Food Aid Targeting and Distribution Guidelines, 2003.

<sup>720</sup> J. Glennie, *The Trouble with Aid: Why Less Could Mean More for Africa*, New York: Zed Books Limited, 2008, p. 25.

pessimistic, tend to be deficient because they limited their scope to selected impacts of aid rather than its overall impact.’ Glennie maintains that aid optimists ‘tend to avoid discussing some of the negative impacts, despite plenty of evidence.’<sup>721</sup> This argument is applicable to the case of Mutare District because since the inception of the emergency food aid programme, villagers continued to plan for their food security with Plan International in mind, even though they were suspicious about the possibility of withdrawal of aid at the time they needed it most.

Moyo, Makumbe and Raftopoulos are generally optimistic about aid provided by NGOs. They note that NGOs had the onerous task of ‘filling gaps in government’s relief programme management, ‘arguing that they acquired considerable experience in working with the poor.’<sup>722</sup> Their observations were reflective of a deep understanding of processes involved in aid programming and implementation. They added that NGOs operated close to grassroots where they could adapt to local conditions. Their staff had experience in working with the poor.<sup>723</sup> They made these conclusions based on the assumption that African governments were incapacitated to adequately deal with food security for their populations. They further argued that NGOs in some remote localities were in regular contact with vulnerable people, making it easier to identify groups targeted for assistance, and that some NGOs had systems in place for dealing with the vulnerable.’<sup>724</sup> These views have been echoed by Mellor<sup>725</sup> who also offers a refreshing, though controversial perspective that food aid helps meet one of the most pressing agricultural and infrastructural development needs in developing countries through the mechanism of food-for-work programmes. Matlosa shares the same views when he

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<sup>721</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>722</sup> S, Moyo, J., Makumbe, & B, Raftopoulos, NGOs, *The State and Politics in Zimbabwe*, Harare: SAPES, 2000, p. 102.

<sup>723</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>724</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>725</sup> J. Mellor, “Food Aid for Food Security and Economic Development”, In Clay, E. & Shaw, J. (eds.), *Poverty, Development and Food*, London: Macmillan, 1987.

argues that some NGOs had monitoring and evaluation systems integrated in their operations.<sup>726</sup>

In light of this appreciation of the *modus operandi* of NGOs, arguments fronted by Moyo and others provide insights into the complex operating environment in which they find themselves.<sup>727</sup> Relief work was mostly implemented during times of crisis, particularly following frequent droughts experienced in the country. They emphasized that in those contexts, “Government may try to reach the poorest people, whom it usually neglects. The experience of the 1992 drought relief programme showed that large-scale Government operations may succeed in moving large quantities of food relief into affected areas, but may not necessarily succeed in ensuring that food reaches the poorest people targeted.”<sup>728</sup> Glennie’s overall conclusion on the importance of NGO aid seems, however, to be partly in agreement with that of Moyo, Makumbe and Raftopoulos as he notes that ‘the direct, life-saving impacts of aid are most apparent in emergency situations.’<sup>729</sup> When natural disasters strike, foreign governments often play a leading role in providing money and expertise to ease the suffering of those affected and help them to start again.

However, questions that arose bordered on whether food aid was sustainable and long-term or just ameliorative or short-term in its impact. Aid optimists tend to avoid discussing the crude impacts of food aid in spite of potential evidence to the contrary. Other analysts present a disapproving picture of food aid through placing emphasis on the macro-economic effects it could have which were detrimental to economic progress. What seems fairly certain for

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<sup>726</sup> K, Matlosa, “The Dynamics of Land Tenure Regimes in Lesotho: Implications for Food Production and Food Security,” In R. Mkandawire and K. Matlosa (eds.), *Food Policy and Agriculture in Southern Africa*, Harare: Sapes Trust, 1993, p. 20.

<sup>727</sup> Moyo *et al*, NGOs, *The State and Politics in Zimbabwe*, p. 102.

<sup>728</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>729</sup> *Ibid.*

Mutare District is that food aid, if properly targeted and distributed, is directly ameliorative, particularly in situations of emergency.<sup>730</sup> However, profound dependency on aid weakens beneficiaries' initiative because they will be inadvertently tuned into consistently looking to food aid as on-going, year-on-year source of livelihood, something which is not in the best interest of other development variables.<sup>731</sup> Renewed donor focus on governance issues could harm chances of food aid being considered as a genuine rescue package to deserving cases.

Conditions attached to aid were motivated in part by donors' whims. For example, Charles Ray, US Ambassador to Zimbabwe, summed this view unambiguously:

We try to put aid where it is most effective and I do not believe having a rule that says everything must be one way or another. As it stands right now, the bulk of our aid goes directly to communities and goes through NGOs. What works at the moment, because of the restrictions on Zimbabwe, is to channel aid through NGOs or directly to communities.<sup>732</sup>

This shows that the NGOs had the power to influence decisions in recipient countries, riding on the desperate food security situations obtaining on the ground. Ray controversially argued that he did not believe in a government that allegedly dictated rules on how NGOs were expected to operate. This view was, however, challenged by Priscilla Misihairabwi-Mushonga, Regional Integration and International Co-operation Minister during the tenure of the Inclusive Government between 2009 and 2013. She argued that it was the prerogative of the government to decide where aid was required. In fact, she reiterated the government's determination to control NGO activities in the country by stressing that

We now require everyone in the country to inform us about their aid work, how much they are spending and which areas they are working on. Right now we do not know and are not sure who is doing what or working with whom and through which NGO.<sup>733</sup>

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<sup>730</sup> Interview with Chief Zimunya.

<sup>731</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>732</sup> *The Zimbabwe Independent*, 13 July 2009.

<sup>733</sup> 'Anti-Government NGOs Warned', *The Manica Post*, 28 July 2009.

For a Ministry that had been working closely with NGOs, this could have come as a surprise, but the Minister had to be seen to articulate government and not partisan positions regarding the framework of NGO operations in general. These contestations also help to explain the view that NGOs had an agenda that could be mutually exclusive with local interests.

In an analysis of NGOs in Africa, Shivji, however, considers aid in its various manifestations as destructive. Influenced by his legal expertise and strong socialist leanings, he demonstrates his pessimism about their hidden agenda. He argues that NGO and donor choices about aid spending were a futile exercise if they continued to be driven by wider geo-political considerations unattached to moral duty. Shivji's criticism of the donor aid is rooted in empirical evidence about the misplaced priorities of focus by donor agencies. He cites, for instance, hot spots like Somalia and Ethiopia where food aid was politicised to give advantage to groups favourable to aid givers remain a testimony to the unreliability of aid.<sup>734</sup> Actually this strengthens our appreciation of why the anthropologist Melissa Leach emphasises the need for researchers to ask locals or aid recipients if they ought to understand the true nature of NGO work. Like Shivji, her views dovetail with those of other development scholars, such as Glennie, who have examined, and made convincing conclusions about, the political economy of food aid.

Glennie's argument is that food aid buys friends if consideration is made of Chinese aid to Zimbabwe in January 2008.<sup>735</sup> About 5,000 tonnes of food aid to Zimbabwe was shipped to the country in that year alone. China's rapid growth and consequent need for vast amounts of raw materials were perhaps behind that new interest in securing aid to Zimbabwe. In

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<sup>734</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>735</sup> Glennie, *The Trouble with Aid*, p. 37.

Marange, for instance, the Chinese's Anjin Investments was controversially granted permission to mine for diamonds in Chiadzwa. There were disturbing reports, however, of alleged scant disregard of the welfare of the local inhabitants in the area. Commenting on the impending forced relocation of Chiadzwa residents to pave way for diamond exploration and mining, Prosper Ndamera, a villager in the Nechirasika area, revealed how 'the Chinese came and barricaded our village and they would drill wherever they wanted. We really felt that we were no longer wanted.'<sup>736</sup> This whole move leaves room for critics to doubt the timing and motivation of Chinese food aid to Zimbabwe.

In Africa, debates have also arisen about the quality of food aid brought into the country by donor communities and the Government of Zimbabwe has stood firm against importation of certain foodstuffs on the argument that they pose a health risk to its population and environment.<sup>737</sup> For instance, in the early years of the WFP-VGF programme in Manicaland and other provinces, there was a wide talk against Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs). Government was torn between accepting GMO foods perceived to have long-term negative effects if consumed and their entry regardless of woes of food insecurity across communities was denied. One Monthly Distribution Report which was prepared by E, Mugore, Project Manager at Plan International-Mutare, clearly shows this dilemma;

Mutare District had planned to feed 69, 566 beneficiaries with 834, 792 metric tonnes of maize grain. Actual achievement for October was 4, 502 who received food rations totalling to 91, 582 tonnes and the reason for the large discrepancy on tonnage received and number of beneficiaries fed is the impasse experienced over appropriateness of the food which was available for distribution.<sup>738</sup>

This follows that where a decision was passed to reject food aid on those and other related grounds, distribution failed to take off in the manner planned. By proceeding to distribute

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<sup>736</sup>*The Zimbabwe Independent*, 14 July 2010.

<sup>737</sup> R, Walters, "Crime, Bio-Agriculture, and the Exploitation of Hunger," *The British Journal of Criminology*, Vol. 46, No. 1, 2006, pp. 26-45.

<sup>738</sup>Plan International, Monthly Report, Emergency Operation 10 200 Report, 5 October 2003, p. 3.



such food, this would reinforce Walters's conclusion that 'forcing GMOs on a nation that does not want them might be looked at as criminal behaviour under international law.'<sup>739</sup>

While it could be true that GMOs were detrimental to health in the long-term owing to their potential toxic nature, it is equally possible to argue that during the period under review, the ZANU-PF Government was becoming increasingly averse to European and American aid for political reasons. The country was gravitating into chaos following the Protracted Land Reform Programme; commonly known as the FTRLP which saw the invasion of commercial farms by people believed to be war veterans and other ZANU-PF backed hooligans. The participation of donors from these continents was akin to exposing the weaknesses inherent in the ruling party considered to be failing to feed its hungry population.

### **The Work of Plan International in Mutare District**

Plan was established in 1937 as 'Foster Parents Plan for Children in Spain,' providing the needs of children affected by the Spanish Civil War of 1936. It became 'Foster Parents Plan for War Children' during the Second World War, working in England, and caring for displaced children across Europe.<sup>740</sup> It was only after Europe's recovery from war that Plan embarked on new programmes worldwide, targeting the disadvantaged. It became Plan International in 1956, assisting children and families regardless of the cause of their needs. It commenced operations in Zimbabwe in 1986 by facilitating food aid and education support projects in seven programme units countrywide. The mapping of needy districts was done with the assistance of government departments such as AGRITEX and Social Welfare.<sup>741</sup> From 2002, the Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee (ZIMVAC) also carried out

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<sup>739</sup> Walters, "Crime, Bio-agriculture and the Exploitation of Hunger."

<sup>740</sup> Plan International Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe Correspondence File: Government Departments and Other NGOs, 2002.

<sup>741</sup> Agricultural extension was introduced in Zimbabwe in 1927 by Emory D. Alvord. (Information extracted from: <http://www.fao.org/docrep/005/AC913E/ac913e05.htm>) (Accessed on 14 April 2017).

important annual rural livelihoods assessments that were frequently utilised by Plan International in sharpening its focus on the most vulnerable areas of the district.<sup>742</sup>

In conjunction with the United Nations World Food Programme, the other assessment mission set up in 2003 was the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation Crop and Food Supply Assessment Mission which looked at the size of the harvest, domestic production, and government capacity to import food, and seed and fertiliser availability against human consumption requirements.<sup>743</sup> This assessment would subtract domestic production and government capacity to import food from annual consumption requirement in order to indicate the food gap for the ensuing marketing year. The country-wide programme units ran by Plan in order of their date of establishment were: Mutare (Zimunya and Marange) 1986; Kwekwe (Silobela and Zhombe) 1990; Mutasa (Honde Valley and Dryland) 1991; Chiredzi (Chiredzi and Mwenezi) 1991; Bulawayo (Tsholotsho and Pumula) 1992; Harare (Mutoko and Epworth) 1993; and Chipinge (Lower and Upper Valley) 1994.<sup>744</sup>

Registered in 1986 as a Private Voluntary Organisation (PVO), Plan International-Zimbabwe, which has a global presence in 68 countries, has an ambitious mission statement of ‘endeavouring to achieve lasting improvements in the quality of life of deprived children in developing countries’ while uniting people across cultures.<sup>745</sup> It was registered under the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare (MPSL&SW) in terms of the Welfare Organisations Act [*Chapter 93*]. Its terms of reference as enshrined in the certificate of registration were to: “Enable deprived children, their families and communities to meet their

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<sup>742</sup> Plan International, PO#2983/2984: Correspondence from WFP: WFP Food Aid Targeting and Distribution Guidelines, 2003.

<sup>743</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>744</sup> Plan International Zimbabwe, Annual Report, Message from the Country Director, Simba Machingaidze, 2006/2007.

<sup>745</sup> Plan International Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe Correspondence File: Government Departments and Other NGOs, 2002.

basic needs and increase their ability to participate in, and benefit from, their societies; build relations to increase understanding and unity among people of different cultures and countries and; promote the rights and interests of the children.”<sup>746</sup>

However, the organisation could be de-registered if it involved itself in ‘subversive activities’, or if it failed to ‘observe the terms of its registration’, or ‘once its technical agreement had been terminated.’<sup>747</sup> Having been established in 1986 as the first in the country ahead of six other subsequent programme units, Plan International-Mutare sponsored children in Zimunya/Marange areas of the district. In Zimunya, the following wards were covered: Chishakwe, Dora, Muradzikwa, Munyoro, Gombakomba, Gandai, Chitora and Munyarari. For Marange, the coverage included Chiadzwa, Mukwada, Buwerimwe, Mafararikwa, Takarwa, Nyachityu, Mukuni, Chimoio, Mutupo, Nhamburiko, Ngomasha, Mutsago, Mudzimundiringe, Kugarisana and Chindunduma wards.<sup>748</sup> Generally, each of these wards had at least two FDPs and identification numbers.

Although Marange is not homogenous with regards its soil structure and rainfall patterns, it is all generally arid. There are some wards with sandy soils such as the ones north of Mutsago which include Mafararikwa, Ngomasha, Nyachityu, Nhamburiko and Mukuni where crops generally thrive under conditions of light rainfall trickles. However, in areas such as Chiadzwa, Mukwada, Kurauone, Chirasika and Banda, the soils are rich enough to support crop cultivation but the rains are generally erratic and unable to support crop life year-on-year. Reporting in the period 1<sup>st</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2009, the District Food Aid Manager for Marange, Virgil Chibvuri, noted how desperate villagers from these communities were for

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<sup>746</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>747</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>748</sup> Plan International Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe Correspondence File: Government Departments and Other NGOs, 2002.

food aid in the face of routine downscaling of WFP-assisted Vulnerable Group Feeding programmes. It is worthy to capture his remarks at length: “This is the final monthly narrative monitoring report under the current WFP- VGF programme which ended on 31 March 2009 amid indications of continued severe food insecurity at household level as a result of immature field crops and/or failure.”<sup>749</sup> Ending emergency operations aimed at mitigating the negative impacts of hunger under such circumstances of great need was itself weighing heavily on the hearts of affected villagers seeking to survive through the food aid programme to the next ‘harvest.’

Regarding its mandate as WFP’s Implementing or Co-operating Partner, Plan International operated within confines of WFP’s laid down procedures and principles on food aid targeting and distribution. In some cases, the successes or failures of part of its food intervention scheme that it implemented had to do with the challenges inherent in the bigger WFP operations that were themselves sometimes faulty. The amount of food available for distribution was determined by WFP, so were the targeting and distribution modalities. Co-operating/Implementing Partners were largely expected to implement agreed formulas. Arguably, it was difficult to effectively judge Plan International’s food aid programme independent of WFP because many things were dictated by WFP. In its own right, WFP almost always operated in an invidious position because it was dependent on donor pledges. What this means is that Plan International, like Christian Care, Goal Zimbabwe, Concern Worldwide and such other Co-operating Partners were unable to meet demand in their areas of operation if WFP’s donor pledges were limited.

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<sup>749</sup> Plan International, Emergency Operation 10 200, Implementing Partner Monthly Report for March, 2009, p. 14.

The setting up in 2002 of Plan International-Mutare's Food Aid Department under the management of Mafemba, resulted directly from the findings of food security surveys carried out in the district by ZIMVAC, among other Government-initiated and independent early warning systems. These assessments determined levels of vulnerability of food-insecure households. Since Plan International was already operating projects in Zimunya/Marange unrelated to food aid, but focused on poverty reduction generally, there was renewed impetus, as a humanitarian organisation, to embrace WFP's initiative to feed households identified as extremely food-insecure, using WFP's targeting and distribution guidelines. Such guidelines included the need for a community-managed targeting and distribution approach to food aid in order to enhance participation and leadership within the distribution cycle. Jaspers and Shoham argue that this is based on the principle that beneficiary communities themselves are best placed to identify and target the most vulnerable households in their communities.<sup>750</sup> This also called for gender inclusion in the food aid targeting process in order to meet the needs of the targeted beneficiaries.

Speaking at a two-day workshop held in 2003 at Nyanga Inn, Oliver Manyerenyere, WFP's Representative, stressed that WFP was not an NGO but a World Board of Government in the United Nations system and its emergency or relief operations were controlled by donors' responses to its calls for support.<sup>751</sup> WFP's co-operation with its NGO partners, however, 'dated back to the very origins of the programme' itself. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed at the headquarters' level with several organisations in the NGO community which regulated collaboration in areas of mutual interest, outlining potential common ground

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<sup>750</sup> Jaspers and Shoham, *Targeting the Vulnerable*.

<sup>751</sup> Plan International. (2008). PO#2983 (2), Correspondence from WFP, Letter Dated 27 October, 2008 by Oliver Manyerenyere, HSO (WFP) to the Provincial Administrator, Manicaland.

for joint humanitarian operations.<sup>752</sup> The principles of co-operation and complementarities underlined this collaboration within a common goal of tackling the scourges of hunger and malnutrition afflicting communities. WFP's interaction with Plan International was, therefore, indispensable to WFP's own overriding goal to combat hunger and deprivation. There were occasions, however, when Plan International and other NGOs sought WFP's collaboration in carrying out their own assistance programmes as indicated above. In such joint ventures in programme delivery, costs were shared if necessary or undertaken by each organisation separately, but still within the spirit of burden sharing.

Both the World Food Programme and Plan International were compelled by their donor agencies to acknowledge the obligations of accountability and transparency in undertaking humanitarian operations. They were, thus, expected to conform to priority areas even if there were more compelling reasons to utilise the aid in areas that required more urgent attention. This is why Powell and Seddon have concluded that NGOs have actually become a law unto themselves by leading processes of social and economic change through a weak elite that takes instructions from foreign capitals rather than local people.<sup>753</sup> In light of these realities, aid operations were not purely designed to assist Government in its quest to feed its own people, but they ought to be understood within the context of this bigger international capitalist picture. During deliberations in a 'Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF), Training of Trainers' Workshop held at Mutare Holiday Inn, Goodson Murinye, WFP Representative, categorically stressed that any WFP operation was called an 'assistance programme.'<sup>754</sup> He sought to emphasise that it was the government's prerogative to feed its own people' while

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<sup>752</sup> Plan International, PO#2211: Community Capacity and Empowerment, Mutare Programme Unit, 2004 Financial Year

<sup>753</sup> Mike Powell and David Seddon, "NGOs and the Development Industry," Review of African Political Economy, Vol. 24, No. 71, 1997, pp. 3-10.

<sup>754</sup> Plan International, Vulnerable Group Feeding, Workshops and Reports, From Patrick Masava (Mutare District) to T. Mafemba, Report on Workshop/Training on Humanitarian and Compliance; 2-3 October, 2008.

‘all other players came in to assist within a given framework.’ For its part, the Government of Zimbabwe was obliged to ‘provide humanitarian space, security and import licences’ and ‘waiver duties and taxes on importation of food commodities,’ while WFP brought in food from its donors to Zimbabwe’s hungry populations.<sup>755</sup>

The Implementing Partners sometimes got support from WFP in transporting food to intended destinations. In most cases, however, it was the responsibility of Partners to identify, engage and contract transport operators accessible to them in order to move the food from WFP warehouses to Food Distribution Points (FDPs) in rural areas under their jurisdictions. Plan International provided feedback to WFP and Government each time there was a VGF scheme, highlighting areas of need and successes, depending on the outcome of each distribution exercise. For instance, Fungai Mbetsa, Provincial Administrator for Manicaland, received an update from Manyerenyere on WFP’s operations for that year, emphasising on two key developments.<sup>756</sup> The first one was that food distributions started in the month of October in all the seven districts of Manicaland soon after food was availed by donors. The second and more fundamental item was the good news that the Government had designated the relevant ministry as the official channel of communication with WFP ‘for all issues pertaining to the implementation of the Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation.’<sup>757</sup>

The challenges of fluctuating donor response to WFP’s food assistance calls weighed more heavily on Plan International which was on the ground receiving complaints about inadequate food items distributed to already listed persons. Sometimes the food was mismatched with

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<sup>755</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>756</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>757</sup> VGF Monthly Monitoring Report, for the Period 1<sup>st</sup>- 31<sup>st</sup> October 2008, Prepared by Virgil P. Chibvuri, (District Food Aid Manager), p. 1.

demand, making it increasingly difficult to distribute.<sup>758</sup> For example, WFP's figures for planned beneficiaries were trimmed by 45 per cent without notice at Kurauone FDP in 2008 because of changes in donor pledges. This seriously affected ground distribution operations as Plan International was compelled to apologise to victim communities on behalf of the donors.<sup>759</sup> In his e-mail communication to WFP, Titus Mafemba, Plan International Mutare's Food Aid Manager, confirmed this reality:

Please, can you help me put out the 'fire' in terms of Mutare District's planned beneficiaries now lowered (very late) by 2, 205 people, that is, from 79, 331 to 77,126 people after making commitments to various Plan constituencies.... Without any communication from WFP, we accidentally, on Monday, came across the reduced Mutare District caseload. Plan Mutare Programme Unit food aid intervention is now facing credibility and food politics crises for making commitments for almost two months that were altered without pre-warning....<sup>760</sup>

Mafemba was pleading with WFP to revisit alterations made to beneficiary numbers as they had been cut by a certain margin. This helps to explain that the WFP/Plan International system was as equally vulnerable and shaky as those people it targeted to rescue from extreme food insecurity.

Through the WFP, Plan International undertook to superintend over the Vulnerable Group Feeding Programme in strict adherence to WFP's implementation criteria. WFP prioritised assistance to most food-insecure districts while Plan International focused on wards. Registers for intended beneficiaries were done by community members at ward or village level in each district in consultation with local authorities, such as village heads, ward councillors, headmen, chiefs and the District Administrator.<sup>761</sup> All these efforts were

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<sup>758</sup> Plan International, Emergency Operation 10 200, Implementing Partner Monthly Report for March, 2009, p. 14.

<sup>759</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>760</sup> E-mail correspondence dated 18 September 2009 by the Food Aid Manager to WFP. The Manager cleared me to use the e-mail evidence in my analysis if I found it useful in reaching conclusions.

<sup>761</sup> Plan International, Vulnerable Group Feeding, 2008-2009, Workshops and Reports, From Patrick Masava (Mutare District) to T. Mafemba, Report on Workshop/Training on Humanitarian and Compliance; 2-3 October, 2008.



supposed to be reflected in a Memorandum of Understanding summary flow chart which mapped out distribution and targeting criteria. One Food Monitor at Plan International's Mutare Office highlighted that this flow chart was critical as a defence mechanism when there was confrontation between the Government of Zimbabwe's high offices, and the Co-operating Partner/WFP. To this end, emphasis was placed on the need by every humanitarian worker to understand it in order to appreciate each one's obligation. Stanley Dawa, Programme Unit Manager for Mutasa District, argued that Marange shared a similar history of incessant drought and poor land fertility with Honde Valley and Dry Land areas under his jurisdiction. It is his conviction that this scenario tended to expose the affected communities to a dependence on food aid from WFP, although they were accustomed to other traditional coping mechanisms.<sup>762</sup>

For the greater part of the 1990s, most farmers who depended on rain fed agriculture failed to produce substantial amounts of food crops for their subsistence. Naturally, these areas fell in the 'red zone' category according to Agritex responsible for mapping out district geographical regions in the country. The crop assessment survey for the 2002/2003 agricultural season indicated that Marange's Mafararikwa, Buwerimwe, Chirasika and Chiadzwa wards were 'popularly known as 'red zones', falling under Regions 1V and V because of their dryness.<sup>763</sup> The 'yellow zones' were those that received substantial harvests lasting up to August, while the 'green zones' enjoyed relatively good amounts of rainfall to guarantee sufficient harvests throughout. In its selection of wards in Marange, Plan International remained guided by reports from Agritex assessments for the area. However, Agritex also anchored its conclusions from findings made by ZIMVAC which frequently

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<sup>762</sup> Interview with Stanley Dawa, Programme Unit Manager, Plan International- Mutare Office, 23 February, 2010.

<sup>763</sup> Plan International Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe Correspondence File: Government Departments and Other NGOs, 2004.

produced Interim Rural Food Security Assessment Reports on a national rather than district level. The Agritex report, for instance, vividly captured the prevailing food security situation; “Information obtained from beneficiaries revealed that the food security situation is fast deteriorating and in the months of August onwards, most households would be seriously affected. In wards such as Mafarikwa, Chiadzwa and Mukwada, the situation is quite deplorable and the need to register more beneficiaries is critical.”<sup>764</sup>

The report further stated that the situation in Mutare District “remained unstable as the majority of farmers failed to get meaningful harvests from their fields. Twenty-one out of thirty-one wards in the district managed to get harvests that are going to last at most three months.”<sup>765</sup> This report coincided with the annual closure of the VGF programme regardless of repeated calls for additional assistance. Despite indications by Agritex of extreme desperation, the WFP’s VGF scheme technically closed its cycle, leaving people looking to it for food aid stranded. Plan International also found itself unable to offer any extended assistance rather than encourage people to wait until the next cycle came round. The situation of beneficiaries who were ‘dumped’ at the closure of each VGF scheme remained desperate

Households had themselves no control over this feeding programme on policy issues except being involved as beneficiaries once again when the programme was brought back to them. This is what Shivji exposes as a weak relationship between aid givers and supposed beneficiaries. “The ‘poor, the diseased, the disabled, the AIDS-infected, the ignorant, the marginalised, in short, ‘the people,’” argued Shivji, “are not part of the development equation, since development is assigned to private capital which constitutes the ‘engine of growth.’”<sup>766</sup> But this did not mean that WFP and Plan International did completely nothing to halt the

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<sup>764</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>765</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>766</sup> Shivji, *The Silences in the NGO Discourses*, p. 30.

rapid deterioration of the food supply situation affecting vulnerable communities across the district. In addition, Agritex, ZIMVAC, WFP and other crop assessment organisations played a vital role in providing the government with vital statistics on vulnerability levels of rural communities. Their findings were at least instrumental in re-awakening authorities to the overriding role of guaranteeing food security.

### **Politicisation of Food and the Logistics of Distribution**

This section assesses why food earmarked for deserving beneficiaries eventually got to wrong recipients, it should be stated at the outset that many beneficiaries for whom food aid is designed remain vulnerable due to complications of targeting and distribution. The entry of NGOs to the food equation in Zimbabwe was sparked by the need to avert drought-triggered food emergencies from turning into famines. However, logistical challenges in reaching the intended beneficiaries continued to militate against the efforts of NGOs in fulfilling their already onerous task. We examine the scheme of operation started by Plan International-Mutare to ensure food aid reached designated individuals, arguing that the process of food aid targeting and distribution is extremely complex and involving. This section builds on these issues to proceed to analyses of food aid targeting and distribution mechanics in Mutare District. This approach provides the much-needed appreciation of the nature and extent of challenges encountered by residents in accessing donated foodstuff. The overall picture is one of desperation because food hampers earmarked for excessively struggling households may not reach them due to a number of variables, including double-dipping, political interference, swindling of food by people occupying positions of authority such as village heads or councillors and theft of commodities from point of dispatch to that of distribution.

The clause that refers to legal sanction against the direct and indirect participation of PVOs in matters of politics and governance was subject to political manipulation if the need arose. Indeed, as will be discussed below, there were cases of political interference with Plan International's operations in Mutare and in its other areas of influence such as Goromonzi. Before serious opposition emerged to the ZANU (PF) administration between 1986 and 2000, Plan International received no threats from Government. From 2000, however, the need to politicise food to gain mileage ahead of opposition parties led ZANU (PF) to change its behaviour by vigorously and unashamedly attempting to lead Plan International's food aid targeting and distribution processes. For instance, ZANU (PF), in its wisdom or lack of it, threatened to curtail Plan International operations, especially field activities, where it felt that the MDC and other rival parties were somehow being favoured by the NGO.<sup>767</sup>

Plan International, like many other NGOs operating in the country, continued to fall victim to whims and perceptions of the ZANU (PF) side of the 2009 Unity Government on alleged involvement in so-called 'subversive activities'. Mugabe passed a blanket accusation to NGOs for 'meddling' in politics, arguing that most of them were 'posing as shadow governments' and 'most exceeding their terms of reference.'<sup>768</sup> Earlier on, mounting suspicion on the operations of humanitarian organisations in a country experiencing a volatile political crisis resulted in the suspension of all field work on the 4<sup>th</sup> of June 2008 by Nicholas Goche, the Labour and Social Welfare Minister.<sup>769</sup> Although the suspension was later lifted on 29 August, 2009, a new set of stringent operational measures was introduced, which included furnishing the Police and the Local Authority with copies of NGO/PVO registration

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<sup>767</sup> Interview with Tichafa Kusena, MDC Councillor for Mukwada Ward 29, 17 July 2010.

<sup>768</sup> 'Anti-Government NGOs Warned,' *The Herald*, 28 July 2009.

<sup>769</sup> Plan International, Vulnerable Group Feeding, 2008-2009, Workshops and Reports, From Patrick Masava (Mutare District) to T. Mafemba, Report on Workshop/Training on Humanitarian and Compliance, 2-3 October, 2008.

certificates, and ‘displaying the same in their offices.’<sup>770</sup> This also entailed furnishing the Minister with annual programme work plans showing budgets and expenditures for scrutiny. The formation of the MDC in 1999 was misperceived as Western-backed, with the ‘express aim of toppling the Mugabe Government.’<sup>771</sup>

This turbulent political scenario was to shape the manner in which food aid was to be handled. The reality which prevailed was one in which farm invasions disrupted agricultural production, leading to an acute shortage of food, hence, prompting the need for food aid. Distributions, therefore, depended on whims of the ruling party which became neurotic in the face of unprecedented loss of parliamentary seats to the MDC in the 2000 Harmonised Elections. The MDC got all sorts of labels, chief of which was that it was pliant to foreign interests, and this characterisation cascaded down to WFP food aid. Hence, distributions were suspended or halted altogether from time-to-time due to serious political interference. It was further reported that “food deliveries to Mutare District had to be suspended for the larger part of October. This affected largely the maize meal commodity. The impasse was centred on GMO foods.”<sup>772</sup>

Disruptions of targeting and distribution by political elements became rampant, particularly when some party officials sought to be identified with WFP, posing as custodians of solutions to acute food shortage reeling across Marange. WFP and Plan International were clearly opposed to this type of interference. Attempts to take over control of targeting and distribution processes could not be condoned. Powerful politicians desperately forced suspension of distribution of delivered foodstuffs on the pretext that they were genetically engineered. This was intended to scuttle the distribution of the food stuffs in order to force

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<sup>770</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>771</sup>*The Herald*, 18 April 2000.

<sup>772</sup> Plan International Monthly Report, October 2002, p. 3.

beneficiaries into compliance with their political agenda.<sup>773</sup> Where ruling party politicians demanded to take over the processes of beneficiary registration and food aid distribution within their constituencies, the WFP discouraged such conduct.

Several cases of political interference were reported, not only in Marange and Zimunya, but also in other areas which received food aid in the country. For example, some people in Goromonzi's Munyawiri Ward in Mashonaland East Province, who had been de-registered during beneficiary verifications as being undeserving cases, arrived at the FDP to demand rations in April 2003. ZANU (PF) party officials who accompanied them alleged that the concerned persons were 'removed from registers because of their party affiliation'.<sup>774</sup> Distributions for that month were suspended when field staff refused to give in and reinstate the undeserving persons although the suspension was subsequently lifted in May of the same year, following Provincial Administrator's arbitration.

In Umguza District of Matabeleland North, the Provincial Governor 'ordered food aid to be distributed in a region not designated by WFP.' In response, WFP's Implementing Partner operating in that region suspended distributions for a day until a meeting was held with the parties involved. Elsewhere in Mashonaland West Province, distributions were also suspended for many months when ZANU (PF) political activists 'jeopardised the security of an Implementing Partner's field monitor.'<sup>775</sup> Overall, during the first quarter of 2003 as well as in 2008, numerous cases of political interference and favouritisms in Marange and Zimunya were brought to the attention of WFP by Plan International, many of which

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<sup>773</sup> Plan International, *Vulnerable Group Feeding, 2008-2009, Workshops and Reports*, From Patrick Masava (Mutare District) to T. Mafemba, Report on Workshop/Training on Humanitarian and Compliance, 2-3 October, 2008.

<sup>774</sup> Plan International, *Monthly Report, Emergency Operation 10 200 Report*, 5 October 2003, p. 3.

<sup>775</sup> *Ibid.*

included manipulation of beneficiary lists by village heads and their secretaries seeking to unfairly include their relatives and friends.

In situations of political interference, distribution would be immediately suspended, in the meanwhile further exacerbating the plight of innocent beneficiaries. In its Fourth Module of the 'Food Aid Targeting and Distribution Guidelines,' WFP's key objective was to minimise any such diversions.<sup>776</sup> This speaks to the view by Jaspers and Shoham that there is need for a political analysis in designing targeting strategies that were aimed to effectively reaching out to the most vulnerable people. Jaspers and Shoham maintained that even though nutrition and food-security assessment methods have advanced significantly in recent years, such assessments frequently have failed to incorporate any analysis of the wider political context. They argued that malnutrition and food security could be effects of complex emergencies, but the causes were highly political in nature.<sup>777</sup>

During the period under review, there had been intense speculation within political circles, especially by ZANU (PF) officials on the possibility of NGOs influencing people's vote against ZANU (PF) party in favour of Morgan Tsvangirai's MDC party. For example, on the eve of the March, 2008 Harmonised Election, Tinaye Chigudu, Provincial Governor for Manicaland, retorted:

It is quite interesting to note that we have NGOs such as Mercy Corps. This organisation originates from one of the poorest areas in the USA. Interestingly, you find the same organisation here in some parts of Africa, trying to assist people. While we do not condemn such a gesture of goodwill, we will always question the reason behind assisting people far afield when they have poor people where they come from.<sup>778</sup>

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<sup>776</sup> Plan International, Monthly Report, Emergency Operation 10 200 Report, 5 October 2003, p. 3.

<sup>777</sup> Jaspers and Shoham, *Targeting the Vulnerable*, p. 360.

<sup>778</sup> *The Manica Post*, 25 July 2009.

But this submission overlooked the fact that the state actually ought to have scaled up distributions to meet the needs of the communities faced with the growing threat of hunger during this period.

Similarly, Mugabe took a swipe at NGOs in 2009 when addressing the Global 2009 Dialogue in Uganda's Munyonyo District whose theme was 'Inclusivity and National Visions.' He said that:

Zimbabwe may soon reconsider the advisability of letting NGOs operate in the country as most of them are exceeding terms of their registration by posing as shadow governments that threaten viability of the inclusive government. We now have a phenomenon of NGOs or shall I call them phenomena, for they really are a type of government in the background of a formal government?" I do not whether this creature is for the better or for the worse, but in our country, we have seen a situation where they have exceeded, really, their terms of reference and perhaps we might have to reconsider the advisability of having them.<sup>779</sup>

These allegations were not easily verifiable in most cases and the slash on the NGOs fell within the routine attacks on the West by Mugabe which had been going on for many years since 2000. Mugabe apparently brushed aside the ameliorative contribution of NGOs at a time when on the ground WFP and Plan International continued to face challenges in screening and verifying beneficiaries who overwhelmed FDPs to access food. Ironically, the government seemed to have demonstrated little capacity to deal with needy cases on its own without securing the assistance of those organisations.

Turning to other critical components of distribution process, the method, timing and mode of dispatch of food aid also posed challenges. The WFP/Plan International scheme of association clearly spells out duties of Implementing Partners, including dispatching the much-awaited foodstuffs to distribution sites where it is expected to arrive at a date announced in advance of distribution. While it is the responsibility of local administration,

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<sup>779</sup>*The Herald*, 17 July 2009.



police and village heads to provide general security to donated food awaiting distribution, Plan International hires trucks to carry food from WFP warehouses to its respective FDPs. However, many problems are experienced at this stage and these include truck breakdowns, thefts of food items by truck drivers or at depots, late deliveries, and inaccessible roads especially during the rainy season and delivery of rotten food. Some of these problems are reflected in the co-operating partner's monthly distribution reports while others are reported by interviewees. From these reports, we get the impression that Plan International, though not succeeding in all cases, strove to improve its logistics and mechanisms in dealing with each of these distribution challenges in the period to 2010.<sup>780</sup> One of Plan International's targets during transportation of food items was to ensure that consignments were generally off-loaded during mornings in order to save sufficient time for distribution before nightfall. In light of this position, there were strict recommendations against late evening deliveries or distributions to avoid additional security challenges to both beneficiaries and allotments.

However, transporters had their own schedules which sometimes mismatched those proposed by Plan International. But the major factor hindering operations by many transporters especially in the 2000-2008 eras of shortages in Zimbabwe was fuel unavailability. Referring to one particular case, for instance, the Programme Area Manager, Justin Kufakweimba, noted that "late arrival of some commodities at Maanhu and Mafararikwa Food Distribution Points meant that distribution had to be done in two phases. Distributions were delayed by a day due to unavailability of fuel at petrol stations."<sup>781</sup> In addition, Kufakweimba called for contingency measures to be "put in place to counter this" because "notification at some centres was not effective and some villagers arrived late for distribution."<sup>782</sup>

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<sup>780</sup> Plan International Annual Reports File, 2000-2010.

<sup>781</sup> VGF May 2003 Report.

<sup>782</sup> VGF Report for June 2003.

Fuel supplies in Zimbabwe remained erratic since 2003 to round about 2009 when hyperinflationary trends rocking the economy were eventually halted by dollarization. This critical fuel shortage resulted in transporters seriously delaying dispatches, hence, prolonging waiting time for beneficiaries anticipating to quench their hunger. Transporters were also reluctant to deliver food to some remote FDPs, citing poor road conditions besides shortage of fuel. The Food Aid Manager, Titus Mafemba, stated that “some food went bad while being kept by transporters after failing to secure fuel for a number of days.”<sup>783</sup> At Kurauone FDP in Mukwada Ward (29), it was reported that some maize meal was unfit for distribution “as the commodity (about 196 bags) was rotten due to inappropriate covering by the transporter when it was raining.”<sup>784</sup> Beneficiaries were also short-changed when one transporter, Nyco Ltd, kept commodities destined for Gwese and Dora FDPs at his garage for an extended period of time (over one week) under poor storage conditions, “resulting in rotting of 56 by 50 kg cereal and 24 by 50kg of pulses. Arrangements to destroy the food with all relevant arms of government are now in place.”<sup>785</sup> Considering the emergency nature of the food aid programme, especially in 2008, which arose from, and in direct response to, socio-economic and political challenges in the country,<sup>786</sup> it was a mark of professional incompetence for the transporter to ferry food after a week when loaded trucks were expected to deliver food within a day or two.

The other feature of the distribution process pertained to the alleged failure by beneficiary communities to report cases of rotten food to Plan International when such situations arose. By virtue of being the ones in charge of food preparation, women were better placed to detect and report such incidences. The male consumers were also accused of complicity in

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<sup>783</sup> Vulnerable Group Feeding Cooperating Partner Monthly District Report, March 2003, p.6.

<sup>784</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>785</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>786</sup> Brian Raftopoulos and Alois Mlambo (eds.), *Becoming Zimbabwe: A History from the Pre-colonial Period to 2008*, Harare: Weaver Press, 2009.

concealing these problems.<sup>787</sup> Probably, the reason could have been that some people discovered this way later after distribution and at point of consumption. Plan Food Monitors were also to blame as they were expected to detect rotten food items before any dispatch was done. The same could be said of the WFP warehouse personnel who were expected not to make arrangements to dispatch rotten food items to beneficiary communities. Regarding food that went bad whilst in the custody of transporters who kept it under suspected poor storage conditions, it was the responsibility of WFP and its IPs to determine what course of action to take. This is because, in view of many possibilities, some extremely desperate people could partake of such food which showed signs of deterioration.

Some monthly reports indicated that beneficiaries were unwilling to disclose to Plan International the bad state of some food items that they received. For example, in the January 2008 Monthly Report, it was revealed that some villagers only opened up to Plan International well after the food had been consumed and during Plan International's routine Post-Distribution Monitoring exercises. The report stated that:

The major blemish was failure by community representatives to acknowledge and indicate the high volume of rotten food commodities on the waybills. The Co-operating Partner made follow ups and was constantly told that the food was safe when in actual fact it was not.<sup>788</sup>

The whole idea was to survive the threat of extreme hunger looming in these communities. In the same report, however, it was highlighted that some food decomposed while under the custodian of transporters who might have received it in a sound state from WFP but whose delivery might have been delayed. Many factors have been advanced to explain those delays, including a combination of fuel shortage and bad road conditions, particularly during rainy seasons. Thus, this report sent conflicting signals about Plan International's response to these

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<sup>787</sup> Interview with Stanley Dawa, Programme Unit Manager, Plan International- Mutare Office, 23 February, 2010.

<sup>788</sup> Plan International, VGF Monthly Report for January 2008, p. 3.

unfortunate occurrences. It is misleading because it stated at some point that, following the “rotting of 56 by 50 kg cereal and 24 by 50 kg of pulses” destined for Gwese and Dora FDPs, “arrangement to destroy the food with all relevant arms of government are now in place.”<sup>789</sup>

At some other point within the same report, it was stated that, “unfortunately, the community representatives who received the food did not indicate the rotten quantities but to the contrary received all bags as sound and in good condition.”<sup>790</sup> This implies, therefore, that the food had already been distributed and possibly consumed. It is difficult in these delicate circumstances to appreciate what really transpired on the ground because of the contradictory nature of this particular report. Perhaps, the impression that this report aimed to give was one of awareness by Plan International of WFP laid down procedures for disposal of decomposed or damaged commodities. Pursuant to the need to maintain its image, Plan International had no alternative but to lay the blame on recipients. But the irony of the matter is that community representatives who received food on behalf of beneficiaries worked under the supervision of Plan staff and in some cases with WFP field staff as well. In such an event, all concerned parties were expected to share the blame.

A notable challenge during the distribution stage of food aid targeting was the attempt to give food hand-outs to a few people amid a worsening food security situation. Sometimes harvests envisaged in a particular year completely failed to materialise and many more people go without proper meals for prolonged periods. Since registration took place far in advance of distribution, those who would have earlier been excluded in beneficiary registers also naturally become vulnerable over time and space. By the time distributions were ready, it became increasingly difficult to ignore them since their case would equally be genuine and

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<sup>789</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>790</sup> *Ibid.*

they would be in conformity with targeting criteria and guidelines spelled by Plan International. The Project Manager, Mugore, noted this possibility as early as March 2003 when he stated that: “The food security situation is worsening daily in most areas, particularly those in the Marange area where there is almost nothing to harvest and more and more potential beneficiaries continue to request for assistance.”<sup>791</sup> It proved very difficult to deal with these unfolding challenges. The livelihoods of individuals and families are severely threatened when they fail to cope with the stress and shock of drought.<sup>792</sup> The need to continually identify and verify who these distressed persons in Marange are should be underscored.

A study of reports on response mechanisms by non-beneficiaries reveals a scenario where the “the most common coping strategies witnessed in the second quarter of 2003 included emigration or border jumping, prostitution, diamond panning, sale of livestock at ridiculously low prices and the consumption of baobab tree roots.”<sup>793</sup> Many people in the lower-to-middle income band and those who owned limited livestock sometimes found it increasingly difficult to purchase food in the face of acute crop failure. Since *sadza* (thick porridge) is the staple food which in normal circumstances is served twice a day in each household, the consumption of fruits and other alternative foods to cope with hunger does not satisfy affected people.

In the opening prayer offered by the village head of Mafararikwa Ward before the commencement of food aid distribution, traces of extreme desperation due to unavailability of food were noted: “*Tinotenda Mwari nekutuma vanhu vePlan International; Kugurawo musuwa wesadza here, kwaakumwe mvura!*” (We are really grateful to God for sending Plan

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<sup>791</sup> VGF Monthly Report, March 2003, p. 4.

<sup>792</sup> Zhira, “Drought in Zimbabwe.”

<sup>793</sup> Interview with Dunmore Magaya, Plan International Field Officer, 2004.

International. Without them, we would not have imagined that one day we would find ourselves to be eating *sadza*, and drinking water thereafter!).<sup>794</sup> To therefore distribute food to only a handful of people in light of this dire food shortage situation remained a challenging task for Plan International. A huge outcry for food ensues at distribution points where only a few people benefit when the rest fail to get access.

One of the reasons for exclusions is to do with projected beneficiary figures that are done early in the year by ZIMVAC but which double or multiply as the year progresses. This complicates the distribution process because the FDPs will be inundated by whole communities seeking food aid but who apparently do not appear on initial registers. Since it is impossible for Plan International to temper with the ration so that it is shared amongst both new and targeted beneficiaries, non-beneficiaries are forced to resort to all sorts of survival tactics, some of which have long-term negative effects. For example, food consumption strategies can be resorted to, which include reducing the number of meals per day, consuming leafy vegetable alone and taking seasonal fruits such as guavas as meals and reducing pot sizes. On the social front, some girls and married women sell sex for food. Begging and promiscuity become rampant alongside theft of food and other things for sale from homes and gardens. Over and above all, people go to greater lengths in trying to save whatsoever little money they may have through excessive sacrifices. For example, they reduce or halt expenditures on non-food items, walk unusually long distances to save on transport in search of food in distant communities or arrange early marriages for their children in exchange for food, in the process compounding the hunger and poverty cycles for these teens who are married off (Marange Apostolic Church members who marry off young girls to elderly men).

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<sup>794</sup> VGF Monthly Report, October 2008, p. 6.

The above scenario affected households, especially if ZIMVAC figures which were utilised by WFP were poorly projected. WFP may find itself trapped in situations where donors' pledges failed to meet projected figures; hence, the call for exclusion of some already registered beneficiaries. Plan International faced this sympathetic scenario, being the one operating on the ground and witnessing these incidents unfolding, but for which they had little or no control. Bertina Nyamutswa, Programme Coordinator for Plan International-Mutare, confirmed this difficulty by highlighting that the significant development for the month was "the reduction in caseload from 71,326 people who received food in December 2009 to 60,070 beneficiaries following recommendations and/or findings of the ZIMVAC in October 2009."<sup>795</sup> She further stated that "the reduction of 11 256 beneficiaries or 15.78% was quite drastic given the peak hunger period in the food distribution calendar starting September to March annually."<sup>796</sup> When ZIMVAC carried out its assessment in June 2009, it found Mutare District relatively 'food secure'.

However, when crops failed to mature because of the dry spell in January, many households were immediately rendered vulnerable. During distributions for January in Marange, excluded people visited FDPs to get food but this was in vain. Nyamutswa noted that people swarmed Help Desks like bees, expressing dissatisfaction when they 'discovered that their names were not on the food distribution lists (following the downward adjustment in the number of people deemed food insecure by ZIMVAC).'<sup>797</sup> In concluding her report, Nyamutswa also hinted briefly on the serious impact of the dry spell on anticipated harvests. The crop situation in Marange was extremely bad in the period under review, with stunted maize plants 'flowering at less than half a metre tall,' and that some crops under the FAO

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<sup>795</sup> Plan International-Mutare Monthly Report, January 2010, p. 12.

<sup>796</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>797</sup> *Ibid.* p. 10.

Zero Tillage Project wilted due to insufficient rains needed to quickly dissolve and neutralise the basal fertilizers that had been applied.<sup>798</sup>

The most affected areas were Mafarikwa, Zvipiripiri, Chiadzwa and central and other parts of Matanda.<sup>799</sup> This report confirms earlier findings about the agro-climatic zone in which these communities are located which require long-term solutions to chronic problems of food security. It was observed that during the season, “agricultural activities in the fields, including gardening, were long abandoned due to the long dry spell of four to five weeks. Crops in red and dark soils were wilting with no hope of good rains coming early.”<sup>800</sup> Indeed, this speaks to the corrupt relationship between the ZANU (PF) Government and Plan International which had the overall impact of leaving the communities exposed to the risk of starvation. Whereas it was increasingly obvious that the livelihood situation had further deteriorated, hence, requiring adjustment to ZIMVAC projections, this was not the case. The failure to respond timely to this unfolding disaster proved how Plan International itself lacked the autonomy to make decisions favourable to its beneficiaries because of Government corruption and bureaucracy.

### **Gender Balance in Food Aid Targeting and Distribution**

One of the attempts made by Plan International to ensure effective distribution of food was to actively involve women at all levels of design and implementation of food aid beneficiary targeting, selection and distribution. Women’s networks and groups were used to disseminate information about an expected food delivery. Plan International assessed where Food Distribution Points could best be located to allow women to collect rations themselves. This also helped to avoid burdensome and unsafe travel to FDPs. But the underlying reason why

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<sup>798</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>799</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>800</sup> *Ibid.*



the programme put women first was to do with effective targeting because, traditionally, women are the ones in charge of household food preparation and management in rural areas. This is why even at Help Desks women were engaged to receive, handle, and deal with all sorts of queries and complaints from beneficiaries or non-beneficiaries in ways that demonstrated a high degree of fairness, neutrality, comprehensiveness and transparency.

However, some of these responsibilities resulted in women being overloaded with work, in addition to being subjected to undue political threats by powerful party supporters if they refused to take instructions, both of which factors compromised the whole attempt at empowering them. For example, reporting to WFP in 2007, the Food Aid Manager, Mafemba, complained that “the major concerns were “on and off” mobilisations done in anticipation of promised deliveries that did not take place as planned...due to adverse weather conditions.” Some beneficiaries eventually failed to turn up on time to assist in offloading trucks and helping in stacking food,” he added, concluding that “this tended to overburden women with hard work of handling bags to the store rooms and stacking places.”<sup>801</sup> However, Plan International strove to reduce those challenges by especially conducting effective pre-distribution meetings in which a public announcement about the expected food was done, at least three days before the food arrived at the designated Food Distribution Points.

One of the initial challenges during distribution of food hampers which women sought to correct as they took over the distribution role was the exclusion of some critically needy households or removal of already registered recipients from feeding registers, particularly those that were female-headed. For instance, in an interview with Esther Sigauke, an aged informant at Mukwada Ward 29 FDP, an incident was highlighted in which one elderly Ethel

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<sup>801</sup> VGF Monthly Report for December 2007, p. 4.

Daara was denied access to food aid on unclear circumstances. She narrated Ethel's ordeal in which she was denied access to food aid and sprang up to launch her complaint at the Help Desk with a saucer and danced in front of Plan International staff. She was replicating what her elders used to do during a drought, traversing the length and breadth of the countryside, begging for food until they filled their sacks with grain. She repeated the dance and song session until Plan staff asked why an elderly woman, so advanced in age would stoop so low to do that. This is when they were told that she had been excluded from the feeding register during both registration and verification because the village secretary had lied that her name had been entered. As a temporary solution, she was given a unit of share from each of the cereal bags of beneficiaries until her own bag was filled. Her name was also immediately reinstated in the feeding register for the following month.<sup>802</sup>

But this is only one known case. The majority of those omitted would not brave the challenge of dancing and singing for food in spite of being equally food insecure. They try to appeal to Plan International through the Help Desk but sometimes solutions to their plight may not be forthcoming. In a related case, Zvemunoita Mupfuva, another elderly widow from Mukwada Ward, also stood up to ask what else she would do to prove that she was in need of assistance. She had not been entered into the feeding register because the village secretary wanted her to produce her identity document which she said she had misplaced. She had walked a distance of about seven kilometres for almost three hours from Betera Primary School to Mukwada FDP to receive her anticipated food parcel. She publicly launched her complaint and, as a resolution, all beneficiaries were persuaded to take out a little ration from their share to contribute to Mupfuva. She was also immediately registered for succeeding

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<sup>802</sup> Interview with Esther Sigauke, Mukwada Food Distribution Point, Marange, 06 July 2010

distribution sessions, while the unscrupulous village secretary was grilled for misleading her.<sup>803</sup>

Another complainant at the Wendumba area's Nhamburiko Ward 11 FDP pointed out that food assistance was denied to him because the household had a well-built brick house which was unique for its beauty. He stated that "vetting on grounds of one's property was rather misleading. His father built a brick house in the 1970s but died in 1989, leaving his mother and the rest of the family vulnerable. But the household was denied food aid simply on grounds of residing in an attractive house."<sup>804</sup> However, Mandiringana supported Plan International staff's random visits and Post-Distribution Monitoring exercises designed to get first-hand experiences of households. These visits, done without the knowledge of village heads and secretaries, revealed serious anomalies and unfair practices in the targeting and distribution process. The Mandiringana family was eventually added onto the beneficiary register for the following months.

Plan International always had to look for practical solutions to ease the burden on women leading the processes of food aid distribution done in an environment of excessive demand. The practical distribution modalities posed challenges in more ways than one, particularly on what specific hassle-free methodology to be followed. I accompanied beneficiaries to Kurauone FDP in January 2010 to get first-hand information on distribution logistics employed by Plan International. I also made numerous other trips to FDPs such as Mukwada, Mutsago, Masvaure and Chiadzwa, where registration or distribution exercises were observed. From these observation trips, it was increasingly clear that the scooping method was effective though it was a bit time consuming. This method entailed dipping a standard

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<sup>803</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>804</sup> Interview with Shepherd Mandiringana, Wendumba Community Hall, 05 July 2010.

container and pouring whatever food items, either beans or corn, into each beneficiary's receiving bag, repeating the exercise until all food was distributed uniformly. The remainders were usually given to the oldest or youngest beneficiary within the group.

The group method involved allocating portions of foodstuffs to groups of people for them to share equally among themselves using their own criteria. Throughout the fieldwork period that we resided in Mukwada Ward 29 whose FDPs were Mukwada and Kurauone Primary Schools, Plan International generally preferred the scooping method to distribute food using scooping utensils available but this method was disliked by WFP because they preferred their own group method regardless of its inherent delays and potential for quarrel among the recipients, especially over remainders.<sup>805</sup> The group method involved allocating portions of foodstuffs to groups of people for them to share equally among themselves using their own criteria. Throughout the fieldwork period, we resided in Ward 29 and attended distributions at Mukwada and Kurauone Primary Schools FDPs at which these dynamics were playing out. In his October 2002 report, the Project Manager registered his complaints against denial by WFP to give some autonomy to Plan International regarding distribution modalities, given that it was the one right in touch with the realities on the ground. He pointed out that when Mutare District received a consignment of both maize grain and mealie-meal, Plan International carefully prepared tools appropriate for the application of the scooping method.

But these tools which were found to be suitable for maize grain in terms of calibrations designed by Plan International were rejected by WFP. It was noted that "graduation of tools proved slow due to lack of scales. As a sponsoring partner; WFP pushed the Implementing Partner to use the group distribution method while Plan, the Implementing Partner, preferred

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<sup>805</sup> We accompanied beneficiaries to Kurauone FDP in January 2010 to get first-hand information on distribution logistics employed by Plan International. He also made numerous other trips to FDPs such as Mukwada, Mutsago, Masvaure and Chiadzwa, where registration or distribution exercises were observed.

to use the scooping method.”<sup>806</sup> In addition, too much time was taken to get an amicable compromise. The group distribution method was used at some centres due to lack of appropriate tools while the scooping method was also utilised at some centres.<sup>807</sup> In the final analysis, the group distribution method became popularised over time because it was consistently hailed in succeeding reports for its efficiency.<sup>808</sup>

Indeed, this method remained in use thereafter owing to the autonomy it granted to villagers to share amongst themselves. On a visit to Kurauone FDP in January 2010, I was impressed to see villagers receiving and sharing their food allotments in their groups in an efficient and time-saving manner. The group method was later to be praised by Kufakweimba, reiterating its effectiveness at lessening time spent in allocating food rations to beneficiaries. He noted that “distribution at a centre could now be conducted in a single day.”<sup>809</sup> This fast distribution process was enhanced by the fact that recipient communities were alerted far in advance of distribution through pre-distribution address and posters placed at strategic places for easy identification. Though regarded as fast and participatory by its very nature, the group method did not guarantee accuracy of ration per beneficiary. There were isolated incidents where influential members formed particular groups aimed to manipulate the process in their favour, especially where cooking oil was involved, leading to brawls in some instances. This was particularly common where it was to be determined who would take the remainders.

But the most unfortunate challenge regarding food aid targeting and distribution was the allocation of food items to undeserving individuals who found their way onto registers at the expense of genuinely deserving cases. As noted earlier on, many reasons led to this scenario,

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<sup>806</sup> VGF Monthly Report for October 2002, p.5.

<sup>807</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>808</sup> VGF Monthly Reports, January 2003, October 2004 and March, 2009.

<sup>809</sup> VGF Monthly Report for June 2003, p. 3.

chief of which was manipulation, without Plan International's approval, of feeding registers by village heads or their secretaries, or in combination with each other. In other cases, food obtained on behalf of absentee beneficiaries did not reach targeted persons in whose name the allocations were received as it was swindled on the way. In an interview with Madondo Mtetwa, one of the long-serving drivers at Plan International, it was revealed that Plan International uncovered a scam where food collected on behalf of an orphan in Marange did not reach him.<sup>810</sup> The one who had signed for him purporting to be his neighbour could not hand over the food items to this orphan who was attending school when distribution was taking place. The matter only came to light when the child was urged by angry villagers to raise the matter with Plan International field officers. Plan International got news of this when they were on a Post Distribution Monitoring exercise having been tipped about it. The culprit was immediately deleted from the feeding register for the remaining months before programme exit.

However, Mtetwa criticised WFP's demand for birth certificates as prerequisites for entry into feeding registers. He pointed out that it was sometimes difficult to get all beneficiaries producing birth certificates, especially from orphans and vulnerable children. Some of them required the Registrar of Births' assistance in procuring those documents; and, in the meanwhile, they remained afflicted by the twin evils of poverty and hunger as their parents either died or abandoned them.<sup>811</sup> Mtetwa further hailed Plan International's mapping system which allowed it to carry out home visits even without notifying village heads in advance. This helped Plan International staff to reach out to families that were often overlooked during registration and distribution, most likely with the machinations of village authorities.<sup>812</sup> In this mapping system, households in a particular ward are indicated for easy follow-up by field

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<sup>810</sup> Interview with Mtetwa, Long- serving Driver with Plan International, Mutare, 12 June 2010.

<sup>811</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>812</sup> *Ibid.*

officers. Many instances of denial of access to food aid by village heads are discovered in these verification programmes.

However, undeserving individuals were caught in the distribution process, sometimes through informants. The usual action taken by Plan International was to delete such people from registers and immediately replace them with new deserving cases. In situations where cheating is rampant and is of unprecedented proportions at the village level, Plan International normally suspends distribution forthwith. For example, when some villagers stole oil at Chitora FDP in Zimunya in January 2003, the whole FDP was suspended until February of the same year when the culprits were apprehended by the Zimbabwe Republic Police investigating the matter. The Project Manager, Mugore, stated that “the number of people who received food aid for the month of January 2003 is not what was planned for because there were no distributions at Chitora Primary School which was suspended after oil theft.”<sup>813</sup> Mugore further stated that “distribution was done at Chitora (in February 2003) because the suspension was lifted after a date was set for trial of the apprehended people.”<sup>814</sup> These were some of the challenges inherent in the process of food aid targeting and distribution for which Plan International was obliged to redress in its pursuit of more effective ways of reaching the needy.

### **Conclusion**

The chapter has demonstrated that, for many households at risk of starvation, food aid was helpful in alleviating the burdens of chronic food insecurity arising from wide ranging situations. Since food security is a key requirement for rural and urban development, Plan International’s endeavours to avail food to Marange through its partnership with WFP was an

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<sup>813</sup> VGF Monthly Report for March 2003, p. 4.

<sup>814</sup> *Ibid.*

important intervention considering the rising food insecurity in the district at the height of the Zimbabwean crisis. It has also been revealed that the task of distributing food hand-outs to starving people was daunting, especially when consignments mismatched demand for food among vulnerable populations. In some instances, intended beneficiaries were inadvertently excluded. Some unscrupulous and influential people diverted food aid away from more deserving cases, resulting in chaotic distribution which frustrate the primary objectives of feeding food-insecure members of communities. Unbeknown to donors, beneficiary registers could be manipulated by village heads to include relatives or friends. The distribution process was complicated by transport problems, poor roads and theft of commodities.

Although NGOs have generally been perceived as a means of filling the gap between the state and the market by providing services that cannot be reached by the former,<sup>815</sup> they have come into the field in Africa with their script of action that does not rely on them talking to the grassroots as to their real needs. Hence, they prescribe solutions that may not be sustainable in the long term. Scholars have criticised such a setting by arguing that the relationship between NGOs and the masses is poorly packaged.<sup>816</sup> It diminishes the opportunities for more genuine collaboration in the process of reducing poverty and hunger. It is also worrying that, despite overtures by donors to engage local people in the planning and implementation stages of food aid targeting and distribution, ordinary community members had little control over the food aid programme.

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<sup>815</sup> Liana Luecke, *Strengths and Weakness of NGOs as Development Actors in Ghana*, Munich: GRIN Verlag, 2012.

<sup>816</sup> Issa, G. Shivji, "Reflections on NGOs in Tanzania: What We Are, What We Are Not, and What We Ought to Be," *Development in Practice*, Vol.14, No. 5, 2004, pp. 689-695.



## CHAPTER EIGHT

### CONCLUSION

Supported by a diversity of theoretical underpinnings, this thesis has revealed that Mutare District experienced food crises of varying proportions transcending colonial and post-colonial epochs. It has demonstrated how the umbilical cord between the broader concept of food security and the inherent role of crop cultivation in improving it was destroyed by the colonial regime. It has been further demonstrated how the post-independence state hardly succeeded in guaranteeing food security. This has been attributed to various economic and environmental factors, in addition to what Devereux and Maxwell have ascribed to as lack of political will. At a general level, modern governments are expected to have in place drought-mitigation measures and other mechanisms to stave off hunger prompted by unforeseen emergencies. The threat of drought-induced hunger is no longer an issue in some jurisdictions because of their relentless efforts at strengthening disaster preparedness, prediction, monitoring and response initiatives within their structures. For Zimbabwe, this has been proven in this thesis to be grossly inadequate, leading to situations where rural communities are still unnecessarily exposed to, and ravaged by, stochastic events in this 21<sup>st</sup> century. While natural factors continue to put people at risk of food insecurity, the severe impact of man-made factors has also been strongly felt in Mutare. These include, but are not limited to, weak agricultural and marketing policies, exhausted soils, poor conservation, environmental degradation and the vagaries of food aid.

It has been demonstrated that food security is a much broader subject than could be imagined and it requires continuous research for one to establish its unique manifestations. Both endogenic and exogenic variables have militated against the ability of households to achieve uninterrupted access to healthy, adequate and nutritious food at all times, either through crop

production, food aid, entitlement and income, among other means. This research has amplified our understanding of why, in spite of being endowed with vast land and water resources, Mutare District still failed to guarantee food security to its inhabitants. The number of people desperate for food aid continued to balloon from roughly about 11 per cent of the district's population in 1986 when Plan International-Mutare commenced its relief operations there to upwards of 30 percent by 2010 in spite of claims by successive governments to permanently tackle the food crisis.<sup>817</sup> These figures exclude nurses, teachers, Agritex officers, households with breadwinners on stable incomes and those whose members brought in remittances from the diaspora, among others with regular incomes. This is why the thesis uses Devereux and Maxwell's claim as a foundation upon which new conclusions have been made. Devereux and Maxwell have argued that "all famines are explained by a combination of 'technical' and 'political' factors, where political factors include bad government policies, failure of the international community to provide relief, and war."<sup>818</sup> Their position is that "national governments and the international community are increasingly held accountable for failing (or refusing) to prevent the drought from developing into famine."<sup>819</sup> While colonial policy is blamed for its shortfalls, this thesis adds the new dimension that the post-colonial state has continuously been riddled with policy failures partly arising from the tendency to relax in the full knowledge that food aid would come in handy to avert worst-case scenarios.

Chapter One laid out the structure of the thesis and laid down the theoretical framework for analysis, while Chapter Two has noted how in 1890 the BSAC's presumptions of huge quantities of gold in Rhodesia proved illusory. This development was apparently at cross-purposes with the expectations of the members of the Pioneer Column who had to be

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<sup>817</sup>Documents accessed at Plan International-Mutare, which were utilised in Chapter 6, revealed the extent of hunger afflicting the people in Zimunya and Marange communal areas of Mutare.

<sup>818</sup> Devereux and Maxwell (eds.), *Food Security in Sub-Saharan Africa*, p. 120.

<sup>819</sup>*Ibid.*

compensated, not with gold as agreed, but with land. As early as 1894, some fertile lands had been granted in concessions both to individuals and companies, pushing for the creation in Matabeleland of the Gwaai and Shangani Reserves and others in succeeding years, such as Mutare District's Marange and Zimunya areas. Through the various land appropriation acts that the state legislated, and which culminated in the notorious Land Apportionment Act, most land with prime agricultural potential had been availed to settlers and companies, usually at considerably lower prices than they would have fetched in open markets. To a very substantial extent, this turn of events directly affected food producing capacities of African farmers in Mutare District.

While struggling to cope with emerging realities of being relegated to infertile reserves in order to pave way for white settler agriculture, and let alone to respond to the demands of the world capitalist system which preferred cash to food crops, Africans had to also contend with the impact of the severe drought in 1947. Although the settlers were equally not spared by this drought, Africans were the hardest hit because of the state's half-hearted approach to the whole question of food security. The drought experience had to have far-reaching consequences on food policy in the district and the rest of the country. The subsequent years after 1947 were fraught with unique challenges, particularly natural and man-made causes of hunger. The discussion has been consistently guided by Devereux and Maxwell's view that droughts, though unsettling, no longer pose a huge threat to food security. This is because of modern ways of mitigating their potentially explosive impact, provided that the affected regions are willing and able to institute such coping mechanisms. For Mutare District, rural farmers were exposed to the severe effects of the 1947 drought because the colonial state did not show political will to deal decisively with it. However, Africans secured livelihoods

through different survival strategies which included resorting to the cultivation of short-varieties of sorghum and millet crops, among other small grains.

Whereas Chapter Two illustrated how the people of Mutare District were striving to cope with the disruptions of the 1947 drought, Chapter Three proceeded into an examination of the controversial Federation of Nyasaland and the two Rhodesias in 1953 and the impact of Prime Minister Ian Smith's infamous Unilateral Declaration of Independence in 1965. This exacerbated the suffering of the already restive Africans who no longer just demanded a review of their livelihoods situation, but actually to dislodge the entire colonial regime altogether. Central to the food security debates during this period was the suggestion that Africans could attempt cotton and tobacco production in response to the post-Second World War manufacturing demands. With this reasoning, the Federation theoretically provided a sound platform from which to explore the factors influencing the chronic rural food insecurity. The country had hoped that it would continue to benefit from the resources of the northern territories since there appeared to have been strong British promise that the Federation would not be dissolved. However, its unexpected dissolution in 1963 forced the country to rethink food security amid heavy protests from Africans against both the racial segregation and the contradictions of the Native Land Husbandry Act being more forcefully entrenched in this period.

This chapter has built a detailed understanding of the policy of the community development since the dissolution of the Federation which Roger Howman, Deputy Secretary of Internal Affairs, had so passionately and glowingly spoken about. In this period, the white colonial regime sought to recast the African society in a way that would 'empower' local chiefs and councils as if to decentralise power. The community development initiative was itself mired

in controversy and its potential benefits were not immediately felt. The chapter has, therefore, deployed Alexander's conceptual framework to help frame the understandings of the rural food security policy within an unyielding white regime bent on promising an end to minority rule and segregation while advancing the same. When sanctions were imposed on the state to frustrate its illegal declaration, huge consequences on African rural development policy were felt across the entire district. These challenges were compounded by the fact that the country eventually slid into a protracted civil war between the Smith regime and the Africans who now aimed to overthrow the white government. By 1975, the wind of change had swept across the country, leading to an escalation of armed hostilities between the state and the nationalists. Over and above this, the period was also characterised by droughts. Hiding behind a facade of drought as an excuse given by failed states for their inability to provide adequate mechanisms for rural populations to cope with hunger, Smith's regime actually neglected African rural areas, which is why nationalists were angling to dislodge the whole system.

The events discussed in Chapter Three neatly dovetail with those that followed thereafter on women, war and food security which Chapter Four discusses. The theoretical underpinnings of this chapter are derived from the experiences that de Waal and others capture in their analyses of food insecurity. Farmers in Mutare District were subjected to intense torture during this period in line with the notion of starvation as a weapon of war. In as much as Munochiveyi highlights the role of prisoners in critiquing the colonial regime,<sup>820</sup> this chapter attempted to illuminate previously hidden issues about the huge role women played in wartime food security. Although the grand narratives on the historiography of guerrilla war have not sufficiently addressed this important role, the chapter has demonstrated that women

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<sup>820</sup> Munochiveyi, *Prisoners of Rhodesia*.

contributed immensely by promoting food security. The last few years of the war had been devastating in the countryside as Robin Palmer summarizes:

Around one-fifth of the entire rural population had fled their homes. Nearly half a million had flocked into towns to escape the war; a quarter of a million had left the country; while some three quarters of a million had been rounded up into so-called 'protected villages' by the Smith regime. In addition, various anti-disease control measures had broken down and the people had lost perhaps a third of their cattle. The result, inevitably, was a very severe dislocation of peasant production.<sup>821</sup>

This chapter has borrowed partly from Munochiveyi's framing of subjects who are on the fringes of history through throwing light on the notable work performed by women during the guerrilla war.

The chapter has also shown that, despite the fact that the food security problems of Mutare District were compounded by the exigencies of the guerrilla war, women stood out as champions in managing household food security under extreme conditions. The challenge had been caused partly by conscription of mostly male labour. However, the import of this chapter has been to bring out a refreshing perspective that, while in overall terms the war was disruptive, women took bold steps to avert the otherwise precarious situations of hunger by standing in for their male counterparts to avail food to their households. This issue was so prominent that the women themselves claimed that they ought to have been placed on an equal footing with the rest of the combatants who achieved accolades and recognition for their role in the liberation struggle. Throughout the thesis, examples were drawn from Mutare District in order to highlight that the people were not idle and could not succumb to the pressures of food insecurity, but also that they displayed utmost resilience in the face of these threats.

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<sup>821</sup> Palmer, "Land Reform in Zimbabwe."

Chapter Five has addressed two disparate but important themes, one on the role of agricultural co-operatives and financing and the other on the dynamics of land reform on the district's food security efforts. It has emerged from the discussion that women have aggressively embraced opportunities offered by the unfolding socialist experiment of the 1980s which Mandaza frames as the political economy of transition.<sup>822</sup> The co-operative movement has been instrumental in shaping rural incomes though they were short-lived because of the sharp ideological transition to market-based economies as well as challenges of management of such co-operatives. The chapter has succinctly tackled the question of the rural financing, taking issue with the promising but eventually disappointing role of the Agricultural Finance Corporation which had been established as a gesture towards rural credit schemes that endeavoured to boost food security. While a permanent solution to food insecurity was still being explored, the post-colonial state exhibited some commitment in reducing the threat of hunger through the rural financing initiative.

The major lesson reflected by the activities of the Agricultural Finance Corporation is that a corrupt state and one which concentrates more on commercial farmers than communal farmers for whom it is partly designed to cater cannot be a transformative tool in rural food security. The lack of initial capital and failure to reinvest the funds frustrated the scheme. Both the co-ordination and the financing experienced shortfalls which brought unintended consequences to the otherwise noble plans rolled out by the state. The loan scheme that was designed for all the provinces and districts of the country was politicised and many farmers raised complaints about the stringent rules of accessing the facility, all of which factors rendered the scheme ineffective. In its last section, this chapter has then grappled with questions around land resources, reinforcing the point that this is a matter which has

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<sup>822</sup> Mandaza, "Introduction: The Political Economy of Transition."

remained unresolved several years after independence due to the contradictions within the state. It has demonstrated how the shifting land and food security policy, along with various other blueprints deployed to restructure the fledgling agricultural economy, have hardly dealt with the low and embarrassing rural crop yields. Low yields, particularly due to lack of agricultural inputs and the haphazard and violent nature of the land reform programme, dominated the challenges besetting communal and newly resettled farmers irrespective of the sweeping changes in land policy.

The thesis has actually demonstrated that the programme of accelerated land reform brought more harm to food security, contrary to submissions by Manjengwa and others. It also rebuts claims by the Utete Commission which stated that “all stakeholders concurred that Government had managed to empower the majority of the indigenous people and had restored their dignity through the land redistribution exercise. The chiefs, war veterans and the rank and file of the people spoke highly of the land acquisition and said the programme was long overdue.”<sup>823</sup> Politically, the 2000 land reform programme caused harm to productivity since many commercial farmers had their farms invaded by persons carrying the banner of ‘war veterans’ under the guise of land redistribution.<sup>824</sup> Chiumbu and Musemwa have teased the character of the crises which were directly sparked by the land reform, with one of the contributors, Duri, stressing the point that Mutare’s poor folks would carry out risky cross-border trade with Mozambique in order to survive.<sup>825</sup> On the balance of probabilities, the beneficiaries of this programme might eventually produce to full capacity if a land tax is levied on each of the farms so acquired.

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<sup>823</sup> Government of Zimbabwe, *Report of the Presidential Land Review Committee on the Implementation of the Fast Track Land Reform Programme*, p. 41.

<sup>824</sup> For more readings around the FTLRP, see also, Matambirofa, “Sowing Political Capital and Harvesting Economic Regression,” p. 338.

<sup>825</sup> Duri, “Negotiating the Zimbabwe-Mozambique Border.”



Chapter Six has utilised the conceptualisation of natural resources as a curse rather than blessing in its examination of the impact of Marange diamonds on rural livelihoods in the district. It has established that the discovery of diamonds in Mutare District in June 2006 only brought temporary relief to struggling households with regards to food security. The main issue centred on the approach adopted by the state on the exploitation of Chiadzwa alluvial diamonds. The first two years from mid-2006 to round about 2009 were dubbed ‘free-for-all’ because of the ‘relaxed’ security apparatus in the fields. This is when lucky artisanal miners from within and without Marange were able to procure and sell gems. However, even with this seemingly lucrative phase within the short Marange diamond mining history, other households were exposed to even more problems of food insecurity because of different limitations such as old age, disability, youth, illness or even fear. Some members of such households would hardly climb the Ushonje Mountain in which the artisanal mining activities were concentrated due especially to health-related problems. Others were child-headed families whose members would not withstand the pressure of the occasional ‘fights’ between the police and the artisanal miners. This was occurring at time when Plan International suspended food aid in the ‘mistaken’ thinking that mining of diamonds had a homogenous positive impact across households.

In this chapter, the underlying class forces and power dynamics of a predatory manifested themselves in state has been shown to be complicit in the way gems have been looted in Marange. The state sought to reward its cronies in the military and police establishments through mining concessions disguised as joint venture companies. In addition, the structures that were put in place to receive diamond revenue for developmental projects such as the Mutare Rural District Council and other community ownership trusts were abandoned altogether. The companies which were co-opted to carry out mining were no longer remitting

any funds to state coffers, resulting in them being disbanded. The situation for those who were relocated to Odzi Transau remained volatile as well. The thesis has demonstrated how such displaced persons have been struggling to survive, having lost their traditional means of coping with hunger. Those who remained behind did not have any better deal either as mining firms caused habitat disturbances such as water pollution, the disruption of waterfronts, and the destruction of forests. Households with members on chronic HIV/AIDS medication were also badly affected as they needed to be on alert. Neglecting those ill members of households would worsen their condition as they frequently demanded assistance and company for hours on end each day.

Chapter Seven has demonstrated the relevance and applicability of the theory that donor organisations advance their own script in most cases which is divorced from the realities and interests of communities within which they operate. It has argued that food aid was effective only in terms of its ability to ameliorate hunger in times of emergencies, particularly drought, but it was not sustainable in the long run. The state has accepted the increasing role of charity organisations in mitigating food insecurity, particularly in its rural communities, despite its pledge to have resolved the food crisis by year 2000. The WFP and its partners have executed emergency operations aimed at ameliorating the growing impact of hunger in affected areas through identifying food-insecure households and distributing foodstuffs. It is against this background that this chapter examines complex dynamics of food aid targeting and distribution in contexts of recurrent food deficits in Mutare. It was demonstrated that the task of reaching out to genuinely struggling households was not a simple one; some extremely needy cases were deliberately or inadvertently skipped during processes of beneficiary identification and targeting, despite their undoubted eligibility. Plan International continued

to be overwhelmed by non-beneficiaries seeking clarification on their exclusion, raising the question about how they may have been omitted by the system.

The thesis has grappled with issues of food security in space and time since the 1947 drought up to 2010. It has made significant contributions to the overall understanding of the dynamics affecting food production and access in Mutare District. However, the study is not exhaustive and it requires further research to come up with various other interpretations to the rural food security dilemma. These future researches will build on conclusions drawn in this thesis to fully engage with issues affecting the food security in the country and the region as a whole. To this end, it should be reiterated that the study admits in this conclusion that the work to interrogate food insecurity in Zimbabwe remains unfinished; hence, present and succeeding generations are faced with the onerous task to further the boundaries of knowledge to new and more interesting horizons than currently done in this thesis. Perhaps the post-2010 command agriculture initiative, and the subsequent efforts to reorganise the diamond mining industry since 2016 (both of which developments fall out of the purview of this thesis), signal the beginning of a new dispensation to regain the country's status as a food basket for the Southern African region.

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