RADAR

Author Mbiba, B

Title Communal land rights as state sanction and social control: a narrative

This version is available: https://radar.brookes.ac.uk/radar/items/15f5dcfe-bfa8-d705-f035-e45d90291bf4/1/

www.brookes.ac.uk/go/radar

OXFORD
BROOKES
UNIVERSITY

Directorate of **Learning Resources**

International African Institute

COMMUNAL LAND RIGHTS IN ZIMBABWE AS STATE SANCTION AND SOCIAL CONTROL: A NARRATIVE

Beacon Mbiba

THE LAND QUESTION IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

Land remains the most central issue: underpinning social, economic and political processes in Southern and Eastern Africa (Palmer, 1996; Simon, 1995). However, the dominance of and preoccupation with the repossession of former settler colonial (white-owned) large farms for distribution to the marginalised majority black population (Moyo, 1995; Simon, 1995; Palmer, 1999), although very necessary and long overdue, has delayed or precluded serious attention to other more subtle land related conflicts. These include issues of security of tenure and land access, inequities in the communal and resettlement areas (Kinsey, 1999) and within urban and peri-urban zones (Maxwell *et al.*, 1998) as well as tension between communal area peasants and commercial farm workers, most of whom are of Malawian, Zambian or Mozambique origin (Ranger, 1985: 287; Mbiba, 1999c: 202–4). Another issue also sidelined is to do with conflicts between peasant farmers and those in Small Scale Commercial Areas plus the productivity of the latter since 1980.

Moyo (1995: 128) concurs that Zimbabwe's national land debate has neglected land problems facing communal land. Concrete programmes to deal with environmental degradation, land use, declining productivity, distribution, tenure, transfer of rights from state ownership (disguised as communal ownership) are all stalled pending resolution of the redistribution of large commercial farms. A dominant view on communal lands is that by descent all Zimbabweans of African origin have a right to use the communal lands (CFU, 1994; ZFU, 1994). Exclusion of urban workers has been rejected, using the social security argument (Whitsun Foundation, 1979; GoZ LTC, 1994; see below). However, this rejection has not considered contradictions in the argument *vis-à-vis* those with ownership of freehold urban property and other forms of urban security (Mbiba, 1999c).

The article accepts the validity of the social security argument in some cases, but points out that these rights are a construct whose persistence has helped perpetuate repressive urban management regimes as well as gender inequities at the household level. The third

BEACON MBIBA is a Senior Lecturer in Rural and Urban Planning at the University of Zimbabwe but is on study leave at the South Bank University in London as an Urban and Peri-urban Land Research Fellow. He runs the Peri-NET researchers' network for Southern and Eastern Africa. In 1995 he published *Urban Agriculture in Zimbabwe: implications for urban management and poverty*.

section of the article will present a historical evolution of the construct and highlight the existence of social differentiation in the communal lands. Society in these areas is not so homogeneous that positions taken in debates on the future of this construct would be driven by vested interests within or outside the various groups. This is followed in the fourth section by presentations of how the spatial construct was translated into the socio-economic 'social security' argument for urban workers. The changing scenario with regard to urban trends and ownership of urban houses by black Zimbabweans is also outlined. This highlights the importance of housing as well as the failure of post-colonial governments to provide adequate urban housing. It is within this context of failure that the construct of communal land rights has partly been used as an urban management option by the state. It has also been used for political sanction and control (Auret, 1994), an issue not covered in this article.

The article was written prior to the political and economic crisis that followed the key 2000 events such as the constitutional referendum, the national elections and the emergence of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) as a vibrant political challenge to the ruling ZANU (PF) party. In this context a question that could be asked is 'To what extent will this changing political landscape affect communal land rights?' or, to put it differently, 'What would happen to communal land rights under an MDC government, assuming the party came to power?' This is an exciting question that would require the use of a different literature base and methods from those employed here. The responses to this question in the postscript are therefore tentative remarks based on limited press material. The observation made is that the changes will neither challenge the core arguments of this article nor change communal land rights relations in the short to medium term. Political events in the year 2000 and after, especially in terms of ZANU (PF)'s response to the crisis, have shown that communal areas are a 'political resource' whose control will not be relinquished without a fight. In proposing any changes to communal land rights, an MDC government would certainly want to maximise the political benefits from this resource but would be doomed if it ignored peasant consciousness of land in the process.

LAND PRESSURE IN COMMUNAL LANDS—A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

As mentioned elsewhere (Moyo, 1995), following the conquest of African tribes in the 1890s, white settlers under the British South Africa Company's command proceeded to appropriate the best land in the country and push the natives towards peripheral ecologically fragile zones considered unsuitable for European settlement. In a move purportedly to 'protect' the Africans, the British government invoked an 1898 order in-council requiring the settlers to create Native Reserves 'lest the natives become completely landless' (GoZ LTC, Vol. 1, 1994: 22). However these reserves were in the ecologically marginal areas (regions IV and V) as already mentioned and were not sufficient for the

economic and subsistence needs of the Africans. Land has been a
source of tension and conflict between the settlers and the Africans ever
since (Cheater, 1984; Zinyama *et al.*, 1993; Rukuni and Eicher, 1994;
Moyo, 1995), while the dual spatial and socio-economic structure set
up then was consolidated over the years, including the post-settler
colonial era.

In a bid to find a solution to the land problem, the 1923 Morris
Carter Commission was set to work on the issue but its findings were
not utilised until 1930 in the form of the Land Apportionment Act,
which provided for the formal legal spatial division of the country's land
along racial lines, cementing a process that was already advanced in
practice. At that time the total population was estimated at 1·43 million,
of whom 1·38 million (or 97 per cent) were Africans, who were
apportioned 9 million ha of land as Native Reserves (*maruzevha or
emakhaya*)[1] against 20·4 million ha for the white settlers (European
land) and 3 million ha as Native Purchase areas (Whitsun Foundation,
1980: 15). At this stage most natives remained on the land (which had
been designated European) until after 1945, when large numbers were
driven out to make way for white ex-servicemen returning after World
War II and other Europeans coming in as part of the general strategy to
boost settler agriculture in the 1950s (Ranger, 1985; Rukuni, 1994a, b;
Moyo, 1995).

In the Native Reserves the Native Commissioner (and District Native
Commissioner, or 'Mudzwiti' at the local level) was the local
authority—court, police and land administrator all in one. The
Mudzwiti created sets of rules and regulations convenient to his/her
management of natives, and this included the creation or reinforcement
of such constructs as 'communal land' (Cheater, 1990; Moyo, 1995:
51), 'African custom' and the 'tradition' that every native male should
have a right of access to land in the Native Reserve. In the reserves,
rapid human and livestock population growth soon exceeded what was
considered ecological carrying capacities, leading to reduced produc-
tivity, environmental degradation and conditions for political ferment
(Ranger, 1985). The settler colonial government responded by setting
up yet another commission of inquiry (the Danziger committee, 1948)
whose recommendations consolidated several strategies starting in the
late 1940s.

First, land for African Reserves was increased to 16 million ha and
remained at that level until independence in 1980. Second was the
promulgation of the ineffective Land Husbandry Act, 1951, which set
out strategies for improved agricultural productivity in the *maruzevha*.
The policy and programmes were to teach Africans good land
husbandry. They included forced destocking and conservation

---

[1] *Maruzevha* is the term in the Shona language while *Emakhaya* is the equivalent in
Ndebele. White settlers (3 per cent of the population) got over 50 per cent of the land, the
bulk of it being the best in the country.

measures such as contour digging whose unpopularity with Africans fuelled nationalist resistance (Ranger, 1985). According to Rukuni (1994b: 26), vigorous attempts were made to introduce elements of individual land ownership for 200,000 of the over 350,000 households in the *maruzevha*, leaving at least 150,000 landless households (*ibid.*). This too was rejected by the Africans and fuelled further resistance.

Africans were taught farming techniques on the basis of the 'extension by persuasion' concepts developed by E. D. Alvord, an American missionary who worked as an 'expert' in the Native section of the Agricultural Department between 1926 and 1950 (Rukuni, 1994b: 25). Those peasant farmers who were trained in or followed the rigorous modern farming techniques prescribed by agricultural extension workers were certified as master farmers (Yudelman, 1964; Weinrich, 1973; Rukuni, 1994b). Such farmers were able to increase the productivity of both staple food crops and cash crops. They formed local farmers' clubs, expanded their land claims and generally evolved into a distinct socio-economic group considered by Rukuni (1994a) as part of the communal area agricultural prime movers.

Statistics given by Yudelman (1964: 140) highlighted that, while master farmer families in the 1960s were only 30 per cent of the communal area population, they accounted for all the increased productivity. As illuminated in the 1980s studies (Jackson and Collier, 1988) this structural property of the communal areas has been entrenched, giving emphasis to the differentiated nature of communal area society in Zimbabwe.

The 'master farmer' phenomenon and related institutions were prevalent especially in present-day Masvingo province. Some of the peasant farmers were facilitated to get land in the Native Purchase areas, while a sizeable number were settled or relocated to newly opened up areas such as Gokwe, Sanyati, Hurungwe, Centenary and Mount Darwin districts. Relocation to these areas increased in the 1950s and 1960s (Zinyama *et al.*, 1993) and is still going on today, although most of it has been a product of individual initiative rather than of government programmes (MacGarry, 1994: 27–8). Tsetse fly infestation was (is) the major threat to human and livestock settlement in these areas known generally as the Zambezi Valley. In the post-1980 period, with support from the European Union, the government has emphasised eradication of the tsetse fly and the provision of infrastructure to hasten settlement in these remote yet resource-rich areas (GoZ, 1986c).

For contemporary land debates, the point to emphasise is that quite early on in the history of settler colonialism there was a high degree of social differentiation on the basis of land asset holdings where land holdings and productivity were transformed into wealth and social prestige (Yudelman, 1964; Weinrich, 1973; Weiss, 1994). At the top were minority whites owning large tracts of the most productive land. Then among the Africans was a small percentage who succeeded in acquiring land in the Native Purchase Areas (today's Small Scale Commercial Farms). In the reserves there was (is) a 20–30 per cent

core group 'owning land' (but without freehold title) and then the bulk
who 'owned' no land at all. Although Africans resisted freehold tenure
during the Land Husbandry Act era, it is crucial to underline that those
allocated arable and residential plots did not repudiate them. Indeed,
these allocations remain the basis of much social organisation on which
land management at the local level is premised (Mbiba, 1999b: 320).

The social differentiation of Zimbabwe's peasantry should therefore
not come as a surprise or as something new, as it appears in some
writings (Chipika, 1990). Secondly the difference in access to land
resources from the early days was the basis of differential opportunities
or life chances for children of these social groups (Lockwood, 1995: 3).
In the context of Makoni District, Ranger (1985: 58–6) described these
people as the entrepreneurial class or the 'Reserve Entrepreneurs',
citing the Muzorewa and Jijita families as examples. Among Africans,
today's ruling elite, the educated, the bureaucrats, civil servants and
business people, largely come from the these and other landed
households (Cheater, 1984, 1987; Zinyama et al., 1993: 263; Weiss,
1994). Although socialist policies in the period 1980–90 had started to
reverse this trend by opening opportunities to the majority poor, post-
1990 market-oriented policies have started to reverse the gains. The
poor find it increasingly difficult to send their children to school
(among other things) such that socio-economic differentiation trends
will revert to the pre-independence 1970s decade unless growth and
equity return to the national economy in the short term. This is very
unlikely.

These are features which hardly appear in the land reform debate,
which has focused more on the racial divide. But, as implied by Moyo
(1995: 50), the African rural ownership structures may help explain
resistance to communal area-focused equity initiatives and internal land
reorganisation in the post-settler colonial period. Certainly there are
groups that may prefer to continue with the option of communal area
peasant livelihoods—a point well argued by Ranger (1985) and which
needs a revisit under current socio-economic conditions. Also worth
noting is the role of government as owner of large tracts of land both
during and after settler colonialism.

The third set of effects related to the Danziger committee was a
government focus on the urban worker along the lines set by the Native
(Urban Areas) Accommodation and Registration Act, 1946, which
obliged local authorities to provide more adequate housing in the
European urban areas for the increasing African urban population
(Whitsun Foundation, 1980: 15). However, with the ascent to power of
the right-wing Rhodesia Front Party in 1963 this policy on the urban
inclusion of Africans was curtailed. The urbanisation strategy was
refined particularly in the 1970s to focus on creating 'urban centres' in
the *maruzevha*. These centres would be the focus of service provision
and industrial development in African areas for Africans. However,
high investment costs, limited fiscal commitment to the policy and the
escalating war of liberation in the 1970s limited the implementation of
the strategy. Consequently, at independence in 1980, the bulk of

African workers in the towns were without tenure or decent accommodation.

On the eve of Zimbabwe's independence the land pressure in *maruzevha* (renamed Tribal Trust Lands in 1969) was intractable. The population had increased many times within the confines of limited space (Whitsun Foundation, 1979; GoZ, 1982). Coupled with population pressure were problems of low agricultural productivity, the debilitating effects of rural–urban migration (Zinyama, 1986) and low infrastructure provision in terms of markets, roads, electricity, telecommunications, schools and other services (Ranger, 1985). The strategies of population relocation, and attempts to improve productivity and urbanisation, offered short-term relief.

In the 1970s, as a political settlement and majority rule became imminent, the urbanisation strategy was given further support through the work of liberal settlers and organisations, particularly the Whitsun Foundation, which urged vigorous 'service centre development' in the *maruzevha* and the siphoning out of excess population to urban areas through industrialisation and security of tenure for Africans in the towns (Whitsun Foundation, 1980).

The government of independent Zimbabwe embraced the bulk of these proposals for rural development, whose programmes have included growth points and a service centre strategy (Wekwete, 1987a, b; Moyo, 1995), grazing schemes and internal communal land reorganisation in the 1980s (Moyo, 1995), resettlement and the conservation of natural resources through camp-fire programmes (GoZ LTC, Vol. 1, 1994: 29), institutional reorganisation at the local level (Wekwete and de Valk, 1990; Wekwete *et al.*, 1991) and programmes to increase agricultural productivity (Rukuni and Eicher, 1994). Each of these strategies has had limited success and has become the focus of evaluative research and debate in the last ten years.

However, taken together, the programmes led to increased agricultural output in the *maruzevha*—the so-called 'agricultural revolution' (Rukuni and Eicher, 1994)—and improved socio-economic conditions for the majority of Zimbabweans for which the country was well known in the 1980s. But, without radical land reform, rapid population growth and economic decline in the 1990s have seen worsening land pressure in the *maruzevha*.

THE MACRO-SPATIAL LAND CONSTRUCTS: COMMUNAL LAND RIGHTS AS SOCIAL SECURITY

The advent of independence in 1980 ushered in a new era of opportunities for the previously marginalised Blacks in terms of education, health, political advancement and employment, especially in the public sector. Whereas previously urban incomes were invested largely in communal areas (in things like farming implements and cattle), the abolition of tenure restrictions made it possible to invest earnings in urban land, particularly housing. This section reflects on the constraints of the pre-1980 period, which were physical and legal but

which seem to persist today at the level of mental perceptions that limit the range of what are deemed priorities in the country.

In terms of land tenure under the provisions of the Land Apportionment Act, 1930, town, urban and all industrial centres were European land which Africans could enter only as workers at the pleasure of the white settlers. The African worker was considered a 'migrant' whose family would remain behind in the Native Reserve, where he was expected to settle permanently after a working sojourn in town. On this basis, bachelor accommodation was provided as the form of housing for the migrant worker in locations abutting industrial zones (on the downwind side) and as far away as possible from white residential areas.

However, in practice whole families started to be a dominant feature of the African residential areas and the demand for adequate family accommodation became part of the nationalist struggle against settler colonial rule (Barnes, 1995). Only in the 1960s did a limited policy emerge on rental housing and limited home ownership for elite Africans (Moller, 1974). Rental housing was normally tied to employment conditions (*ibid.*: 9) and became the dominant mode of housing for both public-sector and private-sector workers. Despite these overtures, the general policy was to maintain urban areas as primarily European, to limit opportunities for African urban stabilisation (*ibid.*) and to reduce the presence of Africans deemed unproductive. Vagrancy laws, registration and pass laws complemented by municipal policing and land-use zoning were used to effect these policies (Wekwete, 1987b).

The impact of poor urban family housing, lack of security of tenure and control policies helped consolidate the image that the Native Reserve was the only domain which an African could call home. Whereas previously Africans had been settled all over the country, settler colonial policy created the 'construct' of Native Reserves for Africans, which Africans themselves soon absorbed and accepted as their 'tradition', 'custom' and 'culture'. Hence any African displaying an inclination to settle permanently in an urban area was derided by his kin. The taboo of urban life was inscribed in folk lore, dance, drama, literature and everyday life. Until recently only urban Africans of Malawi, Zambia or Mozambique origin were without a Native Reserve home, thereby earning themselves the derogatory label *mwidi* (or foreigner without a home). Many of them work(ed) on the mines and white commercial farms. Ranger (1985: 286) records that they were a target of peasant hatred both during the 1970s liberation war and after 1980. Indeed in the on-going political crisis (1996 onwards) they have become an explicit target of attack by ZANU (PF), since they are perceived as supporters of the opposition MDC and foreign interests.

The second impact of this construct was that even those who could have opted out of the 'Native Reserves' were legally, socially and culturally forced back into them, exacerbating land pressure. Whereas the argument that urban areas did not offer any employment was (is) valid to an extent, the reserves/communal lands where these people were (are) forced to go had (have) many fewer opportunities and

employment prospects. It also ignored/ignores (or did not foresee) the opportunities and incomes many of the urban 'unemployed' Africans create in the urban informal sector by way of street trading, crafts, recycling waste (Tevera, 1993), urban agriculture (Mbiba, 1995b), transport services and so on.

Contrary to orthodox thinking, urban areas offer the majority Africans better economic opportunities than the rural communal areas. Linked with this (see below) is that the construct of 'communal land rights for all Africans' was a convenient framework for social control by the settlers to keep Africans out of 'European' land and cities. Amendments of land tenure legislation at the end of the 1970s opened up urban areas to commercial and residential use by all. The bulwarks of segregation laws, influx control, vagrancy laws and policy were removed, although the more subtle gatekeeping structures have taken much longer to wither away. Associated with the transition from settler colonialism to politically independent Zimbabwe were policy studies (notably by the Whitsun Foundation) to appraise options for tackling some of the country's intractable land pressure problems (Whitsun Foundation, 1979, 1980, 1983). Among these, the Whitsun Foundation (1979) produced a social security report which highlighted the pressures on African areas and lamented the lack of pension provision for the African urban workers:

> Due to inadequate preservation of pension rights, many employees can expect no pension, and for those who can, the pension will, in most cases, be very small. Provision for widows and children is generally unsatisfactory, with few members covered by a true widow's pension. [Whitsun Foundation, 1979: iii]

It was hoped that, once in possession of pensions and, more important, urban security of tenure, urban households and those retiring from urban employment would 'support themselves without the necessity to cultivate land . . . small plots of no more than two hundred square metres would be adequate for their retirement' (Whitsun Foundation, 1979: 6). Although the basis for the size of small plots to be required can be challenged, the study was the most emphatic translation of the *status quo* argument into policy ideas. The observation that urban opportunity and security were limited (for Africans), hence the need for the retention of communal land rights (the *status quo* argument) was translated to urge improvement of those urban conditions (security of tenure) so that urban permanence could act to relieve land pressure in the communal lands. Consequently the issue of continued maintenance of communal land rights by those with urban secure tenure (freehold property ownership) becomes a valid question for further research (Mbiba, 1999c).

On coming to power in 1980 the government of independent Zimbabwe embraced the bulk of the policy programmes suggested in the Whitsun Foundation studies, especially as regards the growth points policy recommended by the Whitsun Foundation (1980). The first Five

TABLE 1   *Urban switch from rental housing to home ownership, Gweru.*

	Year			
	1980		1990	
Type of housing	No.	%	No.	%
Rental housing stock	9,177	67	816	5
Home ownership stock	4,532	33	14,978	95
Total	13,709		15,795	

SOURCE   Magagula (1995: 6).

Year Development Plan (1986–90) stressed the importance of this policy to government: 'Investment in growth points will be given preferential treatment as part of a strategy for the urbanisation and industrialisation of rural areas' (GoZ, 1986c).

In the urban areas, by 1982, a new home ownership policy was in force whereby all tied accommodation was to be transferred to home ownership while for any new housing schemes no less than 90 per cent was to be provided on a home ownership basis (GoZ, 1989; Magagula, 1995). All houses were to be built to a high material standard (e.g. baked brick walls, cement floors, metal door and window frames, iron/asbestos or tile roof, etc.) and supplied with electricity, piped water, an underground waterborne sewer system and service roads. Together with the average 300 m^2 stand size for low-income housing this created comparatively spacious suburbs and properties commanding considerable market value should the owners wish to sell (Mbiba, 1995a).

The switch from rental to home ownership was so comprehensive that by 1990 the bulk of urban housing tenure was freehold, as is illustrated by Magagula (1995) in the case of local authority housing for the town of Gweru (Table 1). The stock figures are for low-income public-sector housing and exclude high-income stock and housing provided through private developers, building societies and so on.

Until 1986 building societies and other financial institutions catered for whites only and did not channel any funds towards low-income housing. Public-sector finance has been the dominant avenue of housing provision, complemented recently by schemes such as aided self-help, private–public partnerships, employer-assisted programmes, the (controversial) Pay for your House schemes and donor-assisted housing (GoZ, 1996a).

The construction of new housing units has, however, continued to lag far behind need/demand (Mbiba, 1993a; Civic Forum, 1996; Bond, 1998) while public-sector resources have shrunk, especially in the last ten years. Crippling bottlenecks in the delivery system (Mbiba, 1995a; GoZ, 1995) have compounded supply problems. The magnitude of backlogs and coping strategies by low-income households in the form of backyard shacks, squatting and lodging has received significant

attention from researchers (Potts and Mutambirwa, 1991; Rakodi, 1995; Mbiba, 1995a; Sithole-Fundire *et al.*, 1995).

However, no particular attention has been paid to groups that now constitute a property-owning category in urban Zimbabwe as a result of the home ownership policies. From stock figures of 749,000 units in 1986 (GoZ, 1986b), and bearing in mind both stock decay and new units from the various delivery options, it is considered a reasonable estimate that the total urban housing stock at 1996 was at least 1 million units. Given the market-oriented nature of the delivery systems, some individuals and households own more than one urban property. The point is to recognise the presence of a large urban property-owning category who would potentially qualify for 'urban permanence'. The issue is to investigate how they relate to communal land access, with the focus on the scripts they present *vis-à-vis* maintenance of those communal land rights.

COMMUNAL LAND RIGHTS AS SOCIAL CONTROL: THE GENDER DIMENSION

At the household level the controlling effect of the communal land construct has been forcefully articulated in gender terms (Gaidzanwa, 1994; ZWRCN, 1996a, b.) The backdrop of the argument is firstly in labour migrancy, which drew (and still draws) men out of the communal lands, leaving women, children and the old (GoZ, 1982: 87–92; Zinyama, 1986; Musekiwa, 1993), and secondly settler colonially constructed customary laws and culture which allocate land to males and not females.

According to Gaidzanwa (1994) communal land rights and tenure as currently constituted exploit women's labour: women cannot own communal land or the output of their work, both of which are owned by absentee (in the majority of cases) husbands. Such a scenario subordinates women to men, as no woman can fully assert land and economic rights in her own standing, only through a male (husband, father, brother or other male relative). Whereas in the pre-settler colonial era married women were allocated a piece of land (*tsevu*) by their husbands on which they would grow their own crops, since settler colonialism and the rise of commercial crop production, as Table 2 shows, only a few women are lucky enough to have such a piece of land (ZWRCN, 1996a).

Thus the 'communal land construct' provides a framework of control by men over their wives, daughters and sisters. At the same time, men dominate decision making in institutions at the forefront of land debates in the country and thus stifle any attempts to change the *status quo* (Gaidzanwa, 1994). The Zambian Women's Resource Centre and Network has taken this issue further, illustrating that despite overwhelming submissions by women to the 1993–94 Land Tenure Commission, demanding that rural women should have land allocated to them in their own right, the commission's three-volume report ignored this evidence and recommended maintaining the *status quo*

TABLE 2   *Percentage of women with special land allotment (tsevu) in communal areas.*

Agro-ecological region	With tsevu	Without tsevu
1	5	95
2	19	81
2a	20	80
3	17	83
4	24	76
5	34	66
Overall	23	77

NOTE $n = 173$.
SOURCE   ZWRCN (1996a: 17).

(ZWRCN, 1996a, b; ZWRCN and ZERO, 1997). A commentary offered by Ncube on this matter is incisive:

> The commission fudged this by hiding behind the elusive concept of family, strengthened traditional structures and institutions for dispute settlement. In reality, this is just an idealised world outlook which will not give women any enforceable independent land rights and not a traditional utopia based on revising a badly understood and long dead past of social and community solidarity and harmony. [ZWRCN, 1996a: 21]

Therefore within the broad dual structure of Zimbabwe's socio-spatial and political economy a structure also operates to keep women in degrading environments and under the control of men. The structure has associated intra-household exploitation in favour of men, and the ZWRCN (1996a: 8) goes on to illustrate that the agricultural revolution in Zimbabwe, like agricultural work in Africa generally, is a product of women's labour and management more than of men's. The moral, social and health impacts of this subordination and structure include the high incidence of AIDS in Zimbabwe (and Southern Africa generally), as the more mobile men are away from their partners for very long spells, creating conditions conducive to promiscuity.[2]

It has to be acknowledged, though, that since 1980, with the relaxation of the major legal regimes on urban tenure for African families, more women (particularly the young and educated) have joined their partners or come to seek employment in urban areas in their own right. The population pyramid of the urban population in the 1990s is more normal now than it was at independence in 1980.

Through the Legal Age of Majority Act, 1982, the government has stipulated that land allocation in urban areas shall not discriminate on

---

[2] See, for example, comments by Dr Peter Piot, UNAIDS executive director, in an article, 'UNAIDS optimistic: Africa will overcome AIDS', Panafrican News Agency, 1 July 1998, p. 2. On-line: http://www.africanews.org/pana/science.

the basis of sex, religion or marital status, thus enabling women to own urban freehold land in their own right (USAID, 1996).

As reported by Gaidzanwa (1994), younger and educated women are 'revolting' against control by men in the communal land rights construct and are trying out urban survival options in trade and commerce, including urban housing. Other reports show women increasingly winning the fight to access and own urban property, but major cultural and legal impediments on many fronts (USAID, 1996: ii), subtle gatekeeping mechanisms in local authorities and structural disadvantages in terms of education, formal employment and contacts are major constraints (Sithole-Fundire et al., 1995). Indeed, the government policy discriminates against women in the rural domain and perpetuates a dual socio-economic development structure (ZWRCN, 1996a, b; Mbiba, 1997b).

The lessons to draw from the foregoing are that, further to the social differentiation of society at the regional level on the basis of access to land, there is a further gendered stratification very acute in communal lands. Secondly, urban areas are providing the domain in which women are making some headway (however slow) towards freehold property ownership. Because of their lack of opportunity to own land in the communal areas, one would expect women to have indifferent or antagonistic views towards the maintenance of communal land rights.

COMMUNAL LANDS AS SOCIAL CONTROL: THE URBAN MANAGEMENT DIMENSION

Settler colonial governments created Native Reserves and the construct of communal land rights for all Africans partly as a way of denying Africans urban citizenship. Anybody deemed unproductive or a 'nuisance' in the urban areas was made to go back to the communal areas and utilise his/her land rights there. Even after the scrapping of the Land Apportionment Act, 1930 (amended 1961), the post-colonial government seems to have found the construct a convenient framework for urban management in terms of dealing with those perceived as homeless, squatters, hawkers, prostitutes and so on.

The most recent and largest scale case to illustrate this control feature is the 1993 Churu Farm evictions. About 20,000 Harare residents in need of housing had taken advantage of the facilities offered at Churu Farm (adjoining the high-density suburbs of Glenview and Budiriro to the south-west of the city) to build houses of their own. Donor agencies and other well-wishers supplied materials for public services, which included toilets, clinic facilities and a primary school catering for 800 pupils from year 1 to year 7 (Auret, 1994). But a consortium of government departments, in the face of government policy to acquire land for resettlement and provide housing for all by the year 2000, disregarded the option of regularising the settlement in terms of the Regional Town and Country Planning Act (1976) and instead set the police and army to forcibly evict the 'squatters'. Those without a home

in the city were asked to go back where they had come from (i.e. the communal areas).[3]

This case lends weight to the social control dimension as summarised by a paragraph in Rakodi's work:

> To control the Black population socially and politically, while harnessing its labour, the settler government employed a variety of tactics, including housing policies. Demolition of squatter areas was consistent with these wider aims. The policy of strict control over illegal housing, before and after independence, has gone hand in hand with attempts to control informal activities. Since 1980, waves of demolition have often coincided with round-ups of unlicensed informal sector traders and so-called vagrants and prostitutes, often with the aim of returning people to the rural areas. [1995: 268]

The comment captures the historical links between present-day policy and that of settler colonial days. It not only highlights the link between urban management and social control with the notion of communal land rights for all Africans but emphasises that, as in the rural areas, the practice punishes women and children, since it is they who dominate informal-sector activities. Women in urban areas are more likely to be labelled 'prostitutes' and vagrants than their male colleagues. Thus the structure victimises women in both urban and rural areas. Women and children suffer the most when informal shelter and livelihoods are destroyed (Auret, 1994; Mbiba, 1995c). For example, children from demolished squatter camps suffer long-term disruption of their education while women lose access to the usual nearby sources of income.

The Churu case caps the government's history of urban social control by 'trucking' undesirable people out of the cities to communal areas and occasionally to holding camps, such as Porta Farm, Hatcliffe and Dzivarasekwa camps on the fringes of Harare city. Rakodi (1995) suggests that the quest for physical order in the built environment and social control are a legacy not only of the settler colonial structure inherited at independence but also of the military order of the liberation struggle. This has been internalised to become the culture and part of the values of Zimbabwe society at all levels. There is a desire, we are led to believe, to maintain the settler colonial tidiness of the cities and avoid the squalor associated with cities in many parts of Africa. As recently as August 1998 evictions and forceful handling of 'urban undesirables' was still at full throttle to maintain an orderly formal urban economy and implicitly to protect formal businesses (supermarket chains such as OK Bazaars, TM and Bon Marché) from competition.[4] The outbreak

---

[3] The consortium of departments included the Ministry of Local Government, Rural and Urban Development, the Ministry of Land and Agriculture, the Ministry of Home Affairs (Police), the Ministry of Legal and Parliamentary Affairs and the President's Office.

[4] See 'Police round up vendors', Panafrican News Agency, 16 August 1998. On-line: http://www.africanews.org/PANA/NEWS.

of cholera in 1999 brought a resurgence of these 'socio-spatial cleansing' activities.

The above is also consistent and supportive of a vibrant urban property market and the upholding of individual property rights based on Western laws in urban areas. As this status is accepted and aspired to by many, there is so far very little radical challenge to the practice of social control through the forced eviction of people to communal lands. Thus it is no surprise to observe, as in the study of eviction trends worldwide by Audefroy (1994), that Zimbabwe comes up as one of those countries in Africa with large numbers of evictions in the 1980s. Lee-Smith (1997: 12) in her study of women's access to land in Kenya makes the general observation that, because they have not worked out how to cope with the pace of urbanisation, most African city authorities resort to periodic evictions.

Such a style of urban management has been sustained by a mistaken general view of rapid urbanisation in Africa and urban bias in national development (Lipton, 1988). According to recent analysis (Satterthwaite, 1996), rapid urbanisation and unrestrained rural–urban migration in the South are a myth propagated by governments, international agencies, including the United Nations, and academics. A fresh look at statistics from these organisations shows that, contrary to the common view in the literature, populations have not been exploding.

Implicitly, the urban problems of the South (poor housing, transport, services and so on) are not the result of urban population change *per se* but of the failure and incapacity of social-political systems to adjust to and accommodate the changes. Rather than confront the real social and political causes of such problems, and the imbalances in world economic relations which give rise to them, governments and development agencies alike have tended to present urbanisation as a scapegoat. Hence such misplaced social control policies as the spatial relocation of 'squatters' to communal lands and the futile attempts to control rural-urban migration. Consequently, the continued existence of communal land rights should also be seen within the dominant Western-driven development paradigm where communal land provides a suitable framework for continued intervention.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This article has argued that the settler colonial structure of communal land rights provides a framework within which government in independent Zimbabwe can forcibly maintain tidiness in the cities, protect perceived individual urban property values and 'manage' social and political undesirables by trucking them out to communal lands despite the fact that they keep coming back and that land shortages and lack of opportunity are the proclaimed hallmarks of communal lands. In addition, the structure provides a convenient 'scapegoat' for government's failure to provide employment and urban housing. Within this structure, the government can conveniently direct the unemployed and

squatters to the communal lands despite the serious land shortages there which it too has lamented abundantly. These are some of the contradictions in post-settler colonial Zimbabwe's transformation.

The article has also outlined the evolution of the country's land ownership structure and the processes of social differentiation that on one hand arise from and on the other reinforce the structural properties of land rights. It emphasised the presence of a landownership-based social differentiation or layering of society. However, we have to recognise that the mere identification of categories (or groups) alone will not be a very fruitful endeavour but has to be extended further to an exploration of their (groups' and individuals') consciousness and the actions they take or do not take and the implications of these for social change in urban and rural areas. The work on peasant consciousness and guerrilla war (Ranger, 1985) could be extended to 'consciousness' and development programmes, policies or projects in independent Zimbabwe.

Major processes identified in the article range from state activity in the domain of rural and urban management to gender relations at the household level. In the formulation of Giddens (1984: 24), 'day to day activity of social actors [in these domains] draws upon and reproduces structural features of wider social systems' such as the maintenance of communal land rights in Zimbabwe. The first key point to emphasise other than the long history of communal land rights is that the phenomenon has structural properties which are internal to the institutional and human action at various levels, especially actions of the state.

The second is to note that the processes that reinforce these structural properties simultaneously offer grounds for possible change. The grey literature suggests that discursive consciousness around the gender dimension is on the increase among some organised actors, especially women's groups such as the ZWRCN. There is a political voice emerging around this gender dimension of access to land which challenges the structure of communal land rights.

For ordinary urban residents there is no explicit tradition of challenging government practices, and any attempts to do so have been crushed with the use of brute force, creating a sense of fear of the government machinery. To that extent, ordinary residents would most likely find it difficult to register objections to the structure of communal lands even if they have them. Most residents are likely to accept the structure as the norm. At the level of government officers and institutions that benefit from maintenance of the structure, one can expect only that they would defend it in the first instance. Taking it together with the gender dimension, one may expect that the *status quo* of communal lands argument would be protected, justified and extended using a variety of alternatives. This may help us appreciate why there has not been a serious challenge to 'communalisation' (i.e. extension of the communal lands construct) to resettlement areas since 1980. It is the task of field surveys to establish the nature and extent of these evolving trends.

POSTSCRIPT

This postscript reflects tentatively on what may become of communal land rights and by implication communal land development in the coming years, assuming the MDC came to power. In doing so, one has to underline that the arguments presented in this article are not and cannot be a comprehensive explanation of the complex socio-economic transformations in Zimbabwe's countryside, especially given the rapidly changing political landscape. Press reports and commentaries have portrayed the MDC as an urban worker-driven party which only since the June 2000 parliamentary elections has awoken to the fact that 'Peasants must not be forgotten. They remain the under-dogs in every struggle' (Ranger, 1985: 289) and without them the MDC will not make it to State House. This implies developing not only strategies to win votes in the short term, but also a development programme that captures peasant aspirations in the communal lands. As argued previously, Zimbabwe has a differentiated peasantry with varying degrees of consciousness. How this consciousness coincides with emerging MDC or ZANU (PF) policies and ideologies is a theme worth researching. Certainly the MDC's thrust on employment creation and increased productivity will be well received. However, its subdued views on reclaiming the 'lost lands' leaves the peasants attracted to the 'radical ZANU (PF) option'. Yet ZANU (PF)'s implementation of that option is belated and accompanied by violence directed at the very peasants who are the supposed beneficiaries. These are processes whose impact on peasant consciousness and response to long-term development interventions has yet to receive systematic evaluation.

Ranger (1985) has shown how the past experiences on land and interaction with the state influence levels of consciousness and the people's response to situations in Zimbabwe. For example, in Matabeleland peasants never gave ZANU (PF) their full support right from 1980, a feature aggravated by the Gukurahundi experiences of the early 1980s and manifest in all the national elections. In the 2000 elections, for instance, ZANU (PF) got all its seats in the rest of rural Zimbabwe but nothing in Matabeleland and the urban areas. This has less to do with tribalism than with peasant consciousness mediated by history, identity, perception of current problems and the 'enemy'. This plus articulated development options will determine people's response to any radical restructuring of communal land rights and communal areas in general.

After 1980 the ZANU (PF) government did pilot projects on alternative communal land reorganisation (e.g. in Mwenezi District) to complement on-going resettlement programmes. But these displayed technical and procedural elements of the ineffective Rhodesian land husbandry policies and were viewed with suspicion by the peasants. By 1990 ZANU (PF) had abandoned talk of explicit communal land reorganisation and the current position is influenced by the Rukuni Commission (1993–94) report, which calls for the gradual change of

communal land rights towards freehold title. What would happen to the communal lands rights issue if MDC came to power in 2002 or thereabouts?

The MDC has made efforts to publicise its policies on land.[5] However, with election 2000 and ZANU (PF)'s militant response to the former's success at the polls, it appears as if policy development at MDC has suffered as resources are devoted to urgent practical defence activities and trying to retain a physical presence in the rural constituencies the party had won (e.g. Bikita West). From the limited documentation of MDC policies, its programme for communal lands is a duplicate of ZANU (PF)'s in the 1980s: investment in infrastructure, social services and increased productivity—agrarian reform rather than land (tenure) reform. Although MDC may appear more forcefully in favour of explicit freehold tenure in communal areas, it also takes its cue from the ZANU (PF) government's Rukuni Commission report. Any forceful move towards freehold in communal lands assumes rapid growth in the national economy at levels sufficient to absorb the large proportion of landless households in the peasant areas. It also assumes that these rural people prefer wage labour. Ranger (1985), in discussing peasant consciousness, highlights that 'peasantisation' has been and can be a preferred option to waged labour.

Therefore there is potential for antagonism to any radical programme meant to restructure rural livelihoods. Secondly, given the historical and current constraints on growth in the Zimbabwe economy, sufficiently rapid growth in the short term is very unlikely even under an MDC government. Consequently the gradual transformation of communal land rights appears the more likely and feasible scenario in the medium term.

Thirdly, within MDC there are signs of contradictions that will have to be resolved. For example, the MDC MP for Highfield, Enock 'Chikweche' Gwisai, declared that:

> Bosses and employers and the rich should be taxed heavily to fund public housing, health, education and public works in the rural areas and create jobs for the thousands of unemployed youths. It's wake-up time for the bosses.[6]

Yet Zimbabwe's taxes are already among the highest in the world and if maintained will be one obstacle to the return of highly qualified professionals and entrepreneurs currently fleeing the country. This public-centred approach to development also seems to contradict the liberal private enterprise ideology associated with MDC. One would expect such a statement from the old ZANU (PF)! Further, the said bosses constitute a significant constituent of and benefactor to the MDC. Certainly they would apply the brakes on any such socialist

---

[5] See MDC website: http://www.mdcmuzimbabwe.com/policy/land/, December 2000.
[6] See 'Gwisai vows to make a difference', *Daily News*, Harare, Thursday 13 July 2000. Online: http://www.dailynews.co.zw/daily/2000/july13/.

programmes. In the same article Gwisai suggested that land around cities should be taken away and given free to co-operatives to build houses. The MP is reported as explicitly opposed to the country's current 'capitalist policies' and the 'unholy alliance' with the IMF. Well, without the IMF and the capitalist West, how different would MDC's policies and options be from those of ZANU (PF)? How would it fund rural agrarian reform? There is a strong anti-IMF/World Bank sentiment among ordinary workers in Zimbabwe. Yet MDC has not come out with an explicit policy on what a future acceptable relation would be.

Like Gwisai, one would concur that Zimbabwe has adequate wealth to cater for everyone and to support requisite social services. But, without outside support, this requires a strong collective vision and unity of purpose, committed leadership, well mobilised citizens and institutions (as in Cuba after 1989 in the struggle to deal with the economic and food crisis). This is a long-term rather than short-term option but, with the current levels of poverty and expectations, Zimbabweans may not have the stamina and patience to wait another twenty years as they have under the ZANU (PF) government since 1980.

In a BBC quiz forum Sindiso Ndiweni asked the MDC leader, Morgan Tsvangirai, what the MDC would do about the land issue should it come to power. The MDC leader replied, *inter alia*, that:

> we are going to set up a land commission with defined terms of reference that are going to look at where the land is going to come from, who is going to be settled, what infrastructure is necessary and where the necessary resources are going to come from.[7]

So the land policy will await the deliberations of a land commission! Zimbabweans have had too many of these already (Mbiba, 1997b) and, as has been noted earlier, commissions are long-drawn-out exercises that serve the vested interests of strong pressure groups (including the civil service) and dilute people's aspirations. ZANU (PF)'s twenty-year experience in government shows that, among others, Zimbabwe's civil service is not only very efficient but also a strong force which can stall development programmes if they are perceived as a threat to the interests of senior civil servants. MDC would have it to contend with. Then there are the farmers who occupy the land to be taken away and the sponsors to finance these programmes. The MDC has also to capture the sceptical middle class (both local and in the diaspora) who are concerned that the MDC is seemingly 'too British/pro-White Rhodesian', to use words from Samanyika, a Zimbabwean in the United States.[8]

---

[7] See 'Quiz Zimbabwe's opposition leader', BBC News Forum, Friday 28 April 2000. On-line: http://www.news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/, 21 December, 2000.
[8] *Ibid.*

What is evident from this limited press coverage is that the MDC's land policy is a long way from maturity and that, along the way, many obstructions lie in wait. As expected, the policy so far deals with the 'unsettled' question of large-scale commercial farms and resettlement, and there is little on communal lands *per se*. Given its purported worker basis of support, it is surprising that MDC has little to say about urban land and the delivery of houses to the thousands who are lodgers in cities. The linkage between communal land rights and urban manage-ment is clearly an issue not yet in the policy debate. When the dust has settled it is very unlikely that MDC's communal land policy will be any different from that of ZANU (PF) in the 1980s; the MDC would seek to use the *status quo* to its political advantage or proceed in a way that enhanced that goal. These tentative reflections from a distance would probably differ greatly from those of a participant at the local level or from systematic research on the issue. For this research, and for the MDC, peasant consciousness on the land question should not be underrated.

REFERENCES

Audefroy, J. 1994. 'Eviction trends worldwide and the role of local authorities in implementing the right to housing', *Environment and Urbanization* 6 (1), 8–24.

Auret, M. 1994. *Churu Farm: a chronicle of despair*. Harare: Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe.

Barnes, T. 1995. 'So that a labourer could live with his family: overlooked factors in social and economic strife in urban colonial Zimbabwe, 1945–52', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 21 (1), 95–113.

Bond, P. 1998. *Uneven Zimbabwe: a study of finance, development and underdevelopment*, Trenton NJ: Africa World Press; Harare: University of Zimbabwe Press.

Cheater, A. P. 1984. *Idioms of Accumulation: rural development and class formation among freeholders in Zimbabwe*. Gweru: Mambo Press.

——1987. 'Fighting over property', *Africa* 52 (2), 173–95.

——1990. 'The ideology of communal land tenure in Zimbabwe: mythogenesis enacted', *Africa* 60 (2), 188–206.

Chipika, J. T. 1990. *The Differentiation of the Peasantry in Zimbabwe: some implications for land distribution*. Harare: Department of Economics, University of Zimbabwe.

Civic Forum on Housing in Zimbabwe. 1996. 'Report on Home-based Enterprises in Harare'. Unpublished research monograph, Harare, Sep-tember.

——1997. 'Feasibility Study of Rental Housing Sector Development in Urban Areas of Zimbabwe'. Unpublished report by Palmer Associates Pvt Ltd, Harare.

Commercial Farmers' Union. 1994. 'An Examination of the Factors which affect Agricultural Production in all Sectors and Attempts to address these Issues'. Written submission to the Land Tenure Commission, Harare.

Gaidzanwa, R. 1994. 'Women's land rights in Zimbabwe', *Issue* 22 (2), 12–16.

Giddens, A. 1984. *The Constitution of Society: an outline of the theory of structuration*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Government of Zimbabwe. 1982. *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Agricultural Industry* (under the chairmanship of Professor G. Chavunduka), Harare: Government Printer.

——1986a. *Communal Lands Development Plan: a fifteen-year development strategy* (draft). Harare: Ministry of Lands, Agriculture and Rural Resettlement.

——1986b. 'Report on Housing and Urban Development in Zimbabwe: public and private sector partnership'. Paper presented at the tenth Conference on Housing and Urban Development in sub-Saharan Africa, Harare, 24–8 February.

——1986c. *First Five Year National Development Plan, 1986–90*, Vol. 1. Harare: Government Printer.

——1989. *Housing for All: a national task—urban housing policy implementation manual.* Harare: Ministry of Local Government and National Housing.

——Land Tenure Commission. 1994. *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Appropriate Agricultural Land Tenure Systems.* Harare: Government Printer.

——1995. *Zimbabwe Shelter and Urban Indicator Study: draft final report of findings.* Harare: Zimbabwe Co-ordination Committee on Human Settlements/Ministry of Public Construction and National Housing.

——1996a. *National Report and Plan of Action for Human Settlements in Zimbabwe.* Harare: Zimbabwe Co-ordinating Committee on Human Settlements/Ministry of Public Construction and National Housing.

——1996b. *Urban Councils Act, Chapter 29: 15* (revised edition). Harare: Government Printer.

Government of Zimbabwe/USAID. 1996. *Zimbabwe Private Sector Housing Program: monitoring and evaluation indicator update.* Harare: Ministry of Public Construction and National Housing/US Agency for International Development Mission to Zimbabwe.

Jackson, J. C., and Collier, P. 1988. *Incomes, Poverty and Food Security in the Communal Areas of Zimbabwe.* RUP Occasional Paper No. 11. Harare: Department of Rural and Urban Planning, University of Zimbabwe.

Kinsey, B. 1999. 'Land reform, growth and equity: evidence from Zimbabwe's resettlement programme', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 25 (2), 173–96.

Lee-Smith, D. 1997. *My House is my Husband: a Kenyan study of women's access to land and housing.* Lund: Institute of Technology, Lund University.

Lipton, M. 1988. 'Why poor people stay poor: urban bias in world development', in J. Gugler (ed.), *The Urbanisation of the Third World.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lockwood, D. 1995. 'Marking out the middle class(es)', in T. Butler and M. Savage (eds), *Social Change and the Middle Classes.* London: UCL Press.

MacGarry, B. 1994. *Land for which People? Some unanswered questions.* Gweru: Mambo Press, in association with Silveira House.

Magagula, I. M. 1995. 'Housing for and by the Disadvantaged Groups in our Society'. Paper presented at the Zimbabwe National Shelter Review Workshop for Habitat II, organised by the Zimbabwe Co-ordinating Committee on Human Settlements/Ministry of Public Construction and National Housing, Kadoma Ranch Motel, Zimbabwe, 28 September.

Maxwell, D., Larbi, W. O., Lamptey, G. M., Zakariah, S., and Arma-Klemesu, M. 1998. *Farming in the Shadow of the City: changes in land rights and livelihoods in peri-urban Accra.* Cities Feeding People report series, No. 23. Ottawa: International Development Research Centre.

Mbiba, B. 1993. 'Urban agriculture, the poor and planners: a Harare case

study', in A. F. Elgohary (ed.), *Tenth Inter-schools Conference on Development.* London: University College London.

——1995a. 'Implications of housing standards reduction on subsistence survival of the urban poor in Zimbabwe', in E. Schaur (ed.), *Building with Intelligence: aspects of a different building culture.* Stuttgart: Institute of Lightweight Structures.

——1995b. *Urban Agriculture in Zimbabwe: implications for urban management and poverty.* Aldershot: Avebury.

——1995c. 'Access to justice for the urban poor in Southern Africa, Malawi, South Africa and Zimbabwe', in F. van der Schueeren *et al.* (eds), *Pauvreté urbaine et accès à la justice en Afrique : impasses et alternatives.* Paris: Harmattan.

——1997a. 'Managing Urban Transition in Southern Africa: do frameworks really matter?' Paper for the fourteenth Inter-schools Conference on Development, Edinburgh: Centre for Environment and Human Settlements, College of Art, Heriot Watt University, 24–5 March.

——1997b. *The Zimbabwe Land Tenure Commission, 1993–1994: perpetuating dual development thinking and maintaining the status quo.* Our Common Estate. London: Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors.

——1999a. 'Beyond Race: urban residential land ownership and the regional-ethnic dimension in Harare'. Paper presented at the Futures Planning: Planning Futures research conference, University of Sheffield, 29–31 March.

——1999b. 'Security of tenure and development victims in Zimbabwe's communal lands', *Development in Practice* 9 (3), 316–22.

——1999c. 'Urban Property Ownership and the Maintenance of Communal Land Rights in Zimbabwe'. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Sheffield.

Mhangami, T. M. 1991. 'Expectations of and Problems faced by Secondary Towns in Attracting and Promoting Development'. Paper presented at the Zimbabwe Institute of Regional and Urban Planners' annual school, Harare, 11 July.

Moller, V. 1974. 'Mobility of Africans in a Salisbury Township: Mufakose Study, 1973–74'. Unpublished research report No. 7. Salisbury: Urban Studies Research Unit, Institute of Social Research, University of Rhodesia.

Moyo, S. 1995. *The Land Question in Zimbabwe.* Harare: Sapes Books.

Musekiwa, A. 1993. 'Low-income housing development in Harare: a historical perspective', in L. M. Zinyama, D. Tevera and S. Cumming (eds), *Harare: the growth and problems of the city.* Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications.

Palmer, R. 1996. 'The Threat to People's Land in Southern Africa: the current crisis'. Unpublished paper. Oxford: Oxfam.

——1999. 'Report on DfID Workshop on Land Tenure, Poverty and Sustainable Development in sub-Saharan Africa'. Workshop held at Sunningdale, Berkshire, 16–19 February. London: Oxfam.

Potts, D., and Mutambirwa, C. 1991. 'High-density housing in Zimbabwe: commodification and overcrowding', *Third World Planning Review* 13 (1), 1–25.

Rakodi, C. 1995. *Harare: inheriting a settler colonial city. Change or continuity?* Chichester: Wiley.

Ranger, T. 1985. *Peasant Consciousness and Guerrilla War in Zimbabwe: a comparative study.* London: James Currey.

Rukuni, M. 1994a. 'The prime movers of Zimbabwe's agricultural revolution',

in M. Rukuni and C. K. Eicher (eds), *Zimbabwe's Agricultural Revolution*. Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications.

——1994b. 'The evolution of agricultural policy, 1890–1990', in M. Rukuni and C. K. Eicher (eds), *Zimbabwe's Agricultural Revolution*. Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications.

Rukuni, M. and Eicher, C. K. (eds). 1994. *Zimbabwe's Agricultural Revolution*. Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications.

Satterthwaithe, D. 1996. *The Scale and Nature of Urban Change in the South*. London: Human Settlements Programme, Institute for Environment and Development.

Simon, D. 1995. *Land, Environment and Development in post-Independence Namibia*. Our Common Estate. London: Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors.

Sithole-Fundire, S., Zhou, A., Larson, A., and Schlyter, A. 1995. *Gender Research on Urbanisation, Urbanisation, Planning Housing and Everyday Life: Gruphel Phase One*. Harare: Zimbabwe Women's Resource Centre and Network.

Tevera, D. S. 1993. 'Waste recycling as a livelihood in the informal sector: the case of Harare's Teviotdale dump scavengers', in L. M. Zinyama, D. Tevera and S. Cumming (eds), *Harare: the growth and problems of the city*. Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications.

US Agency for International Development. 1996. *Gender Analysis of the Zimbabwe Housing Guarantee Program*. Harare: USAID.

Weinrich, A. K. H. 1973. *Black and White Elites in Rural Rhodesia*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Weiss, R. 1994. *Zimbabwe and the new Elite*. London: British Academic Press.

Wekwete, K. 1987a. *Growth Centre Policy in Zimbabwe: a focus on district centres*. RUP Occasional Paper No. 7. Harare: Department of Rural and Urban Planning, University of Zimbabwe.

——1987b. *Development of Urban Planning in Zimbabwe: an overview*. RUP Occasional Paper No. 8. Harare: Department of Rural and Urban Planning, University of Zimbabwe.

——1997. 'Urban management: the recent experience', in C. Rakodi (ed.), *The Urban Challenge in Africa: growth and management of its large cities*. New York: United Nations University Press.

Wekwete, K. H., and de Valk, P. (eds). 1990. *Decentralising for Participatory Planning?* Aldershot: Gower.

Wekwete, K. H., Helmsing, A. H. J., Mutizwa-Mangiza, N. D., Gasper, D. R., and Brand, C. M. 1991. *Limits to Decentralisation in Zimbabwe: essays on the decentralisation of government and planning in the 1980s*. The Hague: Institute of Social Studies.

Whitsun Foundation. 1979. *Social Security Study*. Salisbury: Whitsun Foundation.

——1980. *Rural Service Centres Development Study*. Harare: Whitsun Foundation.

——1983. *Land Reform in Zimbabwe (Project 3·23)*. Harare: Whitsun Foundation.

Yudelman, M. 1964. *Africans on the Land: economic problems of African agricultural development in Southern, Central and East Africa, with Special Reference to Southern Rhodesia*. London: Harvard University Press.

Zimbabwe Farmers' Union. 1994. 'Towards a Sustainable Land Tenure System within the Smallholder Agricultural Sector'. Written submission to the Land Tenure Commission, Harare.

Zimbabwe Women's Resource Centre and Network. 1996a. 'Women and
    land', News Bulletin, *Woman Plus* 1 (1), 1–37.
——1996b. *A Review of the Gender Dimension of Access and Land Use Rights in
    Zimbabwe: in the light of evidence submitted to the Land Tenure Commission by
    Zimbabwe Women's Resource Centre and Network*. Desk study report. Harare:
    Zimbabwe Women's Resource Centre and Network.
Zimbabwe Women's Resource Centre and Network and ZERO. 1997. *Setting
    the Basics for Dialogue on Land in Zimbabwe: Report of the NGO Consultative
    Land Conference*, Harare, 27–8 May.
Zinyama, L. M. 1986. 'Rural household structure: absenteeism and
    agricultural labour: a case study of two subsistence farming areas in
    Zimbabwe', *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 7 (2), 163–73.
Zinyama, L. M., Campbell, T. J., and Matiza, T. 1990. 'Land policy and
    access to land in Zimbabwe: the Devure resettlement scheme', *Geoforum* 21
    (3), 359–70.
Zinyama, L. M., Tevera, D., and Cumming, S. (eds). 1993. *Harare: the growth
    and problems of the city*. Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications.

ABSTRACT

This article takes a historical approach to argue that communal lands in
Zimbabwe are a construct inherited from colonial days (prior to 1980) which
governments in post-colonial Zimbabwe have found convenient to maintain
rather than dismantle. The construct is not only a convenient framework for
the delivery of collective consumption goods but in turn it enables the
government to subtly use communal lands as a framework for social control,
especially in terms of urban management. The continued existence of
communal land areas and land rights also sustains processes of social control
at the household level. However, these are issues that will not receive attention
in land debates as long as the larger problem of redistribution of large-scale
commercial farms remains unresolved.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet article adopte un point de vue historique pour affirmer qu'au Zimbabwe les
terres communautaires sont un concept hérité de la période coloniale (avant
1980) que les gouvernements postcoloniaux du Zimbabwe ont jugé plus
commode de conserver que de démanteler. Ce concept n'est pas seulement un
cadre pratique de distribution de biens de consommation collective, il permet
aussi au gouvernement d'utiliser subtilement les terres communautaires
comme cadre de controle social, notamment en termes de gestion urbaine.
Le maintien des terres communautaires et des droits afférents à ces terres
soutient également les processus de controle social au niveau des ménages.
Cependant, ces questions ne vont pas retenir l'attention dans les débats
consacrés à la terre tant que le problème plus vaste de la redistribution des
grandes exploitations agricoles commerciales n'est pas résolu.