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Labour after Land Reform: The Precarious Livelihoods of Former Farmworkers in Zimbabwe

Ian Scoones, Blasio Mavedzenge[†], Felix Murimbarimba and Chrispen Sukume

ABSTRACT

What happens to labour when major redistributive land reform restructures a system of settler colonial agriculture? This article examines the livelihoods of former farmworkers on large-scale commercial farms who still live in farm compounds after Zimbabwe's land reform. Through a mix of surveys and in-depth biographical interviews, four different types of livelihood are identified, centred on differences in land access. These show how diverse, but often precarious, livelihoods are being carved out, representing the 'fragmented classes of labour' in a restructured agrarian economy. The analysis highlights the tensions between gaining new freedoms, notably through access to land, and being subject to new livelihood vulnerabilities. The findings are discussed in relation to wider questions about the informalization of the economy and the role of labour and employment in a post-settler agrarian economy, where the old 'farmworker' label no longer applies.

INTRODUCTION

The policy discourse on farm labour in southern Africa, and in Zimbabwe in particular, has not caught up with the times. Framed as it is by a focus on full-time wage labour and employment rights,[1] it often does not grasp the

[†]Died August 2017.

1. Soon after land reform, attention focused on farmworker displacement and human rights questions (FCTZ, 2002; HRW, 2002). More recently, the General Agricultural and Plantation Workers Union of Zimbabwe has concentrated lobbying efforts on securing an increase in the minimum farmworker wage, a move criticized by the Progressive Agriculture and Allied Industries Workers' Union of Zimbabwe, who argue that farm work represents 'modern day slavery' (see, for example, Chakanya, 2016; *Daily News*, 2017; *The Standard*, 2017). With offers of compensation to former white land owners, representatives of former farmworkers argue that no compensation should be paid until outstanding wage payments and retrenchment packages are settled (*Daily News*, 2018). Little of this debate recognizes the diverse, informal livelihoods currently being pursued by former farmworkers, which are the subject of this article.

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new realities of former farmworkers living on farms, particularly following the ruptures of land reform.

This article seeks to explore the differentiated livelihoods of former farmworkers based on research in one area of northern Zimbabwe, where tobacco production is central to the post-land reform agrarian landscape. Land reform has dramatically reshaped the relationships between land and commercial production, as well as patterns of social reproduction, gender and class relations, and with this, labour. This has major implications for how we understand 'labour' in the new rural context, and what types of service and policy support are required. Our aim is not to compare conditions before and after land reform, but to explore the changes that have occurred to livelihoods in the period following major agrarian restructuring. In the post-Mugabe era, with prospects for increased international engagement, it is essential to ensure that the dynamics of rural livelihoods — and particularly those of former labourers on now-redistributed large-scale farms — are understood.

A focus on labour and employment has returned to discussions in development studies after a long hiatus (Chhachhi, 2014), but there remains much debate as to how the category 'labour', particularly in rural settings, is understood (Harris-White, 2003; Oya and Pontara, 2015). Understanding rural labour is especially challenging where wage labour is combined with diverse livelihoods, with multiple identities and class positions, seen by some as a new 'precariat' (Standing, 2014), the core of an increasingly 'informal' economy (Ferguson, 2015), in which 'surplus' populations, formerly part of the wage-earning classes, must seek out new livelihoods, part of Marx's 'reserve army of labour' (Li, 2009, 2011). This informalization of labour — from fixed wage work to diverse livelihoods — is seen in both rural and urban settings, and has a long history in Zimbabwe (Phimister and Pilossof, 2017). There are multiple trajectories of change, with some benefiting from new opportunities through flexible livelihoods, while others suffer from a lack of the security offered by regular wage employment (Ferguson and Li, 2018). In periods of major transition — such as following land reform — changes in the labour regime and the consequences of informalization are therefore central to any investigation.

For Bernstein (2006, 2010), the contemporary agrarian question may be seen in terms of labour, as 'fragmented classes of labour' seek out livelihoods in the context of a globalized, neoliberal economy, which is unable to provide a living wage. Bernstein states:

> Classes of labour in global capitalism, and especially in the 'South', pursue their reproduction, that is, through insecure and oppressive — and in many places increasingly scarce — wage employment, often *combined with* a range of likewise precarious small-scale farming and insecure 'informal sector' ('survival') activity, subject to its own forms of differentiation and oppression along intersecting lines of class, gender, generation, caste, and ethnicity. In short, most have to pursue their means of livelihood/reproduction across different sites of the social division of labour: urban and rural, agricultural and non-agricultural wage employment and self-employment. (Bernstein, 2006: 455, italics in original)

Livelihoods therefore 'defy inherited assumptions of fixed (and uniform) notions of "worker", "peasant", "trader", "urban", "rural", "employed" and "self-employed"' (Bernstein, 2007: 7). Within this complex constellation of livelihood activities, diverse forms of petty commodity production are central. In the context of changing labour regimes in agriculture, therefore, it is crucial to understand how different 'classes of labour' interact, alongside the processes of differentiation that unfold.

A frequently observed trend has been one from quasi-feudal paternalism, linked to highly controlled wage employment, to less permanent salaried work, except in management positions, and a greater reliance on casual, temporary work. This is often linked to agribusiness restructuring, as corporate actors seek to link production to contracting arrangements without large core estates and workforces (Gibbon, 2011; Gibbon and Riisgaard, 2014). Understanding these new labour regimes is important in grasping changing agrarian dynamics in Africa. In the former settler economies of southern Africa, what new labour regimes can be expected when large-scale agriculture is restructured, either through redistributive reform or the pressures of globalization? When large-scale, capitalist commercial farms, reliant on extensive wage employment, are subdivided, what happens to the labour force? How are former farmworkers incorporated into new agrarian structures, and on what terms?

Responding to these broad questions, this article provides empirical insights from Zimbabwe into what former agricultural wage labourers are doing 18 years after the major land reform of 2000. It makes the case that the category 'farmworker', central to the existing discourse and almost all research and policy analysis, is no longer relevant. Indeed, those who were formerly farmworkers — both women and men — on white-owned, large-scale commercial farms are pursuing a whole range of livelihood activities, including farming, off-farm employment, natural resource extraction, as well as selling labour to new settlers on small-scale farms.

This article draws on a study that investigated a sample of 100 former farmworker households, resident in compounds on three former large-scale farms in the high-potential Mvurwi area, plus 23 smallholder 'A1' settler households (of 220 now with plots on these farms) who were formerly farmworkers.[2] Based on detailed survey work of both compound dwellers and A1 households (focusing on the 23 who were formerly farmworkers), the article examines emerging patterns of social differentiation and class formation, identifying different 'classes of labour'. Through a series of biographies, these new patterns of livelihood are contrasted with former wage employment on large-scale farms. While shifts have occurred, and new

2. The Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) that unfolded from 2000 in Zimbabwe had two types of allocation: A1 smallholder farms, either as villagized arrangements or with self-contained plots; and A2 medium-scale farms, with sizes dependent on agro-ecological region (for more detail, see Scoones et al., 2010).

forms of differentiation have emerged, our data are unable to say definitively whether these former farmworkers are better or worse off today. What is certain is that livelihoods have changed, and different vulnerabilities must be confronted.

The article focuses on a tobacco-growing area, where considerable skilled labour is required. Each of the former large-scale farms grew tobacco, as well as some maize, soybeans, horticulture and fruit crops. Some livestock were also kept. On the new resettlement farms a mixed farming system is evident, with tobacco the dominant commercial crop, continuing to generate significant labour demand (Scoones et al., 2018). Many former farmworkers who continue to live on the farms are vulnerable, subject to precarious livelihoods, poor working conditions and limited access to assets. But by lumping everyone together into a single category and failing to understand emergent livelihood, gender and class dynamics, and the changing nature of 'work', current analyses and policy recommendations are found wanting.

Instead, this article suggests that we need to understand agrarian change together with shifts in labour regimes, class positions and livelihood strategies. To link the land question with the labour question (cf. Li, 2011), we therefore need to understand how processes of social differentiation and accumulation are constituted together with transitions in the agrarian economy, generating new classes of labour, often fractured, diverse, mobile and fragile (Bernstein, 2006). This points to an analysis with major policy implications for Zimbabwe and other regions, particularly in southern Africa, where a transition from settler farm economies, centred on large-scale commercial farms, is occurring.

We start with a brief overview of farm labour in Zimbabwe, before turning to explore the situation post-land reform in the Mvurwi area. The following sections present data on livelihoods, including five cases illustrative of four different types of livelihood. We conclude with a discussion of the implications for understanding former farmworker livelihoods after land reform.

FARM LABOUR IN ZIMBABWE

During the colonial era, expanding commercial agriculture, controlled by European settlers, required increasing amounts of labour (Arrighi, 1970). This was recruited from across Zimbabwe, and indeed the region. During the Rhodesian Federation era, labourers came from Malawi and Zambia, and many also came from Mozambique, especially during the long civil war there. Crops such as tobacco, which became dominant on the Highveld, required considerable labour for production and processing, and farmers built large compounds to accommodate workers and their families (von Blankenburg, 1994). Overall, the conditions were notoriously poor, with low wages, inadequate accommodation and limited services (Loewenson, 1992).

A form of 'domestic government' (Rutherford, 2001) was instituted: a system based on racialized paternalism and control, and often harsh discipline. Workers knew little else beyond the farms, and there were restrictions on off-farm work, and even small-scale gardening. Many 'foreigners' recruited from other countries did not have any citizenship rights, and often lost contact with their wider family. Workers were almost wholly dependent on the farmer, and the particular farm regime (Gibbon et al., 2014).

By the mid-1960s, 206,781 permanent workers, mostly men, were employed in commercial agriculture in Zimbabwe, up from 130,636 in 1945 (Dunlop, 1971: 19). Other workers, often women, were hired in for shorter periods for seasonal piecework (Mosley, 1983). A significant proportion of this labour force was on large estates, notably the sugar estates in the Lowveld. Within the commercial farms, labour was concentrated in the high-potential regions, and particularly on the increasingly profitable tobacco farms (Rubert, 1998). Many permanent workers gained significant skills in field agronomy, equipment repairs, agricultural processing and more, and those promoted to farm management roles were vital in the operations of large, commercial business operations.

Following Independence in 1980, the commercial farming sector and the regulatory and policy environment changed. With the reduction in subsidies for white commercial agriculture, and an increasingly competitive global market for agricultural commodities, farms had to specialize and upgrade in order to engage with global value chains, whether around tobacco, horticulture, citrus or beef. With markets opening up following the end of a sanctions regime, there were growing sanitary and phytosanitary requirements for export to markets in Europe and the USA, where preferential trade options were created. The new government also imposed a set of labour regulations, requiring minimum wages to be paid, along with basic conditions of housing and welfare provision — although such regulations were often not enforced. These changes in the operating environment resulted in a greater professionalization of labour arrangements, combined with a growth in the proportion of temporary, casual labour. Sometimes living on the edge of farms in informal compounds or in nearby communal areas, such farmworkers, often highly impoverished migrants, combined temporary wage work with other livelihood activities. On the farms, a more hierarchical, permanent workforce emerged, with grades and roles more clearly defined.

Meanwhile, in this period, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and farmworkers' labour unions[3] campaigned for improved labour rights and

3. In addition to the two unions (the General Agricultural and Plantation Workers Union of Zimbabwe and the Progressive Agriculture and Allied Industries Workers' Union of Zimbabwe), other NGOs involved in farmworker welfare and rights in the pre-land reform era included the Farm Community Trust of Zimbabwe, the Farm Health Worker Programme, the Farm Orphan Support Trust, the Farmworkers Action Trust, Kunzwana Women's Association, and others (Hartnack, 2016). Since land reform, in part due to the drying up of

service provision, while welfare organizations, sometimes involving farmers' wives, provided support (Hartnack, 2016). In particular, the HIV/AIDS epidemic caused significant ill-health and mortality among farmworkers, resulting in a growing population of children living on the farms without parents, and in need of welfare support (Sachikonye, 2003).

By the late 1990s, there were estimated to be around 150,000 permanent workers on commercial farms, including estates,[4] and the commercial agricultural sector employed around 200,000 additional workers on temporary contracts (Chambati, 2007, 2011; Scoones et al., 2010: 127). By this time, several generations of families had lived on the farms, often moving from farm to farm depending on the availability of employment. While conditions had improved to some degree, options for leaving farm employment were restricted, and the paternalistic dependence on the farm owner persisted.

This all changed in 2000, with the acceleration of land invasions across the country, and the initiation of the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP), presaging the emergence of a new labour regime discussed below. Following the loss of the constitutional referendum in 2000, ZANU-PF, the ruling party since Independence, felt under threat from a buoyant urban-based opposition, led by the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). President Mugabe put his full weight behind the land invasions, and mobilized party cadres, security forces and other arms of the state to support a radical land reform. In this early period, no one quite knew what was going to happen, and certainly those in power had little control of the situation. The period of *jambanja* — the unruly politics of land invasions — resulted in around 8 million hectares (ha) of former white commercial farm land being expropriated (Moyo, 2011). What happened on the ground varied from farm to farm. In some cases, confrontations were violent; in other cases occupations were peaceful, seen more as protest demonstrations. In some cases, farmworkers resident on the farms were chased away or attacked, sometimes violently; in others, farmworkers, with deep knowledge of the farms, joined the invasions, helping to peg out new plots and settlements (Scoones et al., 2010). Farmworkers, with nowhere else to go, often showed strong allegiance to the farm owners, and in many cases were restricted from engaging with land invaders. Seen as supporters of the opposition and backed by whites, farmworkers were often cast as the enemy in the heightened political rhetoric of this period (Rutherford, 2017).

The proportion of new settlers on what came to be A1 (smallholder) resettlement farms who were former farmworkers, ranged from 2 to 15 per

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donor funds with the imposition of 'sanctions', such NGOs have extended their activities to broader development programmes, often outside the contested former large-scale farms.

4. Estates include the large agribusiness and forestry operations in the Lowveld and Eastern Highlands, for example, and are distinct from often formerly white-owned, family-run large-scale commercial farm businesses.

cent, according to different surveys from across the country (see Matondi, 2012; Moyo et al., 2009; Scoones et al., 2010). However, many more were displaced, either *in situ*, still living in the compounds but no longer working, or to other places, usually communal areas where people had relatives (Magaramombe, 2010; Sachikonye, 2003). Those who came to work on the resettlement farms on a temporary basis no longer had formal salaried jobs, and had to negotiate new arrangements with the land reform settlers.

Figures are hard to come by, and much disputed, but after land reform in 2000, around 70,000 farmworker households continued to have employment on remaining farms and estates, about 25,000 were displaced *in situ*, remaining on the farms but initially without work, and approximately 45,000 households were forced to move (Chambati, 2007). This study focuses on the *in situ* displaced population in three farms. Of those who migrated away, most returned to or established homes in nearby communal areas, while others sought employment in nearby towns, notably Harare. Some attempted to return to their countries of origin, connecting with relatives from Malawi, Mozambique or Zambia, while others simply moved to other farms in search of work from the new settlers. As described below, the mobility of farmworker populations is notable, with significant turnover in residents of compounds occurring since the land reform.

The land reform of 2000 resulted in a massive change in agrarian structure. The FTLRP allocated over 4,500 large-scale farms to new farmers, making up around 20 per cent of the total land area of the country, according to (admittedly rough) official figures. This represented over 145,000 new farm households in A1 (smallholder) schemes, with arable allocations of 5–6 ha, and around 16,500 further households occupying larger, medium-scale A2 farms (Rukuni et al., 2009), although there are many additional informal allocations and subdivisions not accounted for in these figures. Around 3.4 million ha of large-scale commercial farming remains, much of it in large estates. Permanently employed farmworkers lost out significantly from this reform, and issues of rights, welfare and deepening poverty of these populations have been repeatedly raised (Pilossof, 2018; Sachikonye, 2003), even as they inserted themselves into the new agrarian economy (Chambati, 2017).

There are important parallels, as well as contrasts, with elsewhere in southern Africa. In South Africa and Namibia, particularly, there have been shifts from a paternalistic system (van Onselen, 1997) to greater professionalization of workforces, and to a pattern of informalization and casualization on large-scale commercial farms (Du Toit and Ally, 2003; Werner et al., 2001), with major implications for gender rights and welfare (Barrientos and Kritzinger, 2004). Intense pressure on capitalist agriculture from globalization combines with a wider informalization of the economy and the changing nature of 'work' (Ferguson, 2015). Notionally progressive legislation to improve wages and worker rights, such as requirements for minimum wages, has often acted to accelerate informalization, as employers attempt to

evade regulations. In South Africa, for example, there has been a significant decline in formal, permanent employment in large-scale agriculture in the last decade (Sender, 2016; Visser and Ferrer, 2015).

Unlike in Zimbabwe, land reform in South Africa or Namibia has not yet resulted in a significant restructuring of land use and rural economies (McCusker et al., 2016; Ntsebeza and Hall, 2007; Werner, 2015). Tenants on farms subject to land reform notionally have greater rights through labour tenancy legislation, although in practice many former wage workers remain on farms with limited livelihood options. Indeed, around 3 million people were estimated to be living on farms in the early 2000s in South Africa, particularly in Limpopo province (Hall et al., 2013: 53), including large numbers of migrants seeking employment, especially from Zimbabwe (Addison, 2014; Bolt, 2012).

As large-scale capitalist agriculture transforms, a decline in the core, permanent labour force is seen, alongside a growth in informal, casual, temporary work, where 'workers' must combine wage employment with other livelihoods, including agriculture. This is a phenomenon across southern Africa, and indeed more broadly, as globalization restructures large-scale commercial agriculture. In Zimbabwe, large-scale agriculture has been fundamentally changed through land reform, with significant redistribution of land to smallholders. A key question, then, is: what happens to labour when major redistributive land reform overturns a system of formerly settler capitalist large-scale agriculture? This is of direct interest to understanding Zimbabwe's agrarian transition, but is also of relevance as other former settler economies in the region contemplate redistributive land reforms.

By focusing on labour in Zimbabwe's agrarian transition, we ask what new relationships are struck, how this affects livelihoods and patterns of social differentiation, accumulation and class formation, and with what implications for gender relations? Most commentaries on Zimbabwe's land reform follow a narrative that highlights the initial patterns of displacement and dispossession of farmworkers (Sachikonye, 2003). Such processes are central to the story, but these commentaries often do not ask what happened next. How did farm labour — formerly wage workers on large-scale commercial farms — engage with the new agrarian structure? What new livelihoods have emerged since? What new labour regime has evolved, and how does this transform our understanding of agricultural work and employment?

LABOUR AFTER LAND REFORM: THE EXPERIENCE OF MVURWI AREA

Our study site is in Mvurwi area, in Mazowe district, Mashonaland Central province, a high-potential area 100 km to the north of the capital Harare. The study site was chosen to represent an area with a long tradition of

labour-intensive agricultural production, mostly focused on tobacco.[5] This allowed us to explore the transition from compound-based labour supply on large farms in an area where labour demand has persisted after land reform in 2000, as smallholder farmers have taken over the land. This contrasts with other areas, such as dryland Masvingo where, prior to land reform, relatively few farm labourers were employed for ranching enterprises, and labour compounds were not a feature of labour management.[6] In Masvingo, following land reform, smallholder mixed crop and livestock production on these farms has boosted demand for labour, but this has had to be recruited elsewhere in the absence of resident former farmworkers (Scoones et al., 2010). The Mvurwi setting also contrasts with the large estates, such as those dedicated to sugar production in the Lowveld, where the production system remained intact following land reform, and with it labour management, even if on smaller, subdivided plots (Scoones et al., 2017). Thus, the Mvurwi area offers a useful insight into a productive, commercially-oriented system, where demand for labour has continued following land reform.

In our study site, pre-reform, the owners ran the three farms as family businesses, and all employed considerable numbers of people in three farmworker compounds. All farms had stores run by the farm, which offered basic supplies and a system of credit linked to wages. The farms had their own characteristics, largely reflecting the attitudes of the farm owner to both farming and labour. These ranged from a very strict, draconian regime on one, to more liberal attitudes on the other two. At land reform in 2000, these farms were initially occupied by a range of people from nearby communal areas, as well as Mvurwi town, some 20 km away. In one farm, the farm owner prevented workers joining the invasions and locked them in. Antagonism towards him resulted in him being evicted at an early stage. On the

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5. After land reform, tobacco production slumped to a low of 55,500 kg in 2006, but increased to 216,000 kg in 2014, reaching pre-reform levels. Estimated production in 2017 was 185,600 kg. In 2015, 26 per cent of production was from A1 farmers, where a national average production of 1,880 kg per registered A1 seller was recorded (see the website of the Tobacco Industry and Marketing Board: http://www.timb.co.zw/index.php, accessed 12 August 2017). Such production is supported through contract agreements with a range of companies (Scoones et al., 2017). Since 2000, national maize production has fluctuated significantly, largely dependent on rainfall, with only 512,000 tonnes produced in the drought of 2016, but 2.15 million tonnes produced with good rainfall in 2017, and 742,000 tonnes in 2015 according to the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (www.fao.org/giews/countrybrief/country.jsp?code=ZWE , accessed 12 August 2017). According to the ZimVac national food security assessment, average maize production in Mashonaland Central was 517.5 kg per household in the 2016–17 season, but only 136.2 kg in 2015–16 (ZimVAC, 2017: 65). Other crops have fared differently, depending on production requirements, market demand and financing. For example, high-value export horticulture and citrus, once a significant feature of the Mvurwi area, has declined, but other, more locally focused horticulture and fruit crop value chains have emerged instead (Sukume et al., 2015).
6. In dryland ranching operations, around one worker was employed per 1,000 ha or 100 head of cattle (Clarke, 1977; see discussion in Scoones et al., 2010: 128).

other two farms, farm owners negotiated arrangements with new settlers initially, and only later abandoned their farms. Today, the compounds house 370 families, representing around 1,790 people, based on a household size of 4.85 in our sample. There are now two primary and two secondary schools serving the area, and a clinic is under construction. Previously there were only two primary schools, established by a group of commercial farmers, and health services were only available at Mvurwi town.[7]

Of the 220 A1 settler households on the three farms in our sample, 23 households are headed by former farmworkers or their sons, representing 10.5 per cent of plots. Eight of these former farmworkers gained land during the invasion process. They were able to make social and political connections and joined the occupations, receiving plots along with others. Others have received plots since then, having become engaged in local politics from a compound base. Two sons of former farmworkers are in this category, gaining land during 2010–12. While the standard allocation of arable land for new settlers was 6 ha, it is notable that former farmworkers received lower amounts (averaging 3.5 ha), reflecting their status and limited negotiating capacities in the complex local politics of land allocation.

Around half of those sampled who were resident in the three farm compounds formerly worked on these farms. The other half had moved, having been displaced from farmworker jobs elsewhere, mostly from farms now owned by medium-scale A2 resettlement farmers nearby (37 per cent), where the new owners dismissed workers and replaced or downsized their workforce. The remaining 13 per cent had been following an itinerant farmworker lifestyle before, moving between farms, taking up temporary piecework jobs. Of those who had been working on farms before land reform, 56 per cent of household heads (66 per cent men, 34 per cent women in our sample) were ‘general hands’, 17 per cent were skilled workers (including clerks, mechanics, drivers, graders, fencers and builders), 11 per cent were domestic workers (housekeepers, cooks and garden boys), 9 per cent were in managerial jobs (farm manger, foreman) and 7 per cent were involved in security as guards. Immediately before land reform, 87 per cent of household heads were living in the province where the study site farms were located, while the remainder had moved from other provinces (5 per cent from Mashonaland West, 4 per cent from Harare, 3 per cent from Masvingo/Midlands) to join relatives. Only 15 per cent of those living in the compounds identified

7. Since 2000, there have been some attempts by the state to develop infrastructure in the new resettlement areas. The secondary schools have been established in former farm buildings, with teachers provided by the Ministry of Education. However, the level of provision is limited and many complain of the lack of state investment in land reform areas. International donors, and NGOs reliant on them for project funds, have largely not funded work in these ‘contested areas’, although this may change with the new government established in late 2017 following the resignation of Robert Mugabe as president.

themselves as coming from other countries, with Malawi and Mozambique being the most common, followed by Zambia.

When asked how their livelihood situation had changed since land reform, 58 per cent of the sampled compound dwellers said that it had improved, while 42 per cent said it had remained the same or deteriorated. As discussed further below, a key differentiating factor was access to land. Not surprisingly, all those who gained A1 resettlement plots thought that their lives had improved, while those who gained a hectare plot also had a positive view. Many others argued that their material conditions were not necessarily better, but 'freedom' from the constraints of fixed employment had benefits. Contrary to the standard narratives about former farmworkers, which emphasize displacement and destitution, a much more variegated picture emerges, with patterns of differentiation having important implications.

COMPLEX LIVELIHOODS

Across our sample, we identified four different types of livelihood, informed by a combination of our survey data and qualitative interviews. These are primarily differentiated by land access, which in turn affects engagement with farm labour (as employers or labourers), as well as involvement in other livelihood activities. First, there are those who were allocated plots and are now A1 settlers, but were formerly farmworkers (or their sons); second, there are those living in the compounds with plots of more than 1 ha, including rented-in land;[8] third, there are those with plots/gardens of up to 1 ha; and finally, there are those without land at all (or just small gardens by their houses), who are highly reliant on labouring and other livelihood activities. These varied combinations of land access and labour practices make up diverse livelihoods suggesting very different experiences of former farmworkers, which we explore below.

Demand for former farmworkers' labour and skills remains high. Alongside maize, the dominant crop on these new resettlement farms is Virginia tobacco, which requires significant labour input as well as particular skills, such as curing, sorting and grading. Household members across our compound-dweller sample (N = 100) were hired to work on 13 different farms (A1 and A2 farms), including the three A1 settlement schemes where they were resident. Our survey of A1 settler households across the three schemes (N = 220, including N = 23 former farmworkers) showed

8. On two of our study farms, negotiations with the District Administrator and the Ministry of Lands resulted in 1 ha plots being allocated within the A1 resettlement area. This arose out of a major conflict between compound dwellers and settlers around the 2008 election, but was resolved through the concession of allocating land to around 30 households in each farm.

Table 1. Wage Labour: Contrasts among Former Farmworkers

	A1 farmers, who were former farmworkers (N = 23)	**Compound dwellers with 1 ha or more of land (N = 26)**	**Compound dwellers with land areas less than 1 ha (N = 52)**	**Compound dwellers with only small home gardens (N = 22)**
Percentage of households with full-time employed members	9%	8%	15%	14%
Percentage of households receiving regular remittances	9%	23%	8%	18%
Percentage of households with permanent employees	4.3%	0%	0%	0%
Percentage of households hiring in temporary labour	57%	38%	10%	0%
Percentage of households hiring out temporary labour	30%	46%	60%	77%

that, on average hired, each household hired 1.92 men and 1.86 women from the compounds and 0.49 men and 0.35 women from outside the compounds (mostly from other A1 settler households) for temporary piecework, averaging 143.5 days per year per hired person. In addition, they hired on average 0.52 men and 0.27 women as permanent, resident workers. Some permanent workers had previously been compound dwellers and had moved to their employers' farms, but most were relatives of the A1 farmers from nearby communal areas. Overall, the demand for employment is high, but is mostly seasonal and task-specific, usually associated with tobacco production.

As Table 1 shows, those with less access to land sell more labour. On average male compound dwellers worked 119 days per year, while women worked 163 days per year. Average pay levels were US$ 3 per day, for a six-hour day, although this varied, depending on the task and the farmer, with women often being paid less. As Table 1 shows, those with land are more likely to hire in labour, although only those with A1 plots had any permanent workers. No one from our compound sample households was employed permanently on resettlement farms. In terms of other sources of income from employment, relatively few household members had permanent jobs elsewhere (these included guards, drivers, housekeepers, maids), but the proportion is higher among those with less land. Receipt of remittances (from both household members and others) varied, with no clear pattern across groups.

Thus, major differences are seen across our sample, linking agrarian questions of land and labour. Those with more land hire in labour, while those with less land hire out, although many households show a mixed pattern,

Table 2. Land, Livestock and Farm Production

	A1 farmers, who were former farmworkers	**Compound dwellers with 1 ha or more of land**	**Compound dwellers with land areas less than 1 ha**	**Compound dwellers with only small home gardens**
Land owned and rented (ha)	3.5	1.5, plus 0.3 rental	0.4, plus 0.3 rental	A few square metres, plus 0.2 ha rental
Percentage of households with gardens	87%	88%	87%	59%
Maize (kg in 2014)	1,488	735	418	66
Tobacco (kg in 2014)	1,031	470	232	27
Cattle (number)	2.1	3.0	1.2	0.1
Goat (number)	1.5	1.3	1.0	0.3

with some household members selling labour at certain times of year, while others may hire in for particular tasks. However, selling labour is not sufficient to survive for any group, and other livelihood options must be sought. While farm work is important, no group can be defined exclusively as 'farmworkers'. While the labour market, driven in particular by tobacco, is important, and seasonal demand high, there is clearly 'surplus' labour in this restructured agrarian economy, resulting in a diversification of strategies for survival. How then do former farmworkers make a living beyond selling labour? As our data have shown, access to land is crucial, and own-account farming is an increasingly important livelihood strategy for former farmworkers.

Before land reform, farming was mostly not possible for those living in the compounds. The white farmers on these three farms sometimes offered 'lines' within their fields as an alternative to rations, but farmworkers were not allowed independent incomes (see case studies, below). Today, access to land is vital. While some were able to gain A1 plots, and others were able to get 1 ha allocations, some have had to extend gardens and rent in land. The informal land rental market is important, and often mutually beneficial. For A1 settlers with spare land, they are able to hook former farmworker tenants into labour relations on their farms (often including a range of land for labour exchange arrangements); this means that often highly skilled workers are on hand, and not hired by others at crucial times.

Table 2 shows how land holding, including rentals, varies, and results in widely differing levels of farm production. In our sample, those 23 households who managed to get A1 plots are doing relatively well. The skills learned on the commercial farms are paying off. Even though they have much lower land areas than others in the A1 settlements (3.5 ha compared to an average of 5.6 ha), they have reasonable production and on average cultivated 2.4 ha in 2014. This resulted in a surplus of maize being sold, and tobacco being marketed. Over the five seasons, 2010–2014, they produced on average 1,741 kg maize, and sold 935 kg each year. Tobacco production

Table 3. Income-earning Activities (Percentage of Households), and Gendered Involvement

Other income earning activities	A1 farmers, who were former farmworkers (N = 23)	Compound dwellers with 1 ha or more of land (N = 26)	Compound dwellers with land areas less than 1 ha (N = 52)	Compound dwellers with only small home gardens (N = 22)	Gendered involvement
Vegetable sales	61	31	38	27	F
Brick making/ thatching	35	50	27	18	M
Building/carpentry	13	35	21	0	M
Fishing	30	31	19	5	M
Trading	30	23	12	18	F
Poultry sales	26	23	13	0	F/M
Tailoring	13	15	8	0	M
Pottery/basket making	9	12	4	5	F/M
Goat sales	9	4	6	5	M/F
Wood carving	9	4	4	0	M
Cattle sales	13	0	2	0	M

averaged 676 kg over these five seasons, rising from 401 kg in 2010 to 1,031 kg in 2014.[9]

Of those living in the compounds there are some who are more akin to poorer A1 settlers, or those in the communal areas, who have on average 1.5 ha, renting in a further 0.3 ha. They produce about three-quarters of annual family food requirements (estimated to be 1 tonne) from maize, while also producing and selling tobacco. Then there are those with less than 1 ha of land, although they also rent in land. This group produced on average 418 kg in 2014, less than half of estimated household consumption requirements, although income is supplemented by gardening, especially by women. Finally, there are those with very small plots or just gardens. Here agricultural production is minimal, with limited food provisioning from maize production, and negligible tobacco production.

In addition to selling labour and small-scale agriculture/gardening, compound dwellers have to seek other livelihood activities. Table 3 shows the array of income-earning activities pursued during 2014–15, and the proportion of households in our four livelihood categories involved in each. These activities are differentiated by gender, with vegetable sales being most important for women, while carpentry, building, brick making and fishing are important for men. Poultry sales are important for both men and women. These activities make up a significant proportion of total household income, especially for those with no or limited land. Such income sources are

9. However, average production of maize and tobacco over the period was 3,789 kg and 967 kg for other A1 farmers, reflecting their larger farm sizes.

especially important for women and, as an alternative to seasonal wage labour, such off-season activities are important in smoothing income through the year.

These survey data show the differentiated patterns of livelihood activity of former farmworkers. However, understanding how wage work, farm production and other livelihood activities interact over time, and within a household across axes of age and gender, requires turning to more qualitative sources. We undertook detailed biographical interviews with a random sample of 24 former farmworker households (interviewing 13 men and 11 women overall), including three who gained land in the A1 settlements.[10] Below we offer five illustrative cases that provide insights into how livelihoods — as well as identities and identifications — have changed following land reform.

MAKING A LIVING ON THE FARMS: CASE STUDIES

Case 1 (A1 plot holder, female): 'We were the lucky ones'

I am 68 years old and originally come from Mozambique. I came to Forrester Estate in 1979 with my husband who was a tractor driver. I have had seven children, and one daughter lives with me as she is a single mother. I also have the kids of two of my sons, as they have died. My eldest son has a house in the compound but farms with me. I came to this farm in 1987 when my first husband died. I married a farmworker here, although he later died. I worked as a general hand on this farm up to land reform, when I joined the invasions. Before there were deductions for food rations, pensions and hospital bills from our meagre pay. The farm owner did not allow us to have beds, bicycles or even watches. He was always afraid that farmworkers would have stolen from him. Thanks to the farm invasions, I now have a farm of nearly 5 ha. We were the lucky ones. I grow maize on my plot, and can get up to 100 bags each year, which I sell [our surveys show she produced on average 3.2 tonnes of maize in the seasons between 2010 and 2014, and sold on average 1.8 tonnes]. I also have a garden, where I grow tomatoes, leafy vegetables, onions and sweet potatoes, and I sell at the roadside market. I am a farmer now! Before I had nothing, but now I have built a nice home, and bought things for it. I also have a cow, which I bought in 2014, and four goats; all bought from my harvests. We now have the freedom to buy what we want, especially livestock.

10. Interviews were undertaken on the three A1 resettlement schemes in Mvurwi area between November 2015 and February 2017. Interviewees were usually the 'household head', the main resident adult, either male or female, in charge of the household, although the biographies focused on the whole family's history.

Case 2 (1 ha plot holder, male): 'Relations are better now'

I was born in 1969 in Muzarabani, was married in 1993 and I now have four kids. My parents worked on the farms, creating the steam for the boilers for tobacco curing. I started working after Form 1, as an assistant spanner boy at Concession, and went to work on tobacco farms in Centenary. In 1995, I was promoted to be a foreman, and later went on a course on curing, planting and reaping at Blackfordby. I came here in 1997, as my boss was friends with the former owner here. He was a tough guy. You couldn't buy personal property. I had a small radio only. I would buy goats and sell for school fees; other money was sent to my parents, now retired in Muzarabani communal area. I tried to keep broilers, but was taken to the farmer's own court. He needed people to be dependent. You had to buy at his shop, and couldn't go to Mvurwi town. I got a 1 ha plot in 2002. Because farmworkers were prevented by the white farmer from the card-sorting exercise for allocation of land,[11] 27 of us came together and went to the village heads, party officials and the Ministry of Lands. In the end, we were given land set aside for 'growth'. We don't have 'offer letters',[12] so we can't get any other support. In fact, we don't have any help at all from the government, as there's still suspicion of us in the compound. During the elections of 2008 it got really bad, and we were thrown out. We camped on the roadside for three days, until the MP and other officials intervened. We came back and relations are better now. I also have been renting land. One of my relatives has a big field in the A1 settlement. She is a war veteran and was married to my late brother, and I rent a plot to grow maize from her. In exchange, I help them out and do the grading and curing of their tobacco. My son, my wife and I all do piecework. We've got a garden (about 30 × 40 m), and grow potatoes for sale in Mvurwi, and at the homestead we grow bananas and sweet potatoes. I first planted tobacco in 2006. Since 2011 I have got 20 bales each year, with 25 bales in 2016, the highest ever. I am now an employer myself: I employ workers on piecework from the compounds. After harvest I buy inputs in Harare, bulk buying. After land reform, I have bought other goods. We now have a 21-inch TV, a sofa, two bicycles, a kitchen unit, a wardrobe and a big radio. I built the [tobacco curing] barn myself, making the bricks. I also have two cows and three goats, and I hire the Brazilian tractor for ploughing.

Case 3 (1 ha plot holder, male): 'Life is better now if you have land'

I was born in 1963 on a farm in Concession. Our family originated from Mozambique; my parents came as labourers. We moved to many farms over

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11. Whereby lists of names were drawn from a hat by local officials or war veterans after land occupations.
12. 'Permits to occupy' issued by the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture and Rural Resettlement.

the years, and came here in 1981. Of my siblings, one of my brothers is also here, and another works on a farm near Harare doing brick moulding. My two sisters live in Epworth. At first I was a general labourer. I got married in 1984, and it was around that time that I got promoted to deputy foreman on the ranching operation. I have five kids: four boys and one girl. My firstborn is working and assisting me. My secondborn is assisting teaching here on the farm paid by the Salvation Army; the others are still at school. I have a 1 ha plot and a garden allocated by the Committee of Seven and *sabhuku* [headman] in 2008 after the conflicts. At land reform, we were prevented from getting land. We concentrated on our jobs. We didn't know if the land reform would happen for long. Now we know it's a reality, but we missed out. Before the farmer would parcel out 'lines' in different fields for farm workers. This was an alternative to rations, and only maize was allowed. You could get a tonne out of your allocation if you were lucky. The farmer here wanted everyone to go to primary school. Four white farmers built the school for farmworkers, and school fees were deducted from wages. We couldn't buy much from our wages. It was a struggle. We didn't buy livestock, as we had nowhere to keep them. We were allowed to buy TVs, radios, bicycles. But the farmer didn't want noise, so radios had to be quiet! We had enough to survive, just hand-to-mouth. On my 1 ha plot, I generally plant tobacco and maize. I managed to buy a truck in 2014 from 16 bales of tobacco from ¾ ha. I have five cattle, an ox cart and an ox-drawn plough. I also managed to buy a bed. I have to pay school fees too. I use the truck to transport tobacco to the floors, and others pay. From 2013, I am no longer going for *maricho* (piecework). Those with 1 ha plots end up being the employers here. Otherwise, if you don't have land it's all *maricho*. Family members help in my field, and they get a share. I hire labourers from the compound, and they are paid US$ 3–4 per day. My son also now has a 1 ha plot, given out by the A2 farmer [medium-scale resettlement farm] who lives in the old farm house. There is no payment, but if the A2 farmer asks for some help, we go. It's all about good relations in the area. Life is better now if you have land, even though it is small.

Case 4 (only garden, female): 'There is more freedom but it's a tough life'

I was born in 1977 and went to school up to Grade 7, but I didn't proceed to secondary, as I had no birth certificate. I was the first born of a family of four. We lived on different farms on Forrester Estate. My father was a cook who moved from place to place, working for the same white man who was a cattle manager. My mother was both a general labourer and a housegirl. My father started out as a worker, then became foreman, then houseboy then cook. My grandparents were farmworkers too, working near Concession, and were originally from Mozambique. We moved to this farm

in 1992 when my father's boss moved. I have never married, but I have two boys and a girl, and live with my parents. We have never had any money. The pay was always poor. The white farm owner here was harsh. If you bought a bicycle or TV he wanted to know where it came from. There was a mindset that workers would always steal. Even if we had extra money, we would not buy things, as the farmer would be suspicious. Here you were not allowed to farm anything. No gardens even. In one year only he gave three 'lines' for all the workers, but that was it. We have been helped by my brothers. Two were kombi drivers in Banket, and my parents helped them get licences. They helped with the education of my kids, and fund my son at UZ [the University of Zimbabwe], where he's doing a law degree. Education is the most important thing, and our family is so proud of my son. He will be different to us. Today it's difficult to raise money — it's only *maricho*. Despite being old, my father and mother even go. We have a very small garden, where we grow vegetables and a bit of maize. We do have one cow which gives us milk. We don't have any other land. Those with connections got 1 ha plots, but otherwise farmworkers were prevented from getting resettlement land. The compound is home now. We have nowhere to go. This is where we live, however difficult. In the past you had a salary. You knew it would come. If the boss had relatives visiting, my father would get extra. Now you don't know where money will come from. But at least we will not be asked where we got the money to buy things. We now have a TV, sofa and kitchen unit. Each child has a bed. We also have solar. There is more freedom, but it's a tough life.

Case 5 (only garden, female): 'There's no-one to plan for you'

I was born in Forrester Estate in 1967. My father worked there on irrigation, opening water to the canal. My mother worked as a general worker. Later, when at school, my mother became sick so I left school. I looked after the other children, as I was the first born. I was married in 1980. I went with my husband to Mozambique in 1992, but returned here in 2009 as we divorced. We have a garden for growing tomatoes and vegetables. We go and sell by the roadside to raise cash for school fees. It's about an acre. I work with one of my sons in the garden, and do not hire labour. We do *maricho* ourselves. One son is here, but the others are in Mozambique, but I don't get any income from them. In the past when working for whites, we had very small gardens near the house only. Now we can grow more. My livelihood is better now, as I have the freedom to do gardening, and sell without asking anyone for permission. You can plan to do what you want: there's no one to plan for you. Before you were told what to do. Now time is your own. You have to plan: if you work the land you will be OK; if you are lazy and don't bother, you will starve.

Discussion

Across these cases, a recurrent theme is the sense of new freedoms, but also extreme challenges and precarious livelihoods, linked to new vulnerabilities and structural insecurities in an uncertain labour market. Reflections on the past focus on control, ordering and disciplining, and the 'domestic government' of the farm, but also stability and the certainty of a wage, even though that wage was often so low it was impossible to accumulate. Beyond these qualitative reflections, our data do not explore shifts in material conditions over time, nor changes in patterns of vulnerability. What is clear is that former farmworkers are pursuing very different livelihoods today compared to the waged employment of before, and this generates contrasting vulnerabilities and forms of precarity.

As the testimonies show, former farm owners were very different in their approach, although all expected farmworkers to be dependent and subservient, without independent income sources. Today, access to land is seen by all as crucial, given the lack of secure employment opportunities. In all cases this is combined with other livelihood activities. Now people identify themselves as farmers, employers as well as workers. Expectations of the next generation being different are also emphasized.

Access to land, as the key axis of difference, is heavily influenced by politics and patronage, with those gaining A1 or 1 ha plots doing so through their connections. This is highly gendered, with independent women, as in the last two cases, losing out. Involvement in other livelihood activities beyond farming and wage labour is also highly differentiated, with better-paying skilled trades, such as building and carpentry, being in high demand in the new resettlements (and mostly involving men), whilst other activities, such as vegetable selling and trading, are central to women's livelihoods, alongside casual farm labour. Different people weigh up the pros and cons of change in different ways. Gaining access to land, even if a very small plot, is seen as crucial, but this is only available to some, and highly dependent on social-political relations and connections. Very often for compound dwellers without 'offer letters', security of tenure is uncertain, and continued access is dependent on local patronage relations.

The biographies also highlight the multi-generational experience of farm work, and the continuous mobility of moving from farm to farm in search of work. Several have family connections with Mozambique or Malawi, but often a few generations removed. Home has become the farms, although some have continued communal area connections in Zimbabwe. Conflict with the A1 settlers is common, over wages and labour conditions, as well as access to land. But new accommodations are being reached, as land is rented and skills hired as diverse former farmworkers become incorporated in the new agrarian setting.

Above all, the cases highlight the complex livelihoods of former farmworkers, representing a classic picture of 'fragmented classes of labour' in

an agrarian setting. A singular category of 'farmworker' reliant on wage employment is clearly insufficient. A diversification and fragmentation of livelihoods creates opportunities for some, but challenges for others. A process of differentiation is occurring among the former farmworkers: some have access to land, some are new employers of others living in the compounds, while others are engaged in wider livelihood activities beyond the farm. Class, gender and age dynamics therefore intersect in the process of creating a new labour regime in these land reform areas.

PATTERNS OF DIFFERENTATION: A NEW LABOUR REGIME?

Table 4 provides a summary of the contrasts across the sample in relation to key indicators of social differentiation, including agricultural sales, wage income from casual farm work, and changing asset ownership and accumulation. The contrasts are stark. This is no 'amorphous peasantry' (Hill, 1968) or uniform, rural (semi-)proletariat; instead, different 'classes of labour' link land-based petty commodity production with self-employment and selling wage labour. The process of differentiation is a dynamic one. At land reform, all these households were working on large-scale farms as wage labourers. As Table 4 shows, all have accumulated assets since then. As the

Table 4. Investment and Accumulation

	A1 farmers, who were former farmworkers	Compound dwellers with 1 ha or more of land	Compound dwellers with land areas less than 1 ha	Compound dwellers with only small home gardens
Maize sales (kg in 2014, when 1 tonne was US$ 400)	504	137	24	0
Tobacco sales (kg in 2014, when 1 kg was US$ 3 on average)	1,031	470	232	27
Average wage income, based on days worked at US$ 3.5/day	ND	US$ 117	US$ 104	US$ 273
Cattle owned now/at time of resettlement	2.1/ND	3.0/0.8	1.2/0.3	0.1/0.2
Cattle purchased in last 5 years	0.7	0.3	0.2	0.0
Bicycles owned now/at resettlement	1.3/ND	0.7/0.5	0.3/0.1	0.4/0.0
Solar panels purchased in last 5 years	0.9	1.0	0.8	0.4
Mobile phones purchased in last 5 years	2.8	2.1	1.6	1.2

Note: ND = no data

interviewees repeatedly asserted, gaining access to land is crucial, but this, as we have seen, is influenced by political processes, and is highly gendered. Opportunities for off-farm work, and the terms of incorporation into the new labour economy, are similarly differentiated.

Earlier explorations of social differentiation and class formation in rural Zimbabwe (Cousins et al., 1992) identified a number of classes among communal area small-scale farmers in the decade following Independence. A similar classification emerged from a study of smallholder A1 resettlement farmers in Masvingo province in the 2000s (Scoones et al., 2012). These studies distinguish 'petty commodity producers' from 'worker peasants', the 'semi-peasantry' and the 'rural petit bourgeoisie'. All were associated with diverse livelihood strategies, combining on- and off-farm work, with some employing wage labour. Expanded reproduction through 'accumulation from below' (cf. Neocosmos, 1993) was achievable for some, reinforcing a process of social differentiation, but simple class assignations were impossible and, with processes of differentiation continuous, the categories were always mobile. In such settings, labour regimes are complex, with farm labour supplied from different households across classes, often with age- and gender-specific roles. Petty commodity producers, for example, combine family, collective and hired labour, while a rural petit bourgeoisie engages in sustained capitalist accumulation, extracting surplus from wage labour. This is a pattern seen in complex, and poorly understood, rural labour markets elsewhere (Oya and Pontara, 2015; Worby, 1995).

Reflecting on our livelihoods analysis, those who were allocated A1 plots are clearly doing the best. As a result of farm production, they are hiring labour, accumulating cattle, building homes and buying other goods, with 48 per cent having ploughs and 39 per cent having ox-carts. Three had bought cars, and on average 0.6 bicycles had been purchased by these households in the last five years. In sum, this group are similar to other 'petty commodity producers' in the wider resettlement areas, many of whom are 'accumulating from below', combining own production and labour hiring (Cousins, 2010).

Those who gained access to 1 ha plots after the land reform are also selling surplus production, and they also hire in labour to support their farming operations, mostly from the compounds. Their reliance on selling their own labour is relatively limited, although at the peak of the farming, curing or grading seasons, some family members may be hired. Many men in this group had higher grade jobs before, and may be sought out for advice. Their status in the former farm hierarchy often meant better education and connections locally, and this has benefited them in gaining access to land through local negotiations. Given the gendered access to such patronage relations, there are no female-headed households in this group. Through farm work in particular, these households have started accumulating and are investing in cattle, especially, and also a whole range of other goods, including solar panels, water pumps, bicycles and cars. Women in these households often have their own plots, and are also accumulating independently. Like those

allocated larger A1 plots, this group can also be seen as ‘petty commodity producers’, accumulating from below, but combining this with more wage work, which is usually seasonal or skill-specific.

Those with some, but limited, landholdings are more reliant on labouring and other off-farm livelihood activities, with women in particular being involved in vegetable sales. Many men in these households are engaged in trades, very often ones learnt previously as farmworkers, including building, carpentry and so on. They are now servicing the A1 areas where there is significant demand for building work, as people have established and improved their homes and built tobacco curing barns following land reform. Now they operate as independent, self-employed workers, setting their own terms in a context where demand is high, resulting in often quite well-remunerated but irregular employment. This is a complex grouping in class terms, with some who could be characterized as semi-proletarian ‘worker-peasants’, while others are more like the petty commodity producers described above. Selling labour — either as wage work on other farms or through informal labour markets for trades and services — is much more significant for this group. Although they are the most significant providers of farm labour in the area, however, this is far from stable, but is located in an informal, precarious exchange economy.

Finally, there are those who have only very small home gardens, although some are renting in land, and one household sells tobacco. Nearly half are female-headed households, including widows, divorcees and unmarried women. These households are reliant on selling labour to land reform farmers and other compound dwellers with plots, especially picking and sorting tobacco. They can be seen as ‘worker-peasants’ or part of a marginalized ‘semi-peasantry’.

Labour organization may involve farmers driving round with a pick-up and recruiting on the day, or may be mediated by a local broker (often a compound member) who is in mobile phone connection with a number of farmers, both A1 and A2, and who directs people to work openings, again by mobile phone. Such labour hiring is an option for both men and women, but is dominated by men, especially if the hiring is to more distant farms. Being especially reliant on selling labour for sustaining livelihoods is reflective of the pattern of casualization and feminization of the new informal labour regime. No longer under the control of a paternalistic farm owner, they must operate in a volatile market, at the mercy of brokers and other intermediaries. Within a household, managing income flows is often highly contested, with different people gaining wage income at different times. Separation, divorce and other forms of family conflict are, unsurprisingly, common under these conditions.

Overall, we can see diverse livelihoods being pursued by former farmworkers; some are accumulating, notably those with access to land, but others are not. A process of social differentiation, inflected in particular by gender differences, is evident, with a pattern of class formation emerging

among this group of former workers, heavily influenced by the politics of the new agrarian setting. The label 'farmworker' is clearly insufficient, as people's livelihood practices and identities, previously so wrapped up in the paternalistic relations of power on a particular farm, have been disrupted and refashioned following land reform.

As farm labour is reincorporated into new agrarian relations, inevitably new identities and identifications emerge. As the biographical interviews show, long family histories of farm work condition outlooks, perceptions and skills, and so affect who does what now. Equally, the contested politics of land reform influences how former farmworkers are seen by different actors. The discursive shadows cast by being a former farmworker are long, making it difficult to shed such identifies completely (Hartnack, 2017). But, as the case studies show, former farmworkers — highly significant in numerical terms in such areas as Mvurwi — are carving out new identities, associated with new livelihoods and relationships, moving beyond the social and political characterizations of the past. With relatively few having directly benefited from the land reform, others are now creating new opportunities, combining farm production with wage work and off-farm trades and business activities, and inserting themselves into the new agrarian economy.

These new 'fragmented classes of labour' are subject to different vulnerabilities and multiple challenges.[13] This is not to say that conditions are worse than before, as wage labour on large-scale commercial farms was often oppressive, with limited opportunities for accumulation, as our biographies show. Indeed, many former farmworkers describe how the situation has improved, particularly for those with access to land. However, challenges remain, and for many, livelihoods are harsh and precarious. Many such challenges emerge from the social-political position of former farmworkers in an informal economy, where patterns of 'social regulation', affected by gender, age and ethnicity (cf. Harriss-White, 2003; also Meagher, 1995), influence who gains what. Land access in the new resettlement areas is certainly limited, and political gatekeeping and patronage networks mean that not everyone benefits. Allocations of land since the land reform within the three farms we have studied have depended on complex negotiations between those in the compounds and local political leaders.

Many A1 settlers are suspicious of those in the compounds. Cheats, thieves, foreigners, MDC supporters and worse are the descriptors often used. This antagonism is not universal, however, as the post-2000 settlers are well aware that they need the labour and skills of those living there for

13. Our survey of compound-based households identified the lack of land (24 per cent) and employment (23 per cent) as the major challenges faced and, related to these, the lack of farm inputs (18 per cent) and shortage of cash (15 per cent). For some, food insecurity was prioritized (14 per cent), emerging from lack of land or jobs, and for others the lack of schools (4 per cent) and housing (1 per cent) was highlighted, related to the limited government support they received.

their tobacco production. Good relations in the end are necessary, and accommodations have to be found. Brokering by local politicians and traditional leaders resulted in the concessions of the 1 ha plots (see above); and land rental deals with nearby A2 farms to avoid antagonism have also occurred, as illustrated by the cases above. Compound leaders, usually with connections to the ruling party, ZANU-PF, have been able to create opportunities, but only for some. Usually it is the older, male, better-educated, previously higher-grade employees who have benefited, while the youth, single women and others with fewer connections have not, as the case studies show.

The four types of livelihood highlighted above are of course not fixed, but they do suggest an emerging pattern of class formation, with some petty commodity producers accumulating 'from below'; other 'worker-peasants' combining income-earning options; and others part of a more informalized group of semi-proletarianized footloose labour, taking up temporary work, and combining this with a whole range of other livelihood activities. The old labour regime, of wage work under the paternalistic system of farm-based 'domestic government', has gone. In its place is a much more fragmented livelihood pattern, based on a diversity of often unstable sources of income, although for some this provides an opportunity for accumulation which was not possible before. Yet, overall, just over half of our sample regard life today as an improvement. As one commented: 'Life in the past was very hard. It's definitely an improvement today. I didn't even have bicycle then, no cattle. Now I farm a bit, and have both'.[14]

CONCLUSIONS

Land, livelihoods and labour regimes are changing in the old, large-scale commercial farming areas of Zimbabwe, where land use and ownership have been radically transformed by land reform. Over time, there have been major shifts in social and class positions: from subservient, almost feudal, paternalistic arrangements under a white farm owner, to a more classic proletarian, wage-earning workforce under capitalist agriculture, regulated by a bureaucratic state. Today, following land reform, there are many more small-scale farms operating in the same areas, and a much more fluid, informal and unregulated arrangement, whereby temporary wage work combines with self-employment and petty commodity production, based on limited, but varied, ownership of land.

Among former farmworkers various outcomes are observed, characterized by four different types of livelihood, which can be seen as diverse 'classes of labour' given the combination of farm production with a range of informal, often precarious, labouring activities. This new labour regime is

14. Source: Interview, farm compound, April 2016.

shaping the new agrarian landscape. This is now more typical of non-settler economies elsewhere in Africa. These 'fragmented classes of labour' are the result of processes of social differentiation, as well as local politics and patronage. Such new livelihoods create greater freedom and independence for former farmworkers, while simultaneously resulting in different forms of vulnerability and insecurity.

The nature of 'work' and 'employment', as well as 'modes of belonging' and definitions of 'citizenship' (Rutherford, 2008) have also fundamentally changed and with them the wider 'terrain of politics' (cf. Li, 2011; Rutherford, 2017) within which relationships between land and labour are negotiated. In the post-land reform setting, a simple label of 'farmworker' is insufficient, as diverse classes of labour exist side-by-side, influenced by a process of social differentiation, driven by the social and political conditions of the new agrarian setting. Central to this process of social differentiation is access to land, which in turn has been heavily influenced by local politics and patronage relations, since former farmworkers were often seen as 'enemies' of land reform, with many not initially benefiting from it. Inserting themselves into a significantly altered agrarian structure, and seeking out livelihoods in order to survive, has not been easy, and some have done better than others. For some, trajectories of accumulation are observed, as agricultural production and marketing is combined with off-farm work; for others reliance on casual, informal work is the dominant livelihood strategy for survival under precarious conditions. Beyond the material consequences of these changes, as represented by patterns of asset ownership, investment and accumulation, there are other factors that emerge in people's accounts. Autonomy, independence and freedom are frequently highlighted in former farmworkers' testimonies, all seen as highly positive, even if material conditions are harsh.

Today, identities are not fashioned by the association with a farm and its particular owner, but in relation to the realities of securing a livelihood. While conflicts exist between new post-reform settlers and those living in the compounds, there are also emergent solidarities, and relationships of support and reliance. As new settlers seek to increase tobacco production, for example, they need the skills of former farmworkers, as well as their labour. And, as former farmworkers begin to farm, even on small plots, they face many of the same challenges as their resettlement farmer counterparts, including lack of state support, inadequate markets and exploitative contracting deals with tobacco firms.

Whilst for some, notably the labour unions, there is a continued emphasis on 'farmworker' wages and rights, those who used to be farmworkers themselves have had, by necessity, to get on with life in the 18 years since land reform. A lack of focus on what has happened in this period means that there has been little informed debate about what frameworks are required to support this large population. As international aid donors, NGOs and others re-engage with Zimbabwe in the post-Mugabe era, new thinking based on

emergent realities on the ground is needed, rather than assuming that the old category of 'farmworker' as waged employee is still relevant.

Tobacco production, now the mainstay of Zimbabwe's fragile agricultural economy, is highly reliant on labour, yet this must be secured under a very different labour regime to what went before. Some important new questions arise. What labour rights do those living in the farm labour compounds have? What is the future of the former labour compounds in the new resettlements, where significant populations live? What other livelihood support is required, including access to land, to sustain the livelihoods of former farmworkers, now increasingly integrated in a new agrarian structure? Will, in the longer term, a more formalized, wage work regime become reinstated, or will an informal wage economy combined with small-scale agriculture, involving diverse classes of labour, persist?

These are important questions, currently barely being discussed. In the unhelpfully polarized debate around Zimbabwe's agrarian future, farmworkers are frequently seen only as victims of an unjust reform,[15] rather than being appreciated as a significant rural population integrating in a new agrarian landscape, whose livelihood needs — contextualized by history and politics — must be taken seriously. As in South Africa, where a large, informal workforce supports agriculture, but often with people living off-farm and in informal settlements, the prospects for coordinated policy action or collective response seem remote (Visser and Ferrer, 2015). Yet, as in the case of the De Doorns strike in the Western Cape, effective mobilizations can occur (Wilderman, 2015). Forms of organization have to move beyond a focus solely on wage and labour issues to wider livelihood and welfare concerns.

Across southern Africa, and beyond, agricultural labour regimes are changing from more formal, regulated systems centred on wage work, with clear conditions of employment, to more informal systems, where 'work', as paid employment, is only one element of a range of livelihood activities, part of a complex bricolage of opportunities put together often under very difficult conditions (Du Toit, 2004). This poorly understood reality is increasingly common, a consequence of wider processes of change under deregulation and neoliberal globalization (Ferguson and Li, 2018). The reconfiguration of labour regimes, away from a clearly exploitative dependence on a commercial farmer, towards a more flexible, informal arrangement, does not mean that patterns of dependency and patronage disappear, of course, as new social relations emerge between workers, brokers and new farmers, inflected by class, gender and age, affecting who gains what and how.

The question of wage labour, combined with self-employment and farm work, in agrarian change processes is frequently poorly understood, and

15. See, for example, the campaign film, *House of Justice* (https://vimeo.com/24309617), featuring the head of the General Agricultural and Plantation Workers Union of Zimbabwe, Gertrude Hambira; also various reports by the Justice for Agriculture Group (see, e.g. *The Zimbabwean*, 2008).

informed by inadequate statistics (Oya, 2013). Yet the emergence of fragmented classes of labour, centred on diverse livelihoods, is a common phenomenon the world over (Bernstein, 2006), reconfiguring our understandings of labour and work in developmental processes (Chhachhi, 2014; Ferguson, 2015). This article has offered an insight into one setting, where radical land reform has accelerated this process of informalization, changing farm labour and employment patterns dramatically. By understanding how former wage-earning farmworkers adapted to this change and became incorporated in the new agrarian economy, important insights are gained into the changing pattern of agrarian labour regimes, with relevance far beyond Zimbabwe.

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Ian Scoones (corresponding author: i.scoones@ids.ac.uk) is a professorial fellow at the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex, Brighton, UK, and director of the ESRC STEPS Centre. He has worked on land and agrarian change issues in Zimbabwe since 1986, and runs a blog at www.zimbabweland.wordpress.org.

Blasio Mavedzenge was formerly a research technician and agricultural extension officer with the Zimbabwe Ministry of Agriculture. Until his untimely death in August 2017, he was farming in Masvingo province, Zimbabwe.

Felix Murimbarimba (felixmurimba@gmail.com) was formerly a research technician and agricultural extension officer with the Zimbabwe Ministry of Agriculture. He now works with the Agricultural Policy Research in Africa programme (APRA), and is a sugarcane farmer in Hippo Valley, Zimbabwe.

Chrispen Sukume (csukume@africaonline.co.zw) is an agricultural economist, formerly of the University of Zimbabwe, and now with the Livestock and Meat Advisory Council of Zimbabwe. He is country lead for the Agricultural Policy Research in Africa programme (APRA), based in Harare, Zimbabwe.