

**AN AGRARIAN HISTORY OF THE MWENEZI DISTRICT,  
ZIMBABWE, 1980-2004**

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**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF M.PHIL IN LAND AND  
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**ABSTRACT****An Agrarian History of the Mwenezi District, Zimbabwe, 1980-2004**

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The thesis examines continuity and change in the agrarian history of the Mwenezi district, southern Zimbabwe since 1980. It analyses agrarian reforms, agrarian practices and development initiatives in the district and situates them in the localised livelihood strategies of different people within Dinhe Communal Area and Mangondi Resettlement Area in lieu of the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) since 2000. The thesis also examines the livelihood opportunities and challenges presented by the FTLRP to the inhabitants of Mwenezi. Land reform can be an opportunity that can help communities in drought prone districts like Mwenezi to attain food security and reduce dependence on food handouts from donor agencies and the government. The land reform presented the new farmers with multiple land use patterns and livelihood opportunities. In addition, the thesis locates the current programme in the context of previous post-colonial agrarian reforms in Mwenezi. It also emphasizes the importance of diversifying rural livelihood portfolios and argues for the establishment of smallholder irrigation schemes in Mwenezi using water from the Manyuchi dam, the fourth largest dam in Zimbabwe. The thesis calls for the need to consider other forms of land use like tourism, fishing and game hunting as well as the reliance on local resources and local knowledge systems. The thesis contributes to the growing body of empirical studies on the impact of Zimbabwe's ongoing land reform programme and to debates and discourses on agrarian reform

**Key Words:** Zimbabwe, Mwenezi, Agrarian History, Agrarian Reform, Land Reform, Land Tenure, Sustainable Development, environment, Gender, Livelihoods

**DECLARATION**

I declare that *An Agrarian History of the Mwenezi District, 1980-2004* is my own work, that it has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged as complete references.

Kudakwashe Manganga

November 2007



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## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

### **Overview**

This study focuses on the agrarian history of the Mwenezi district of the Masvingo province in Zimbabwe. It explores histories of agrarian change, land reform and the socio-economic impact of the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) on the inhabitants of Mwenezi. Agrarian reform is an amalgam, which encompasses land resettlement or redistribution, land consolidation, land tenure reform and other changes in land use patterns.

Unresolved land problems inherited from the colonial past are part of the colonial baggage that the post colonial state in Africa, Asia and Latin America has been trying to unload. The colonial encounter and land expropriation, in Zimbabwe, by European settlers from the autochthons engendered marked inequalities with regard to access to, and ownership of, land on the basis of race. Consequently, at independence, in 1980, and even after, a greater part of the country's fertile land was in the hands of a few white commercial farmers.

The need to address such imbalances and skewed land ownership patterns by the postcolonial state cannot be overemphasized. Land and agrarian reform can help address socio-economic inequalities, eradicate poverty and can be argued to be part of the democratisation process that a number of developing countries like Zimbabwe, South Africa, Namibia, Mexico and Venezuela are going through (Moyo 2001). Land reform and agriculture can be the basis for social transformation and democratisation, food



security, income generation, the provision of gainful employment and the improvement of the quality of life of rural communities. It has also been observed that “greater equality in access to land ownership would increase economic growth and reduce poverty, while minimising the risk of a future land crisis” (International Crisis Group (ICG), 2004: vi).

Land reform is a highly complex and contested terrain. It is a debatable and contentious issue in development, political, economic, social and academic discourses. Rukuni and Jensen (2003:253) note that land reform “encompasses any change that redistributes land”. They further assert that “because land is a finite resource and its ownership is generally symbolic of wealth, social status and political power, all forms of land reform are political in nature” (Rukuni and Jensen, 2003:253). Land reform often involves a restructuring of wealth, income, social status and prestige (Rukuni and Jensen, 2003:254), which are essential components of politics. In addition, land reform can be ‘revolutionary’ as it involves the transfer of power from one societal group to another. It is this dimension that makes it problematic and controversial if it is not done in a transparent, programmed, systematic and equitable manner.

Land tenure reform is an integral part of land reform (Breytenbach 2004; Byres 2004). In essence, it entails the rules that govern land and land related property rights (Rukuni and Jensen, 2003:254). For land reform to be successful there is need for security of tenure. Security of tenure encourages farmers to invest in their land and this can result in increased agricultural productivity.

## **The Regional Context**

Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe share similar land problems as colonialism and apartheid engendered skewed land ownership patterns. These countries share histories of race-based colonial land dispossession (Goebel 2005). However, the dimensions of the land problems are country specific (Greenberg 2004). According to Marongwe (2004: 18), southern Africa's land debate is informed by the colonial land expropriation experiences, the nature of the decolonisation process and land reform experiences of individual countries in the post-independence period.

Overall, the land problems in southern Africa are characterised by imbalances in the patterns of land ownership in countries like Zimbabwe, South Africa and Namibia; while in Botswana, Malawi and Zambia the debate is more about tenure rights and land utilisation (Marongwe 2004; Moyo 2000). In Botswana, land rights of the minority 'Baswara' (San) are yet to be recognised by the country's Land Tenure Policy (Marongwe, 2004:21). In Namibia, pastoral groups in the centre and north of the country are pressing for more grazing land. South Africa's unresolved land problem has been described as a ticking time bomb (New African, November 2002). The end of apartheid and the dawn of a new political dispensation, in 1994, did not automatically find a panacea for the country's land problem.

Zimbabwe, South Africa and Namibia have adopted different approaches to their land problems. The concept of "willing seller- willing buyer" has dominated the discourse on land in South Africa since 1994 (see Lahiff 2005). The approach seems to have been

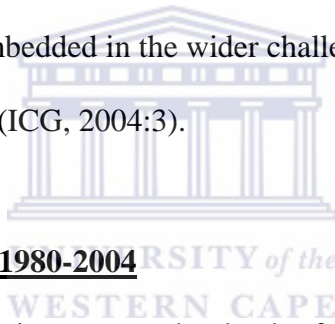
influenced by the market-led, market-based or negotiated land reforms advocated by the World Bank since the early 1990s. The South African version of the willing seller-willing buyer was also “influenced by the course of land reform in Zimbabwe, where it had a very particular meaning rooted in the Lancaster House Agreement” (Lahiff, 2005:1). In South Africa, the concept entails a situation whereby private land owners (the willing sellers) are free to sell their land to the highest bidder or buyer of their choice, unlike in Zimbabwe where the state was the only willing buyer (Lahiff 2005). Beneficiaries or the willing buyers in South Africa have to compete for the available land on the market at the prevailing market prices.

Since 1994, South Africa has embarked on a market driven land reform, and a demand-driven and rights-based approach to tenure reforms. From a legal perspective, the country’s systems and policies to deal with land reform are “probably the most advanced” in the region (De Villiers, 2003:1). However, the unavailability of resources is a limiting factor. In Namibia, the pressure for a Zimbabwe-style-state-driven land reform is increasing (De Villiers, 2003:1).

The successes and failures of Zimbabwe’s farm occupations and the FTLRP can provide lessons for countries in the region (De Villiers 2003; Palmer 1999; Sukume 2004). In addition, Zimbabwe’s land reform had a demonstrating effect as it partly led to the emergency and increasing militancy of South Africa’s Landless People’s Movement (Cousins 2003; Goebel 2005; Moyo 2002). Although it is difficult to predict the course of

events in Namibia and South Africa (Sukume, 2004:4), Goebel (2005) argues that South Africa is unlikely to take Zimbabwe's path.

Nevertheless, land reform, whether state or market driven, remains a necessity in southern Africa. Marongwe (2004:18) observes that "land reform is central in the development strategy that is expected to provide the base for rural livelihoods". He adds that access to key resources like water, forests and wildlife is relevant when discussing land and resource rights in the region. Along the same vein, it has been observed that, "throughout Southern Africa, questions relating to the control, ownership and use of land have become increasingly embedded in the wider challenges of development, livelihoods, governance and HIV/AIDS" (ICG, 2004:3).



### **The Zimbabwean Context, 1980-2004**

From the discussion above, it is apparent that land reform is not uniquely a Zimbabwean issue. However, Zimbabwe makes an interesting case study. Scholars like Moyo have described the land reform in Zimbabwe as 'radical' (Moyo 2001; 2004; Goebel, 2005; De Villiers 2003). To say Zimbabwe's land reform has been 'radical' can, however, be problematic as it does not correspond to being 'radical' if compared, for instance, with the Mexican Revolution of 1917. In addition, as will be argued later, the FTLRP also failed to decongest the communal areas as had been expected. Zimbabwe's land reform is, therefore, not radical in the Marxian sense of being revolutionary, but in the chaotic manner in which it was executed. Nevertheless, Moyo (2004:2) argues that, if judged by its effectiveness in acquiring land, the land occupation movement has been the most

notable of rural movements in the world today. Moyo and Yeros (2004) further claim that the 'land occupation movement' in Zimbabwe has been the most important challenge to the neo-colonial state in Africa under structural adjustment. It should, however, be noted that the existence of a 'land occupation movement' in Zimbabwe is subject to debate.

From 1980, Zimbabwe embarked on a number of reforms meant to address the colonial land imbalances. According to Moyo (2004), Zimbabwe's land reform process can be divided into three phases:

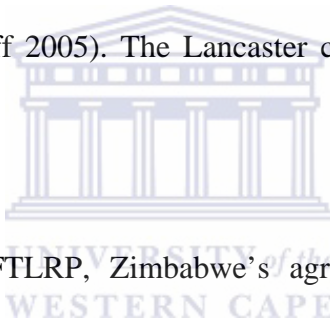
- i. 1980- 1992- a period characterised by market driven reforms;
- ii. 1993-1999- a period characterised by the beginning of an official challenge to the market method, and
- iii. Post-2000- a period when the market method was abandoned and replaced by compulsory state acquisition.

However, throughout these periods, low and high intensity land occupations were driving forces of land reform (Chitiyo 2000).

At independence, the white agrarian bourgeoisie, amounting to about 6000 large-scale white commercial farmers, owned 39 per cent of the land that amounted to 15.5 million hectares of prime farmland, while about 1 million black households had 41.4 per cent of the land (16.4 million hectares), which was on marginal areas (Marongwe, 2004:20; Moyo 1995; Moyo and Yeros 2004; ICG 2004). The white minority, constituting below 3 per cent of the total population, commanded nearly two-thirds of national income, while

the black majority, at 97 per cent, took the remaining one-third (Moyo, 2004:5; Moyo and Yeros 2004; ICG 2004).

Zimbabwe's land reform was also influenced by the Lancaster House Agreement of 1979, which established the willing-seller willing-buyer principle as the basis of land reform. The state was entitled to expropriate unused and under-used land but the more productive land in the hands of white owners could only be acquired if the state was willing to pay the land's market value. The state was not obliged to buy land that was not offered by the willing sellers. In addition, the state was the sole buyer and not the intended beneficiaries (Lahiff 2005). The Lancaster constitutional provision expired in 1990.



In addition, prior to the FTLRP, Zimbabwe's agricultural sector was dualistic in structure. It consisted of a highly mechanised white commercial sector with free hold title to land, and a low-technology all black smallholder sector under mixed tenure systems. In addition to the two major sectors, there was a small-scale commercial sector which held land under lease from the government (Sukume *et al* 2000; Sukume 2004).

In the 1980s, land reform was thought to be the mainstay of the growth with equity national development plan (Moyo 2000; Sukume 2004). The beneficiaries of land reform at this stage were to be the landless, former refugees, war veterans and former commercial farm workers (Kinsey 1983; Tshuma 1987). Zimbabwe's land reform was pursued within a state-centred, but market-based approach to land acquisition on a

willing-seller-willing-buyer basis according to the provisions of the Lancaster Agreement (Moyo, 2004:6). There was notable progress in the pace of the land reform between 1980 and 1984, when Zimbabwe was an agricultural success story. However, land reform under the market mechanism was limited as the government resettled 58 000 on 3 million hectares when the target was 162 000 families. In addition, land acquired under the willing-seller willing-buyer was of inferior agricultural quality in terms of soil fertility and favourable rainfall patterns (Manzungu and Machiridza 2005; Moyo 1995; Moyo and Yeros 2004). The market mechanism affected the cost, quality and quantity of land acquired for redistribution (Marongwe 2004).

Between 1985 and 1992, the pace of land acquisition drastically fell to 75 000 hectares per year. This was due to financial constraints, the limitations posed by the market driven approach and doubts on the sustainability and productivity of resettlement models which were initiated in the early 1980s. Meanwhile, the state was grappling with the problem of 'squatting' and resource poaching by landless peasants (Alexander 2003; Chitiyo 2000). Land occupations or squatting were taking place in a context of dwindling resources for land resettlement and economic liberalisation under the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP), which eroded incomes of urban households (Moyo 2004; Hammar and Raftopoulos 2003). However, in the late 1990s, the land occupations expanded and culminated in a more intense movement, which Moyo (2004) refers to as the high profile intensive land occupations. These began in 1997 when the government succumbed to the demands by the veterans of Zimbabwe's war of liberation and designated 1 471 white commercial farms for resettlement (Moyo 2001; 2003). Along the same vein, Hammar

and Raftopoulos (2003:7) observe that sustained lobbying of government by the war veterans for greater financial compensation, political recognition and progress on land redistribution reached a crescendo in 1997, when the government gave in to the demands of the war veterans. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the land occupation of the 1990s were community-led. It is simplistic to assume that the farm occupations were solely led by the war veterans as such an assertion overlooks the complex dimensions of the FTLRP.

In addition, after 1990, the Zimbabwean government initiated constitutional amendments that removed restrictions on land acquisition that had been imposed by the Lancaster Agreement. Consequently, a National Land Policy Document was published in 1990. In 1992 the Land Acquisition Act (LAA) was enacted. This allowed for the compulsory acquisition of farms following a designation exercise (Chitiyo 2000; Sukume 2004). The 1990s also witnessed the emergence of the Affirmative Action Group (AAG), a vocal lobby group calling for black economic empowerment and indigenisation. As a result, the government revised its resettlement programme to accommodate commercial farming (Moyo 1995). In 1995, the government started the Commercial Farm Settlement Scheme to help 'indigenous' or black Zimbabweans venture into commercial agriculture. However, as in the current land reform exercise, the black economic empowerment effort lacked transparency. The government also failed to consult all stakeholders. The Land Donor Conference of September 1998 did not approve the government's National Land Policy and Phase 2 of the Land Redistribution and Resettlement Programme that aimed at distributing 5 million hectares of land over 5 years. The donors felt that the programme



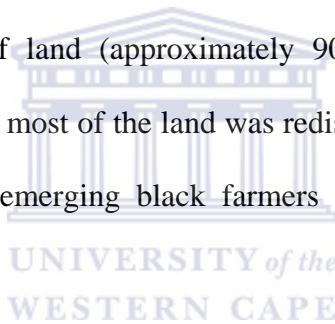
was too ambitious and suggested an Inception Phase Framework Plan (IPFP) based on 1 million hectares (Sukume, 2004:10). International donors also agreed to fund the IPFP.

However, with a changing socio-political context, in 2000 land reform assumed a new political and violent tone (Goebel, 2005:345; Moyo, 2004:19-20; Sukume, 2004:10). According to Moyo (2001:318), “the rejection of the draft constitution in February 2000 was a precursor to the current land occupations in Zimbabwe”. Mass land occupations, led by war veterans, began in Masvingo province and spread to other provinces. The 12 war veterans who occupied farms in Masvingo alleged that white farmers had connived with the political opposition to defeat the draft constitution (Moyo, 2001:38; Moyo, 2004:9). Subsequently, farm occupations became violent and were “intertwined with the political campaign for the June 2000 parliamentary elections” (Moyo, 2004:9). Land became highly politicised and this further polarised Zimbabwean politics. The political opposition was critical of the manner and timing of the land reform. Led by the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), the political opposition called for transparency, poverty reduction, the rule of law and macro-economic stabilisation (Moyo 2001).

The Implementation of the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) started in July 2000 (Marongwe, 2004:22), with the objective of accelerating land acquisition and redistribution. The supposed failure of the IPFP to come to fruition became justification for the adoption of the FTLRP. It is, however, apparent that the FTLRP was closely

linked to the rejection of the Draft Constitution in February 2000 and the subsequent farm occupations.

In principle, the FTLRP involved the takeover of land from mainly white commercial farmers and the settlement of a diversity of people. However, in practise the land reform did not necessarily benefit landless Zimbabweans as the political elite and those with political connections largely benefited from the FTLRP. Land was identified, leading to government issuing notices followed by immediate acquisition. By June 2000, about 800 farms had been occupied and by the end of 2002 the FTLRP had compulsorily acquired over 10 million hectares of land (approximately 90 per cent of white commercial farmland). By the year 2004, most of the land was redistributed to about 127 000 peasant households and over 8000 emerging black farmers (Marongwe, 2004:22; Moyo and Yeros 2004).

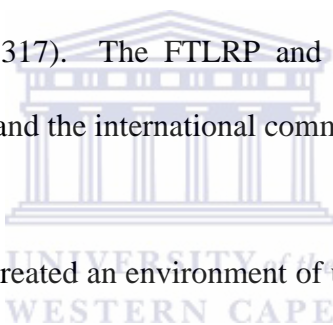


Land allocation under the FTLRP (2000-2003) took the following patterns:

**a). A1 Model-** consisting of use rights to a family plot and common grazing land. Family plots are inheritable but not marketable. The ICG (2004:85) claims that A1 Plots were often directed to people loyal to the local power structures.

**b). A2 Model-** consisting of leasehold title with a proposed option to buy. The large-scale commercial A2 farms were “mainly doled out to key figures within the government and security services” (ICG, 2004:84).

The farm occupations were legitimised under the Rural Land Occupiers Act of 2000. Before the Act came into being, land occupations were illegal under Zimbabwean laws (Marongwe, 2004:22). The government then amended the country's laws in a bid to normalise the chaos that had been generated by the farm occupations and the FTLRP. This resulted in the 2002 constitutional amendment, which placed responsibility for compensating large-scale white commercial farmers affected by the land reform onto the former colonial power, Britain, (Marongwe, 2004:22). Hitherto, the British Labour Government, which succeeded the Conservative Government, had denied any historical responsibility for land expropriation on the grounds that its members were not of the land owning stock (Moyo, 2001:317). The FTLRP and the farm occupations created an impasse between Zimbabwe and the international community.



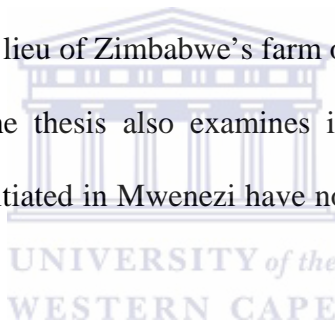
In addition, the land reform created an environment of uncertainty with regard to the land rights of the affected white farmers. The land rights of the resettled farmers also remain uncertain. The offer letters given to the new farmers do not guarantee them against future evictions (Bate 2006; Gratwicke and Stapelkamp 2006).

The ad hoc nature of the land reform exercise drew criticism from opposition parties, NGOs, academia and the international community. Zimbabwe's land reform programme has been condemned by neo-liberal scholars who see it as compromising democratic ethos; disregarding issues of human rights, especially those of the white commercial farmers and their farm workers; disrupting production and negatively affecting the natural environment. Scholarship has been dichotomised with some advocating for a

market driven reform while others dismiss this as not practicable and support the state led reform.

The nature of Zimbabwe's land reform raises cardinal questions about sustainability. Although it is apparent that the land reform, despite its shortcomings, is not reversible, the question is has it been effective with regard to equity and food security for rural households?

As a case study of this question, the thesis analyses the agrarian history of the Mwenezi district from 1980 to 2004 in lieu of Zimbabwe's farm occupations and the fast-track land resettlement programme. The thesis also examines if agrarian and land policies and development programmes initiated in Mwenezi have not compromised the district's food security.



### **Aims and Objectives**

The main aims and objectives of this study were to:

- i). Examine land use and agrarian practices in the Mwenezi District from 1980 to 2004 focusing on continuity and change.
  
- ii). Analyse the socio-economic implications of the current land reform exercise to the inhabitants of Mwenezi.

## **Rationale**

Mwenezi constitutes an interesting case study for discussion on land and agrarian reform. In the early 1980s, the local leadership in the district initiated the Mwenezi Radical Land Reform Programme (MRLRP), involving internal resettlement. In addition, together with Mberengwa and Gwanda districts, Mwenezi accounted for about 30 per cent of the land identified by the state for resettlement. The district ironically, had extensive and supposedly 'under-utilised' land before the current land reform.

Although it receives low and erratic rainfall, Mwenezi has the potential to become Masvingo Province's breadbasket. One of the largest dams in the country, Manyuchi dam, is in the district. The dam has great irrigation potential. This study therefore documents continuity and change in Mwenezi's agrarian history and considers the implications of the current land reform on equity, poverty eradication and rural livelihoods. The thesis also contributes to the literature on land reform and agrarian studies.

## **Thesis Overview**

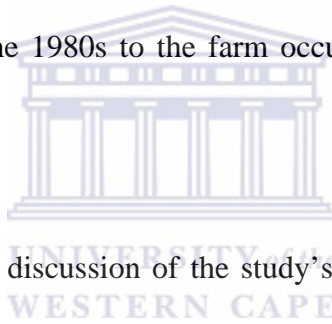
The thesis is divided into seven chapters. The present chapter has introduced the main focus of the study and gave a synopsis of the land reform in Zimbabwe from 1980 to the current land reform and resettlement programme. Zimbabwe's experience has been situated in the broader context of land and agrarian reforms in the region.

The second chapter focuses on the literature review or background to the study. It emphasises that land reform is a topical issue in academic discourse and therefore warrants interrogation. The chapter acknowledges the existence of a large corpus of scholarly works on the subject and situates the thesis in this broader context. Although there is divergence of opinion on the nature of the land reform Zimbabwe should have adopted, there is consensus on the need to address colonial and post-colonial land imbalances. In addition, the chapter argues for the case study approach as opposed to macro-theoretical debates on Zimbabwe's land reform.

The third chapter discusses the conceptual issues around the study as well as the research methods used in pursuit of the study's aims and objectives. Additionally, the chapter provides working definitions of some of the essential terms used in the thesis. These include agrarian reform, agrarian history, land reform, land tenure, livelihoods, gender and the environment. The chapter calls for a land reform that is sensitive to equity, poverty eradication, environmental protection and the needs of future generations. In addition, there is need for political will on the part of local and national leaders to translate their declaration of intent into objective reality.

In the fourth chapter, the thesis provides an overview of the case study areas, which are Dinhe and Mangondi. The chapter discusses Mwenezi's agro-ecological conditions as well as the district's ethnic composition. The chapter also provides an overview on poverty, livelihoods and agricultural production in Mwenezi.

The fifth chapter discusses land reform and development initiatives in Mwenezi between 1980 and 2004. These include the Mwenezi Radical Land Reform Programme, the Manyuchi Dam Project, the Mwenezi Palm Oil Project and the FTLRP. In addition, the thesis argues that most development projects in the district have not been effective as they have failed to eradicate poverty, ensure multiple and sustainable livelihoods, gender equality and the protection of the environment. Consequently, the chapter argues for the need to support smallholder irrigation projects like the Dinhe Irrigation Scheme, as opposed to large-scale irrigation projects. The chapter also highlights the importance of water management in dry regions like Mwenezi. In addition, the chapter discusses land reforms in Mwenezi from the 1980s to the farm occupations, which began in the year 2000.



The sixth chapter presents a discussion of the study's main findings. It focuses on the impact of the land reform on the environment, equity and rural livelihoods. The chapter discusses the role of NGOs in poverty alleviation and environmental protection. It also emphasises the importance of security of tenure in ensuring a sustainable land reform. On the whole, the chapter notes that the land reform has not been effective thus far.

The seventh chapter gives a synopsis and discussion of the salient issues raised in the thesis. It provides an overview of the impact of the FTLRP on equity, the environment and rural livelihoods in Mwenezi.

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Introduction**

This chapter reviews some selected works on land and agrarian reform in Zimbabwe. It also situates the thesis in the context of the prevailing academic views and discourses on the subject. It should, however, be made clear that this literature review is in no way exhaustive. Due to limitations posed by accessibility of sources and time constraints, attention was given to works on agrarian and land reform, gender and resettlement in Zimbabwe.

### **Land and Agrarian Reform**

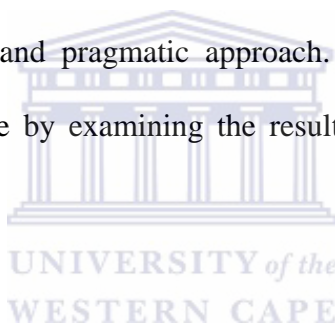
Land reform is a very topical issue in both political and academic discourse. Unsolved land questions inherited from colonial pasts, are not particular to Zimbabwe. Countries like Australia, South Africa and Namibia are still grappling with this challenge (de Villiers 2003; Sukume 2004). Moyo (2001) has advanced the argument that the land occupations in Zimbabwean are a manifestation of a larger phenomenon happening across the south, that is, in Latin America, Asia and other African countries. These occupations, Moyo (2001) argues, reflect common grievances arising from unresolved agrarian questions.

Like many other authors, Moyo blames the country's neo-liberal experiment in the 1990s, after some flirtations with socialism in the 1980s, for the failure to address the land problems. He regards the neo-liberal views about the current Zimbabwean crisis as too simplistic and advances the restitution and justice/equity paradigm. Hammar and Raftopoulos (2003), however, observe that equitable land redistribution might have received widespread support had it been implemented in a programmatic and systematic



manner. The farm occupations and the FTLRP have attracted scholarly and political attention and also presented lessons for countries like South Africa, Namibia and Kenya.

There is a plethora of scholarly works on land and the agrarian reform in Zimbabwe. Moyo, (1986; 1995; 2000; 2001; 2004; 2005) has produced a large corpus of academic works on the subject. He argues that before independence the land question was articulated by the liberation movements, which anticipated the expropriation of all alienated land from white owners for the benefit of the hitherto marginalized black majority. However, the post-colonial state did not immediately meet these aspirations. Instead, it took a cautious and pragmatic approach. Moyo (1986) has also analysed changes in agrarian structure by examining the results and effects of various agrarian reforms in the early 1980s.



In addition, Moyo (1995) calls for the need for discussion on land to move from the abstract macro-theoretical level and the general to the specific. He argues for the need to go beyond the rigid notions of ‘the land question’ towards a more transparent and multi-layered set of land questions (Hammar, Raftopoulos and Jensen 2003). Moyo does not only emphasise the dynamism of the politics of land, but also calls for the need for empirical evidence and micro level studies. It is this gap that this study sought to fill.

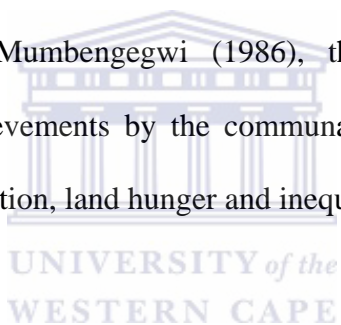
Mumbengewi’s (1986) work also marked another early attempt to grapple with Zimbabwe’s land question. He examined agriculture in the first five years of independence and argued that there was no sharp break with that of the Unilateral

Declaration of Independence (UDI) era (1965-1979). In other words, there was more of continuity than change in Zimbabwe's agricultural policy between 1965 and 1985. However, Mumbengegwi focused on policy and erroneously anticipated a socialist agricultural transformation.

Tshuma (1997) examines Zimbabwe's agrarian question from the colonial to the postcolonial period from a legal point of view and seems to take an anti-liberal stance. Like Mumbengegwi (1986), Tshuma sees more of continuity than change in land policy from the colonial era to the 1990s. He observes that the independence constitution, which was based on the willing seller-willing buyer approach, slowed land redistribution. Tshuma (1997) also argues that private rights and freehold tenure created conditions that perpetuated undemocratic and exploitative agrarian relations of production. In short, Tshuma illuminates the contradictions and shortfalls of liberal legality and constitutionalism and its failure to engender democratisation and equity through land redistribution.

The above sentiments are shared by Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru (2002), who argues that before 2002, legal justice had proved illusive for the agrarian aspirations of the majority of the Zimbabwean people. Although the legalities surrounding the agrarian question do not constitute the focus of the thesis, it concurs with Moyo (2001) and Tshuma (1997) that democracy without equity is meaningless. Land redistribution can be argued to be part of the democratisation process that can help address the problem of inequality.

Rukuni and Eicher (1994) made a notable contribution to the discussion on Zimbabwe's agrarian history and land reform. They examined the historical development of agriculture in Zimbabwe from 1890 to 1994 and the lessons that other southern African countries can draw from the Zimbabwean experience. Their overall discussion centred on the premise that up to the early 1980s, Zimbabwe constituted an agrarian success story. The authors identified two revolutions in Zimbabwe's agrarian history; the first one (1950-1980) was based on increased cotton, maize and tobacco production by a handful of white commercial farmers; while the second one (1980-1985) was based on increased smallholder cotton and maize production by a few agro-ecologically privileged communal farmers. Like Mumbengegwi (1986), they noted that underneath the supposedly impressive achievements by the communal farmers lay cardinal questions about sustainability, malnutrition, land hunger and inequitable land ownership.



Another dimension of Zimbabwe's land debate is discussed by Chitiyo (2000), who explores violence as both a cause and effect of the land crisis, and the link between the land crisis and the 'war veteran situation' in Zimbabwe. The land question was one of the causes of Zimbabwe's war of liberation and demobilized war veterans constitute a sizeable percentage of the rural poor. This probably explains why the war veterans were the flag-bearers of the farm occupations. Chitiyo demonstrates that landless peasants have traditionally opposed the skewed land ownership pattern through the use of silent violence (the threatened or actual use of force against livestock and the environment). Examples of silent violence include resource poaching. Chitiyo notes that since the land

reform remains incomplete, silent violence will remain a problem for the foreseeable future in Zimbabwe.

Until recently, Chitiyo (2000) argues, Zimbabwe had managed to suppress 'loud' violence or the use or threatened use of violence against people and their property. War veterans, a critical component in Zimbabwe's land question, were defused through persuasion, coercion and financial compensation. In 2000, the war veterans were almost out of the state's control and loud violence failed to stop the farm occupations. Chitiyo also argues that the state has not eliminated landlessness and poverty, which are the root causes of agrarian conflict. The thesis borrows from Chitiyo's analysis and also calls for studies to break new ground by mapping practical solutions to the problems of poverty and landlessness in particular communities and in specific contexts. This study, therefore, makes a contribution toward this end.

Scoones (1996) focuses on challenges faced by farmers in dry land areas and their responses to risks, uncertainties, hazards and opportunities. Lessons for policy and practice are drawn from detailed studies carried out in the Chivi district of the Masvingo province. Scoones' work was one of the studies that marked some of the departures from macro-level theoretical debates, generalisations and rhetoric on the sustainable development debate, to focus on complexities and particular details in specific districts. The thesis borrows from such an approach and also looks at the challenges and opportunities presented by the farm occupations and the FTLRP in Mwenezi.

In addition, Scoones, Chaumba and Wolmer, (2003) carried out research on new politics and new livelihood changes in the Zimbabwean lowveld since the farm occupations of 2000. Their work is based on fieldwork in the Chiredzi district, south-eastern Zimbabwe. They examine the political dynamics and livelihood implications of farm occupations and the FTLRP, tracing new patterns of social stratification. They assert that Zimbabwe's land reform has dramatically changed the country's physical landscape and led to the appearance of new institutions.

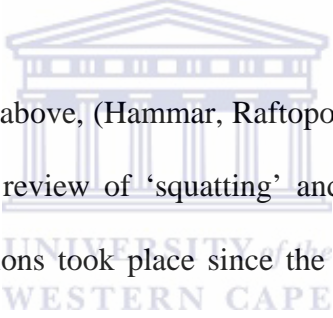
Wolmer (2001) has also researched on lowveld landscapes, conservation and the wilderness vision in south-eastern Zimbabwe. He argues that before independence, conservation and developmental initiatives in south-eastern Zimbabwe were largely influenced by the conceptualisation of the region's landscape as a wilderness. This consequently submerged the role of the local African people as actors on the landscape, belittled the importance of dry land farming and encouraged the implementation of developmental agendas that sidelined the Africans in favour of white commercial agriculture, particularly game ranching. Wolmer (2001) also calls for the need for conservation and development programmes to consider how the lowveld environment has been imagined, re-imagined, shaped, re-shaped and acted upon by various actors. However, this study questions the sustainability of dry land farming in Mwenezi given the fact that the district receives low and erratic rainfall. The thesis takes cognisance of the view that Mwenezi's supposedly 'unfavourable' climatic conditions can be both livelihood challenges and opportunities. It builds on Wolmer's findings in its bid to

explore the dynamics of the agrarian history of the Mwenezi district that borders Wolmer's research area.

One of the most important works on the land question in Zimbabwe is by Hammar, Raftopoulos and Jensen (2003). The authors unpack the 'Zimbabwean crisis' illuminating a much more complex and multi-layered picture, projecting many crises and land questions. Their approach is different from the ZANU (PF) nationalist rhetoric, which identifies the Zimbabwean crisis as solely one about land and its bilateral dispute with Britain. Neither do they claim to subscribe to the neo-liberal counter position that presents the crisis as one about governance. Like Moyo, the authors call for the need to localise and contextualise the Zimbabwean crises. The authors also focus on the politics of land and resource distribution, reconstruction of nation and citizenship, and the remaking of state and modes of rule.

Like other works reviewed above, Hammar, Raftopoulos and Jensen (2003) acknowledge the existence of inequitable land distribution before 2000 but argue that the political elite have incessantly manipulated the land question. Rukuni and Jensen (2003) focus on land, growth, governance and tenure reform in Zimbabwe. They argue that the farm occupations disrupted agricultural modernisation in Zimbabwe. They add that any successful land reform should be dependent on political stability, a sound economic base, and sufficient institutional capacity to undertake the reforms.

The farm occupations negatively affected agricultural productivity on white commercial farms, subsequently, leading to a fall in agricultural output. However, although not condoning the state's approach to solving Zimbabwe's land questions, the thesis argues that social and political stability can also be attained through systematically addressing inequitable distribution of resources, and environmental and social justice. In addition, since it is apparent that the land reform is irreversible, debate should go beyond cause and effect to how the new farmers can be assisted to be self-reliant and to grow sustainably. Research also needs to focus on how the land reform can help eradicate poverty, protect the natural environment and promote equity.

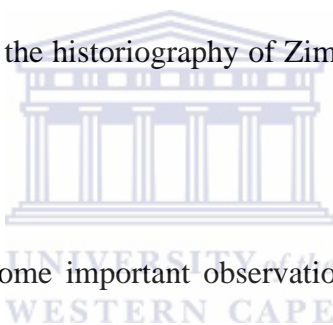


In the publication referred to above, (Hammar, Raftopoulos and Jensen 2003), Alexander (2003) provides a historical review of 'squatting' and resettlement in Zimbabwe. She points out that land occupations took place since the 1980s before the violent ones of 2000. Marongwe (2003) also looks at the complex dimensions of the farm occupations including the motives, outside influence, forms of mobilisation, selection of farms, types and scale of occupation. He notes that in the 1990s, occupations were community led and the slow pace of the land reform frustrated occupiers (see Moyo 2001). Farm occupations were undertaken in specific social, economic and political contexts. Marongwe, therefore, argues that it is simplistic to claim that the farm occupations were spearheaded by ZANU (PF) or through force, as other local factors were also at play.

Cousins (2003) calls for alternatives that will help deepen democracy, reduce poverty and undermine the foundations of structural inequality rather than the neo-liberal reassertion

of Western, liberal democratic values or authoritarian nationalism and radical land distribution. Similarly, Goebel (2005) presents a comparative analysis of South Africa and Zimbabwe's land reforms. She argues that although there are structural similarities between the two cases, indications are that South Africa is unlikely to face a Zimbabwean type land problem.

The thesis appreciates Cousins' sentiments but does not largely focus on macro-level theoretical debates about which path Zimbabwe should have taken. Neither does it solely focus on the 2000 farm occupations and land reform. Nevertheless, the broader debates help in situating the thesis in the historiography of Zimbabwe's agrarian history and land reform.



Kinsey (2004) also makes some important observations with regard to the debates on land and agrarian reform in Zimbabwe. He notes that the land occupations which started in 2000 tend to obscure the fact that Zimbabwe had an agrarian reform programme before 2000. Kinsey (2004) reviews some of the outcomes of past agrarian reforms and the interface between poverty, property and conflict. He argues that these agrarian reforms, which were aimed at encouraging modernisation and the growth of the agro-business sector and to enhance state power, did not benefit the majority of the rural poor. This observation is in tandem with that by Hammar, Raftopoulos and Jensen (2003). Similarly, this thesis argues for agrarian reforms which are pro-poor and are aimed at reducing rural poverty.



## **Gender and Land Reform**

Discourses on the land question in Zimbabwe have largely focused on not only macro theoretical debates but also other important macro issues like land rights and racial inequalities. This has submerged internal stratification with regard to access to land and land reform. It is in this regard that Gaidzanwa (1995), a prominent Zimbabwean feminist and sociologist has called for the need to factor in issues like indigenisation, efficiency, sustainability, equity, access and land use by age, class and gender into the discussion. She calls for the need for a gendered dimension of the land debate in order to capture its implications on the livelihoods of the poor urban and rural women of Zimbabwe. Scholarly works on land have largely neglected the interests of the youth and women, especially the divorced and widowed. This thesis, therefore, examines the gendered implications of the current land reform exercise in Mwenzi in relation to environmental protection, land and land rights.

On the basis of research in a resettlement area in Wedza, east-central Zimbabwe, Goebel (1999a; 1999b; 2000; 2003) has written extensively on gender, the environment and land reform. She acknowledges that women have been marginalized in discourses on land reform. Goebel (1999) argues that although it is often assumed that the lack of formal rights to land implies that women have no control over the produce of their agricultural labour, the benefits women derive from arable land have improved in resettlement areas. She also observes that the paradigm of sustainability has largely been centred on ecology. Debates on land reform should therefore put women's perspectives in the limelight, as they are the main agricultural producers. Goebel (2003), however, warns against

assuming a special relationship between women and the environment as this may distort reality. Instead, she argues for the importance of field based empirical research as the basis for theory formulation.

### Conclusion

From the discussion above, it is apparent that there is a plethora of scholarly works on land reform and agrarian studies in Zimbabwe. However, although there is consensus on the need for land reform in countries like Zimbabwe, South Africa and Namibia, opinion is divided over the manner the reforms should be implemented.

In addition, very few of the works reviewed above focus on the FTLRP in relation to the land reform's impact on poverty and livelihoods. The works that proved most relevant or pertinent in this regard included those by Scoones, Chaumba and Wolmer (2003), Chitiyo (2000), Cousins (1987), Sukume (2004), Marongwe (2004), Moyo (2001; 2004), Worby (2001) and Goebel (2003; 2005). However, with the exception of Cousins (1987), most of the works reviewed above do not focus on land and agrarian reform in Mwenezi.

Cousins (1987) has done some research in Mwenezi but unlike this study he focused on grazing schemes, rangeland management and common property regimes. His two case studies, the Mangezi and Machingo Grazing Schemes, are in Mwenezi but outside this study's case study area as they are in Matibi 1 Communal Lands. The thesis' case study areas are drawn from Maranda Communal Lands, south of Matibi I, and a resettlement area. Comparisons are made between Cousins' findings and those contained herein,

especially in relation to the implementation of the Mwenezi Radical Land Reform Programme.



## **CHAPTER 3: CONCEPTUAL ISSUES AROUND THE STUDY AND METHODOLOGY**

### **Introduction**

The last chapter has situated the thesis in the broader context of works on land reform in Zimbabwe. The present chapter further develops the conceptual framework that informs the main arguments in the thesis. The chapter also discusses the research methods used in pursuit of the thesis' aims and objectives.

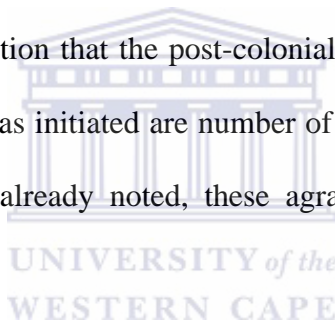
### **Conceptual Issues Around the Study**

#### **Agrarian Reform**

The term agrarian reform has a broader meaning than land reform. In its narrow sense, agrarian reform refers to the redistribution of agricultural land. In its broader usage, the term refers to an overall redirection of the agrarian system of a country, which often includes land reform measures. Agrarian reforms also encompass changes in the provision of credit facilities to farmers, training and land consolidation (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agrarianreform>).

Cousins (2005) notes that in addition to being concerned with land rights and their character, strength and distribution, agrarian reform also focuses on other broader issues like the class character of the relations of production and distribution in farming. Agrarian reforms are therefore concerned with economic and political power. It is in this broader sense that agrarian reform is understood and used in this thesis.

In Zimbabwe and countries like Namibia, South Africa and Kenya, the historical origins of the agrarian question can be traced to the colonial 'land grabs' and the subsequent displacement of the indigenous farming communities from fertile land with adequate rainfall; to rocky, sandy and infertile soils with low rainfall (Campesina et al 2006). The agrarian question is, therefore, a political issue and a source of conflict in the post colonial state. Kinsey (2004:1669), thus, observes that the agrarian question and politically motivated violence are Zimbabwe's most enduring colonial legacies. Discriminatory agricultural policies led to the marginalisation and impoverishment of rural populations. It was this racially skewed land use and land ownership pattern, which constituted the agrarian question that the post-colonial state had to address. Since 1980, the Zimbabwe government has initiated a number of agrarian reforms in a bid to solve this problem. However, as already noted, these agrarian reforms did not benefit the majority of the rural poor.



Consequently, in this context, agrarian history refers to the study of the efforts made by colonial and post colonial states to address the agrarian question, as well as other broader efforts linked to agrarian practices, land reform, land use and other efforts at rural development.

Agrarian reforms need to be systematic, equitable and just if they are to be effective. They can not be effective without fair prices for agricultural produce and other off-farm products, which are critical in sustaining rural livelihoods. Agrarian reforms need to secure and guarantee access of the rural poor, the marginalised or socially excluded, over

land, water, inputs, finance, training, marketing and distribution of their produce (Campesina et al, 2006:11). Effective agrarian reforms need to balance the needs, rights and demands of diverse actors especially, the rural poor, women, widows and the youth. In addition, effective agrarian reforms provide appropriate opportunities for a dignified future (Campesina et al 2006).

Okigbo (1989), quoted by Ezumah and Ezumah (1996:216), defines a sustainable agricultural production system as “one which maintains an acceptable and increasing level of production that satisfies prevailing needs and carrying capacity of the resource base and other worthwhile human needs”. The above definition puts human needs at the centre of sustainable agricultural production. In addition, agrarian reforms include other non-agricultural forms of land use. Effective agrarian reforms need to help eradicate poverty and protect agricultural and non-agricultural land for use by future generations.

### Land Reform

Land reform is an integral part of agrarian reform. According to Moyo (2004), land reform is a necessary but not sufficient condition for agrarian reform and national development. Land reform is a complex process that can involve both resettlement and tenure reform. It entails changes in societal arrangements whereby government administers possession and use of land. The different types of land reforms include government-sponsored schemes, collectivisation (socialist attempt), non-socialist initiatives, the development of capitalist agriculture or market driven approach (Byres, 2004:2-4; Breytenbach, 2004:48-9). According to Byres (2004:2), the two basic types of

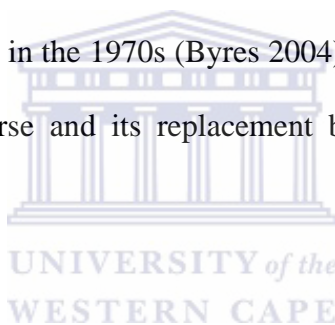
land reform are tenurial reform and redistributive land reform. In principle, the latter is more 'radical' than the former. It seeks to redistribute land by taking it from those who have large holdings and giving it to those with no land or those with smaller holdings (Byres, 2004: 3).

Arguments for and against land reform are diverse and debatable. They can be ethical, social, political and economic. Redistributive land reform hinges on the premise that land reform reduces rural poverty. Redistributive land reform is often argued to be a way of rescuing the landless and poor from chronic poverty (Campesina et al 2006). Land redistribution broadens the livelihood portfolios of the rural poor. In addition, land reform is often a political issue and political arguments can be advanced in its support. In fact, land can be politicised, regionalised and racialised (Goebel, 2005:351-2) as evidenced by Zimbabwe's land reform programme. In addition, land reform challenges the political power of the landowners thereby changing the whole agrarian structure (Moyo, 2004:2).

Historically, popular discontent with land related institutions has been one of the major causes of revolutionary movements and social upheavals (Peters 2004). Land reforms have historically taken place in the context of political crisis, and land reform can be used as a valve for class tension (Kinsey, 2004:1673). In Zimbabwe, land reform was justified as a way of addressing colonial injustices during the 'undemocratic' settler rule. Discourses on land reform can be used to arouse nationalistic sentiments.

In the aftermath of colonialism and the industrial revolution, land reform has occurred around the world especially in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Examples include the Mexican Revolution of 1917 and land reform in Communist China in the 1950s. Land reform was also an important step in achieving economic development in Taiwan, South Korea and Malaysia. In South Africa, land redistribution was one of the promises made by the African National Congress (ANC) when it came to power in 1994.

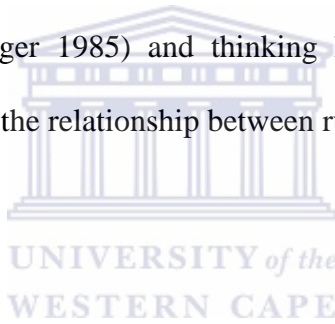
Land reform was prominent in the development agendas of the 1950s and 1960s in both socialist and non-socialist states. The land reform discourse receded in the 1960s and was largely out of policy agendas in the 1970s (Byres 2004). This rise followed the demise of the developmentalist discourse and its replacement by neo-liberalism and neo-liberal development discourse.



At this juncture, it should be noted that two main schools of thought have largely informed discussion on land reform and the stability of ‘peasant’ production systems. These are the historical materialist and the neo-populist schools (Chimhowu and Woodhouse 2007). The former was premised on the thinking that peasant production systems are inherently unstable in the face of the advance of capitalism. Consequently, ‘peasant’ production was seen as transitory and was expected to be super-ceded by capitalist agriculture. Some richer peasants would, supposedly, become capitalist farmers while the rest would become workers on farms and in towns. Manganga (2003) has, however, noted that the linear proletarianisation thesis is problematic when applied to the Zimbabwean historiography. According to the historical materialist thinking, the ‘peasant



problem' was to be solved through the formation of large state or co-operative farms (Chimhowu and Woodhouse2007). In addition, post-world war two development economists drew distinctions between modern and traditional sectors of the economy and 'peasant' agriculture was regarded as traditional. Rural farmers were also regarded as a cheap source of labour and "poverty reduction and rural development was seen as being contingent upon productivity growth driven by large scale mechanised agriculture working in synergy with industrial growth" (Chimhowu and Woodhouse2007:10). However, since the 1970s there have been marked shifts in scholarly opinion on the subject. Studies have demonstrated that rural communities are differentiated (Chimhowu and Woodhouse 2007; Ranger 1985) and thinking has shifted toward peasant farm stability models. In addition, the relationship between rural farmers and the market is also complex and multi-faceted.



Unlike the historical materialist approach, the neo-populist school recognises 'peasant' agency and the efficiency of peasant production (Kinsey 2004). 'Peasant' production is seen as more stable and 'peasant' production systems are regarded as more efficient than large-scale capitalist farms. The approach argues that smallholder agriculture is the key to productivity growth and poverty reduction (Chimhowu and Woodhouse 2007). Contemporary discourses on land reform also underline the key role of smallholders in poverty alleviation efforts. As is explained below, emphasis is on agricultural investment, supportive policies, post-settlement support and secure and enforceable tenure (Chimhowu and Woodhouse 2007). Another notable development has been the shift from the use of the term 'peasant' to 'smallholder farmers'. With the emergence of

the livelihood approaches, the term ‘smallholder farmers’ has now been replaced by ‘smallholders’. This new thinking recognises the diversity of livelihood portfolios of rural households and their dependence on farm and off-farm activities (Ellis 2000; Peters 2004).

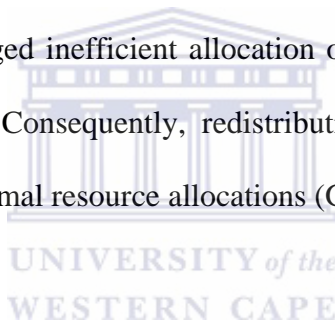
Powerful grassroots peasant movements in Africa, Latin America and Asia have helped to bring redistributive land reform on policy agenda (Moyo 2001; 2004; Byres 2004). In fact, scholars like Campesina et al (2006) and Sobhan (1993) argue that effective redistributive land reforms trigger broad based economic development and the reduction of rural poverty. In agrarian economies, land reform is a way of reducing inequality and rural poverty.



Redistributive land reforms are effective if good quality land is distributed to the majority of the rural poor. They should be accompanied by reforms in trade, the marketing of agricultural products, credit facilities to farmers, pricing of farm produce, macro-economic and sectoral policies favourable to successful farming. Effective redistributive land reforms are argued to have led to economic successes in countries like China, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan (Campesina, 2006:16). These countries are deemed to have had successful state-led land reforms. In South Korea, land reform is credited with creating a more equitable ownership of land and economic success for a majority of beneficiaries (Chimhowu and Woodhouse, 2007:14). However, redistributive land reforms are not effective if they give poor quality land to the rural poor and if no supporting policies are put in place. Effective agrarian reforms should be accompanied by post-settlement

support. In this regard, Zimbabwe's land reform has not been effective. In addition, the success of state-led land reform in South Korea, Japan, China and Taiwan has been attributed to specific circumstances peculiar to these countries or specific geopolitical and historical factors (Chimhowu and Woodhouse, 2007:15).

Neoclassical analysts justify redistributive land reform as a means of improving sub-optimal resource allocations (Kinsey, 2004:1672-3). Another rationale for redistributive land reform is the existence of under-utilised land on large land holdings as well as the inverse relationship between farm size and unit yields (Kinsey 2004). Neoclassical analysts concentrate on alleged inefficient allocation of productive resources associated with market imperfections. Consequently, redistributive land reform is justified as a means of improving sub-optimal resource allocations (Griffin, Khan and Ickowitz 2002).



The neoclassical argument centres on the supposed underutilisation of large land holdings and the inverse relationship between farm size and yields. Kinsey (2004:1673) notes that “historically, the underutilisation issue has been of particular importance in Latin America but it is also important in southern Africa”. Although the rationale was often used in Zimbabwe, large-scale white commercial farmers had always benefited from superior access to inputs and technical services. Theoretically, they had superior output contrary to the Griffin, Kan and Ickowitz (GKI) theory (Griffin, Khan and Ickowitz (2002). However, small farms are not necessarily more efficient than larger ones. Kinsey (2004), thus, observes that Zimbabwe's land reform can be the chance to test the argument that small farms are more efficient than larger ones.

At this juncture, it should also be noted that the ecological sustainability of smallholder farmers is a debatable issue. The harvesting of forest products in communal and resettlement areas also remains largely uncontrolled. Kepe and Cousins (2002), however, observe that although the ecological dangers of small-scale agriculture are often exaggerated, some livelihood activities are unsustainable.

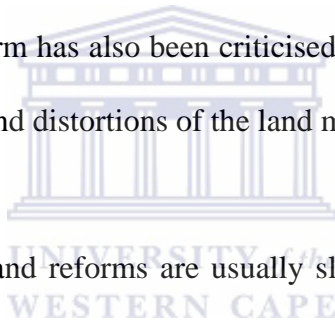
In addition to supporting radical redistributive land reform, Griffin, Khan and Ickowitz (2002) argue against tenure reforms and the World Bank's market-driven approach, which they say can not be a realistic solution to inequality and poverty (Griffin, Khan and Ickowitz 2002; Byres 2004). They assert that tenurial reform alone can not produce superior agricultural outcomes since it might even worsen the situation. They also dismiss market-led land reforms on the basis that they are time consuming and expensive. The GKI theory is grounded in neo-classical neo-populism (Byres, 2004:6). The approach has been dismissed as ahistorical and on the basis that it ignores the dynamics of capitalist transformation. The theory also ignores the fact that rural communities are differentiated. Bernstein (2004) is critical of neo-classical populism and its advocacy for redistributive land reform and notes that Zimbabwe's land reform presents a unique case of "comprehensive, regime-sanctioned, confiscatory land redistribution in the world today" (Bernstein, 2004: 190; see Yeros 2002b). Bernstein (2004:221) concludes that, "the issues of redistributive land reform in capitalism today should not be surrendered to the concerns or fantasies of neo-classical populism nor otherwise assigned to the dustbin of history marked, 'anachronistic', 'reactionary', 'utopian', or all three". The thesis takes

on board all the varying theories on land reform and their counter-positions, and argues for a land reform process that is systematic, equitable and sustainable.

Chimhowu and Woodhouse (2007:16) also observe that, the effectiveness of state-led reforms is weakened by conceptual weaknesses, procedural constraints and methodological flaws associated with redistributive land reform. It is argued that the state is inherently inefficient and bureaucracy and red tape increase the costs of land redistribution. It has also been asserted that state-led reforms tend to promote corruption and the politics of patronage, which negatively impact on equity. In addition, giving free land to farmers, as was the case with Zimbabwe's FTLRP, creates dependency on the state by the new farmers (Chimhowu and Woodhouse, 2007:17).

Land reform has also historically been associated with conflict and class tensions (Kinsey, 2004:1673). Most land reforms have been carried out in the context of crisis and as a result have been reactionary (see Peters 2004). Moyo (2001; 2004) also sees land reform as part of the democratisation process. Along the same vein, Jacobs (2000) observes that the Zimbabwe government justified its 'land grab' on the basis that it was addressing past wrongs by the colonial government. White commercial farmers in Zimbabwe also attacked the land reform arguing that commercial agriculture played a critical role in the country's economy (Kinsey, 2004:1674).

From the 1970s onwards, the World Bank and the West advocated market-driven or negotiated land reform programmes (Lahiff 2005). According to this approach, there is less emphasis on the direct role of the state and more on a general framework of institutional reform in which civil society plays a leading role in the administration of land (Peters, 2004:275). The market paradigm is based on the premise that the land market can be used to benefit the poor “in a way that does not over-commit state resources” (Chimhowu and Woodhouse, 2007:17). However, this market-oriented commercial agricultural policy competes with the populist and egalitarian approach, which favours a socially progressive land and rural development policy. The market-driven approach to land reform has also been criticised for its large bureaucracy and top-down approach, corruption and distortions of the land market (Byres 2004).



In addition, market-driven land reforms are usually slow and do not have a significant impact on structural inequalities. More often than not, the market mechanism is out of sync with political objectives of land redistribution (Chimhowu and Woodhouse 2007). In Zimbabwe, the market-driven approach faced the same problems in the 1980s and early 1990s. In fact, in Zimbabwe, liberal legality and constitutionalism failed to engender democracy and equity through land redistribution during this period (Tshuma 1997). In South Africa, market-driven land reforms, that have been adopted since 1994, has been slow, failed to meet redistribution targets and have not really benefited the poor in meaningful ways (Chimhowu and Woodhouse 2007). Market-led reforms have not made any significant impact on the lives of rural communities (Kepe and Cousins 2002). Kepe and Cousins (2002:3) note that sustainable rural development in 21<sup>st</sup> century South

Africa “will never be achieved without a radical assault on the structural underpinnings of the poverty and inequality inherited from three centuries of oppression and exploitation”. Kepe and Cousins (2002) add that the redistribution of land, and land related resources, should be accompanied by secure tenure rights.

The agrarian reform agenda has, of late, shifted toward land tenure reform. Tenure reform is an integral part of any sustainable land reform. Breytenbach (2004:147) asserts that one of the salient issues about land reform in southern Africa is the failure to integrate land reform policies into land tenure reforms, resettlement programmes and land use policies that cover rural, urban and non-agricultural land. The new revisionist stance on land tenure is discussed in the sub-section below.

In view of the discussion above, it can be argued that the agrarian question has political, social and economic dimensions. Agrarian and land reforms also have important implications for the environment. In addition, market-led reforms tend to depoliticise the agrarian question, which by its very nature can be solved by structural changes that can be addressed in the realm of politics rather than the market (Rosset 2002). Campesina et al (2006) add that “rather than following the World Bank’s market based approach, policy makers and social movements should learn from the successes and failures of the post-World War Two period...and from the demands and experiences of indigenous people and women”.

On the other hand, radical redistributive land reforms have their own shortcomings. In Zimbabwe, the FTLRP has largely benefited the political elite, war veterans and supporters of the ruling party rather than the rural poor. Radical redistributive reforms also undermine property and individual rights. In fact, Goebel (2005:345) argues that, “the radical land reform process in Zimbabwe is discredited by most analysts...for the corruption, disregard of rule of law, marginalisation of the poor, anti-democratic political forms and violation of human rights that it has entailed”. Consequently, in view of the above observations, different approaches to land reform need to be harmonised to make them more equitable, effective and just. However, this depends on the prevailing economic, political and social context in a given country.

Agrarian and land reforms also need to be accompanied by supportive policies. These include the provision of credit to the resettled farmers on reasonable terms; the provision of infrastructure; appropriate technology; access to markets and fair prices for farm and off-farm products (Campesina et al 2006). Governments should invest in basic services like schools, clinics, water supply and roads. Discourses on agrarian reform often focus on land submerging issues like water rights, which are critical if agrarian reforms in dry areas are to be effective.

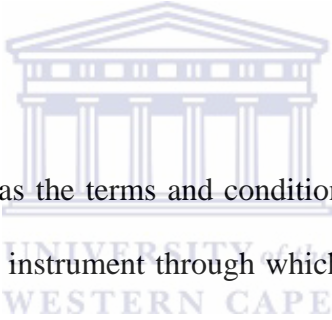
Land reform needs to benefit the landless and the rural poor rather than the political elite and their supporters. This should apply to all land reforms whether they are state-led or market-driven. The land identified for resettlement should be fertile and well watered. Zimbabwe’s market-led agrarian reforms that were carried out in the 1980s failed to



guarantee this. This thesis argues that agrarian reforms should increase the rural poor's access to water for domestic and agricultural use.

Land reforms should be accompanied by secure tenure. Access rights are critical in ensuring long-term food security and investment in land. Women, widows, the youth and marginalised groups also need to have rights to own and use land. Their access rights to water, forests, fisheries and other resources should be secured and guaranteed (Campesina et al 2006). In short, the thesis argues for agrarian and land reforms that are systematic, equitable and programmed.

### Land Tenure



Land tenure can be defined as the terms and conditions under which land is held, used and transacted. It is the legal instrument through which rights to resources are assigned. One of the goals of land tenure reform is to enhance and secure people's rights to land and associated resources. This may be necessary to avoid arbitrary evictions and landlessness. Land tenure reform may also be essential if rights holders are to invest in the land and to use it sustainably (Adams, Sibanda and Turner 1998).

Land tenure is central to the management and sustainability of land use (Bernstein and Woodhouse, 2001:294). According to O'Flaherty (2003:179), land tenure is more than just land ownership as it can broadly be seen as a relationship to land and its associated resources. Land tenure can help make land reform more effective as it helps reduce conflicts over resources (Worby 2001). It has been noted that, "land distribution needs to

be accompanied by tenure reform in order to clarify, secure and upgrade existing tenure rights. It must be seen to benefit the needy and not primarily the regime's supporters" (IPA Report, 2002:1).

In addition, Saruchera (2004:4) calls for comprehensive and inclusive tenure reforms in order to secure land and resource rights for the rural poor. Wanjala (2004:13) also adds that a comprehensive land reform cannot be undertaken without recontextualising African customary tenure, which has been subjected to intellectual confusion and distortion. The distortions were that Africans did not own land, that land belonged to the whole community, and as result could not be transferred. During the 1970s, customary land tenure was seen as inhibiting agricultural modernisation (Peters 2004). During the 'land reform decades', (the 1960s and 1970s), the World Bank and aid agencies thought that customary systems did not provide the necessary security to ensure agricultural investment and productive use of land. Aid agencies tended to favour individual private property rights.

There has been a revisionist stance toward land tenure and land policy. It has been realised that individual freehold rights are not necessarily synonymous with modernisation. The new approach is influenced by findings showing the viability of customary systems of land holdings (Saruchera 2004). The approach also promotes land policies that are more human-centred, pro-poor and less driven by economic imperatives (Peters, 2004:275). This thinking is in tandem with the thesis's conceptualisation of sustainable agrarian reforms. The new stance is associated with the livelihood approach

to development, which has been adopted by many donor agencies. The livelihood approach seeks to build on the strengths and opportunities open to the poor (Peters 2004). The new thinking has also been influenced by post-modernist and post-colonial theories, which uphold ambiguity, multiplicity and indeterminacy. Peters (2004:271) is, however, critical of this approach and argues that, “the dominant view in academic scholarship on land tenure, despite its considerable success in displacing simplistic economic models of tenure, is now obscuring critical social processes around land”.

It should also be noted that freehold title is not necessarily the most secure form of tenure and can lead to insecurity for poor people as it makes land alienable. In addition, International Peace Academy (IPA) (2002:7) observes that:

The permits held by resettled farmers in Zimbabwe are also insecure and can be revoked for violations of land use regulations established by state officials. Tenure reform in Zimbabwe should aim to vest rights in people living on the land by recognising and providing institutional support to customary tenure. Land reform should address insecure tenure among residents of communal areas, resettlement areas, and commercial farms.

According to Graham and Darroch (2000), researchers have shown that tenure security is an important condition for economic development. Secure property rights enable farmers to have better access to credit facilities and provide greater incentives for investment. It has been noted that, “only through the establishment of permanent and enforceable land

rights can those emerging farmers realise tenure security” (Graham and Darroch, 2000:295).

Moor and Graham (1994) have also noted the interaction between land tenure security and agricultural productivity in Zimbabwe. Their study showed that small-scale farmers invested more in land improvements where tenure is most secure. The lack of security of tenure explains why most A1 and A2 often vandalised the infrastructure which they found on the former white-owned farms. Some resettled farmers were, therefore, tempted to sell off vital implements or irrigation equipment and cattle found on the farm and make quick cash before being displaced by powerful politicians coveting the same farm.

In view of the discussion above, it can be argued that the role of customary tenure in land and resource tenure reform needs further investigation. In addition, there is need for transparent, equitable and enforceable property and land rights if agrarian reforms are to be effective (Peters 2004).

### Women and Land Reform

In addition to security of tenure, land rights for women are another important factor. Gender has a critical influence on access to land and other land-related resources. The patriarchal social context in which Zimbabwe’s land reform was carried out militates against gender equity (Agarwal 1995; Goebel 2005; Jacobs 1989; Walker 2002).

Gender is one of the fundamental aspects of sustainable agrarian reform. The thesis has argued for gendered analyses of land reform. Gender refers to the socially negotiated relationship between women and men. It designates behaviour, attitudes, roles, status, power, ownership and decision-making in a particular socio-economic and political context. Gender is an integral part of land reform and rural livelihoods. It is about power, subordination and inequality (Ellis, 2000:139; Razavi, 2003:2).

Control and ownership of land is an expression of power relations. Consequently, the manner in which land rights are allocated and regulated often determines the ensuing gender relations (Wanjala, 2004:13). Although women play a critical part in the livelihoods of rural households, land rights regimes in Zimbabwe have not adequately secured women's rights over land and other land related resources. In addition, discourses on land reform in Zimbabwe have submerged social stratification, especially gender with regard to ownership of land. The thesis, therefore, calls for a gendered dimension of the land debate in order to capture its implications for rural women (Gaidzanwa 1995). Women and the youth need to be positioned in vantage positions in relation to land rights and environmental protection.

Agarwal (1994) argues that the gender gap in the ownership and control of property is the single most critical contributor to the gender gap in economic well-being, social status and empowerment. Jackson (2003) also advocates land rights for women. Efforts should be made to increase women's access to land. However, Jackson (2003:476) observes that, "land rights for women is not the inevitable conclusion of a gender analysis of land,

which needs a more open terrain of possibilities, richer analytical frameworks, a more critical approach to existing data and more contextually grounded research to make progress”. Jackson (2003) also prioritises detailed ethnographies that focus on social change, considers the diversity of subject positions and subjectivities of women in relation to land and situates gendered property relations within a broader context of marriage, kinship and livelihoods.

At this juncture, it should be made noted that there is a school of thought which assumes that women have an instrumental role with respect to the conservation of the natural environment (Ellis 2000; Goebel 1999; 2000; 2002; 2003). The thinking assumes a special link between women and the environment. Eco-feminists view women as the custodians of the environment (Jackson 1993; Leach *et al* 1995). However, although the thesis acknowledges that rural women, and the rural poor in general, tend to rely more on their environment for their livelihoods, it also subscribes to the thinking that the relationship between men, women and natural resource utilisation and management is complex, diverse and malleable (Goebel 2003). The relationship changes according to pressures on livelihoods and opportunities presented by the macro-economy (Ellis 2000). Consequently, assuming a special link between women and the environment distorts the lived realities of women (Goebel 2003).

### **Livelihoods**

‘Livelihoods’ is another essential concept in this study. There are two broad approaches to defining livelihoods. These are; the narrower economic focus on production,

employment and household incomes; and the holistic view, which encompasses economic development, reduced vulnerability and environmental sustainability (Satge 2002).

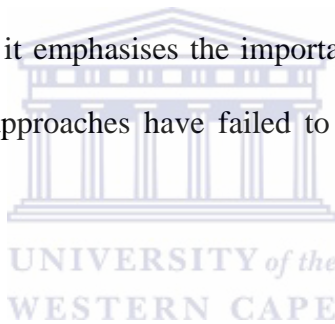
The thesis adopts a holistic interpretation of livelihoods, which goes beyond production and income activities. Livelihoods comprise of capabilities, assets (material, social, natural, financial, social capital) and the activities required for a living (Chambers and Conway 1992; Ellis 2000:7-8; Satge, 2002:3-4, 10). Livelihoods determine the living gained by individuals or households. The concept of sustainable livelihoods emerges from definitions of sustainability, economic and social development pre-occupations with poverty, vulnerability and food security (Ellis, 2000:127). Livelihoods are sustainable if they can cope with, and recover from, stresses or vulnerability and maintain and enhance their natural resource base or the environment (Satge, 2002:2-4).

The 'livelihood approach' to development is in tandem with the revisionist approach to land policy, which promotes a human-centred, pro-poor approach (Peters 2004). The approach is popular with many donor agencies and it seeks to build on the strengths and opportunities open to the poor. The 'livelihoods framework' is a way of understanding how households derive their livelihoods by drawing on capabilities and assets to develop livelihood strategies (Satge, 2002:2).

Satge (2002:4) argues that the livelihoods framework helps us to identify and value what people are already doing in order to cope with risk and uncertainty. The approach also

helps in identifying measures that can strengthen assets, enhance capabilities and reduce vulnerability. The approach can be applied to both rural and urban households. Unlike earlier approaches to development, the livelihood approach recognises the heterogeneity of rural communities.

However, as will be argued later in the thesis, the relationship between NGOs, which have been advancing the livelihood approach, and the Zimbabwe government is currently an antagonistic one. Non-governmental organisations are regarded as agents of Western domination and the 'regime change agenda' (GoZ 2004; International Bar Association 2004). In addition, although it emphasises the importance of off-farm activities to rural households, the livelihood approaches have failed to substantially shift attention from farm livelihoods.



In addition, the livelihood approach has significantly influenced the nature of the agrarian change debate. Smallholders are now seen as individuals who stay on the land but whose livelihood portfolios cut across a wide range of off-farm and non-farming activities (Bryceson 2002; Ellis 2000). Agriculture is no longer the main motivation for land reforms as it one among a wide range of livelihood options for smallholders.

At this juncture, it should be noted that just like sustainable agricultural production, the sustainable livelihoods approach put the poor at the centre of development. The thesis also argues that land reform should take on board environmental issues and the concerns of the poor, landless, women, youth as well as future generations.



## **Sustainable Development**

There is a crucial interface between the environment and development, including land reform. Ziegler (2002), quoted by Campesina (2006:18), observes that, agrarian reforms that are truly transformative and redistributive have proved to be fundamental in reducing poverty and can be key to generating economic development. However, the environment is a critical component that often bears the cost of development (Manganga, 2005:137). The thesis argues that land reform should help eradicate rural poverty, be equitable, systematic and sensitive to environmental concerns.

The concept of sustainable development is an evolving one and has been defined in various ways by different authorities. Consequently, it means different things to ecologists, economists, development theorists and critics, planners and politicians. Sustainable development is subject to different and often conflicting interpretations (Nieto and Durbin 1995).

The Brundtland Report defines sustainable development as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Goodland *et al* 1991; UNEP, 1995:113). It is a process of change in which the exploitation of resources, the direction of investments, the orientation of technology development and institutional change are all in harmony and enhance both current and future potential to meet human needs and aspirations (UNEP, 1995:113). It should, however, be noted here that sustainable development as described by the Brundtland

Report has some methodological flaws, particularly the view that economic growth is needed to achieve sustainability.

Some critics have tried to quantify the concept of sustainable development. They have also made proposals for a definition that allows for substitution and to operationalise the concept or set of measurable indicators (Nieto and Durbin 1995). On the other hand, the neo-Marxist perspective calls for a historical analysis of the relationship between development and the environment. It is argued that such an analysis would reveal the limitations of approaches that view development exclusively in terms of economic growth. The neo-Marxist critique also observes that the environment alone is not the key factor in making development sustainable. Neo-Marxist critics of sustainable development assert that sustainability is a matter of political power, and can only be achieved through political changes at local, political, and international levels. In addition to political will on the part of the leadership, development can not be appropriately sustainable unless the poor are involved in meeting their aspirations (Nieto and Durbin 1995).

Deep ecologists or eco-centrists argue that the protection of the environment is the most important aspect of sustainable development. They define sustainable development in terms of the imperatives of ecosystems (Karshens, 1992; Neefjjes 2000) and argue that the Brundtland Report did not adequately distance itself from neo-classical economic theory (Nieto and Durbin 1995). The linking of economics and ecology, it is argued, perpetuates unsustainable systems.

In addition, some advocates of sustainable development posit that humans should be stewards of nature with the responsibility for its care (<http://www.eco.utexas.edu/humcleave/port.html>). Such a stewardship approach ignores the satisfaction of immediate socio-economic human needs. If a development initiative is sustainable, it has to address not only the needs of the future but the existing social and economic inequalities (Knowles and Materu 1999). The thesis argues that sustainable development should also accommodate the equity and justice paradigm concerning Africa's unsolved land questions. This implies taking on board issues like social difference and environmental justice.

Middleton and O'Keefe (2001: 12) add that if development projects are to be sustainable, they should be socially just. However, since communities are not homogenous, the question is whose justice? The sustainable development discourse is, therefore, laden with contestations and ethical dilemmas (Christie and Warburton, 2001: 30).

Anti-development theorists have also provided a radical philosophical critique of sustainable development. The concept of sustainable development is considered utopian. It is argued that the term only serves to revitalise 'development', and to give it another lease of life by tying it to concerns of the environment (Nieto and Durban 1995).

In addition, it has been argued that sustainable development represents a new justification for intervention by the West in developing countries under the guise of concern for the environment. According to Williams (2006), the terrain for intervention has been

extended to include governance, the role of civil society and the stewardship of environmental resources. Sustainable development strategies adopted by international donors and NGOs arguably extend and reproduce forms of domination of the developing countries by the developed ones.

It is apparent that the term sustainable development is a multi-faceted concept. It is delicate and multi-dimensional. The relationship between growth, development, poverty and sustainability is also complex and problematic.

Nevertheless, the views of sustainability of people from different disciplinary backgrounds can be complementary. It has been argued that sustainable development has three key dimensions: the social, economic and environmental (Christie and Warburton 1999; Knowles and Materu 1999; Meddleton and O'Keefe 2000). It has, therefore, been posited that:

The three legs of the sustainability tripod can be viewed as representing the economic, ecological and sociological schools of thought. Without all three legs the tripod will not stand. Each leg gives support to the others. Only if all three are firmly on the ground can the whole entity be strong enough to use (<http://www.fao.org>).

From the discussion above, it is clear that discussion on sustainability should go beyond the three legs of the tripod to include the political dimension of sustainable development. In addition, the thesis argues that sustainable development needs to focus on the

sustainable welfare of humans. Along the same vein, it has been argued that it makes sense to concentrate on the welfare of people since any operational approach to the conservation of natural ecosystems must be rooted in beliefs and values of society (ibid).

It is also important to note that social inequalities need to be addressed if we are to achieve long-term environmental, economic, political and social security and prosperity for all. Karaborni (2005) posits that sustainable development will not be achieved unless a holistic and integrated approach to rural poverty alleviation is taken through comprehensive local development efforts coupled with long-term economic and environmental security and partnership development. In addition, since rural populations, especially women, have limited and differential access to resources, training and support networks, sustainable development should encompass gender equity.

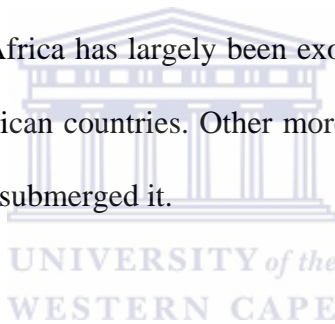


#### The Environment-Poverty-Development Triad

It should be noted that the environment is perceived differently by many actors. These actors have diverse and often conflicting interests. Consequently, the impact of the land reform on the environment is multi-layered and differential. The 'environment' is a multi-faceted concept. One can talk of the natural, social, economic, political, cultural, man-made or built and spiritual environment. The thesis adopts this broader conceptualisation of the environment. The natural environment also constitutes the natural resource base or natural capital on which economic development hinges. A holistic conceptualisation of 'development' incorporates the economic, social, cultural, political and environmental dimensions. In addition, it is now generally agreed that

environmental concerns cannot be divorced from developmental issues, including land reform. The environment and development are also closely linked with poverty, hence the need to balance the environment-poverty-development triad (Manganga, 2005:142).

Concern over environmental degradation is a global issue. However, it has been the developed countries that have been championing environmentalism and the concept of sustainable development. Although the thesis subscribes to the concept of primitive ecological wisdom (Milton 1996) and the importance of local knowledge systems in environmental protection, it also buys the argument that the impetus to address the global environmental problems in Africa has largely been exogenous. The environment has not been a priority for many African countries. Other more pressing issues and the need for economic development have submerged it.



The environment-poverty-development triad's intricacies further compound the difficulties in addressing environmental problems in Africa. To illustrate, in 1987 the then Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), President R. G. Mugabe, declared to the United Nations General Assembly that "when you talk to the third world about the environment, you are talking ...about poverty and unless you are prepared to deal with poverty there will be no environment to preserve" (Manganga, 2005:142, also see Burayidi, 1994:19).

Christie and Warburton (2001) observe that there is often fear of environmentalism on the part of policy makers. Environmentalism can be seen as a problem and there are fears

that environmental policies impose burdens on business. It is argued that the deep ecologist approach is anti-growth and hostile to modernity. It has also been asserted that; “many politicians and policy makers still see environmental policies as constraints and burdens, not as catalysts for radical changes that will enhance our quality of life and open up new economic opportunities” (Christie and Warburton, 2001:36).

Debate around sustainable development and the environment has added another dimension to the tension torn North-South dialogue that concerns debates on the appropriate international “policy framework and potential institutional mechanisms to address the global environmental catastrophe in the multilateral context of the north-south dialogue” (Edoho, 1994:31). The North claims that it is fighting to protect the environment but the South, in its bid to develop and eradicate poverty, is destroying it. This tension was evident at the 2002 Earth Summit in Johannesburg. At the local level, the differences in environmental perception between the white commercial farmers and the African ‘settlers’ or farm occupiers typify this tension. To illustrate, efforts to clear land for cultivation by the resettled A1 farmers is often viewed by some white commercial farmers, NGOs and the independent and Western media as destruction of the environment. To the A1 farmers, the supposed destruction of the environment is simply an attempt to broaden livelihood portfolios.

Zimbabwe’s land reform programme therefore raises pertinent issues about environmentalism and sustainable development. As will be argued later, the environment is an important source of livelihood for many resettled households. However, the thesis

argues for a land reform that is sensitive to equity, environmental concerns, the complexity of rural livelihoods, and the demands for land and resources by future generations.

The present section has provided the conceptual framework that informs the thesis. The following section discusses the research methods used.

### **Research Methodology**

A number of research methods were employed in a bid to meet the research aims and objectives. However, overall, the research methods used were qualitative not quantitative. The researcher was more interested in the depth of data collected (Wimmer and Domimik, 1997:84). Qualitative research in this context relates to interviews done on a small scale (Jensen and Jankowski, 1991:33). This study largely made use of oral interviews, historiographic analysis, personal field observations and historical research.

Preliminary investigations on the subject were undertaken in order to identify what other scholars have done and the gaps that this study could fill. Preliminary investigations consequently helped in moulding and developing the study's research questions as well as establishing the theoretical and conceptual framework of the study. This stage of the research entailed undertaking literature review on land and land reform in Zimbabwe and the region. Although not all available works on the subject could be reviewed due to time and problems of access, the stage was instrumental in shaping the research problem and



the scope of the study. In addition to the local libraries in Zimbabwe, the researcher also made use of the resource centre at PLAAS.

Archival research at the National Archives of Zimbabwe (NAZ) constituted one of the important stages of data gathering. A wealth of primary sources was unearthed. The targeted sources included Government of Zimbabwe publications, ministerial and departmental reports, Native Commissioner's Reports for Nuanetsi and Chibi districts, the Nuanetsi Delineation Report, legislations with a bearing on land, resettlement, gender and conservation, magazines and newspapers. The researcher also made use of documents from the Mwenezi District Administrator's Office, especially the Chiefs and Headmen Files (PER 5 Files).



Official documents from the above sources helped in capturing change and continuity in official attitude toward land reform/land policy and the implications of such policies on agriculture, gender, equity and the environment. PER 5 files and the Delineation Report for Nuanetsi (Mwenezi) helped in documenting the administrative history of the district. Data from ministerial and departmental reports, the District Office and AREX offices was useful in 'reconstructing' land use and agricultural practices in Mwenezi.

In addition, the historiographical tradition was fused with the broad research methods used in the study. The researcher used the historian's method of historical research or gathering and analysing evidence. In addition, to primary sources from the NAZ, the thesis made use of running records and recollections. These were obtained from some

NGOs working in the district. Recollections include memoirs, or oral histories and personal reminiscences.

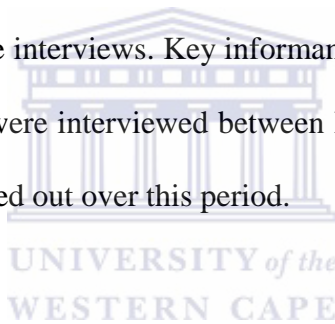
The data gathering stage also involved an extensive and intensive use of the oral research methodology. Detailed oral interviews were conducted at Dinhe and Mangondi between December 2004 and early 2007. This research method proved to be the mainstay of the study. Since the literacy rate is very low among Mwenezi's adult population, oral interviews proved most useful. Due to ethical considerations, oral interviews were only tape recorded with the consent of the interviewees.

Oral histories were collected in both the communal and resettlement areas. Oral history is the recording of people speaking in their own words about their life experiences, personal reminiscences, both in public and private, in ways that are unavailable in writing. The oral research methodology gave a voice to the voiceless, that is, the illiterate. It was for this reason that the researcher made no use of questionnaires.

Frey and Oishi (1995:01) define an interview as “a purposeful conversation in which one person asks prepared questions (interviewer) and another answers them (respondent)”. This is done to gain information on a particular topic or area of research. The study made use of unstructured or open interviews, which were informed by the research aims and objectives. Nichols (1991:131) defines an unstructured interview as an informal interview that is not structured by a standard list of tentative questions. Although the research was guided by a list of questions, these were merely a guide and not religiously followed. The

questions were open-ended, allowing the researcher to probe deeper into initial responses (see Wimmer and Dominick, 1997:156). However, unstructured interviews created some problems when informants failed to understand some of the questions asked and the researcher had to rephrase the questions.

Twenty households, ten from each of the research areas, were interviewed. In addition to these, twenty respondents from Dinhe (Communal Area), fifteen from Mangondi (Resettlement Area), three from Neshuro Business Centre, one from Sarahuro Business Centre, five from Rutenga Service Centre, one at Mwenezi Service Centre and two from Nyahombe participated in the interviews. Key informants and the ten households from each of the two case study areas were interviewed between December 2004 and 2007. Follow up interviews were also carried out over this period.



At this juncture, it is important to explain why Dinhe and Mangondi were chosen as the case studies. The researcher's family migrated from the Nyajena Communal Area (Masvingo South District) to the Dinhe Communal Area in 1974 but moved back to Nyajena in 1994. Although Nyajena has favourable agro-ecological conditions, the researcher's family had apparently been 'attracted' by prospects of relatively larger pieces of land in Mwenezi. However, due to periodic droughts in Mwenezi, the family was 'forced' to migrate back to Nyajena Communal Area. This historical link explains why Dinhe was chosen as one of the case studies. The researcher also had contacts at Dinhe who helped with the identification of some of the interviewees. In addition, the researcher knew some of the former Dinhe farmers who had moved to Mangondi.

Although the above historical link might be argued to be a source of intrinsic bias on the part of the researcher, it equally enriched the study as the researcher made use of personal reminiscences and personal field observations.

Participants were chosen at random. However, in some instances, the researcher was referred to some of the interviewees by other informants. This was particularly so for interviews held outside the two research areas. The targeted informants cut across the entire adult age spectrum, including members of various social and ethnic groups, the literate and the illiterate, the youth, men and women. The target groups also included communal farmers, A1 farmers, commercial (A2) farmers, traditional leaders, NGO representatives working in Mwenzezi, district administrators, AREX officers, councillors, and gender and environmentally oriented groups/organisations, the youth, women, students and school leavers. This approach enabled the researcher to capture the various perceptions on Mwenzezi's agrarian history, opportunities and challenges presented by the land reform programme.

The research made use of both individual and group interviews. The former were advantageous as they allowed confidentiality, and openness on the part of the informants. Respondents were free to express their views in personal rather than group interviews. Group interviews were used at the household level. In some instances men tended to dominate and submerge women's voices. However, in other households it was interesting to note that women were remarkably vocal in articulating gender related issues. No group interviews were held beyond the household level, as they are difficult to manage. In

addition, the political environment currently obtaining in Zimbabwe militates against ‘unsanctioned’ public gatherings. Also, group interviews lead to the domination of weaker personalities by stronger ones yet being vocal is not synonymous with being knowledgeable or representative. In this regard the researcher worked from the premise that group interviews are not the ideal (see Wimmer and Dominick, 1997:461).

Oral interviews gave the Mwenezi poor, newly resettled farmers, women and the youth, the opportunity to give their own agrarian stories, multiple and often competing narratives and development agendas. However, the researcher failed to conduct interviews with white commercial farmers in the district. The three farmers whom the researcher contacted with the view of organising for interviews were not co-operative. The country’s land reform programme has arguably widened the racial divide creating an atmosphere of mistrust, suspicion and hatred. This is a setback to fieldwork. The white farmers in question apparently had part of their farms resettled by ‘black’ A1 and A2 farmers. However, the researcher managed to interview black commercial farmers resettled under the A2 scheme. The overall sentiments of some white commercial farmers were captured from reports produced by the Zimbabwe Commercial Farmers’ Union (ZCFU).

Oral interviews were complemented by personal field observations. These helped in assessing the visible changes that have taken place in the case study areas and how developmental programmes, the farm occupations and the land reform exercise have impacted on the inhabitants of Mwenezi.

The study makes a comparative analysis between a resettlement (Mangondi) and a communal area (Dinhe). Both areas have been presented with a number of livelihood opportunities and challenges. Dinhe has had the opportunity for sustainable development by the construction of the Manyuchi dam, the Mwenezi Radical Land Reform Programme, the failed Mwenezi Palm Oil Project and the Mwenezana Sugar Estates. On the other hand, the land reform is an opportunity and challenge to the farmers at Mangondi.

### **Ethical considerations**

The project was funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) and was approved by the General Research Ethics Board (GREB) of Queen's University. In this regard, the research upheld research ethics by ensuring the anonymity and confidentiality of participants. The researcher drafted documents that were produced to the local authorities and read to illiterate would-be interviewees. These included the Letter of Information and the Consent Form. The documents explained the nature of research, assured confidentiality and anonymity, explained that participation was voluntary and did not involve any foreseeable physical and psychological harm to the participants. In addition, the interviews were only tape recorded with the consent of the informant who was made aware that the interview would be used for academic purposes only. Interviewees used pseudonyms in order to protect their identities. The rights of research participants were, therefore, not infringed.

## Conclusion

The first section of this chapter has argued that land and agrarian reforms can play critical roles in reducing rural poverty. It also asserted that land reform should be accompanied by enforceable and secure tenure. In addition, agrarian reforms should be sensitive to the aspirations and demands of marginalised groups, especially women. Supportive policies and post-settlement support make agrarian reforms effective whether they are market driven or not. The second section of the chapter discussed the research methods used in pursuit of the study's aims and objectives. The research methods used were qualitative and not quantitative. The following chapter presents an overview of the case study area.



## **CHAPTER 4: OVERVIEW OF THE CASE STUDY AREA**

### **Introduction**

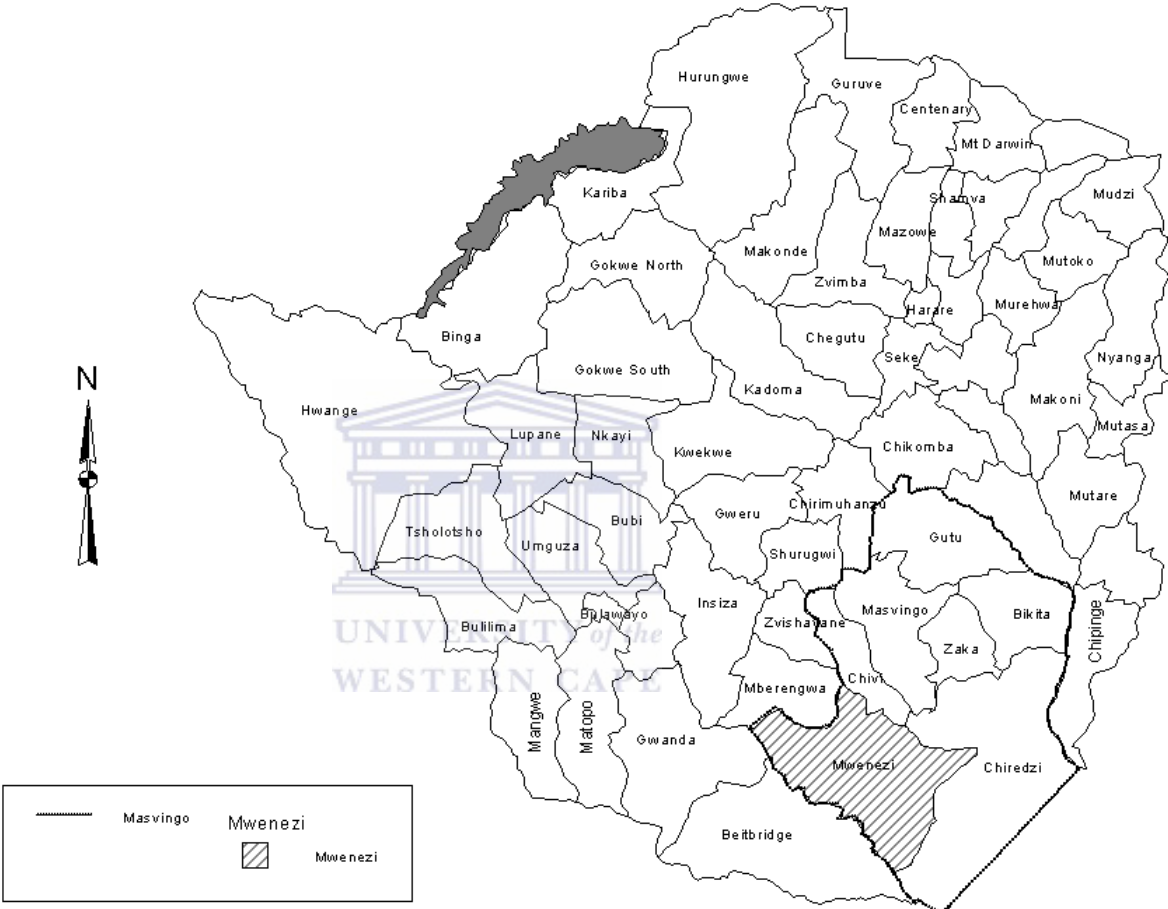
The last chapter discussed the conceptual issues around the study as well as the research methods used to meet the thesis' aims and objectives. In this chapter, an overview of the case study area is presented. The chapter also seeks to introduce the case study areas. The chapter illuminates the environmental, social and historical background of the Mwenezi district. The overview helps in assessing the impact of the land reform on the inhabitants of Mwenezi.

### **Geographical Location**

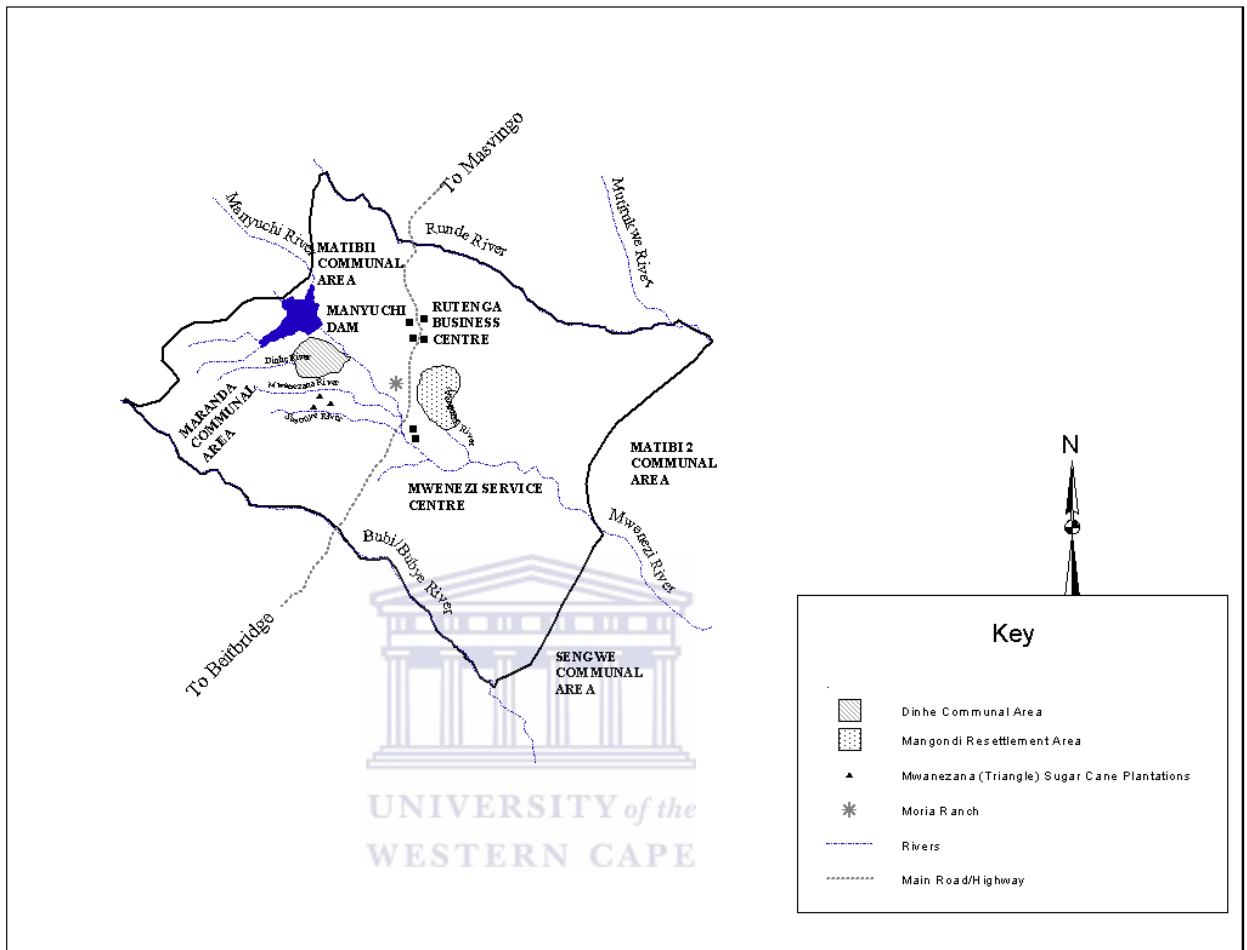
Mwenezi district lies in the Masvingo province in southern Zimbabwe and is part of the south-eastern lowveld. It shares borders with the Chiredzi district to the east and northeast, Beitbridge district to the south and west, Mberengwa district to the northwest, and Chivi district to the north (see maps below). It is made up of the Maranda and Matibi communal areas. Matibi is further divided into Matibi 1 and Matibi 2. Matibi 1 lies to the north of Maranda, while Matibi 2 is to the southeast near the Chiredzi district and the Gonarezhou National Park. Matibi 1 encompasses Neshuro, Mawarire and Chitanga communal lands. Matibi 2 covers Sengwe Communal Land.



**MAP OF ZIMBABWE SHOWING THE COUNTRY'S DISTRICTS**



## SKETCH MAP OF THE MWENEZI DISTRICT



The thesis focuses on two areas within the district, Dinhe and Mangondi (see map above). Mangondi is a resettlement area located between the Rutenga and Mwenezi service centres along the Masvingo-Beitbridge road. The area initially consisted of white commercial ranches. These were occupied and later allocated to black A1 and A2 farmers under the FTLRP. By contrast, Dinhe is a communal area directly under Chief Maranda. It covers ward 8 of the Mwenezi district and is one of the areas of origin of some of the ‘new farmers’ at Mangondi. Dinhe is to the west of Mangondi, south of Matibi 1. The

study area covers the area between the Dinhe and Mwenezi rivers around the Dinhe Business Centre.

### **Agro-Ecological Conditions**

Zimbabwe is divided into five agro-ecological zones, which are also referred to as Natural Regions. Natural Region I is the small region in Zimbabwe's eastern highlands. It has the greatest and specialised agricultural potential (Kinsey, 2002:3; Robilliard *et al*, 2002:2). Mwenezi lies in agro-ecological region 5, a classification indicating a dry and low rainfall area. The northern part of the district is in region 4 (Cousins, 1992:99). The district receives low (about 400 mm per year) and erratic rainfall and is prone to severe drought and famine. Because of the low and unreliable rainfall, the people of Mwenezi largely rely on food handouts from government and NGOs and remittance income for survival. Dry land farming is very uncertain and unsustainable (Campbell *et al* 2002). In the dry season, Mwenezi often faces a shortage of water for both people and animals.

Underground water is scarce, unreliable and unyielding (CFU Report for the UNDP 2004). In many instances, the water table is very low and underground water is out of reach of the traditional hand operated pumps or boreholes. There are three major rivers that supply water to the district. These are the Mwenezi, Runde and Bubi rivers, which flow through the district. These are, however, often dry during winter and autumn. The Bubi River only flows during heavy rains or severe flooding. This is because it is effectively dammed in the West Nicholson area in the Gwanda district. There are no

dams on the Bubi River in the Mwenezi district. Other smaller rivers include the Dinhe, Mangondi, Sosonye and Mwanezana rivers, which feed into the Mwenezi River.

The Mwenezi River is the district's major source of water. Its perennial water supply improved after agreements had been made between government and Triangle (Pvt) Limited Company for the release of the 'first flood' water from the Manyuchi dam. There are other minor catchment weirs on the river, where the water is blocked for irrigation purposes. The main user of the Mwenezi River's water is the Triangle-owned Mwanezana Sugar Estate. Most white commercial farmers in the district used to have complex sand extraction water systems through which water was delivered around their properties by extensive pipelines (CFU Report for the UNDP 2004). There are some small dams in communal areas on minor rivers and streams. However, some of them were destroyed by Cyclone Eline in the year 2000.

The scarcity of surface water is severe in resettlement areas like Mangondi. This is because the Mwenezi River is far away from the resettlement area and the Mangondi River is dry during the greater part of the year. In contrast, Dinhe is closer to both the Dinhe and Mwenezi rivers. A number of boreholes also provide fairly reliable sources of water in the communal area. As will be discussed in the sixth chapter of the thesis, at Mangondi, water is the cause of conflicts between A1 and A2 farmers.

Despite the dry conditions, the soils in Mwenezi are generally fertile. Some parts of the district have fertile basalt soils, which are however difficult to work with hoes or a simple

plough. Red loam soils, which are found in other parts of Mwenezi, are capable of yielding good crops but the low rainfall renders them useless without the use of irrigation (NAZ S2929/8/4 Delineation Report). Mwenezi is also a broken granite country with mixed bush lands (Mopane and Acacia) woodlands. There is a mixture of granitic sands, which are generally infertile and heavier fertile red clay and loam soils (Cousins, 1992:101).

Because of the unfavourable climatic conditions, in the pre-colonial past, the people of Mwenezi used to grow drought resistant small grains like millet, sorghum and rapoko. These were mostly grown in the lighter alluvial soils along rivers (Bannerman, 1981:19-20). However, in addition to droughts, the Mwenezi people have had to contend with the problem of locusts and quelea birds (NAZS2929/8/4). The low and unreliable rainfall does not suit the growing of crops like maize, which can only be grown successfully under irrigation.

Before the land reform, about 83 per cent of the land in Mwenezi was held as large-scale commercial ranches. Part of the land was under irrigation. The communal lands of Maranda and Matibi made up the rest of the district (Cousins, 1992:99).

The lowveld has a unique but extensive ecosystem which, produces some of the most palatable and nutritious grazing in the country (CFU Report for the UNDP 2004). The best lowveld grasses are the perennials, which if not overgrazed can supply nutritious green shoots with very small amounts of rain (ibid). The Acacia, Combretum and

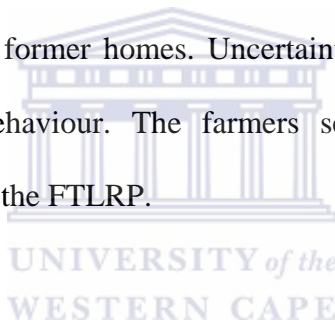
Mopane shrubs and trees also provide good livestock food in the form of leaf, fruit and pods, respectively. Mwenezi is, therefore, ideal for commercial and small-scale production of livestock like goats, cattle and sheep. Donkeys are an important source of draught power for poor households, who do not own cattle. They can also survive or resist severe droughts unlike cattle.

For many years, the lowveld was sparsely populated mainly because of its poor roads, droughts, lack of water and extreme heat. However, it was well known for the wildlife, which existed there and was popular with South African hunters. In fact, land use and development initiatives in Mwenezi were largely moulded in the context of the wilderness vision thesis (Wolmer 2001). The perception was of the south-eastern lowveld as a wilderness area. European settlers wanted to retain the lowveld as a continuous wilderness area and keep people and livestock out. From its arrival in Rhodesia, the BSAC was keen to establish a ranch in the lowveld. Plans to establish the Nuanetsi Ranch date back to this early colonial period. The development of ranches and the Gonarezhou National Park were all in line with the wilderness vision (see Bannerman, 198:31-39).

According to Wolmer (2001), this developmental approach submerged dry land farming, which is apparently at the core of rural livelihoods in Mwenezi. Dry land agriculture was not regarded as a key livelihood strategy. The approach also sidelined development projects like dam construction and small-holder irrigation schemes, which are suited for small-scale producers in the area.

## **Ethnic Composition**

Mwenezi is not a simple, homogeneous and harmonious society. In addition, both Dinhe and Mangondi are ethnically heterogeneous and the people have multi-layered identities, which are often changeable and context dependent. These broad identities can be based on gender, age, class, ethnicity as well as political and religious orientation. The newly resettled farmers have assumed another identity, 'the new farmers'. At Mangondi, the new farmers prefer to call their new place '*Kumagariro matsva*', that is a place where there is a new lease of life. However, some of the 'new farmers' often shuttle between their new farms and their old homes in the communal areas and appear reluctant to completely break with their former homes. Uncertainties around the security of tenure seem to influence such behaviour. The farmers seem to be managing risks and uncertainties associated with the FTLRP.



The above identities can be assumed and articulated depending on the social, political and economic climate obtaining on the ground at a particular time. According to Cousins (2004:1), commonality and difference emerge, articulate and condition each other over time in specific settings. Mwenezi is a hybrid society consisting of a number of ethnic and sub-ethnic groups. These include the Karanga, Pfumbi, Venda, Changaan or Shangan and Ndebele. This ethnic heterogeneity impacts on social stratification and problematises 'otherness' thereby dichotomising 'the other' in development discourse (see Nyambara 2002).

As already noted, the district's adverse climatic conditions made it generally sparsely populated during the pre-colonial and early colonial period. However, forced evictions during the colonial era, especially during the implementation of the Native Land Apportionment Act (LAA) and its subsequent amendments in the 1940s and 1969, meant that more people of diverse cultural, ethnic and historical origins moved into the district. Such a development usually leads to ethnic strife as groups compete for resources. In addition, different social groups have varying development priorities which policy makers need to consider when designing development programmes.

The Pfumbi are regarded to be the original inhabitants of Mwenezi. Today, they are largely found in the Maranda Communal Lands. Their old ancestors are believed to have originated from South Africa in the Transvaal (Beach, 1980:208, 214-15; NAZS2929/4/5). They crossed the Limpopo into Zimbabwe during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. There seem to be an overlap of the histories of the Pfumbi and the Venda as both groups migrated from South Africa, and the Marugudzi Mountain in Thohoyandou, South Africa, features prominently in their collective oral memory.

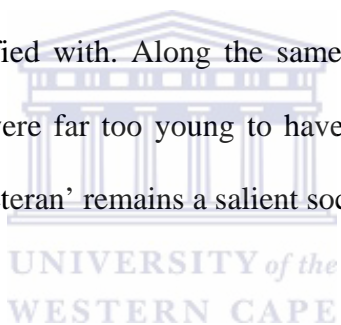
Most of the Karanga moved into the district during the colonial era and after independence. Other Shona groups might have moved into Mwenezi during the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. Neshuro and Mawarire, of Matibi 1, are examples of Karanga communities in Mwenezi. Mazetese's people in upper Mwenezi are largely identified as Ndebele. These were latecomers into the district. Their original area was in the Fort Rixon district in Matebeleland. They were evicted and resettled in Mwenezi in 1948 (NAZS2929/8/4).



The Shangan originally came from South Africa during the Mfecane era (19<sup>th</sup> century). They settled in the Sengwe Communal Land. Between 1918 and 1919, Chief Chitanga and his people were moved into Matibi 1 Communal Area. However, the Shangan in Matibi 2 were not affected by these forced evictions. Chiefs Chilonga, Mpapa, and Gezani, who are ethnic Shangan, fall under Matibi 2. Most Shangan are found in Matibi 2.

At this juncture, it should be noted that through intermarriages and internal migrations, enclaves of any of the above ethnic groups can be found in any part of the district. Other migrants moved into the district as families or individuals not as ethnic groups. In addition, it should be noted that ethnic naming had a profound impact on attitudes towards land reform, modernity, gender, education and farming practices. This was largely influenced by the 'we-they dichotomy', ethnic pride and ethnic prejudice. In general terms, other ethnic groups have historically regarded the Pfumbi and Shangan as the epitome of 'backwardness' and resistance to change and modernity in Mwenezi. Most non-Pfumbi interviewees alleged that the Pfumbi are not receptive to new farming ideas and methods. They compare very much with the Shangwe in Gokwe, north-western Zimbabwe, who historically have been perceived by their Ndebele and Karanga counterparts as 'retrogressive' and not receptive to modernity (Worby 1992; 1994; Nyambara 1999; 2001; 2002). However, to assume that all the Pfumbi or Shangan are 'backward' is misleading and too simplistic.

New patterns of social differentiation are also emerging at Mangochi like in any other resettlement area in Zimbabwe. New lines of political authority are also sprouting. Chaumba, Scoones and Wolmer (2003:1) note that the farm occupations led to the unfolding of a new political terrain with new actors and new institutions. They add that “this is a confusing and dynamic landscape populated by actors as diverse as entrepreneurial war veteran security guards-cum-protection racketeers, militant ZANU PF youth brigades...” (Chaumba, Scoones and Wolmer, 2003:1). Armed militias were also part of the social landscape together with pseudo-war veterans. The term ‘war veteran’ has gained currency and has become a tag most rural dwellers and farm occupiers want to be identified with. Along the same vein, it has been observed that, “many of those mobilised were far too young to have fought in the war of liberation” (ICG, 2004:75). The ‘war veteran’ remains a salient socio-political identity at Mangochi.



### **Demography and Literacy**

In 2004, the district’s population was estimated at around 170 000 (ACT 2004). Mwenzi is also one of the poorest districts in Zimbabwe. Before and just after 1980, most of the civil servants working in Mwenzi came from outside the district. A very small fraction of the population had gone beyond four years of secondary education. There was a general negative attitude toward education especially among the Pfumbi and Shangan. A female Pfumbi informant interviewed by Moyo (1988:ii) said that; “my father did not want to send me to school. He always argued that if girls were sent to school they would turn into prostitutes and they would not be married to any respectable young man of the village”.

However, Shona and Ndebele immigrants often embraced education and modernity enthusiastically and some would send their children to mission schools for secondary education. In addition to investing in education, Shona and Ndebele immigrants were more receptive to new farming methods and experimented with new crop varieties. The Shangan, Pfumbi and Venda embraced modernity at a slower pace. However, at Dinhe Christian Primary and Secondary Schools, most school drop-outs are from Pfumbi and Shangan backgrounds. This seems to confirm the popular stereotype in the district that the Pfumbi do not embrace modernity. Most students with Pfumbi backgrounds drop out of school after the seventh grade and go to work on South African farms as illegal immigrants popularly known as ‘border jumpers’. The latter is also a new and growing social and economic identity largely influenced by the socio-economic meltdown in Zimbabwe. Consequently, the ‘art’ of border jumping is popular with other ethnic groups apart from the Venda, Shangan and Pfumbi.

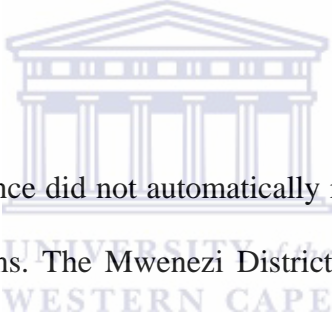
From the above discussion, it is clear that the case study area is a heterogeneous society, which is socio-economically multifaceted. Consequently, the district’s development aspirations and the impact of the land reform on the inhabitants of Mwenezi can in no way be generalised. Communities have multiple and often conflicting development priorities.

In addition, the resettlement area is an arena for emerging multiple and multi-layered identities. These identities should, however, not be rigidified as they are malleable, fluid, changeable and intersect. In addition, as will be argued later in this thesis, the setting at

the new farms is also an arena for emerging and competing identities and social classes. These have varying and often divergent perceptions on gender and environmental control.

### **Land reform in Mwenezi: An overview**

The land question in the then Nuanetsi Reserve during the colonial era was similar to the situation in most 'African reserves'. As already alluded to, the district was affected by the supposedly reformist agricultural and land reorganisation policies of the 1950s and 1960s, especially the Native Land Husbandry Act (NLHA). However, the overall impacts of these colonial policies and the African response do not constitute the focus of the thesis.



The attainment of independence did not automatically resolve the country's skewed land ownership and access patterns. The Mwenezi District was no exception. The Africans remained in the former reserves, now Communal Lands. The Communal Lands were characterised by poor or non-existent infrastructure, a critical land hunger and increasing population pressure on the natural resource base.

At the national level, government embarked on a number of socio-economic programmes aimed at alleviating the citizens in the communal lands of the colonial baggage. The reforms were aimed at improving the quality of life of the citizens. Land reform was also carried out in the context of the Lancaster House Agreement's willing- seller willing-buyer basis. However, the Mwenezi district did not benefit from the country's market driven land reform. On the contrary, oral interviews and information from the Central

Statistical Office (CSO 1982, 1992 and 2002 census) indicate that more people seem to have moved into the district in the 1970s and the 1990s. In addition, unlike the districts in the more favourable agro-ecological regions, Mwenezi did not experience the cotton and maize inspired 'peasant boom' of the early 1980s (see Rukuni and Eicher 1994).

### **Poverty, Livelihoods and Agricultural production**

Communal farmers in Mwenezi rely on dry land farming as their main source of livelihood and income. Most households depend on agricultural production and livestock rearing. Mwenezi is not a maize-producing district, as the crop does not do well due to lack of adequate rainfall. Traditionally, farmers have relied on small grains like sorghum, rapoko and millet. Crops grown under irrigation on smallholder irrigation schemes include maize, vegetables and beans. Some households are also venturing into cotton farming. Livestock that are kept by most farmers include cattle, donkeys, goats and sheep. Cattle and donkeys are important sources of draught power. Goats, sheep and chickens are often sold to raise money for school fees or other household requirements. Other sources of income include micro businesses, part-time jobs, crafts, remittance income, food hand-outs from the government and NGOs (ACT 2004).

In addition, Mwenezi is characterised by poor and low agricultural productivity. Farmers lack vital inputs like seed, fertiliser, chemicals and draught power. Production is largely for subsistence purposes but this has to be augmented by other sources of income.

The common and general definition of a poor person is “*munhu asina chaanacho*”, that is “a person who owns nothing” (interview with Ward 8 Councillor). Poverty indicators include shortage of food; lack of draught power, especially cattle; inadequate access to key services like health care and education; unemployment; lack of farming implements and poor houses. With adequate inputs and draught power, farmers can have relatively better crop yields despite the dry conditions. However, if one does not have draught power and other inputs, s/he cannot till the land efficiently and timeously resulting in poor harvests, which creates food shortage for the household. Such households often survive through ‘*maricho*’ (part-time jobs) (see [www.zdcp.org/projectsites.htm](http://www.zdcp.org/projectsites.htm)). Poverty definitions also differ according to age, sex and social class.

### Conclusion

The present chapter has provided an overview of the two case study areas (Dinhe and Mangondi). It discussed the Mwenezi district’s agro-ecological conditions and noted that development projects in the district were largely influenced by the conceptualisation of Mwenezi’s landscape as wilderness. In addition, the chapter provided an overview of poverty, livelihoods and agricultural production in Mwenezi. Food security is a major concern for most households and current agrarian practices have failed to reduce poverty and broaden the livelihood base for most households.

The following chapter provides an analysis of agrarian reforms and development initiatives in Mwenezi from 1980 up to the farm occupations of year 2000. It examines the effectiveness of these development initiatives in reducing poverty and vulnerability in

Mwenezi. Development initiatives that are focused on include the construction of the Manyuchi Dam, the Mwenezi Palm Oil Project, the Mwanezana Sugarcane Estates, the farm occupations and the state funded Nuanetsi Ranch Irrigation Project.



## **CHAPTER 5: LAND REFORM AND DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES IN MWENEZI, 1980-2004**

### **Introduction**

This chapter provides an overview of the major development initiatives in Mwenezi. These include the Mwenezi Radical Land Reform Programme, the Mwenezi Palm Oil Project and the Nuanetsi Irrigation Project. Overall, the above projects have not been effective. In addition, development projects often took the form of large-scale irrigation schemes.

### **Pre-1980 to the early 1980s**

Conflicts over land and resources have been characteristic of the agrarian history of Mwenezi. During the colonial era, there were conflicts over land between local chiefs and Christian Mission Stations. After the setting up of such missions on land, which had hitherto belonged to local Africans, the latter often resorted to resource poaching. They could herd or graze their flock on mission grounds or farms. Resource poaching also extended to the neighbouring white commercial ranches. Africans could illegally graze their flock in these ranches or paddocks at night. According to one informant, men would organize themselves into groups, vandalize the paddock fencing, and then drive their flock into the paddocks at night. The men would then sleep in the nearby villages or alternatively poach for game, and then drive their cattle out in the morning. In addition to poaching or illegal hunting, resource poaching included the illegal cutting of trees for firewood or poles, and grass for thatching (interview with Baba Munya, Dinhe). There



were often clashes between the black security personnel working for the commercial farmers and the local resource poachers. Resource poaching continued even after independence.

At this juncture, it should however be noted that the role of Christian Missions in the socio-economic development of the Mwenzi district can not be ignored. For example, the Roman Catholic Church, started operating in the district in the late 1940s. In addition to the Catholics were the Lutheran World Federation, the Dutch Reformed Church and the Free Methodists. It is noteworthy that Christian missions continue to play notable roles in the socio-economic development of the district. They play a pivotal role in the provision of education, health facilities and drought relief.

Despite the existence of tensions between the Church and the local communities over resources, the Church has historically played a developmental role in Mwenzi. The Catholic Church based at Matibi Mission made notable contributions toward the development and improvement of agriculture complementing the role of agricultural extension workers. Oral histories collected by Magwa (1987) assert that Father Herman Stoffel and Walter Kaufmann would go about the surrounding villages teaching rural farmers the importance of good farming methods such as winter ploughing and crop rotation. In addition, the locals near Matibi Mission could hire a Mission cart to carry manure from the kraals to their fields.

Catholic missionaries also played a role in the formation of African Farmers' Clubs. Two such clubs were *Tsvakanjere* (Seek Wisdom) and *Kurima Huda* (Farming is by Choice), which were still operational in the 1980s (Magwa, 1987:21-22.) An Agricultural Technical and Extension Services (AGRITEX) officer who worked at Matibi Mission during this period, F. Dhoba, said that Catholic missionaries, particularly Herman Stoffel, played an important role in trying to improve peasant farming.

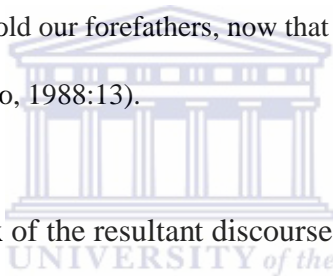
The Church also continues to play a fundamental role in poverty alleviation in Mwenezi. To illustrate, the Catholic Church started issuing out maize meal to drought and famine stricken families as early as 1966. During the 1981 drought, the Catholic Social Services and Development channelled aid to the inhabitants of Mwenezi through the Matibi Mission. The aid was in the form of maize meal and clothes. The Methodist Church also assisted the people of Mwenezi with drought relief during the 1981 drought. It is apparent that since the 1960s, various churches have assisted with food relief in Mwenezi augmenting the role of government and NGOs.

At independence, there was no marked improvement in terms of the socio-economic development of the district. African farmers still faced the same transport problems that they were facing during the colonial era. Most farmers had no direct access to Grain Marketing Board depots (Moyo 1988). Consequently, they had to sell their produce to middlemen who would then re-sell it at a profit. In this regard, it can be argued that the war of liberation and independence did little to improve the economic and social well being of the rural farmers in Mwenezi.

Despite its mean climatic conditions, in 1980 Mwenezi had a bumper harvest. Some traditionalists claimed that the unprecedented harvest was a result of the ancestors being pleased with the new government. Unfortunately, the year of plenty was followed by successive years of drought and famine. According to Moyo (1988:13), rural farmers began to feel that the new government should have done something to please the gods. In an oral interview conducted in 1988, an informant claimed that;

The Mugabe government is responsible for the continuous years of drought.

The leaders should have come back to the elders and the spirits to tell us that, that which they had been fighting for had become a reality. When they went out to fight, they told our forefathers, now that they have won, they have said nothing (Moyo, 1988:13).

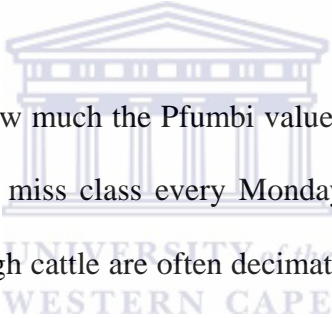


The above remark is an index of the resultant discourses associated with droughts, famine and other natural calamities by some sections of society. Today some rural farmers in the district perform rain-making ceremonies just before the start of the rain season. In 2005, at the initiative of the country's traditional leadership, Zimbabwe held traditional ceremonies locally known as *bira* to appease the ancestors. The *biras* were held at a time when the country had been experiencing successive droughts. For Mwenezi, Beach (1980) attributed the drought to the general climatic conditions of the district. As already noted, the district has historically suffered from incessant droughts. However, some years of drought are not that severe. More severe droughts occurred in 1970, 1981 and 1992.

Since 1980, the government has been providing food aid to the people of Mwenezi on an almost yearly basis. Initially, the aid was indiscriminate but later the targets were the poor, those without cattle, the disabled and the elderly. This, of course, was very problematic and created tensions as it is difficult to define poverty in a poor district like Mwenezi. The government later introduced the “Food for Work Programme” which was locally referred to as *Mukomondera*. This was a public works programme whereby rural farmers developed their areas in exchange for food relief or money. The term *mukomondera* was also used to refer to the food relief for the public works programme. Under this scheme, rural farmers constructed small dams, resurfaced roads, worked at schools and clinics, constructed small bridges or filled-in gullies. The latter helped in combating soil erosion. The Lutheran Development Services also currently operates in Mwenezi supporting some households through the Food for Work Programme for Integrated Rural Development, which is almost similar to the food for work programme discussed above (ACT 2004).

It should be noted that in the 1980s, there was very little new investment in infrastructure in the district. The government did very little to ‘develop’ Mwenezi. In the field of education, local parents and children built most of the schools. Attempts to install electricity at some of the district’s shopping centres remained elusive. This overall lack of development of basic infrastructure impacted negatively on agrarian reform and livelihoods options, which remained limited.

Cattle are valued greatly by most Mwenezi rural farmers, not so much for their being a vital source of livelihood but because one's riches are determined by the number of cattle s/he owns. One informant told a story, which he insisted to be true. The story stereotypes the Pfumbi ethnic groups as valuing their herds but despising education. According to the story, a parent went to Dinhe Primary School and confronted a teacher who had beaten a pupil for truancy. The parent verbally abused the teacher and said; "why did you thrash my son for missing class as if education can be eaten? I grew up eating rapoko and not maize meal, am I dead? I have a large herd of cattle, you a teacher, what do you have? Nothing."



The above incident shows how much the Pfumbi value their cattle. Apparently, the story goes, the man's son used to miss class every Monday, as he had to drive his father's cattle to the dip tank. Although cattle are often decimated by severe droughts, many rural farmers are reluctant to sell their herds. It should also be noted that livestock ownership is another source of intra-community differentiation (Cousins, 1987:1). Information obtained through oral interviews around Dinhe revealed that a person who does not own cattle is often referred to as '*munhu asina chaanacho*', meaning one who owns nothing or a poor person. Lacking cattle can therefore be used to define poverty.

Land problems also remained unresolved. Rural farmers in Mwenezi, like others across the country, had been promised land during the war but the promise was not forthcoming. Consequently, with increasing population, the 1980s were characterised by resource poaching and increasing pressure on the available resources.

The above factors and the failure by government to provide land to the landless might have influenced the local leadership to initiate the Mwenezi Radical Land Reform Programme (MRLRP), which is referred to by oral sources as the linear villagisation programme or *maraini* (lines).

### **The Mwenezi Radical Land Reform Programme**

The MRLRP has been intensively discussed by Cousins (1987; 1992) and Cliffe (1986). However, it deserves attention, as it was a fundamental attempt by the communal farmers of Mwenezi at land reform. Cousins (1987:17) notes that the end of the war restored peace and order in the countryside enabling AGRITEX officers to increase their presence in communal areas and to promote grazing schemes. In 1982, the Chief Veld and Pastures Officer at the Department of Agricultural, Technical and Extension Services sent a memorandum to all Provincial AGRITEX Officers advising field staff to publicize the idea of grazing schemes (Cousins 1987:17). The issue of grazing schemes was therefore ongoing in other parts of the country in the 1980s. This often resulted in those found in communal grazing areas (*kumafuro*) being resettled elsewhere.

Cousins (1987:425) notes that “the radical land reform programme which began to be formulated in 1982 and 1983 consisted largely of a reorganisation of land use within the communal lands, not a redistribution of land from commercial to communal”.

The MRLRP started when the Mwenezi District Administrator and some district councillors began to promote the idea of a voluntary re-organisation of settlement

patterns. It involved the surveying of the area to determine the available grazing land, the introduction of short duration grazing, the fencing of paddocks, internal resettlement and the formation of new villages or linear villagization (Cousins, 1987:19). Arable lands were to be consolidated but crop production was seen as secondary to livestock production. The MRLRP was not very different from the NLHA. However, the difference lay in being supposedly a grassroots initiative.

The MRLRP was popular with donors, planners and the media. The Sunday Mail (17/11/87), for instance, described it in a rather exaggerated manner as one of the radical advances in communal farming since the plough. There was nothing radical about the MRLRP. It was just a question of publicity, the same media publicity that was later associated with the Mwenezi Palm Oil Project, which like the MRLRP proved a failure. What was radical was probably the idea and not what actually obtained on the ground. The MRLRP gave the Mwenezi district immense publicity. Consequently, the 'radical land reform' became a 'model' for other districts. However, by the early 1990s, indications were that the project was now a failure. Paddock fencing had also been vandalised (Cousins, 1992:99).

In addition, at the grassroots level, the 'radical land reform' was not very popular. Most people at Dinhe were strongly against the idea of linear villagisation. Most interviewees claimed that they feared that '*maraini*' (linear villagisation) would expose them to the enemy in case of an outbreak of another war. The Matebeleland disturbances of the 1980s seemed to have influenced such thinking. People moved into the 'lines' reluctantly.

Internal resettlement also moved some farmers away from their fields. This negatively impacted on crop production as a lot of valuable time was spent travelling to and from the fields. The MRLRP also failed in its attempt to build a local agricultural economy based on livestock sales (Cousins 1992). As already noted, most people in Mwenezi are reluctant to sell their livestock, even in years of drought. During the 1992 drought some households lost large herds of cattle as they failed to sell them off. The 1982-84 drought had also decimated large heads of cattle. Although crop production is affected by the mean climatic conditions, it remained an important source of livelihood.

According to the current Ward 8 Councillor, in the area around Dinhe, there was some internal resettlement but no paddocks were established (interview with Ward 8 Councillor). The shortage of grazing land often militated against this. The nearest paddocks were established in the late 1980s in the area under headmen Tupu and Ramela, who are both Shangan. There were often some conflicts over grazing rights between the latter communities and those from Dinhe, who incidentally happened to be Pfumbi and Karanga. This conflict over grazing was pronounced during winter after the harvests when cattle were left to graze in the harvested fields. The tensions over grazing often took an ethnic dimension. The present author, who lived in Dinhe during the 1980s, was witness to the implementation of the MRLFP and the aforementioned clashes over grazing land.

The implementation of the MRLRP also proved a failure in most parts of the districts. Like other projects, the MRLRP failed to provide a panacea for Mwenezi's lack of



livelihoods options. Along the same vein, Cousins (1992:107) notes that in the rest of the district “the MRLRP was proving much more difficult to get off the ground, and had lost its high profile and reputation as a grassroots initiative to restructure land use in communal areas”.

In addition, Cousins (1992: 105) also adds that:

From its inception the MRLRP faced a fundamental dilemma. Given a history of forced relocation of rural communities into densely settled ‘reserves’ in low potential areas, it was unlikely that the kind of land use reorganisation proposed by the MRLRP could by itself resolve the problems faced by communal land households.

Apparently, what was needed was external and not internal resettlement. This explains why resource poaching continued unabated throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Resource poaching was an indicator of the failure of agrarian reforms in Mwenezi. It was also a sign of protest against the slow pace of the land reform. In addition, despite its weaknesses, the MRLRP showed the desperation of community leaders in Mwenezi to address the district’s land problems and seek sustainable livelihood options. Another lesson that can be drawn from the project’s failure is that concerns raised and articulated by a community’s leadership are not necessarily in tandem with those of the ordinary villagers. In addition to the MRLRP, the construction of the Manyuchi dam was another notable development in the agrarian history of Mwenezi.

## **The Manyuchi Dam Project**

Water is a crucial determinant in coping with drought. Consequently, agrarian reforms should improve communities in dry areas' access to irrigation water and irrigable land.

Along the same vein, Manzungu and Machiridza (2005:01) argue that:

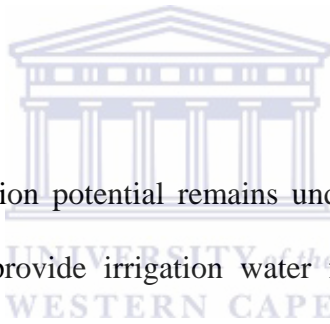
A discussion of access to land alone, without extending it to water, in ...a semi-arid environment does not bode well for an informed analysis of the agrarian question in general or an understanding of how sustainable smallholder agricultural production can be structured.

Water and land accessibility complement each other. However, in addition to the availability of land and water, successful agricultural production also depends on factors like access to markets, finance, appropriate technology and reliable transport (Manzungu and Machiridza, 2005:01).



The construction of the Manyuchi dam was expected to open up avenues for livelihood diversification for communities around the dam and down stream. However, the Manyuchi dam remains under-utilised. The dam is along the Mwenezi River about 160 km from Masvingo town. Its construction was the brainchild of a consortium of commercial farmers downstream of the Mwenezi River and business people under the Mwenezi Development Corporation. The dam was constructed under the auspices of the Ministries of Energy and Water Resources and Development (MEWRD) (Kabell 1986). The first survey, investigations and preliminary designs of the dam were carried out in the early 1960s.

When the idea was first mooted, the dam was intended to form an integral part of the planned development of the water resources of Zimbabwe as it would virtually control the entire runoff from the Mwenezi River catchment above the site (Kabell 1986). The dam's catchment area is 4610 square kilometres. The idea to construct the dam was revived after independence. During this time, a local investment company, the Mwenezi Development Corporation, was promoting an enterprise to establish a palm oil plantation in Zimbabwe. The soils and climate of the Mwenezi district suited the proposed project. In addition, water for irrigation could be drawn from the Manyuchi dam. An agreement was reached between the Mwenezi Development Corporation and the government to fund the construction of the dam.



The Manyuchi dam's irrigation potential remains under-utilised. Before independence, the dam was intended to provide irrigation water for commercial farms and cattle ranches. Crops that were to be irrigated by the dam included cotton, maize, sorghum, lucerne and wheat (Project Report, 1965:01). After its completion, the dam was designed to irrigate an agro-industrial complex. This would have helped ensure food security in the district. The Manyuchi dam was expected to support an enormous dairy, palm oil, soap and chocolate industrial venture that had been planned by the Mwenezi Development Corporation.

The dam was also meant to irrigate 2000 hectares of sugar cane about 40km downstream. In addition, a mini-hydroelectric power station was also to be installed at the foot of the dam wall. The generation station was to be linked to the national grid by a 25km medium

voltage line. A regional medium voltage distribution network was to be built in order to meet the needs of nearby villages and industry (INFO/AIJReport).

Legally, the set up of the project had been designed to be a ‘trust’. The parties to be involved in the Manyuchi Hydro-electric Power Project were the Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority (ZESA); local authorities and customers; Triangle Company, the owner and operator of the dam; EDF of France; Ontario Power Generation; RWE of Germany and Hydro-Quebec (INFO/AIJ Report). The foreign companies above had shown interest in investing in the project. ZESA was meant to be responsible for operating and managing the local grid including the billing of clients.

Despite the high hopes, the Manyuchi Hydro-electric Power Project was another failure. In fact, the dam has degenerated into a “veritable white elephant” (Herald 30/06/04). Its water has not been used to secure the district’s food security. Neither has the proposed Manyuchi Mini-hydroelectric Power Station transformed into objective reality. The dam has been a case of irrigation potential gone to waste. Four smallholder irrigation schemes downstream at Dinhe, Pikinini, Magomana and Chizumba have drawn very little water from the dam. These schemes are also negatively affected by acute fuel shortages, lack of spares and machine breakdown. As a result, although the dam has been 100 per cent full since 2000 (Herald 30/06/04), the inhabitants of Mwenezi have for years relied on food handouts from the government and donors. Irrigation has the potential to ensure food security and livelihoods diversification in Mwenezi despite the district’s mean climatic conditions.

The Mwanezana Sugar Estates owned by Triangle have been the major beneficiaries of the Manyuchi dam. However, Triangle, which was granted water rights to Manyuchi for a period of 40 years, seems to have failed to maintain and manage the dam. Since the 1992 drought, when the then Department of National Parks and Wildlife Management lost a tender to develop the dam into a lucrative tourist destination, the dam's potential remains underutilised. The Manyuchi dam is a potential tourist attraction in the district. It can offer facilities like water-skiing, site seeing, bird watching, boating and fishing. In fact, the Manyuchi dam has the potential to boost recreational tourism.

The dam has been vandalised and also faces the problem of siltation. Fences have been plundered or stolen and thieves have broken into the dam's administrative offices stealing fishing machines and boat trailer wheels. Fish poachers have also settled on the dozens of islands that dot the dam. This uncontrolled exploitation of the dam's resources is likely to lead to over-fishing. The cyclone Eline induced floods seriously affected the dam in 2000 and these damaged the bridge and road below the spillway. Because of Cyclone Japhet induced floods of 2001/2002, the reservoir just fell short of flowing over the dam wall after 10 hours of heavy rainfall (Interview with local School Headmaster).

As a result of the above-mentioned problems, the Manyuchi dam is now a white elephant. The dam has been a victim of neglect in a district ravaged by drought and poverty. The full irrigation potential of the dam has therefore remained underutilised. However, in the late 1980s, attempts were made to establish a palm oil plantation in Mwenezi using irrigation water from the Manyuchi dam. Like other agrarian reforms discussed above,

the palm project was also a failure as it failed to transform the livelihoods of rural farmers in Mwenezi.

### **The Mwenezi Palm Oil Project (MPOP)**

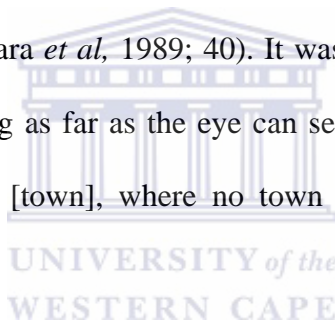
Like the MRLRP, the MPOP drew substantial media attention and was touted to be the solution for Mwenezi's apparent 'underdevelopment'. The media described the MPOP as an 'awe-inspiring venture' and "the biggest project in Zimbabwe since independence" (Nhandara *et al*, 1989:40). However, the project failed to live up to expectations and remained a pipe dream.

The MPOP was essentially a palm oil project on a massive scale. It was the brainchild of the Mwenezi Development Corporation, a subsidiary of the Aberfoyle Group. The Mwenezi Development Corporation had obtained permission from the Zimbabwean government for the development of a 12 000 hectares palm oil plantation (Parade Magazine, October 1988). The project also encompassed the construction of the Manyuchi dam, Zimbabwe's forth-largest dam.

The project also envisaged massive infrastructural development. The Mwenezi Development Corporation planned to open up four townships with 400 houses each. Detached houses were meant for field and mill foremen while semi-detached ones were for general workers. In addition, electricity, water and sewage were to be provided to all workers free of charge. Basic furniture was also provided (Parade Magazine, October 1988). Motorbikes and cars were provided for supervisors and foremen. However, it was

this over investment that rendered the MPOP unsustainable economically. Although no company documents were found, some former employees claimed that the company wasted money providing workers with furniture, cars and other household goods when it would require up to ten years for the project to start paying dividends (interview with Collen Dube, Dinhe).

If it had succeeded, the MPOP could have increased livelihoods options for the local communities. It was expected that upon completion the project would turn a hitherto sleepy village into an agro-industrial town of bustling activity, providing employment to some 10 000 people (Nhandara *et al*, 1989; 40). It was also hoped that by 1990, a “vast field of lush green, stretching as far as the eye can see” would “envelope a small town almost the size of Chegutu [town], where no town existed before” (Nhandara *et al*, 1989:40).



The palm oil from the MPOP was to be used to manufacture soap, margarine, confectionaries, ice cream and cooking oil for domestic and industrial use. The first processing mill was expected to have been completed by 1993 and the second one by 1996. Each of the mills was expected to have the capacity to produce 35 tonnes of palm oil an hour (Nhandara *et al*, 1989:40). The development of other related industries would have transformed the site into an agro-industrial complex. It was expected to produce 60 000 tonnes of crude palm oil a year and most of it could be exported since internal consumption was low. It was believed that by world standards, Mwenezi would produce about 0.5 per cent of the world market of palm oil (Nhandara *et al* 1989). The MPOP was

also set to become one of Zimbabwe's leading foreign currency earners, generating US\$40 million annually.

However, Mwenezi failed to strike oil. The grand project failed to take off, but hopes had been raised and expectations were that:

The people of Mwenezi will remember- may be as they roam around their rubber plantations- the crazy strangers in mammoth vehicles who made roads in the mountains and stopped the river flowing so they could make a dam and plant strange plants that can make soap and margarine (Nhandara *et al*, 1989:40).

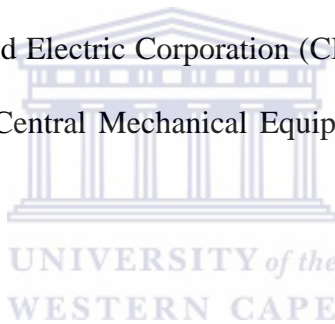
In the early 1990s, it became apparent that the Mwenezi Palm Oil Project had failed to take off. Although the reasons for the failure are not clear, it is likely that the project was hamstrung by shortages of working capital (Interview with former Mwenezi Development Corporation foremen). In other words, the project lacked economic viability as there was a shortage of working capital. Consequently, Triangle Limited Company took over the project and established the Mwanzana Sugar Estates.

### **The Nuanetsi Irrigation Project (NIP)**

The NIP is another recent development project that was initiated in Mwenezi. However, the project's sustainability is already under threat and government seem to have abandoned the irrigation scheme ([www.zwnews.com](http://www.zwnews.com) 27/02/2006). The economic crisis that Zimbabwe is currently facing, compromises the economic viability of the NIP.



The NIP was launched in 2000. It was the brainchild of the Masvingo Food Initiative, a group of senior politicians in the province. The project was initially aimed at growing winter maize on the state-owned Nuanetsi Ranch in the south-eastern lowveld. The mooted irrigation scheme was expected to restore food security in the country. The government hoped to create a 100 000 hectare irrigation scheme at Nuanetsi Ranch, which at full production was expected to produce enough food for the entire country (Newsnet 01/06/04). The project's promoters, including the then Masvingo Governor and resident minister, claimed that the project would be the answer to the chronic food shortages experienced in the country (The Standard 14/08/05). A Chinese company, China International Water and Electric Corporation (CIWEC) was the main contractor in the land clearing while the Central Mechanical Equipment Department (CMED) was a subcontractor.



Like the other projects initiated in the district before it, the NIP is a grand and ambitious project whose viability is already under threat. By January 2005, out of the 2000 hectares ready for planting only 170 hectares had been planted (Herald 10/01/05). More than 1800 hectares of prime land lay unplanted at the scheme, ironically due to a critical shortage of irrigation water. Massive siltation, intermittent droughts and erratic rainfall have left the Runde River dry. The river is currently the main source of water for irrigation. Agricultural and Rural Development Authority (ARDA)'s Nuanetsi Project Director confirmed the water shortages at the project in early 2005.

The project is expected to go into full throttle once the Tokwe-Mukorsi Dam in Chivi district has been completed. The dam will have a capacity of 1.8 billion cubic meters of water when full, which will make it the largest inland water body in Zimbabwe. It will have the capacity to irrigate 25 000 hectares depending on the crop and type of irrigation (Herald 10/01/05). However, it remains questionable whether the full utilisation of the Tokwe-Mukorsi dam will have social and economic benefits that would transform the livelihoods of people in Masvingo province given the fact that most large scale irrigation projects in the province have failed to live up to expectations. Meanwhile, plans are also afoot to draw water from the Manyuchi dam which can irrigate 10 000 hectares. However, most areas that are irrigable using the Manyuchi water are still to be cleared.

At the moment, the NIP is facing a critical shortage of water for irrigation. The current governor for Masvingo Province in August 2005 pleaded for funds from the private sector and government for the completion of the Tokwe-Mukorsi dam. Speaking at the National Economic Consultative Forum Workshop in Chiredzi, he said, “the province urgently appeals for the completion of the Tokwe-Mukorsi dam which can irrigate 25 000 hectares in the Nuanetsi and downstream areas. A lot of innovation and investment is called for in this sector” (The Standard 14/08/05). The governor added that Masvingo has a lot of potential for irrigation water but funds are insufficient for both new schemes and the rehabilitation of existing ones.

It is apparent that the NIP, which is expected to transform the perennially dry province into a greenbelt and a major food producer, is already facing viability problems.

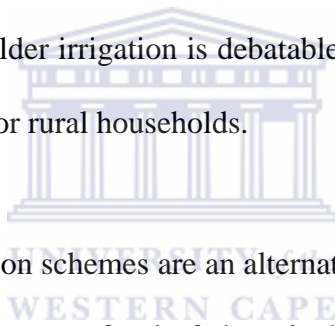
According to Matimba (The Standard 14/08/04), there is nothing at the site that shows any “serious land preparation activity taking place or a resemblance of any other government project of a magnitude that both government and the ruling party promoted so vigorously”. In addition, in 2003, CIWEC distanced itself from the project claiming that ARDA had taken over the NIP.

Agricultural experts also argue that the NIP will not immediately solve the province’s, let alone the district’s, food shortages (Interview with an AREX Officer). The Tokwe-Mukorsi dam has been beset by financing problems over the last 20 years and is only at ground level. In addition, the scheme is moving at a slow pace. It will take a couple of years to complete and several more to fill up. In addition, at the Nuanetsi Ranch, there are hills to be flattened and gullies to be bridged in order to turn virgin bush into productive agricultural land. A huge network of irrigation canals, pipelines, roads, housing, schools and other infrastructure need to be set up for the irrigation beneficiaries. This will take many years to be completed.

According to Kahiya (The Independent 21/02/03), “the tragedy of Zimbabwe’s water policy and irrigation development is the failure to put into practice water management strategies whereby water is treated as an economic good which is a key facet of agriculture”. A majority of the state driven irrigation schemes or projects have largely been failures and this has negatively impacted on efforts to ensure the country’s food security. Kahiya (The Independent 21/02/03) further observes that over the years the

government has constructed a number of dams, but failed to put in place the necessary infrastructure to facilitate irrigation near the dams.

The recurrence of drought in Zimbabwe over the past couple of years compelled the country to develop irrigation capacity that might enable the production of critical food crops. The development of irrigation infrastructure helps to cushion the country against the devastating impact of drought. The thesis, however, makes cognisant of the existence of other alternatives especially given the counter arguments to irrigation such as the relocation of people to more favourable areas for rain-fed agricultural production. The cost effectiveness of smallholder irrigation is debatable. It is, however, undeniable that it is one of livelihood options for rural households.



Although smallholder irrigation schemes are an alternative livelihood option, the thesis in no way belittles the importance of rain-fed agriculture. Dry land cultivation is an important source of livelihood in Mwenezi although it is not necessarily viable.

Since independence, the government did not seem to consider the smallholder irrigation sub-sector of socio-political significance. This was largely because of the low economic contribution from the sector. Manzungu and Machiridza (2005:12) argue that “indigenous irrigation has ...been undervalued to the extent that it does not feature in official statistics and policies despite the fact that it contributes significantly to rural livelihoods and sustainable resource management”. State funded irrigation schemes in Zimbabwe have generally failed to live up to expectations (The Independent 21/02/03). In this context,

critics are sceptical about the likely success of the NIP. The project does not seem to have potential for being sustainable. It does not appear a viable proposition in ensuring food security, at least in the foreseeable future. The NIP requires huge capital outlays and vast sums for recurrent expenditure. The state does not seem to have the capacity to timeously avail such funds.

An estate manager in the south-eastern lowveld asserted that:

It is not just a question of felling trees and destumping. Soil tests have to be carried out, the land has to be surveyed, levelled and basic infrastructure like roads, canals and holding tanks should be installed. There is also the huge costs of purchasing irrigation infrastructure like pumps, pipes, pivots, transformers and putting up power lines (The Independent 21/02/03).

In addition, experts say the government will require at least US\$200 million to make NIP viable, which was initially billed to expand sugar cane, citrus, cotton, and wheat production in the lowveld (The Independent 21/02/03).

From an environmental point of view, indications are that the NIP will not be sustainable. Environmental experts, teams from ARDA, National Parks, academics and NGOs need to assess the environmental and social impact of the project. For a project of such magnitude, an environmental impact assessment should be carried out. Indications at the project site seem to be pointing to the contrary. The authorities do not appear to have given enough thought to the impact of the irrigation scheme on wildlife and the cultural heritage of the concerned communities. Along the same vein, Kahiya (The Independent

21/02/ 2003) asserts that, “as bulldozers and other plant equipment move on to the site to start clearing land, farmers hope this will not mark the beginning of an ecological disaster on land traditionally reserved for cattle and game ranching”.

### **Land Reform in Mwenezi, 1980s-2004**

Apart from the short-lived Mwenezi Radical Land Reform Programme of the 1980s, there were no significant developments in terms of land reform in Mwenezi between the late 1980s and 1999. However, the period was characterised by increasing pressure on land and other resources due to population increase. Resource poaching also continued and intensified during this period.

It is also important to note that the construction of the Manyuchi dam led to the displacement and resettlement of the communities living around the dam. Some of the evictees were resettled in former white commercial ranches near the Mwanezana Sugar Estates (Munyamani Resettlement Area). The Munyamani Resettlement Area was named after the original area from where the community was evicted. Although the resettled farmers have been provided with services like roads, schools and a clinic, the area's agro-ecological conditions are similar to those in their places of origin. In addition, unlike Manyuchi, the resettlement area faces a critical shortage of surface water, as the near-by Mwanezana River is dry for the greater part of the year. Apart from increased land holdings, grazing land and access to forest products, the farmers at the Munyamani Resettlement Area have not benefited much in terms of agricultural output. Other Manyuchi evictees were resettled at Nyahombe, in Chivi South District, while others

were resettled in Nyajena, in Masvingo South District. These areas have more favourable agro-ecological conditions than the district of origin. A former Manyuchi evictee who was interviewed at Nyahombe noted that resettlement had opened up new opportunities for her as the new area receives better rainfall and is relatively well developed in terms of services.

#### Farm Occupations, 2000-2004

As already noted, Mwenezi and the Gwanda district accounted for 30 per cent of land identified by government for resettlement under the Fast Track Land Reform Programme. The existence of large and supposedly empty white commercial ranches near the congested communal areas was a source of conflict between white farmers on the one hand and smallholders on the other (interview with A1 farmer, Mangondi). As a result, when the 12 war veterans in Masvingo Province occupied white farms in 2000, war veterans, unemployed youths, the landless and traditional leaders in Mwenezi also moved into near-by white farms. The motivation of the farm occupiers varied as will be argued in the next chapter.

In Mwenezi, almost all ranches and conservancies were occupied. These included Rutenga Ranch, Buby River Ranch, Merrivale Ranch, Quagga Pan B Ranch, Kyalami, Umbono, Rienette, Mkumi, Mariotti, Moriah, Wentzelhof and the Nuanetsi Ranch. Reports from the CFU suggest that the occupations and resettlement of mostly A1 farmers in these ranches is leading to an ecological disaster if the situation obtaining in these ranches remains unchecked (CFU Farm Invasions Update, 17 July 2000; CFU

Report for the UNDP 2004). However, it should be noted that CFU reports referred to in the thesis presents an exaggerated picture of the overall negative impact of the land reform.

### Conclusion

A number of conclusions can be drawn from the discussion above. It is apparent that most of the agrarian and land reforms undertaken in Mwenezi have not benefited the majority of the rural poor. They failed to broaden the livelihood portfolios of many households and ensure food security. The MRLRP and the MPOP were notable failures. In terms of development projects, there was more of continuity than change. In addition, apart from the water utilised by the Mwanezana Sugar Estates, the Manyuchi dam has for years remained underutilised. In terms of smallholder irrigation schemes, the dam is literally an irrigation potential and sustainable livelihood option gone to waste. The present chapter has, thus, argued that development agendas and agrarian reforms in Mwenezi have not been effective. The next chapter examines the impact of the farm occupations and the land reform on the environment, equity, land use patterns and rural livelihoods in Mwenezi.



## **CHAPTER 6: STUDY FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Introduction**

The previous chapter discussed agrarian reforms and development initiatives in Mwenezi since 1980. The chapter argued that these developments failed to eradicate poverty and did not provide sustainable livelihood options for rural households in Mwenezi. The present chapter explores and discusses the study's main findings. It examines the impact of the FTLRP on the inhabitants of Mwenezi.

It has already been noted in preceding chapters that there is an interface between agrarian reform, land reform and sustainable livelihoods. Both sustainable agricultural production and the livelihoods approach put the poor at the centre of development. In addition, concern for the environment is an important facet of effective agrarian reforms. Consequently, the present chapter discusses the impact of the FTLRP on the environment, rural livelihoods, gender, tenure and social differentiation in Mwenezi.

### **The Environment**

Land use, land tenure regimes, agricultural practices and the exploitation of forests, fisheries and wild animals have an impact on environmental change. The environment often bears the cost of development and agrarian change. Consequently, it has been argued in the preceding chapters that effective agrarian reforms should help communities build a dignified future. In other words, agrarian reforms should help in the eradication of

rural poverty and the protection of the environment. This section of the thesis explores the impact of the FTLRP on the environment at Mangondi resettlement area.

Zimbabwe's land reform programme had a profound impact on the environment in all its various dimensions. The ad hoc nature of the farm occupations gave little room for the 'occupiers' and government to consider the environmental implications of the land reform. As a result, there has been a general and marked environmental degradation or the diminution of the natural environment in terms of quantity and its deterioration in quality (Manganga, 2005:139).

However, environmental degradation in Mwenezi like other parts of the country preceded the current land reform (Land Tenure Commission 1994; Mubvumi 2004). It can be traced to the colonial era, where imbalances with regard to land ownership led to increased pressure on land in the African Reserves. The colonial state attempted to address the looming ecological disaster in the reserves by enforcing some conservation measures including the NLHA. As already noted, after 1980, communities in Mwenezi embarked on a number of programmes aimed at addressing the district's environmental challenges. These included the MRLRP. However, environmental problems like soil erosion, siltation of dams and deforestation continue to bedevil the district. For example, the Magamba dam on the Dinhe River has been victim to siltation. The dam was constructed in the 1980s through the Mwenezi District Development Fund and efforts from the local communities.

In the 1980s and 1990s, the Magamba Dam was an important source of livelihood for communities in Dinhe. In addition to fishing, the dam was a source of irrigation water;

The Magamba dam used to be an important source of water and livelihoods for this community. Now you can not believe it because the dam is full of sand and mud. During the 1980s and early 1990s, we used to have a fishing co-operative here and the project helped parents to raise money for their children's school fees and other uses. The dam also sustained an irrigation project and a number of vegetable gardens (interview with former Ward 8 Councillor, Dinhe).

In addition to siltation, neglect and vandalism of fencing, most dams in the district were destroyed by tropical cyclones between 2000 and 2003. For example, Cyclone Japhet destroyed 10 dams in Mwenezi (UNICEF, 2 April 2003). The heavy rains also destroyed bridges, human habitation and led to massive soil erosion. Environmental degradation is a serious problem in the communal areas of Mwenezi. Soil erosion has increased since 2000, when the district received four times its annual rainfall. This resulted in a plethora of gullies in fields, grazing areas, roadsides and heavy siltation of dams (Interview with an AREX Officer). The destruction of roads and bridges affected farmers' efforts to secure inputs and to market their produce. The incessant droughts that the district has witnessed over the years have also contributed to environmental degradation. Droughts also force communities around Dinhe to resort to gold panning, along the Mwenezi River, as an alternative source of livelihood.

However, it should be noted that local communities, NGOs and AREX officers have been playing instrumental roles in trying to address Mwenezi's environmental problems. Non-

governmental organisations and AREX officers have been encouraging environmental conservation through afforestation, contour ploughing and gully-in-filling.

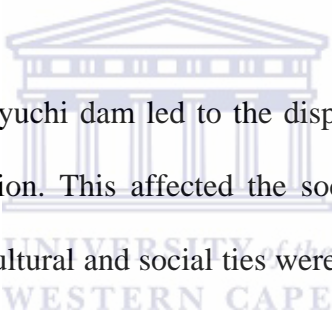
The Mwenezi Development Training Centre (MDTC), one of the NGOs with programmes in the district, has been playing an important role in addressing environmental problems in Mwenezi. It is based at Neshuro, a district service centre. The MDTC's Three Year Development Plan (2001 to 2003), among other things, sought to provide practical skills in environmental and water protection to smallholder rural farmers (MDTC 3 Year Development Plan). The MDTC also identified and selected people for training in environmental protection. These would attend two-week courses in soil erosion control, contour pegging and construction, gully reclamation and dam protection. The MDTC has helped local communities to acquire requisite equipment for soil conservation. It also assisted communities to establish run-off and rainwater harvesting systems.

#### The environmental impact of dam construction

Although dam construction and irrigation schemes create options for sustainable livelihoods, they have environmental and social impacts that can negatively affect the concerned communities. Swatuk (1996) observes that dam construction is not always successful or sustainable, despite the fact that irrigation is a critical issue in regions that chronically suffer prolonged periods of droughts. He further argues that the social costs of dam construction are usually high, especially where indigenous people are to be uprooted and resettled elsewhere. In addition, many developing countries tend to

exaggerate the value on hydro-electric generation, tourism and other water-related industries (Swatuk 1996).

In Mwenezi, the proposed mini hydro-electric project on the Manyuchi dam has failed to come to fruition. The socio-economic benefits of such a project could have been immense given the country's current power shortages. Livelihood options that could have opened up with the construction of the dam, including recreational tourism, have remained elusive. This is despite the fact that the Manyuchi dam was constructed at an environmental cost that was social and ecological in nature.



The construction of the Manyuchi dam led to the displacement of hundreds of families without adequate compensation. This affected the social environment of communities around the dam as historic, cultural and social ties were cut. In addition, the development led to social costs in the form of destroyed homes, infrastructure and livelihoods. Infrastructure that was destroyed included Munyamani Primary School (Interview with Manyuchi evictee). Large communities were uprooted and settled in other parts of the district that did not provide the same livelihood options and opportunities. Some of the displaced families were resettled in Chivi district in the Nyahombe area, while others were moved to the more ecologically favourable Masvingo south district in Nyajena Communal Lands. However, the resettlement of the Manyuchi evictees has not been effective due to limited post-settlement support in terms of infrastructural development in the resettlement areas.

Dam construction and irrigation schemes may have catastrophic impact on the ecosystem. In this regard, Swatuk (1996) argues that in assessing whether or not dam construction is ecologically, socially and economically viable, an open dialogue among all concerned parties should ensue. Like any other dam, the construction of the Manyuchi dam affected both flora and fauna on and around the dam site. It also led to the loss of genetic resources, wildlife species and habitats, disruption of aquatic fauna and wildlife patterns (interview with AREX officer).

In addition, dams have had a considerable impact on Zimbabwe's biological diversity and migratory fish populations (Gatwick and Stapelkamp 2006:8). They also create artificial lake habitats where historically there were none. Dams are often points of introduction of harmful invasive species of fish and plants (Gatwick and Stapelkamp, 2006:8). Additionally, the thesis has noted that the Manyuchi dam has been a victim of neglect, siltation and vandalism. As a result of the 2000/2001 cyclone induced floods, the dam wall has developed some cracks and needs rehabilitation. If not rehabilitated, the dam is likely to pose flooding risks to communities downstream.

However, the socio-economic benefits of dam construction and irrigation to the local communities cannot be ignored. As will be argued later, the Dinhe Irrigation Scheme is benefiting from water from the Manyuchi dam although more can be done to upgrade the scheme. In addition, the opening up of the Mwanezana Sugar Estates turned once pristine Mopane forests into large sugar cane plantations. Although this has disturbed the local

ecosystems, the project has created employment opportunities for the local communities, thereby broadening their livelihood bases.

### The Farm Occupations, Land Reform and the Natural Environment

There is a school of thought, which argues that A1 or intensive resettlement is inherently not sustainable in the dry region V. The ‘one-size-fits-all’ resettlement models that have been adopted by government tended to disregard regional agro-ecological variations (Sukume, 2004:18). In fact, agricultural experts recommend that Natural Regions IV and V should be used mainly for livestock production and game ranching.

The A1 scheme provided households with between 20 and 50 hectares of land. Eight hectares were to be cleared for crop cultivation. However, this was done in low rainfall areas like Mwenzi where white commercial ranchers used to run their cattle at 1 livestock unit to between 12 and 25 hectares (CFU Report for the UNDP 2004). The amount of land allocated to A1 farmers indicate that they should be running 2 or 3 cattle per household. However, at Mangondi, some A1 farmers have 20 to 30 cattle in addition to goats and donkeys (CFU Report for the UNDP 2004; Personal field observations).

The grazing lands and Mopane forests are being cleared by axe and fire leaving little to sustain the A1 farmers’ herds in the long run. This is not sustainable and has a negative impact on the environment. The destruction of Mopane forests, shrubs and grass in order to clear land for cultivation is still going on. Uncontrolled fires are common and these destroy huge areas of grazing land (Personal field observations). A CFU report of 10 May

2001 noted that a veld fire started by occupiers on the Chigwisi Section of the Nuanetsi Ranch destroyed a lot of grazing areas and the fire also spread into properties owned by Triangle (CFU 10/05/2001).

Overall, it can be argued that the land reform has not been environmentally sustainable as it is leading to deforestation and uncontrolled grazing, especially on A1 farms. Deforestation was a major problem in Zimbabwe prior to the farm occupations and the land reform. However, nationally, forest cover declined from 57 per cent in 1990 to 49 percent in 2000, and 44 per cent in 2005, a rate of loss over six times higher than the global average (Gratwicke and Stapelkamp, 2006:6). The environmentally unfriendly slash-and-burn method, practised by most A1 farmers, is contributing to the loss of vegetation cover in the resettlement area. A1 farmers at Mangondi use the axes to clear their land but since this is slow and too taxing; uncontrolled fires are being used to clear Mopane forests.

Along the same vein, Gratwicke and Stapelkamp (2006:7) argue that, during the farm occupations, “one of the first actions of the settlers was to burn the land, to flush out game for hunting or simply as an act of arson to destroy habitat and to scare landowners off their properties”. In other instances, the fires spread to National Parks and conservancies. Unprotected fires in the Eastern Highlands affected conservancies and wildlife populations, National Parks and destroyed nearly 2000 hectares of plantation forests (The Herald 20/9/5). Over 22 000 hectares of plants and crops were destroyed by



veld fires throughout the country between 2004 and 2005. This constituted 12 per cent of the national prime land forest resource (Newsnet 19/7/6).

Uncontrolled veld fires lead to a reduction in biodiversity and the destruction of fauna and flora. Veld fires also lead to the reduction of soil fertility, increased soil erosion and soil compaction (Interview with an AREX Officer). The removal of basal cover through uncontrolled burning of grass and trees increases the rate of soil erosion leading to the siltation of dams and other water bodies.

Additionally, due to the nature of the farm occupations and the fast track land resettlement programme, no one supervised and checked on the number and health conditions of the animals moving from the communal to the resettlement areas. If controls are not put in place the situation might lead to overgrazing, as at the moment there are no controls on grazing at Mangondi. All farmers might soon exceed the carrying capacities of their plots. Although the above assertion is contentious, the concentration of large numbers of livestock on small pieces of grazing land seriously affects grass recovery. Persistent droughts and the destruction of the ecological system by veld fire further compromise issues of sustainability.

Ranchers in Mwenezi used to describe themselves as growers of grass as this was how they fed their livestock and wild animals (CFU Report for the UNDP 2004). Perennial grasses if not overgrazed, can supply nutritious green shoots with small amounts of rain.

Other grasses that have to grow from seed require a suitable long rainy period before they can be grazed

Commercial Farmers' Union reports claim that in dry areas like Mwenezi, the present A1 settlement model is 'totally unsustainable' (CFU Report for the UNDP 2004). Some AREX officers who were interviewed also echoed these sentiments;

Resettled farmers have been trying to grow maize without any success. The crop just cannot be successfully grown in this dry district. The farmers are wasting their time and resources. Maize can only be sustainably produced under irrigation. The new farmers should concentrate on livestock production and the cultivation of small grains (Interview with an AREX Officer, Mwenezi Service Centre).

It has already been noted that without irrigation, maize production is not viable in Mwenezi. Some A1 farmers have thus ventured into cotton growing. The crop is drought resistant and does well in Mangondi's red clay soils. Some farmers are also growing drought resistant small grains like rapoko, millet and sorghum. Many households however, indicated that they are facing critical shortages of cotton seed, fertiliser and chemicals.

In addition, like other agrarian reforms that were introduced in Mwenezi since 1980, the current land reform has failed to improve rural farmers' access to irrigation water. Consequently, water continues to be the limiting factor in as far as the land reform at Mangondi is concerned. During the farm occupations, settlers targeted areas around cattle

water points, pans and dams or sites where water was pumped for wildlife. This cut off wildlife from traditional drinking points and also encouraged poaching, which was characteristic of the farm occupations. The overall impact of this has been the disruption of wildlife.

The concentration of villages along rivers, streams and water pipes is likely to lead to high levels of soil erosion in the near future. Since most water pipes have been vandalised, farmers at Mangondi largely rely on the Mwenezi and Mangondi Rivers and other streams for their water supply. This might soon cause river-bank destruction as a result of the continual trekking of livestock to and from the rivers.

Water is a source of bitter conflicts between A1 and A2 farmers at Mangondi. Initially, the conflict was between an A2 farmer, Chokuda and a white commercial farmer, part of whose farm was allocated to the A2 farmer. The latter had taken over part of the ranch including the white farmer's water points. Chokuda claims that he reached an agreement with the white farmer whereby he contributed towards the pumping of water from the Mwenezi River to their properties. Currently, the conflict is between Chokuda and the A1 farmers who claim that they are also entitled to the water points on Chokuda's farm. The settlers occasionally vandalize the A2 farmers' fence so that they can have access to the water points. In addition, Chokuda complained that the A1 farmers poach for wild animals and *madora* or *amacimbi* (edible worms) on his farm. He also noted that a number of his cattle had fallen victim to snares set by the A1 farmers;

Since 2001 when I came here, I have been having problems with the A1 farmers.

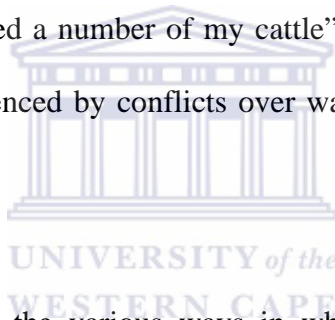
They want to water their animals on water sources on my farm. The water is mine because I pump it from the Mwenezi River, it's not natural surface water. The other problem is that these settlers poach for wild animals and *madora* on my farm. A number of my cattle have died after being caught on the snares set up by these poachers. The situation is bad but there is little that I can do to stop them. If I try to stop them, they just vandalise the fence around my farm (interview with Chokuda).

The conflict over resources at Mangondi has also assumed ethnic and class dimensions. Unlike most of the A1 farmers who came from Maranda Communal Area, and of the Pfumbi ethnic group, Chokuda is a Karanga from Nyajena, in the Masvingo south district. In addition, he is a war veteran and a civil servant. His ethnic background makes him alien to the community of A1 farmers at Mangondi. Chokuda's socio-economic class also problematises his relations with the A1 farmers. More so, Chokuda is considered a latecomer, as he was not part of the original farm occupiers at Mangondi. The A1 farmers, apparently, feel that they are entitled to forest products on farms belonging both to the white commercial farmers and black A2 farmers. Some of the A1 farmers who were interviewed argued that the fact that they were the 'original occupiers' meant that they had the social rights over these resources. Majuzi, an A1 farmer who came to Mangondi from Dinhe in 2000, noted that;

This is now our land. We fought for this land and no one can take it away from us. We hunt and kill animals for food. There are a lot of wild pigs here. The government and the white farmers do not own the wild animals. The animals belong to our ancestors and they are our inheritance. So no one must tell us to stop killing the animals for food. We also need to raise money for

our children's school fees. Where do we get the money? This area is very dry and as you can see, the crops are wilting in the fields (interview with Majuzi, Mangondi).

In addition, some A1 farmers allege that Chokuda got the A2 farm because of his political connection. On the other hand, from the researcher's interview with Chokuda, it emerged that he has a low opinion of the, mostly Pfumbi, A1 farmers who he regards as 'retrogressive' and more concerned with poaching than farming. He noted that, "most A1 farmers here are ethnic Pfumbi. They are only interested in poaching and harvesting madora. They have also killed a number of my cattle" (Interview With Chokuda). Such sentiments seem to be influenced by conflicts over water and resource poaching by the A1 farmers.



The above conflict exposes the various ways in which different actors perceive the environment. Some A2 farmers seem to be more concerned with the preservation of the natural environment. They are keen to preserve the wildlife they found on the farm for future financial benefits. On the contrary, some A1 farmers seem to be more concerned with meeting their immediate needs than the needs of future generations. The wild animals that still remain are an important source of livelihoods. Some 'poachers' also intimated that they sell part of the meat at the Rutenga and Mwenezi service centres. The money obtained is used to pay school fees or meet other household requirements.

The illegal killing and consumption of the country's wildlife species continues to pose the most serious threat to the future sustainability of Zimbabwe's wildlife reserves and game farming activities (Gratwicke and Stapelkamp 2006). Three types of poaching that are currently obtaining in the country are subsistence, sport and commercial poaching. A1 farmers largely practise subsistence poaching. It has been argued that subsistence poaching reflects:

An opportunistic response to the combination of poverty, lack of food and the disintegrating economy and the rule of law in the country. Many independent news reports affirm that thousands of rural poor cut through wire fences on conservancies and commercial farms, then use this wire to make snares to catch wild animals for food both on private land and in the bush (Gratwick and Stapelkamp, 2006:4).

Poverty and desperation are likely to lead to the depletion of wildlife in resettlement areas.

However, although it is evident that subsistence poaching is taking place at Mangondi, it should be noted that concern for the environment can not be restricted to A2 farmers, the independent media, NGOs, white farmers and the Western media. It is erroneous to present A1 farmers as mindless poachers who do not know the effects of over-hunting, deforestation and environmental degradation. Evidence gathered at Mangondi shows that some A1 farmers are keen to protect their natural environment. An A1 farmer and subsistence poacher claimed that:

We have been taught the dangers of destroying our natural environment.

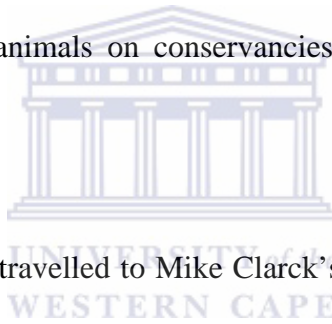
The environment sustains our life and that of our livestock. I am a hunter but

do not kill every animal that comes my way. I kill smaller animals like the hare, the buck and wild pigs (warthog) for food. In addition, one does not go hunting every day. You can do it once a month and you do not kill an animal each time you go hunting. If we kill all the animals what will be left for our children, grandchildren and generations to come? Years back, when there were lots of animals on the white farms, we used nets to trap animals but now we no longer do that as this leads to over-hunting. We just use dogs for hunting (interview with an A1 farmer, Mangondi).

Nevertheless, Gratwicke and Stapelkamp (2006:4-5) argue that illegal sport hunters have taken advantage of the breakdown in the rule of law to seek the thrill of the kill or simply to harvest venison for biltong or hides that are smuggled to South Africa for commercial trade. Commercial poachers operate for profit in the form of bush meat or trophies. Such poachers tend to be politically connected and, therefore, allowed access to once protected areas. Allegations are that the country's uniformed forces are also illegally killing the once protected animals for food.

In addition, poaching on land that was formerly privately owned has been supposedly encouraged by some government officials as 'spoils of war' (Gratwicke and Stapelkamp, 2006:4-5). In another instance, an A2 farmer at Mangondi intimated that he often illegally kill wild animals for food and for sale. He, however, argued that what he does is 'crop protection' not poaching. He claimed that the wild animals are a threat to his crops so he has no option but to 'protect' his crops. From the discussion above, it is clear that both A1 and A2 farmers are engaged in poaching and this is negatively affecting wildlife.

The report of the Zimbabwe Conservation Task Force Media and Assessment Trip (ZCTFMAT) also gives some insights into the environmental impact of the land reform in Mwenezi. The ZCTFMAT took place from the 11<sup>th</sup> to the 14<sup>th</sup> of April 2003 and Johnny Rodriques compiled the report. A South Africa Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) TV reporter and a cameraman accompanied Rodriques. They travelled from Harare to Chiredzi through Gutu and Chivi and then travelled through Mwenezi. The report said settlers in resettlement areas had destroyed the surrounding vegetation in order to plant maize that was in a 'sorry' state due to the drought. The report also noted that several plots they came across were on game ranches and conservancies. It also claimed that 75-80 per cent of the animals on conservancies countrywide had been killed by poachers.



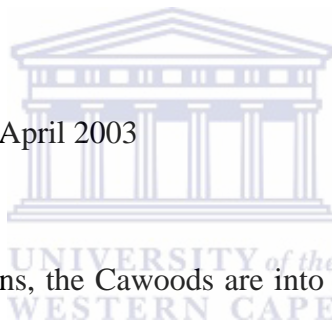
The group left Chiredzi and travelled to Mike Clark's property in Mwenezi. According to the ZCTFMAT report, during the trip through the Nuanetsi Conservancy; "we literally did not see one live animal. Mike told us that two years ago, the same roads on which we were travelling were actually a hazard because there was so much wildlife". The report also gave descriptions of dead wildlife caught on snares. The group then visited Kleibegin Ranch run by Sam and Janet Cawood. The Cawoods co-existed with some war veterans. The Ranch is part of the Buby River Valley Conservancy. They started their Safari Operation in 1966. According to the ZCTFMAT report, the Cawoods lost 95 per cent of their wildlife between 2000 and 2003. This is illustrated in the table below:



### The number of wild animals at Kleibegin Ranch

Animals	1966	March 2000	2003
Giraffe	105	135	5
Eland	175	412	0
Zebra	30	72	15-20
Wildebeest	36	85	25-30
Kudu	250	885	10
Impala	275	470	50

**Source:** ZCTFMAT Report April 2003



In addition to safari operations, the Cawoods are into cattle ranching. They also used to keep 130 hectares free of cattle and wildlife. The purpose was to allow the natural grasses to grow for cattle fodder. The Cawoods would then harvest the grass and pack it into bales and store it and use it during drought periods. However, the war veterans have ploughed the land destroying the grass.

From the discussion above, it is clear that in Mwenezi the settlers occupied commercial farms, parks and conservancies. All these private and national properties have been victim to poachers. Nationally, in 2002, the Chairperson of the Wildlife Producer's Association noted that, "it is estimated conservatively that we have lost about 50 per cent of our wildlife, 65 per cent of our tourism in the country and up to 90 per cent Safari

hunting on commercial farms and a huge reduction in captive and translocations of wildlife on conservancies” (Gatwicke and Stapelkamp, 2006:10). It is therefore clear that the farm occupations and the land reform had disruptive impacts on wildlife and tourism.

At this juncture, it should however be noted that Gatwicke and Stapelkamp (2006), CFU reports and the ZCTFMAT report referred to above present a rather biased picture as they seem to be pro-commercial farming conservationists. Consequently, they sympathised with the white commercial farmers and over exaggerated the environmental impacts of the land reform.

The destruction of wildlife also caught substantial media attention (Wolmer, Chaumba and Scoones, 2003:8-9). Almost all the game ranches in the lowveld, including the Gonarezhou National Park, were occupied in varying degrees. As already noted, the independent local media and CFU reported incidents of massive poaching and deforestation by the resettled farmers (see Goebel, 2005:357-8). There was a conflict of interest with regard to environmental perception. The perspective shared by the independent media, the political opposition, the white commercial farmers, Zimbabwe’s erstwhile donors and the wildlife industry, was that the farm occupations were an “economic, ecological, moral and aesthetic outrage” (Wolmer, Chaumba and Scoones, 2003:8-9).

The independent media, NGOs and the political opposition were mainly concerned with the destruction of the once pristine forests and wildlife. Such sentiments were echoed by

an independent and pro-opposition newspaper, the Daily News (14/12/2001) which reported that:

The once lush green Zimbabwean agricultural landscape has been transformed into motley of mud huts, tree stumps and charred pastures as new settlers torch flora and fauna in a land preparation process resembling Russia's World War II 'scorched earth' military strategy against Hitler's Germany.

Another report by the Daily News (16/8/2001) compared the environmental impact of the land reform in Mwenezi with the impact of Cyclone Eline. It noted that:

Another hurricane is sweeping through Mwenezi as thousands of war veterans and supporters of the governing ZANU (PF) party take over cattle and game ranches, felling trees at random and clearing huge tracts of land to grow maize, the Zimbabwean staple food which, unknown or ignored by the settlers, will never thrive in such a dry area.

Personal field observations at Mangondi and Dinhe showed that the rate at which mopane forests are being destroyed is very fast. This is particularly so in the communal areas. There is increasing demand for wood as a source of fuel and rural communities often have no other cheaper alternative sources of fuel. Consequently, resettlement areas have become sources of wood for adjacent communal areas.

However, the resettled farmers have a different view. They argue that they have to clear land for cultivation and are entitled to harvesting forest products for survival. Nevertheless, the foregoing discussion shows that the farm occupations and the land reform had negative effects on the natural environment. In this regard, it can be argued

that thus far, the land reform has not been effective in as far as environmental protection is concerned. However, some of the above reports by white commercial ranchers and the independent press tend to exaggerate the environmental impact of the farm occupations and the land reform. Personal field observations at Mangondi revealed significant environmental damage, and the use of fire to clear Mopane forests, but not 'an ecological disaster'. Nevertheless, the observation does not seek to belittle the extent of the environmental damage or the losses incurred by the white commercial ranchers in terms of cattle and wild animals lost.

#### Land Reform and Wildlife Management

Wolmer, Chaumba and Scoones (2003) have raised questions as to whether the land reform and wildlife management can be reconciled. The attempt to incorporate extensive wildlife management into resettlement schemes seems contradictory (Wolmer, Chaumba and Scoones 2003). As already alluded to, the land reform essentially meant taking over land from white commercial farmers and redistributing it mostly to black A1 farmers for dry-land crop cultivation. However, wildlife and cattle ranching appear the mostly favoured land use options in Mwenezi (Wolmer 2001; Wolmer, Chaumba and Scoones, 2003:6).

Mwenezi is in Natural Region V where the recommended land uses are extensive agriculture and livestock husbandry (Robilliard *et al*, 2002:2-3). Extensive crop production means that A1 farmers in region V need larger landholdings than those in

regions I to IV. However, the A1 Model was largely a ‘one-size-fits-all’ model with little regard for the regionally varied agro-ecological potentials.

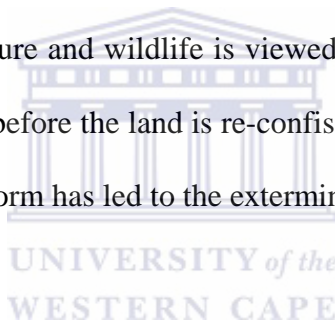
Cattle ranching and wild life management have been touted as the suitable land use options in dry regions, like Mwenezi, where crop production is not viable in the absence of irrigation. It has also been argued that hunting and recreational tourism are the other more lucrative and viable sustainable development options for dry regions like Mwenezi.

It was observed that:

The ongoing land reform programme ought to take advantage of the economic and ecological attributes of wildlife production in parts of the country that are prone to drought and have fragile soils, which cannot sustain crop production without massive investment in irrigation. Of the country’s natural regions, wildlife based land reforms can be successfully implemented in natural region V whose crop production potential is generally low (Ministry of Environment and Tourism, GoZ, 2001:4-5).

Economic and ecological arguments for wildlife claim that it is a more sustainable land use in dry regions. It is argued that wildlife is more ecologically resilient, permits greater diversity and has the potential to generate foreign currency and can sustain eco-tourism (Wolmer, Chaumba and Scoones 2003). Suzuki (2001:618) observes that, unlike cattle; “the niche separation of browser and grazer wildlife enable a higher carrying capacity and hence more productivity. It is also argued that wildlife species are evolutionary adapted to dry land environments”.

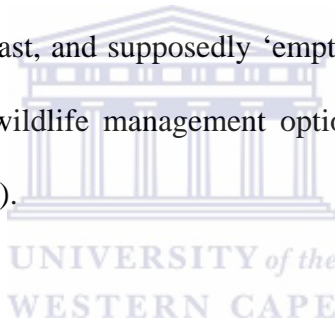
In the 1990s, wildlife ranching was one of the fastest growing land uses in Zimbabwe. About 20.7 per cent of white commercial farms were under wildlife utilisation (Wolmer, Chaumba and Scoones, 2003:3). Before the farm occupations of 2000, Zimbabwe had one of the best wildlife management programmes in place. The Parks and Wildlife Act of 1975 gave ownership of wildlife to landowners. Consequently, landowners in arid areas like Mwenezi could get more revenue from wildlife management than from farming. This also gave the incentive to protect wildlife and its habitat (Bate, 2006:4). By 1995, the Wildlife Producer's Association had 351 members with over 250 600 head of game. Private game reserves were also an integral part of the tourism industry. However, land ownership is now very insecure and wildlife is viewed by some new farmers as an asset to be stripped from the land before the land is re-confiscated (Gratwicke and Stapelkamp, 2006:4). In fact, the land reform has led to the extermination of wildlife populations.



However, although wildlife management has the potential of generating foreign currency, it has no substantial direct benefits for the local communities even under ostensibly community-based programmes like CAMPFIRE (see Wolmer *et al* 2003:17). In addition, wildlife management tends to be an elitist land system. As a result, it compromises issues of equity. In addition, wildlife management does not combine well with other forms of land use, especially crop production. According to Wolmer, Chaumba and Scoones (2003), wildlife based land reforms are linked to the economic and political interests of the white dominated wildlife sector, politically connected new black landowners and entrepreneurs, various NGOs and the environmental lobby with international funding.

It has also been noted that game ranching can be a source of conflict and is politically controversial. The existence of congested rural communities in juxtaposition with vast and supposedly 'empty' conservancies or ranches might be interpreted by the landless to mean that wild animals are more important than human beings (Dzingirai 1997; Saruchera 2001; Wolmer, Chaumba and Scoones 2003).

Wolmer, Chaumba and Scoones (2003) assert that although land reform and wildlife management can be reconciled, the reconciliation is not necessarily equitable. Wildlife management tends to be elitist as the rich and the political elite dominate it. In addition, the disparities between the vast, and supposedly 'empty' ranches, and the overpopulated communal areas make the wildlife management option a source of conflict (Wolmer, Chaumba and Scoones (2003).



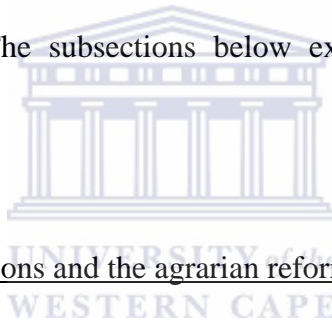
A1 and A2 farmers at Mangondi are combining cropping with cattle production. However, for this land use option to be sustainable it requires restocking of cattle herds for some households and the enlargement of A1 plots to ensure sustainable grazing and therefore guard against overgrazing (see Mombeshora 2001; Wolmer *et al* 2002). Livestock production can be integrated with other livelihood options like dry cropping, labour migration and remittance income. Despite the competing discourses about land for small holders and wildlife-based land reform, it is apparent that the two land use forms can be complementary (Wolmer *et al* 2002). This best applies to A2 farmers who have large pieces of land. In fact, Chokuda, an A2 farmer at Mangondi described himself as a medium-scale cattle rancher. He also grows small grains and cotton to

augment his farm income. All farmers can also integrate crop cultivation with ‘small-scale’ cattle ranching. This requires the need for controlled grazing, more grazing land and restocking. The practical utility of grazing schemes is however a debatable issue.

The present section has discussed the impact of the agrarian reform on the environment. The following section explores the impact of the FTLRP on rural livelihoods in Mwenezi.

### **New livelihood opportunities and challenges**

The agrarian reform has opened a plethora of new livelihood opportunities for households at Dinhe and Mangondi. The subsections below examine some of these livelihood opportunities and challenges.




### **Non-governmental organisations and the agrarian reform**

Non-governmental organisations have historically played key roles in supporting agrarian reforms in Mwenezi. However, NGOs have largely maintained their presence in the communal than the resettlement areas. Nonetheless, opportunities for sustainable livelihood opportunities have been opening up for households at both Dinhe and Mangondi. At the former, NGOs have been playing notable roles in trying to alleviate poverty. Non-governmental organisations like Plan, Christian Care, Lutheran Development Services and CARE International Zimbabwe have been implementing a number of poverty alleviation programmes and the approach is in line with the livelihoods framework discussed in the preceding chapters.



Christian Care, for example, started operating in Ward 8 of the district in 1998. Like other NGOs, it has been providing food packs to HIV/AIDS orphans, widows and the elderly. It also paid school fees for disadvantaged children and supplied them with school uniforms. Christian Care provides supplementary feeding for children below the age of five. In addition, NGOs have been helping in the construction of schools, clinics, the sinking of boreholes and the opening up of irrigation schemes. Plan International, another international aid organisation operating in Mwenezi, focuses on poverty alleviation for children. Non-governmental organisations also provided relief to victims of the cyclone Eline and cyclone Japhet induced floods.



Some NGOs like Christian Care are sponsoring the construction of small dams and financing smallholder irrigation schemes in the Dinhe Communal Area. Christian Care also provided drip kits for drip irrigation to communal farmers at Dinhe. According to Chiedza, a school leaver, had it not been for the assistance from the donors, the people of Mwenezi would have been worse off in terms of poverty. She noted that drip kits were proving useful to farmers, as they are an economic and efficient in water utilisation. She added that “Christian Care has immensely helped the people of this community. It provided drip kits which we use to water our gardens. People are getting some money from the sale of their produce. The donors also gave us fencing for some paddocks and our gardens” (interview with Chiedza, Dinhe).

In 1998, some NGOs initiated a restocking exercise following the successive years of drought, which decimated livestock in Mwenezi. Community workers working for the

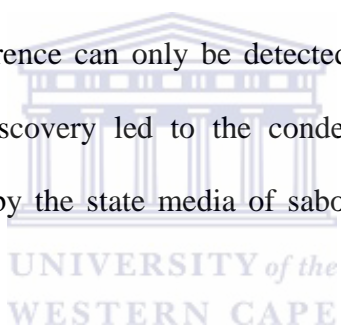
NGOs would identify the ‘needy’ families in their communities who were then given a heifer per household. Upon giving birth, the household retained the calf and the mother (cow) was given to the next household. Community workers monitored the growth of the calves as well as the transfer of cows from one household to another. The beneficiaries of the restocking project would pay for the calves over a period of three years.

Non-governmental organisations have been providing seed and fertiliser to farmers in communal areas. However, the government has been sceptical about the role and motive of NGOs. Non-governmental organisations often compete with the government for recognition by the citizens. They offer services that the government might not be able to provide. Consequently, the concerned communities tend to align and identify themselves more with the NGO than with the government. Of late, NGOs have been accused by government of working with the political opposition. This has culminated in the Zimbabwe Non-Governmental Organisations Bill of 2004, which seeks to control and regularise the operations of NGOs.

To illustrate, in 2004, CARE International Zimbabwe was accused of trying to derail the land reform after it allegedly donated forage sorghum seed instead of Macia sorghum seed to farmers in Mwenezi and Chivi (Herald 2,3/7/2004). CARE International started operating in the country in 1992 after signing a Basic Country Agreement with the government of Zimbabwe. In 2000, it introduced the Households Livelihood Security approach, an innovation framework of implementing and monitoring the impact of development programmes (CARE International Zimbabwe 2004). In 2002, CARE

International established the Emergency Agricultural Recovery Project in Zimbabwe. The project is aimed at protecting and promoting the livelihoods of communal farmers and increasing household food security by providing seed and fertiliser. During the 2003/2004 season, CARE International Zimbabwe provided farmers in Mwenezi and Chivi with a pack of agricultural inputs comprising of 10 kilograms of maize seed, 4 kilograms of sugar bean or groundnut seed and 5 kilograms of sorghum seed.

During the vegetative stage, farmers in Mwenezi and Chivi discovered that the sorghum seed was behaving like forage sorghum. Forage sorghum seed is difficult to distinguish from Macia seed. The difference can only be detected when it is growing in the field (Herald 18/7/2004). The discovery led to the condemnation of CARE International Zimbabwe. It was accused by the state media of sabotaging the land reform and rural economies and livelihoods.



In a bid to exonerate itself, CARE International Zimbabwe issued a press statement to explain the problem. It noted that:

Part of CARE's seed distribution focuses on diversification of crops- ensuring farmers have a variety of different crops in their harvest in case the crop doesn't perform well. So all the farmers in Chivi and Mwenezi received maize and sugar bean seeds and infact sorghum seed represented only a small portion of the total seed package delivered (ibid).

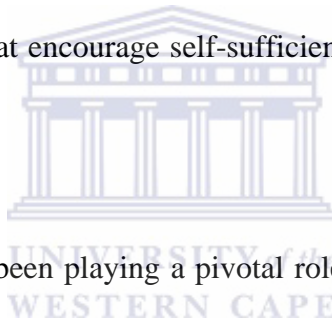
CARE International Zimbabwe, the Seed Company of Zimbabwe (Seed Co), AREX and representatives of the District Administrator's Office and the Rural District Council

Offices in Chivi and Mwenezi conducted a field survey in the affected areas. The group concluded that about 3 per cent of the total seed distributed by CARE was forage seed. CARE claimed that it had bought the seed from reputable seed houses including Seed Co, which supplied a total of 500 tones of sorghum seed (Herald 18/7/ 2004).

In a bid to demonstrate its commitment to poverty eradication and livelihood promotion in Chivi and Mwenezi, CARE distributed 300 tones of sorghum grain as ‘seed protection’ to affected farmers. Seed protection refers to the distribution of a small quantity of food during the planting period, which ensures that farmers plant the distributed seed while consuming the complementary food grains provided. Farmers received compensation as some of the seed they had planted had failed to contribute to the food security of households. In addition, Seed Co also took responsibility for the mix-up and agreed to replace the seed in the 2005/2006 season with 98.25 tonnes of Macia sorghum seed (Herald 18/7/2004).

Despite the above incident, CARE International Zimbabwe continues to play an important role in trying to secure the livelihoods of communal farmers in the country. Its Strategic Programming Directions for 2004 included the following items; reinforcing household livelihood security programming, addressing HIV/AIDS and implementing Recovery Assistance Programmes which seek to provide social safety nets to vulnerable people (CARE International Zimbabwe 2004).

From the discussion above, it is clear that the role of NGOs in the agrarian reforms and socio-economic development of communal lands in Mwenezi can not be ignored. Non-governmental organisations operating from Neshuro or with programmes in the district include Africa Now, Africa 2000, Agricultural Development Assistance Fund, Biodiversity for Africa, Christianaid, German Development Services (DED), Hivos, Plan International and German Development Cooperation (GTZ). Infact, in 2004, about 31 NGOs had programmes in Mwenezi (Interview with Local Government Official). However, over dependence on aid can make the attainment of sustainability impossible as it encourages a dependency syndrome among rural communities. NGOs need to initiate development programmes that encourage self-sufficiency and self-reliance by concerned communities.



The MDTC at Neshuro has been playing a pivotal role toward the development of rural communities in Mwenezi. Its mission is to:

Enable the people of Mwenezi district to achieve social and economic development through the provision of practical and organisational skills for self-reliance, follow-up and support services and foreign resources to enable those trained to use the skills acquired (MDTC 3 Year Development Plan 2001-2003).

MDTC off-farm training included imparting participants with practical skills in building, food processing and nutrition, carpentry, dressmaking, metalwork, welding, crocheting and crafts, leather tanning and business management. Some MDTC graduates, however, lamented the lack of post graduation support. Many of those interviewed indicated the lack of capital as their major challenge. There are exceptions though. Dzinoreva, a

MDTC graduate, is a success story. He completed a welding course in 2001. Since then, he has been working as a welder in South Africa. He managed to buy his own equipment and has opened a welding workshop at Sarahuro, a few kilometres from Neshuro. He currently employs three school leavers.

### Smallholder Irrigation Schemes

Effective agrarian reforms should improve rural farmers' access to water. Non-governmental organisations operating in Mwenzi have also been playing a crucial role in pursuit of this goal. The Dinhe Irrigation Scheme is one such example. The project was started in 1999 and been running till this day. The 2001-2002 register showed that the project had 143 plot holders. The irrigation project is situated near the Dinhe Business Centre, a clinic, a primary and a secondary school, which act as markets for the produce from the irrigation project. The surrounding communities also act as an important market.

Plot holders noted that their plots are too small although the soils are good. Families with land close to the irrigation scheme are reluctant to give up their land to the scheme without substantial compensation. The project's sustainability has been negatively affected by the critical shortage of diesel for the water pumps. Plot holders noted that their project could be made more viable if it is electrified. If the money is made available, this will be possible since the Dinhe Township has already been electrified. In addition, more land need to be made available if the irrigation scheme is to expand. Incentives can be given to farmers whose fields are close to the scheme so that they can give up their land to the irrigation project thereby increasing land under irrigation.

Another area of concern at the Dinhe Irrigation Scheme is the gender disparity in terms of plot holding. Out of a total of 143 plot holders in the 2001/2002 register, only 31 plot holders were women. This was despite the claims by some local NGOs that they were advocating gender equity. Such imbalances are linked to the cultural and traditional factors referred to in the foregoing. Interestingly, although most plots are officially under the husband's name, women and children work them.

Of late, the Zimbabwean government has been making efforts to resuscitate smallholder irrigation schemes throughout the country. This endeavour is intended to augment poverty alleviation efforts by NGOs. Government is working in conjunction with NGOs in Masvingo Province to expand and rehabilitate the Dinhe and the nearby Lapache irrigation schemes (interview with Ward 8 Councillor, Dinhe). The Lapache project is expected to cost about Z\$500 billion. Upon completion, the Lapache irrigation project is expected to increase in size from the current 40 to 50 hectares. According to a report by The Herald (15/6/6), "water for irrigation at the scheme, that will benefit new farmers resettled under the model A1 Scheme, will be drawn from the under-utilised Manyuchi Dam".

The expansion of both the Dinhe and Lapache Irrigation Projects are expected to be jointly undertaken by government and some NGOs, which would complement each other's efforts in increasing rural households' access to irrigation. Along the same vein, the current Masvingo Provincial Governor noted that the resuscitation of irrigation schemes is part of the work being done in the province following recommendations made

by the Provincial Irrigation Development Committee which seeks to fully utilise the abundant water sources in Masvingo in order to end chronic food woes in the province (The Herald 15/6/6). The above proposals are however yet to be transformed into objective reality. Due to the country's economic crises, the irrigation projects are likely to suffer from viability problems. As a result, they will not be sustainable in the economic sense.

The Irrigation Development Committee in Masvingo was founded at the behest of President Mugabe, who in 2005 expressed dismay at the glaring under-utilisation of water in most of the province's dams. The Chief Irrigation Officer in Masvingo said the Lapache Scheme is going to benefit 700 families. He noted that:

The expansion of Lapache and subsequently Dinhe Irrigation Schemes in Mwenezi was expected to go a long way in fully utilising water from Manyuchi Dam which has been under-utilised for the past decade yet crops in nearby fields needed the water (also see Newsnet (ZBC) 15/6/6).

Built on the confluence of the Manyuchi and Mwenezi Rivers, the Manyuchi dam has the potential to irrigate about 10 000 hectares. Smallholder irrigation schemes using water from the Manyuchi Dam can therefore help enhance food security and livelihood diversity at household level. At Mangondi, unlike the communal area, NGOs have not been there and no smallholder irrigation projects have been started. The farm occupations and the attendant unstable political environment disrupted activities of NGOs, which conduct development-related activities among the rural poor. In addition, from the



interviews conducted, it emerged that some households try to maintain their presence in both the communal and resettlement area so that they could continue benefiting from the assistance from the NGOs.

### Other Livelihood Opportunities

Other new livelihood opportunities are opening up at Dinhe and Mangondi. Rural households have a wide livelihood portfolio and multiple and multi-layered livelihood strategies (see Campbell and Luckert, 2002:7). The land reform has created a plethora of new opportunities for some small-scale farmers (see Goebel, 2005:358). At Mangondi, households now have larger land holdings of relatively better soil quality. They also have better grazing as compared with the situation at Dinhe. In addition, at Mangondi, both men and women have access to land. However, the gender imbalances with regard to access to and ownership of land are still issues of concern in both the communal and resettlement area.

The following are some of the sources of livelihood in the resettlement area:

- i. Crop and livestock production
- ii. Poaching
- iii. Illicit beer brewing and selling
- iv. Small business and crafts
- v. Running tuck shops
- vi. Harvesting and selling forest products, especially madora (Mopane worms)
- vii. Cross-border trading

- viii. Remittances from relatives in towns and out of the country, especially South Africa
- ix. Commercial sex work
- x. Buying and selling fuel
- xi. Gold panning along the Mwenezi River

The resettlement as well as the communal areas are arenas for new and multiple livelihoods and land use systems. Multiple identities are also emerging. Unemployed youths in the resettlement area have ventured into the illegal but lucrative business of buying diesel from international truck drivers along the Masvingo-Beitbridge Road and selling it at a profit to bus operators and motorists. They call this business '*kukorokoza*', or dealing. Such fuel dealers are also into forex dealing. Those who were interviewed said their business was more rewarding than dry land farming which is adversely affected by weather conditions. A number of girls have also ventured into commercial sex work (see UN Relief and Recovery Unit, Harare 2002). This has apparently led to an upsurge in the number of HIV/AIDS related deaths and child headed families. HIV/AIDS is affecting the demography and livelihoods of both communal and resettlement populations (Chaumba, Scoones and Wolmer, 2003:3).

Resettlement has provided a new lease of life to widows, divorcees and single parents who had limited access to land in the communal area (Goebel 1999). Women who were looked down upon in communal areas now have their own pieces of land. This probably explains why farmers at Mangondi call their new place '*kumagariro matsva*', that is 'a

place where there is a new lease of life'. The following cases illustrate some of the livelihood opportunities in the resettlement area:

### Selected Case Studies at Mangondi

The case studies below illustrate some of the livelihood opportunities and challenges that are opening up for farmers at Mangondi;

#### Case One

The researcher had an interview with Mai Linda a divorcee in her early thirties with 2 children. She originally came from Marinda in Maranda Communal Lands. She is an A1 farmer and now has her own piece of land at Mangondi. She came to the resettlement area in 2000 and owns five herds of cattle. Mai Linda is relatively 'richer' than her co-farmers and can hire agriculture labour and employs a young man who looks after her cattle.

In addition to being a new farmer, she runs a 'bottle store' and is also into buying and selling. She buys forests products and agricultural produce like groundnuts from local women and resells them at a profit in Beitbridge. Mai Linda is also a cross- border trader and buys and sells her products in South Africa. It is apparent that the resettlement area has opened up new opportunities for women like her. However, not all women in the resettlement area have been that 'fortunate'.

### Case Two

Grace is a young lady in her early twenties. She is an unemployed school drop-out who stays with her uncle who is an A1 farmer in the resettlement area. The researcher met her at Mai Linda's 'bottle store'. Grace admitted that she is a commercial sex worker. She revealed that her uncle was given land but is poor and does not own cattle. She augments the family income through prostitution. She plies her trade in the resettlement area but noted that trade is brisk at Rutenga and Ngundu Business Centers along the Masvingo-Beitbridge Road. Here her targets are truck drivers, returning border jumpers and civil servants like school teachers.

Grace acknowledged the risks associated with her source of livelihood but said her options were limited. She said she is too young to rely on dry land farming. Grace once tried her hand at border jumping but was arrested and deported from South Africa several times. She said that now she has secured a Zimbabwean passport and is saving money for a South African visa application.

### Case Three

Mbiza and his family came to Mangochi in 2001. He originally came from Dinhe Communal Area. He is an A2 farmer and largely grows cotton and sorghum. Mbiza keeps about fifty herds of cattle in addition to some goats and donkeys. The A2 farmer noted that the land reform has increased grazing land for his livestock.

In addition to being new farmers, Mbiza and his wife are civil servants who teach at Mangondi Primary School. Mbiza is also a war veteran. However, the two revealed that their farming business has not yet started paying dividends. They attributed this to drought, lack of inputs (post-settlement support), lack of farm equipment and the unfavourable macro-economic climate. It is however apparent that Mbiza's household is relatively 'richer' than its neighbours, especially A1 farmers. The household owns a fairly large number of cattle, (about seventy) a larger farm and can hire labour.

Mbiza and his household have other sources of income that augment their farm income. The A2 farmer-cum-civil servant and war veteran revealed that during school holidays he goes to South Africa together with his wife to engage in piece jobs, mainly manual work. They also buy agricultural produce, *madora* and other products in Mangondi for re-sale in Petersburg, South Africa, where they have a relative. In South Africa, the two farmers buy groceries and other household goods for re-sale in Mwenezi.

The Mbiza household has also ventured into cotton production. Mbiza asserted that;

Cotton does well here. The soils are good and the crop can do well even with little rainfall. AREX officers are encouraging us to grow the crop. I started growing cotton two years ago [2005] and the yields have been improving. If your timing is good, the crop does well here. However, its an expensive crop. It is labour intensive and the seed and chemicals are expensive. The government and NGOs should assist us with inputs. The other problem is transport cost. Hiring trucks to ferry our produce to the Ngundu depot [market] is very expensive (interview with Mbiza).

From the discussion above, it can be deduced that there are many actors and socio-economic classes with different motives and agendas and different levels of accumulation in the resettlement area. In addition, not all people who moved into the resettlement did that because they really wanted agricultural land. Some just wanted to expand their retail businesses. Other households operate micro-enterprises from their plots on part time or full-time basis (See Pederson, 1997:167). Others were attracted by the abundant game and the prospects of confiscating cattle belonging to white ranchers.

#### Part-time Farmers

At the national level, a sizeable number of A2 farmers were slow in taking up their plots. The national take up rate for A1 plots was 90 per cent while that of A2 plots was 66 per cent. The take up rate for A1 and A2 plots in Masvingo Province was 95 per cent and 79 per cent respectively (PLRC 2003; Sukume, 2004:13).

Some A2 farmers have reportedly turned their plots into weekend 'braai retreats'. Others have been described as cell phone farmers as they seldom stay at their plots but direct operations from cities through cell phones. As a result, the agrarian reform has not been effective as it is evident that land did not go into the hands of deserving individuals. A2 farmers include "middle class professionals" working in towns and cities. Such farmers do not reside on their plots like most A1 farmers. According to Moyo (2004:33) they oversee operations during weekend and at month end visits, and telephonically. This negatively impact on decision-making and can affect farm operations.

Oral interviews and personal field observations at Mangondi indicated that some A2 farmers do not have short term or immediate plans of becoming fully-fledged, full-time farmers. For example, a professional and senior civil servant based in Harare with an A2 farm near the Rutenga Service Centre in Mwenzezi intimated that he will continue to shuttle between his farm and Harare for a 'long time'. He noted that his salary ensured that he meets his family's financial needs, which the A2 farm cannot guarantee at the moment;

There are a number of uncertainties surrounding the land reform. There is no security of tenure. The offer letter does not provide any security at all. In fact, there are many cases where two or three people had offer letters indicating that they had been offered the same piece of land. So, one has to play it safe. You never know what will happen in future. The land might be taken away from us the very same way we took it from the whites. I cannot leave my job at the moment. I will continue with this arrangement until things normalize. The other thing is that we have been experiencing droughts and I have not been getting any meaningful income from farming activities. I am largely into cattle ranching but I have also started a piggery project as this generates income faster than cattle ranching. Currently, I use part of my salary to meet my farm expenses (Interview with an A2 farmer).

It is therefore apparent that some A2 farmers are trying to manage risk and uncertainty associated with the land reform by being 'part-time' farmers. Along the same vein, Moyo (2004:33) adds that this form of part-time farming represents "a wider strategy of agrarian capital accumulation during the transitional period of agrarian restructuring".

Other A2 farmers have also been accused of abusing the seed, fertiliser, financial support and fuel allocated to them by the government. Until 2006, farmers used to get fuel from government at a subsidised rate of Z\$11 000 a litre. Some of the farmers would then divert the fuel to the black market where they sold it at more than Z\$200 000 a litre. The practice generated a lot of money for such farmers but negatively impacted on the sustainability of the country's agricultural sector and undermined the land reform (ZBC News 20/04/06). The practice was so rampant that Vice President Joice Mujuru warned new farmers against the abuse of strategic resources. She added that government would prosecute those who 'abused' strategic facilities and resources that meant to sustain efforts to turn around the Zimbabwean economy (Herald 21/04/06). The Vice President also added that government had noted with concern the trend where individuals masquerading as farmers took over farms when it was harvest time and move on to the next farm at the on set of a new harvest season (The Herald 22/05/06).

Similarly, the Minister of State Security, Lands, Land Reform and Resettlement, Didymus Mutasa, also warned farmers against selling farm equipment, farmhouses or renting out pieces of land they were allocated as they could be repossessed of the land. He also asserted that the government "does not condone errant farmers who hold onto the land for speculative purposes" (Herald 12/05/06). Ironically, evidence shows that senior politicians and top government officials often looted farm implements and abused strategic resources like fuel. It is also apparent that some of the 'new farmers' are just opportunists and speculators who are not interested in farming, but making 'quick bucks' by selling equipment belonging to former white commercial farmers. This tendency



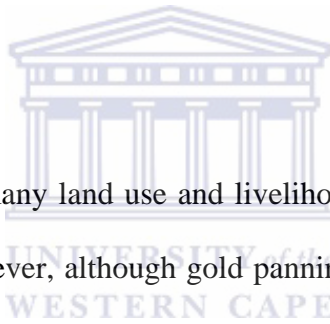
makes the land reform unsustainable as it leads to the loss of vital farm equipment and agricultural potential.

Along the same vein, Chaumba, Scoones and Wolmer (2003:28) observed that; “the resettlement areas are populated by a wide range of actors with different motivations, origins, identities and livelihoods”. They also argue that while there is continuity with the patterns of socio-economic differentiation found in the communal areas, there is also change in the resettlement area. They observe that, “the resettlement areas are providing opportunities for the landless poor to engage in farming, for business people to expand their markets, for single women to escape abusive social structures, and others to find temporary work as agricultural labourers” (Chaumba, Scoones and Wolmer, 2003:28).

The research’s findings are in tandem with observations by Campbell and Luckert (2002:7) who note that rural households have wide livelihood portfolios or multiple livelihood strategies. These include livestock keeping, cultivation of a wide variety of crops, collection of forest products and small-scale industries. Along the same vein, Penderson (1997:167) notes that rural households in Sub-Saharan Africa have increasingly engaged in non-agricultural activities in order to supplement their agricultural incomes.

In some instances, the resettled farmers have abandoned farming to concentrate on other livelihood opportunities in the resettlement area. At Mangondi these include gold panning along the Mwenezi River. Developments at Mangondi largely reflect the situation

obtaining in other resettlement areas across the country. The successive droughts that the country has been experiencing in the past years meant that dry-land farming has been unyielding. Rural farmers have been forced to resort to other sources of livelihood. However, it appears as if the farmers-turned-gold panners are oblivious of the environmental degradation and the dangers the resultant pits and gullies pose to their livestock. This is largely because gold panning pays better than dry cropping. For example, in April 2006 an ounce of gold was worth Z\$62 695 664 in contrast to Z\$31 300 000 per tonne for maize (The Herald 29/4/6). Farmers have apparently realised that they can make more money if they venture into gold mining unlike farming where they only harvest once a year.



The above cases show the many land use and livelihood opportunities in the communal and resettlement areas. However, although gold panning is a source of income for many households, it has a disastrous impact on the natural environment. This renders it unsustainable. The above cases also indicate that rural households are increasingly relying on off-farm activities (see Fay 1997; Penderson 1997).

### Post-settlement Support

Land reform also needs to be accompanied by capacity building. Building viable institutions is crucial to land reform. Rural District Councils need to be provided with additional resources or sufficient authority (Moyo, 2004:1). There is need to help the new farmers develop the capacity to be sustainable farmers who, in the long run, do not necessarily need to rely on government or NGOs for inputs. It is in this vein that it is

often argued that in the 1980s Zimbabwe came closer to an agrarian reform by providing extension advice, training, inputs and providing marketing depots and social infrastructure in resettlement areas.

Large-scale commercial farmers and A2 farmers have been getting support from government. However, indications are that a dependence syndrome is already developing within the A2 farming community. The Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe Governor, Gideon Gono, observed that:

Our farmers, particularly the low-yielding farmers, who have a tendency to shout the loudest, must desist from being perpetual cry-babies who want to blame the government at every turn and for every misfortune they perceive. These farmers forget that the government has gone to extreme lengths of sacrifice and international vilification for acquiring the land, which has been given free to most farmers yet the same farmers want to bankrupt that same government through perpetual and unsustainable subsidies (Herald 30/04/06).

Consequently, the government suspended aid to A2 farmers for the 2006/2007 agricultural season. It is clear that while the new farmers need access to credit and financial support, over-dependence on aid from NGOs, central government or the private sector equally makes farming unsustainable.

It should also be noted that the lack of infrastructure in resettlement areas is likely to affect women more than men since women are the principal subsistence farmers in the rural areas. There is also a critical shortage of essential services like health, education and extension services in the resettlement areas. The Fast Track Land Resettlement

Programme was implemented with the philosophy of settling people first with infrastructure to follow (Sukume, 2004:23). Consequently, the resettlement area lacks essential social amenities. In addition, government support has largely been channelled toward the provision of inputs. For example, in 2002 the government provided Z\$8.5 billion for tillage, crop and livestock input credit support to resettled farmers nationally for the 2002/2003 farming season (Sukume, 2004:23). Lack of secure tenure rights has discouraged banks from making non-government guaranteed lending to resettled farmers. According Sukume (2004: 23), “the financial requirements of all classes of farmers have largely gone unsatisfied with grave productivity consequences”.

In addition, despite the fact that the resettlement area is a window for multiple livelihoods, Breytebach (2004:59) warns that resettlement projects without marketing, money and extension services are likely to fail. There is need to build the capacity of the new farmers so that they can utilise the land on a sustainable basis. Along the same vein, Sachikonye (2004:64) observes that, “it is a widely bandied cliché that an important key to address poverty, especially rural poverty is land reform. Although it is not itself a sufficient guarantee of economic development, land reform is a necessary condition for a more secure and balanced society”.

At Mangondi, land reform has not been sustainable thus far. The new farmers have limited or no access to credit, farm inputs, markets and extension services. Past agrarian reforms in Mwenezi failed due to poor investment in agriculture and lack of post-

settlement support for resettled farmers. In this regard, there has been more of continuity than change in Mwenezi's agrarian history since 1980.

### **Gender**

Women play key roles in subsistence agriculture in Zimbabwe. They form about 52 per cent of the country's population and 86 per cent of them depend on the land for their livelihoods (Human Rights Watch (HRW) 2002). The study established that women generally occupy subordinate positions in both the communal and resettlement areas of Mwenezi. Rural women living in the communal areas are largely treated as dependants of men and not as landholders or farmers in their own right. However, information obtained from oral interviews with some women at Dinhe Business Centre, indicated that the role and status of women has been improving over the years and a sizeable number of women are becoming gender conscious. They are increasingly aware of the need for equality between men and women.

A health worker based at Dinhe Clinic observed that;

Women continue to occupy subordinate positions but over the years, the status of women in this district has been improving. Unlike, say, ten years ago, more women now have access to health and education. Some NGOs and advocacy groups continue to play pivotal roles in improving women's social and economic status (interview with Mrs Moyo, Dinhe Clinic).

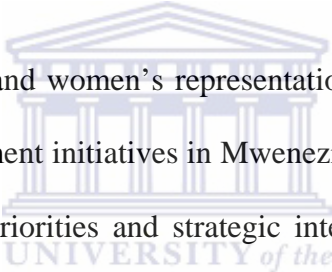
In addition, the study established that women play an integral role in ensuring household food security. There is a heavy dependence on women labour in both the communal and resettlement areas. In Zimbabwe, women are the main providers of labour for farming and they are the primary managers of homes in rural areas (HRW 2002). More so, polygamous marriages are a prominent feature in a number of households in Mwenezi. Consequently, families are large with an average of 8 family members (Personal field observations). This has the impact of disempowering women and putting more pressure and responsibilities on women's shoulders. It is difficult to ensure food security for such large households given the poverty levels in both the communal and resettlement areas.

Another salient feature of households at Mangondi and Dinhe is the increasing number of female and child headed families. This has been attributed to the devastating impact of HIV/AIDS. It is said that about 33 per cent of households in Mwenezi are headed by females ([www.zdc.org/projectsites.com](http://www.zdc.org/projectsites.com)). The migration of men out of the communal and resettlement areas to urban areas, Botswana and South Africa, in search of work also account for the gender imbalances mentioned above (Interview with a Community Health Worker, Dinhe).

Although women generally occupy subordinate positions, there is a general appreciation of their contribution toward the development of their local communities. However, most of the women who were interviewed said that their lack of adequate educational qualifications hindered them from assuming or being voted into public offices. Oral interviews that were held with a number of women at Dinhe revealed that some women

seem to have internalised stereotypes that militate against their socio-economic development. One of the informants, MaSibanda, intimated that she could not run for a public office because;

It is very difficult for us women. Who does not want to be a Councillor? The Problem is that men here say they cannot be led by a dress [woman]. The other thing is that I am a woman and I am not educated. I am not employed and do not have any money. Men can afford to buy beer for the prospective voters, which is why some of them are in positions of leadership (interview with MaSibanda, Dinhe).



The lack of gender balance and women's representation in local authorities undermines the effectiveness of development initiatives in Mwenezi as development agendas or plans do not to reflect women's priorities and strategic interests. Nevertheless, some NGOs have been playing a leading role in gender awareness campaigns.

The study also revealed that women in Mwenezi especially in the communal areas have limited access to socio-economic resources. Traditionally, women were not allocated land as primary right-holders (Interview with a Village Head). Instead, they accessed land through their husbands or other male relatives. Of late, some women were beginning to challenge men's control over land. Female interviewees generally attributed such attempts to subvert male authority to education and gender awareness campaigns. This transformation was revealed through an interview with Miriam Mbedzi, in Gara village in Dinhe Communal Area.

Miriam is a widow in her fifties and has seven children. She is Venda and was married to Chirume, a Karanga who originally came from the Chivi district. The two moved into the Mwenezi district in the 1970s and were allocated a fairly large piece of land by the village head. During this period, Mwenezi was still relatively sparsely populated although more people were moving into the district. When Miriam's husband died in 1991, the village head attempted to dispossess the widow of her land. He argued that the land had been allocated to Chirume and not his wife, Miriam. In addition, the village head claimed that since her husband was now dead, Miriam no longer had the means to utilise the land effectively. Apparently, the village head wanted to give the piece of land to his cousin who had just married. However, Miriam argued that the land belonged to her and her sons. She said that she even threatened to beat up the village head for trying to violate her rights. She also threatened to report the village head to the District Administrator. Consequently, Miriam successfully resisted the village head's intended move.

Miriam claimed that she was conscious of her rights 'unlike most Pfumbi women here'. From the interview, it emerged that she had received some education and was actively involved in local politics during and after the war of liberation. Miriam was a war collaborator (*Chimbwido*) during the liberation war. She was also involved in a number of voluntary development projects and is currently working for an NGO as a community worker.

From the discussion above, it can also be argued that widows in communal areas are more vulnerable than those in resettlement areas. In the former, women access land



through the patriarchal system and this compromises their control of land and other related resources. Miriam's case shows that some widows lose land once their spouses die. In addition, despite some exceptional cases, women in communal areas have little or limited power over agricultural produce or the benefits from the land. Such exceptions include female-headed households. Male interviewees claimed that culturally, women could not discuss the issue of land ownership at household level with men. Such wives who become too inquisitive could supposedly be 'fixed' by marrying another wife. Such attitudes compromise women's socio-economic development.

Women and men's development priorities differ in both the communal and resettlement areas. However, in both areas, women identified poverty as their greatest challenge. Poverty was defined in terms of limited access to essential services like health and education. The common definition of being poor was "*munhu asina chaanacho*", that is 'one who owns nothing' (Interview with Ward 8 Councillor, Dinhe). Other indicators of poverty include lack of food, clothing, farming implements, cattle, school fees and unemployment.

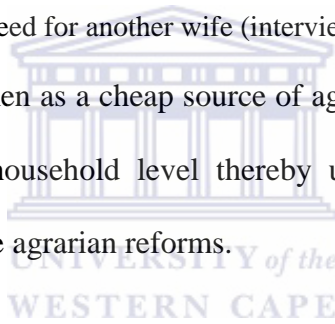
Most female interviewees indicated that they want to engage in income generating projects like gardening, irrigation schemes, poultry keeping, basket making, or soap and candle making. They, however, lamented that they did not have capital to start such projects. Such projects would arguably help ensure food security for many households. Some women who appeared to have some education were also concerned about education and reproductive health, especially family planning, as other priorities. Additionally,

some women showed interest in owning their own property especially cattle as key to their socio-economic empowerment.

By contrast, many men showed interest in wealth acquisition particularly better houses, cattle, scotch carts and jobs as their development priorities. One male respondent at Mangondi said:

I need more cattle so that I can pay *roora* (bride price) for a second wife who can help in the fields. As you can see, I was given a large piece of land under the A1 scheme than I used to have in the communal area. I now require additional labour in the field, hence the need for another wife (interview with A1 farmer, Mangondi).

Such men still consider women as a cheap source of agricultural labour. This encourages gender inequalities at the household level thereby undermining equity, which is an important facet of sustainable agrarian reforms.



The above discussion shows that women and men have different and often conflicting development priorities. The development concerns differ due to biological and socio-economic reasons. Priorities also varied according to age and the level of education. In this regard, it is vital for development projects to take on board the concerns of the various stakeholders if such projects are to be equitable. The above exposition also indicates that rural communities are differentiated.

Development priorities also differ according to age. An interview held with Isaac Chauke at Dinhe Business Centre captured some of the concerns of the youth and school leavers.

He is a Shangan in his mid-twenties and is unemployed. He refers to himself and others in similar situations as ‘PhDs’, that is, permanent home dwellers. Isaac lamented that:

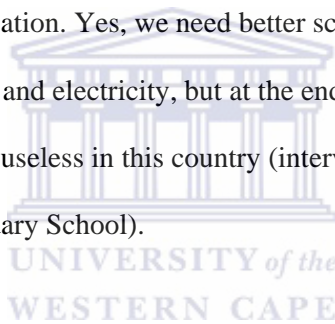
I am unemployed just like most school leavers here. I failed. Things are difficult here. I have no job and no money to go back to school. My parents are old and poor and we have no cattle; we just have a few goats and four donkeys. All our cattle died during the 1992 drought (interview with Isaac Chauke, Dinhe).

Isaac also noted that their soils are poor and they often can not afford to buy farm inputs. As a result, Isaac’s family largely relies on hand-outs from government and NGOs. Isaac also revealed that he was contemplating illegally migrating to South Africa where he thinks fortunes are brighter. He indicated that some of his former classmates who are ‘border jumping’ into South Africa are now better off. They now wear nice clothes, have bicycles, radios and have installed solar panels at their homesteads. Others have even bought cattle for themselves and their parents. By contrast, Isaac augments his family’s meagre income by ‘doing *Maricho*’, that is, piece jobs which include working in ‘richer’ households’ fields or selling firewood.

Discussions with a number of school leavers and some students at Dinhe Christian Secondary School showed that the youth want better quality education, money for uniforms and school fees, and better employment prospects. They also commended the work of NGOs in the district and showed interest in self- help projects but noted that they lacked capital to start their own business ventures. Some of the youths said they had completed carpentry and welding courses at the Mwenezi Training Centre (MTC) at

Neshuro. They hope that the recent electrification of the Dinhe Business Centre might open up new opportunities for them. However, a greater part of the youths who were interviewed thought border jumping into South Africa and Botswana remains the most viable option. Some students at Dinhe Christian Secondary School said going to school was now a waste of time due to the economic crisis in Zimbabwe;

We are just wasting time here. There are a lot of guys who passed their 'O' Levels but are unemployed. There are no jobs in this country and the economy is bad. So what do you think I will do with the 'O' Level certificate? My brother, who dropped out of school and went to work in Botswana, is now better off than our teachers here, even with his little education. Yes, we need better schools, qualified teachers, libraries, running water and electricity, but at the end of the day will we get any jobs? Education is now useless in this country (interview with Justin Chongoveza, Dinhe Christian Secondary School).



Other students also noted that the resettlement programme offered no new opportunities for them as the resettlement area is just as dry as the communal lands. Others said the land was given to their parents and not to them. Some of the youths just showed no interest in farming. They argued that dry land farming is not rewarding in Mwenezi. These varying perceptions show how different development priorities are among the different sections of rural populations.

### **Security of Tenure**

As already noted, land and agrarian reforms should be accompanied by supportive policies, especially secure land tenure. Access rights are critical in ensuring long term

food security for rural households. However, Zimbabwe's land reforms have not been accompanied by tenurial reform. Offer letters were given to farmers who were allocated land. The offer letter acted as the official document confirming that a farmer had been allocated a particular piece of land. However, in some instances, offer letters were forged, while in others more than one farmer had offer letters indicating that they had been offered the same piece of land. The manner in which land was distributed was chaotic. In addition, offer letters do not secure farmers' hold over land and they do not guarantee plot holders against future evictions. As a result, the land reform has not been effective.

A critique of the Presidential Land Review Committee (PLRC 2003) by the MDC identified the lack of tenure security and 'subdued law enforcement' as some of the causes of 'lawlessness' on the farms. The MDC observed that:

The settlers are literally mining the resources they found on the farms because there is no effective law enforcement mechanisms empowered on farms that are settled. Clear tenure arrangements could also alleviate the destructive activities currently gripping the resettled farms (MDC: PLRC 2003).

At Mangochi, the land reform has not yet secured and guaranteed the new farmers' rights over land and other resources. The land reform has resulted in increased insecurity on the farms. As a result, of the prevailing uncertainty, some A1 farmers at Mangochi continue to retain pieces of land in the communal areas of origin. Some A2 farmers who were interviewed also emphasised the importance of security of tenure. They noted that the

proposed 99 year leases should have accompanied the offer letters. The 99-year leases were expected to have been finalised by June 2006 but the farmers are still waiting to get the leases (Herald 20/04/06, ZBC News 20/04/06). It is hoped that the leases would bring a new wave of hope among new farmers allocated land under the agrarian reform. Farmers are currently reluctant to invest in agriculture and in the development of land.

Security of tenure may also reduce conflicts over land and other natural resources like water. In addition, agricultural production could not have been disrupted if land reform had been accompanied by secure tenure. Land was also given to opportunists interested in using the confusion on the farms to loot implements, machinery, cattle and crops. This scenario shows that the land reform was not programmatic and systematic.

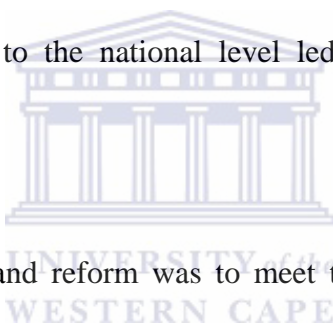


### **The Land Reform and Social Differentiation**

It should also be noted that one of the aims of the FTLRP was to help decongest the communal areas. This has been one of the key objectives of the land reform programme since independence (Sukume, 2004:13). However, nationally, preliminary assessments show a mixed picture. The Fast Track Land Reform Programme increased the area under smallholder farming by about 21 per cent; “despite a 21 per cent increase in new smallholder areas only 9 per cent of communal households were resettled implying lower decongestion levels than area increases may suggest” (Sukume 2004:13).

In addition, the land reform sought to address socio-economic inequalities with regard to access to, and ownership of, land. However, the land reform has not been successful in

this regard. In Mwenezi, there were allegations of ethno-regionalism and discrimination in the allocation of land on the basis of political orientation. Such a scenario submerges equity, which is one of the pillars of sustainable land and agrarian reform. In addition, the resettlement area has been characterised by conflicts over resources and, more often than not, local particularism and the ethnic tag have played central roles. It has already been noted that like the communal, resettlement areas are ethnic mosaics. Local politics also play a salient role. Those farmers who got A2 farms were largely war veterans, senior civil servants or those with political connections (Interview with a resettled farmer; HRW 2002). Additionally, the existence of multiple layers of authority with regard to land allocation from the district to the national level led to unprocedural land allocation (PLRC 2003).



The stated purpose of the land reform was to meet the needs of disadvantaged black Zimbabweans. However, not all those who deserved to be allocated land were resettled. The key role played by war veterans in the distribution and allocation of land politicised the whole process thereby creating discrimination in land allocation. Consequently, it can be argued that the land reform has not adequately addressed the problem of landlessness. In this regard, the land reform has not been effective.

In addition, instead of the resettlement of landless rural households, land was largely given to those who are politically correct, some civil servants and traditional leaders who already had enough land: “The blunting of the distinction between government and the

ruling party in the structures for allocating land under the fast track programmer poses further problems” (HRW 2002). HRW (2002) also observed that:

Discrimination in selection of beneficiaries is facilitated by the fact that there are not published records of deliberations or of the reasons for selection or rejection of applications for land at each step in the formal process. The process is not transparent, and there is no provision for an appeal if an application is rejected.

Goebel (2005:358) adds that Zimbabwe’s land reform was chaotic and “the elites are the main beneficiaries of land redistribution”.

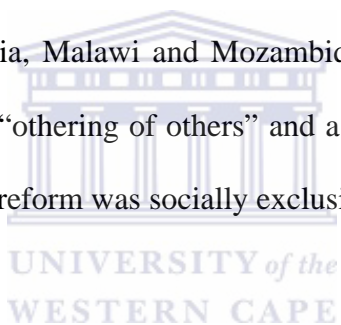
In Mwenezi, like in most districts in the country, there were allegations of inconsistencies with regard to the allocation of land. In 2004, disgruntled residents called on the ruling ZANU PF party to investigate the then Resident Minister and Governor for Masvingo province for favouritism. The Governor was accused of improper conduct amid claims that he had resettled people from Chivi South District, who are ethnic Karanga, on acquired farms in the Triangle area (Mwenezana) and on irrigation projects around the Manyuchi dam (Daily Mirror 20/7/2004).

It was alleged that the Governor played ‘dirty tricks’ and marginalized the people of Mwenezi [largely ethnic Pfumbi] and Chamayellow, near Mwanezana Sugar Estates, as he tried to keep not only the Chivi South parliamentary seat within his faction’s control but in the process solidify his faction’s base in the province (Daily Mirror 20/7/2004). Masvingo province is well known for intra ZANU PF divisions. Local politicians were supposedly abusing the land reform and resettlement for their political gain. This



disadvantaged some households. The Daily Mirror (20/07/2004) noted that “poverty stricken Mwenezi inhabitants have allegedly been affected as a result of Hungwe [the governor]’s alleged actions, as they have failed to secure jobs on the irrigation project and the Triangle farms seized for the purposes of land resettlement”.

At the national level, the land reform has transformed the hitherto racially skewed land ownership pattern. However, the transformation has been racially exclusive. Land reform largely implied taking land from white commercial farmers and giving it to blacks. This left out and marginalized the coloured community as well as the farm workers who are largely migrants from Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique (Rutherford 2003). In a way, the land reform entailed the “othering of others” and a redefinition of citizenship by the state. In this regard, the land reform was socially exclusive and not equitable.



At this juncture, it should be emphasised that although women play a key role in the livelihoods of rural households, the land reform did not fully cater for women’s demands. Not all women who wanted land had access to it or resettled. In addition to the aforementioned reasons, some women who were interviewed at Dinhe identified the violence and uncertainties associated with the farm occupations as other issues of concern. An A1 farmer at Mangondi noted that;

My son, those were difficult times. It was war, jambanja chaiyo [real violence]. We also wanted the land but as you know jambanja is for men not old women like me. So, when jambanja started, my husband and our two sons went to the farms with others. I only joined them later when the violence had subsided (interview with an A1 farmer).

In fact, informants revealed that men and some male youths dominated the early phases of the farm occupations. Most married women remained in the communal areas and joined their husbands after the situation had normalised. However, a sizeable number of widows, single mothers and divorcees were said to have joined the initial farm occupiers. This demonstrates how desperate such women were to secure sustainable livelihoods as they hoped for improved access to land in the resettlement area.

In terms of gender balance the land reform has not been sustainable. According to the HRW (2002), a land redistribution and resettlement programme should ensure that women are given the opportunity to hold land in their own right on equal terms with men. In October 2000, the Zimbabwean government stated that it would ensure a 20 per cent quota for women to benefit from the FTLRP. However, this declaration of intent has not been translated into objective reality. In fact, it has been asserted that “there is no legal or administrative framework in place to ensure gender equality in the distribution of resettlement land. The policy documents and laws setting out the basis of the fast track programme make no mention of gender issues” (HRW 2002). Consequently, Zimbabwe’s Women and Land Lobby Group has criticised government policy on and the results of past land resettlement schemes from a gender perspective. In addition, overall, many single women and the male youth did not receive land due to their limited social and political influence (Moyo 2004).

Similarly, Sukume (2004:13) argues that land allocations have tended to be skewed towards males. In Matebeleland South and Mashonaland Central provinces 87 per cent of

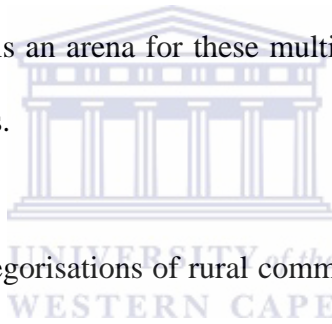
plots were allocated to men (PLRC 2003). The need for the gendering of the land reform cannot be overemphasised (Gaidzanwa 1999; Goebel 1999; Moyo 1999). Feminists argue that, “since women are the main agricultural producers, it is counter-productive and inefficient to deny them [women] full access to and control of land” (Goebel, 1999:77). Nevertheless, Moyo (2004:23) argues that by comparison, women who traditionally have been marginalized in development programmes (see Gaidzanwa 1995), fared better than usual in A1 land allocations. As individuals, they gained an average of 12-24 per cent of the land allocated across the country’s provinces. Under the A2 scheme, women as individuals got between 5 and 21 per cent (Moyo, 2004:23).

Additionally, since communities are differentiated, the implementation of land and agrarian reforms should be based on local level solutions derived from community development concerns (Cousins, Weiner and Amin 1990; Leach, Mearns and Scoones, 1999:225). The way different social actors perceive the utility of different aspects of the environment varies. They also see different components of the environment as resources at different times (Cousins, Weiner and Amin 1990). This partly explains the aforementioned conflicts over access to resources.

The land reform has led to the emergence of what Moyo (2004:26) refers to as an agrarian class structure. It has been argued in preceding chapters that rural communities are not simple and harmonious. The land reform seems to have enhanced and cemented these socio-economic classifications. Cousins (2004: 1) argues that communities are complex, differentiated and are characterised by inequalities (see Mueller, 2006:2). He

further argues that communities in rural areas can be divided into groups, networks and categories. Groups are bounded units whose members are conscious of shared membership and may decide to act in common. They include villages, clans, chiefdoms, voluntary associations, workgroups, co-operatives and political parties (Cousins, 2004: 1).

Networks are defined as unbounded series of links between people (Cousins, 2004: 1). They include friends, patrons and clients. Categories are unbound sets of people with a common interest. Examples of categories are gender, age, ethnicity and class. As already noted, the resettlement area is an arena for these multiple, competing, and multi-layered and often malleable identities.



The above identities and categorisations of rural communities help in understanding how people obtain access to, or control over, or ownership of land and resources. In addition, Cousins (2004: 4-5) observes that “in land disputes, it is often the case that personal identities are defined and re-defined to highlight membership of the three kinds of social affiliation and rural people sometimes play one social affiliation off against another to increase or protect their land rights”. This assertion explains why conflicts over resources at Mangondi tend to assume ethnic and class dimensions.

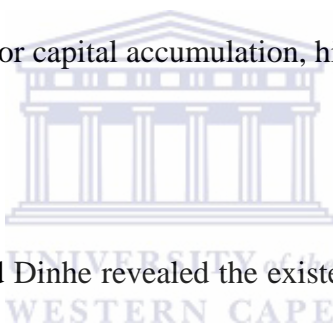
At this juncture, it should be made clear that the thesis takes cognisance of the fact that class identities and class relations take different forms (see Cousins 2004:7). Class analyses can take the distributional, culturalist or the materialist (Marxist, Neo-Marxist or

political economy) approaches. In addition, like other socio-economic and political categories, classes are internally differentiated and class structures are inherently complex (Cousins 2004).

Earlier surveys have revealed a 'pervasive pattern of inequality' with regard to income, output, ownership of the means of production and various indices of the standard of living such as education and health (Cousins, Weiner and Amin, 1990:3). Consequently, the linear proletarianisation thesis becomes problematic when applied to rural populations (Manganga 2003).

Moyo (2004:26) also argues that peasants numerically dominate the emergent agrarian class structure or petty-commodity producers. They constitute 98 per cent of the country's current farming units. The peasants are found in the communal and resettlement areas and hold 73 per cent of the total agricultural land area (Moyo, 2004:26). As already alluded to, there are intra-class differentiations of the 'peasantry'. These are determined by variations in land quality; differential access to off-farm incomes; access to other means of production like ploughs, tractors, inputs and drought power; levels of education; access to markets and differential social, economic and political influence (Cousins, Weiner and Amin, 1990: 6-7; Moyo, 2004:26). This has led to the emergence and use of terms like poor, middle and rich peasants; worker- farmers; peasantariat and semi-proletariat. Moyo and Yeros (2004) have also used terms like small capitalists, middle and large capitalists. The categories are defined by the size of the land holdings and access to the means of production.

At Mangondi, there is evidence of the emergence and growing salience of the above socio-economic categorisations. It is apparent in both the resettlement and communal areas that some 'peasants' are richer than others. The richer 'peasants' include civil servants like school teachers, nurses, senior civil servants, AREX officers, business people (who run shops, bottle stores and bars), and war veterans. Some of these are A1 or A2 farmers. They also augment farm incomes with their off-farm incomes. Consequently, unlike the other farmers, they have differential access to farm inputs and other implements. In addition, some senior civil servants and politicians got A2 plots. They have better access to other means of production, credit and technology. Consequently, they have a higher potential for capital accumulation, higher value commodity production and labour control.



Interviews carried out around Dinhe revealed the existence of work-parties as an attempt by communal and resettlement farmers to create group cohesion and also to assist the less fortunate farmers. The work parties are locally referred to as *humwe* or *nhimbe*. Work parties are common among poor households who do not own cattle. In addition, richer peasants in both the resettlement and communal area often loan out some of their cattle to 'poorer' households. The practice is known as *Kuronzera* or *mulaga*. *Korenzera* also defines power relations among rural communities as those who can loan out cattle acquire an esteemed social status.

In addition, some farmers generate additional income from remittance income and other off-farm activities. Some 'richer' women, like Mai Linda referred to above, buy farm and

forest products from 'poorer' women and resell the products in Beitbridge, Masvingo, Chiredzi and other towns. Mai Linda, unlike other women, can also afford to pay duty for the products she exports to South Africa and Mozambique. It is therefore evident that women in rural areas have differential access to markets.

Poor farmers also augment their incomes through selling their labour to richer peasants. This is referred to as *maricho* or piecework. One informant at Mangondi however observed that while *maricho* helps 'poorer farmers' to earn a living, the practice had a negative impact on farming overall as farmers neglect their own fields:

*Maricho* helps us the poor to get money for school fees and other things. Some farmers who are generous give us grain in return for our labour. However, *maricho* is hard work. Also, if one is not careful s/he can forget and neglect one's field.

Such people survive through *maricho* year in year out (Interview with an A1 farmer).

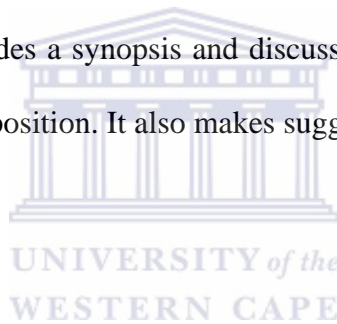
In the long term, both *maricho* and *kuronzera* create a dependence syndrome.

### Conclusion

In view of the discussion above, it can be concluded that communal and resettlement areas are arenas for multiple identities. It is also apparent that the land reform's impact on rural communities cannot be generalised as communities are differentiated. Rural communities and their local environmental entitlements are complex and dynamic. From the foregoing exposition, it is also apparent that like most of the agrarian and development undertakings initiated in the Mwenezi district since independence, the FTLRP has not been sustainable thus far. The UNDP (2002) adds that Zimbabwe's land

reform has been chaotic, unsustainable and lacking in transparency. The fast track land reform is deemed to be the main cause of Zimbabwe's present political social instability (UNDP 2002). The land reform has not been sustainable in as far as it led to political, economic and social instability, which ultimately retards development. In addition, the A1 farmers in the resettlement areas have been lacking institutional support and resources for development. Land reform needs to go beyond redistributing land. Along the same vein, Moyo (2004:1) argues that "land reform is a necessary but not sufficient condition for agrarian reform and national development".

The following chapter provides a synopsis and discussion of the salient issues that have emerged in the foregoing exposition. It also makes suggestions for further study.





## **CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION**

The preceding chapters have analysed land reform, agrarian histories and development initiatives in Mwenezi from 1980 to 2004. The present chapter is, essentially, a summation of the issues discussed in the thesis. It also discusses the most salient issues raised in the thesis. Consequently, a number of conclusions can be drawn from the discussion above.

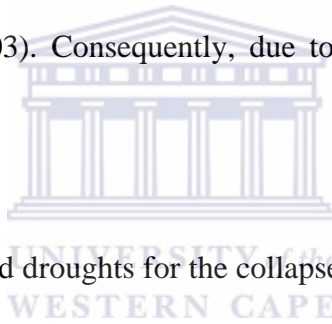
### The Land Reform and Zimbabwe's Current Crises

It is common knowledge that Zimbabwe's land reform was chaotic, racially exclusive and had a violent tone overall. It also lacked transparency and the land distribution process had a plethora of irregularities (Goebel 2005; Hammar, Raftopoulos and Jensen 2003; ICG 2004; UNDP 2002; Worby 2001). According to the UNDP (2002), the Fast Track Land Reform Programme is the main cause of Zimbabwe's present political, social and economic instability. Although Zimbabwe's political, economic and social crises can be explained in terms of a complex synergy of factors, it is apparent that the chaotic nature of the land reform and its politicisation precipitated the crises. In this regard, it can be argued that the land reform has not been effective.

The chaos and violence associated with the land reform disrupted agricultural production contributing to the country's acute food shortages. The land reform compromised Zimbabwe's previous status as the breadbasket of southern Africa, making the country a net importer of its food requirements. Marongwe (2004) argues that the FTLRP has

contributed immensely to the events leading to the current poor state of the economy. The chaotic nature of the land reform also eroded and undermined business and investor confidence (Marongwe 2004). The thesis has argued that land reform needs to be planned, systematic and programmed.

At the national level, agricultural production fell by 22 per cent in 2002 compared to an average annual growth rate of 4.7 per cent between 1990 and 2000 (Sukume 2004). This observation is in tandem with that of scholars who argue that the land reform disrupted farming and is responsible for the country's current food shortages (Hammar, Raftopoulos and Jensen 2003). Consequently, due to the drought, harvests have been poor in Mwenezi since 2000.



While the government blamed droughts for the collapse of food production in Zimbabwe, it has been noted that the drought of 2001/2002 was only 22 per cent below average rainfall levels. At most, it accounted for 13 per cent in the drop in the value of the agricultural economy, while 87 per cent of the drop was due to the collapse of property rights, poor planning and the unavailability of inputs (Bate 2006). In addition, analysis by the Centre for Global Development shows that there has never been a two-year period when low rainfall in Zimbabwe has not been associated with low rainfall in neighbouring countries like Zambia and Malawi (Bate 2006). According to the United States Department of Agriculture, maize production in Zimbabwe fell by 74 per cent between 1999 and 2004, whereas it fell by only 31 per cent in Malawi (Bate 2006). This shows

that at the national level, instead of reducing poverty, the FTLRP has actually led to an increase in poverty levels.

In Mwenezi, it was however observed that, land reform has relatively improved the food security of many households despite the recurrent droughts. Resettled farmers at Mangondi often sell grain to farmers in communal areas like Dinhe and Neshuro. This shows that agrarian reforms can help in the reduction of rural poverty.

It is noteworthy that at the national level, the land reform has initiated a process to reverse the hitherto racially uneven patterns of land ownership. It reversed a situation whereby about 1 per cent of the country's population owned over 75 per cent of the arable land (Moyo 2000; 2001). However, the land reform was racially exclusive and sidelined other racial and ethnic groups, particularly whites, coloureds and farm workers from Mozambique, Zambia and Malawi (Hammar, Raftopoulos and Jensen 2003; Rutherford 2003). Despite its inadequacies, the land reform can be reformed and modified to make it more equitable and just and decongest communal areas.

It has been asserted that insecurity of tenure is leading to the pursuit of immediate gains by some 'opportunists-cum-new-farmers' through the sale of farm and other equipment on the former white commercial farms. Delays in the finalisation of the proposed 99-year leases have compromised the effectiveness of Zimbabwe's land reform. Consequently, the offer letters given to the new farmers do not guarantee them against future evictions.

There is an atmosphere of insecurity on the A2 and A1 farms. Bate (2006) also adds that the destruction of property rights contributed to the wildlife catastrophe in Zimbabwe.

In Mwenezi, between 1980 and the farm occupations that began in year 2000, there was more of continuity than change in terms of the district's agrarian history. Attempts at agrarian reform and other development initiatives failed due to poor infrastructure, shortage of inputs, limited access to irrigation water by rural farmers and poor investment in agriculture. Development projects were also influenced by the wilderness vision thesis. Consequently, agrarian reforms that were carried out during this period did not benefit rural farmers in Mwenezi.

Unlike other preceding agrarian reforms, the FTLRP relatively benefited more rural farmers and women. However, land reform has failed to decongest the communal areas in Mwenezi. In addition, overall, the land reform has afforded too few opportunities for land and grazing expansion. On the contrary, the land reform has led to great insecurity as some farmers continue to retain pieces of land in the communal areas where they came from. Lack of tenure security is hampering agricultural production and investment in land. Most A2 farmers are reluctant to invest in land, which they fear might be taken away from them if the political situation in Zimbabwe changes. It can be concluded that farmers at Mangochi are managing the risks and uncertainties surrounding the FTLRP by maintaining their presence in both the communal and resettlement area.

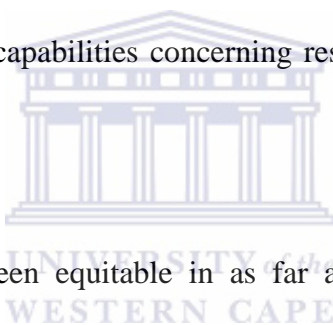
### Land Reform and Equity

The study noted a number of irregularities in the manner in which the FTLRP was carried out both at the national and local levels. In Mwenezi, there were allegations of ethno-regional bias in land allocation as ‘regional political barons’ and ‘war veterans’ from other parts of Masvingo Province used land allocation as a trump card in drumming up political support ahead of the 2000 parliamentary election and the 2002 presidential election. Most of the people who got the A2 farms were largely war veterans, supporters of the ruling party or senior civil servants. It was also noted that some of these beneficiaries originated in other districts outside Mwenezi. In addition, the majority of the farmers who were resettled under the A1 scheme were people loyal to local power structures. As a result, the FTLRP was not necessarily pro-poor. Consequently, the land reform has not benefited the majority of the rural poor who might have been the genuine beneficiaries. In this regard, the land has not been equitable and just. It can, therefore, be concluded that the land reform has not been effective in addressing issues to do with equity or those who needed the land most.

In addition, there was differential access to land and other related resources on the basis of gender, age, political and social influence. Although there are a number of widows and single mothers who got land under the A1 scheme at Mangondi, the majority of the initial land occupiers were male (ZANU PF) youths and male war (and pseudo) veterans. More often than not, war veterans also got land that was closer to water points or near the Masvingo-Beitbridge road. The study observed that differential access to land, markets,

draught power and off-farm income is also impacting on accumulation and social differentiation.

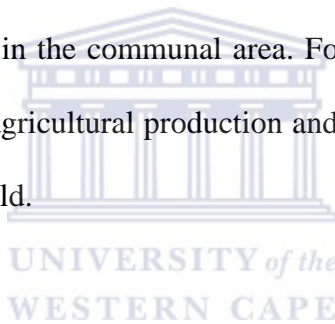
Gender inequality and gender differences remain pervasive features of rural livelihoods. Nationally, the land reform relatively improved women's access to land. However, in both communal and resettlement areas, women continue to have limited access to land. Gender inequalities also occur with respect to ownership of assets, especially cattle. Along the same vein, Ellis (2000:158) argues that women have "unequal ownership or access rights to land, their access to productive resources occurs through the mediation of men, their decision making capabilities concerning resource use and output choices are often severely restricted".



The land reform has not been equitable in as far as it has not fully addressed the developmental aspirations of the youth and women. Marongwe (1999) also adds that sustainable land reform needs to pay particular attention to the youth. He argues that youths and middle-aged men feel the effects of overpopulation and support resettlement more than the old aged people who have stronger cultural ties to their land. However, most of the youths who were interviewed in both the communal and resettlement areas showed little interest in agricultural production. Their major wish was to work in Botswana or South Africa. For others, the land reform has opened new opportunities for gold panning, as well as buying and selling foreign currency and fuel along the Masvingo-Beitbridge road. Other youths buy groceries and basic household goods in

South Africa and sell them in the resettlement area. Consequently, the land reform has created markets for enterprising men and women in Mwenezi.

Land reform has meant different things to the youth, men and women. At Mangondi, it was observed that there are more women, especially widows and single mothers, who own land than in the communal area, where most women work on the land but do not own it. This means that land reform has led to the socio-economic empowerment of women who were marginalised in the communal area. The study also noted that some single mothers at Mangondi are accumulating personal wealth, especially cattle, something that was difficult in the communal area. For other men and women, the land reform has led to increased agricultural production and improved standards of living and food security for the household.



However, for other women, the land reform has led to the breaking up of families as their husbands left them in the communal area and married new wives at Mangondi. The land reform was an opportunity for some men to marry more wives as they argued that since they now had bigger pieces of land and larger cattle herds, they needed more wives and children to provide agricultural labour. On the other hand, some women saw the land reform as an opportunity to subvert male dominance in the communal areas, where they had limited control over land and agricultural products. The above observations show that the land reform has presented different and often conflicting opportunities for youths, women and men.

In addition, the study observed that despite their limited access to land and agricultural produce, rural women continue to make a significant contribution to rural agriculture. However, women in resettlement areas have improved access to land and associated resources than those in communal areas.

In both the communal and resettlement area, women, more than men, seem to rely more on harvesting and selling forest products. The thesis has noted that there is a close relationship between gender, the environment, poverty and agriculture. Overall, rural women are poorer on average than men. Female headed-households tend to be even poorer than male-headed ones (Ellis 2000). The thesis noted that, as a result of the migration of males out of the district in search of wage labour, as well as the devastating impact of HIV/AIDS, there is a marked increase of female and child headed families in Mwenezi. However, the link between gender and poverty cannot be generalised as the thesis alluded to the existence of some exceptional cases.

In countries like Zimbabwe, where the majority of the population depends on agriculture for their livelihoods, land reform plays a crucial role in ensuring equity and social justice (Moyo 2001). Equity is one of the fundamental aspects of sustainable land reform. Land reform should therefore not enrich certain sections of the population, for example those with political connections, while impoverishing others. The existence of multiple farm owners shows that Zimbabwe's land reform has not been sustainable in the sense of equity (cf PLRC 2003).



Ownership of, and access to, land is a major source of conflict. Land reform should therefore be equitable in order to reduce such conflicts. Land reform also needs to form part of agrarian reforms that redistribute access to resources and opportunities other than land (cf IPA Report 2002).

### Environmental Sustainability

The thesis has also brought out the need for land and agrarian reforms to help in the protection of the environment as this enables land to sustain the agrarian needs of future generations. In addition, rural households often derive their livelihoods from their immediate environment. Households at Dinhe and Mangondi feel that they are entitled to surviving from their natural environment. They harvest forest products, cut down trees for firewood and timber, clear land for cultivation and hunt wild animals for food. At Mangondi, resettled farmers continue to clear mopane forests using fire, which often end up damaging large hectares of forests and grazing land.

Resettled farmers and wood poachers from communal areas are also destroying forests as they cut down trees for firewood, which they sell at Rutenga and Mwenezi service centres. The uncontrolled cutting down of trees is likely to lead to deforestation in the resettlement area. The illegal hunting and killing of wild animals for food and for sale is still going on at Mangondi. If the consumption of wildlife remains unchecked, indications are that the land reform might result in the extinction of many species of wildlife in the area.

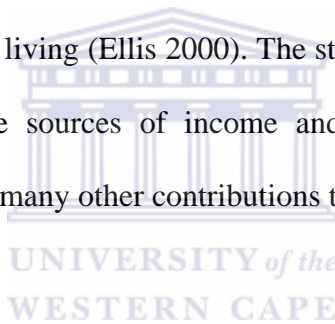
In addition, since the rural poor, especially women, derive their livelihoods from their environment, they should be encouraged and empowered to take leading roles in efforts at protecting the environment. Security of tenure can also have a positive impact on this. Agrarian reforms should secure the livelihoods of rural communities to reduce their dependence on the environment. Consequently, it can be argued that the damage to local environments cannot be effectively halted unless poverty itself is addressed. The rural poor need to be provided with alternative sources livelihood. Because of the harsh economic conditions and limited sources of income, firewood, wild animals and other forest products provide sources of livelihood in areas opened by the FTLRP.

### Livelihoods

The thesis has also noted that development initiatives and land reforms in Mwenzezi between 1980 and 2004 have not been effective. Before 1980, most development projects were influenced by the perception of the lowveld landscape as wilderness (Wolmer 2001). After 1980, the tendency by development planners and government has been to favour large-scale irrigation projects. Examples include the Mwenzezi Palm Oil Project, the Mwanezana Sugar Estate and the Nuanetsi Irrigation Project. These land and agrarian reforms and development initiatives have failed to eradicate poverty and empower rural women, whose critical role in rural livelihoods has been emphasized.

In addition, it has been noted that farming on its own does not provide sufficient means of survival for households at Dinhe and Mangondi. Consequently, households in both the resettlement and communal area are diversifying their livelihoods by venturing into other

off-farm activities like gold panning, micro-businesses, piece jobs or *maricho*, poaching and the harvesting and selling of forest products, especially mopane worms. In addition, farmers in Mwenezi continue to rely on food support from NGOs operating in the district. In fact, some resettled farmers at Mangondi are trying to maintain their presence in their former homes so that they can continue receiving food aid from NGOs operating in the communal areas. Remittances from relatives working as illegal immigrants in South Africa and Botswana continue to play key roles in the livelihoods of households in both the communal and resettlement area. The activities discussed above are processes by which rural households diversify portfolios of activities and assets in order to survive and to improve their standards of living (Ellis 2000). The study's findings therefore show that rural families have multiple sources of income and livelihood. Crop and livestock production feature alongside many other contributions to family well-being.



The above observations augur well with findings by scholars like Bryceson (1997), Ellis (2000) and Penderceson (1997). According to Ellis (2005), studies have shown that between 30 and 50 per cent of rural household income in Sub-Saharan Africa is derived from non-farm sources. This indicates that farming cannot be a sole livelihood strategy in rural areas. It also shows that livelihoods and land use patterns in rural areas are multiple and complex.

Additionally, farmers in both the communal and resettlement areas are diversifying into specialised crops, particularly cotton, which fares better than maize in dry areas like Mwenezi. Farmers who can successfully grow cotton are better off than their counterparts

in terms of their quality of life and the assets they have. However, unlike the small grains, cotton is proving to be an 'expensive crop' as it requires relatively more inputs in terms of fertilisers and chemicals. The private sector and NGOs can play important roles in this regard by providing farmers with inputs, training and fair credit facilities. Farmers who are interested in growing cotton should be encouraged to get into partnership with cotton buyers who can provide them with inputs on condition that they deliver their produce to those cotton buyers (that is, contract farming). Food crops are, however, a problem when it comes to contract farming.

In addition, the study has established that both the resettlement and communal areas have been exposed to various environmental, economic, social and political stresses on their livelihoods. In both areas, various adaptive strategies have evolved in response to these stresses (cf ENDA- Zimbabwe 1995). Engagement in livelihood diversification also means nurturing social networks that enable such diversity to be secured and sustained (Bryceson 1997; Ellis 2000; Penderson 1992). For example, at Dinhe and Mangondi, '*kuronzera*' or cattle loaning to poorer households is an important way of coping with stress although in some cases it tends to create a dependency syndrome (see Cousins 1992).

The study also noted that land reform had significant impacts on livelihoods at Mangondi as it broadened the livelihood portfolios of the resettled farmers. Although it has failed to decongest the communal areas, the land reform has seen a relative increase in the size of land available for cultivation and grazing for the resettled farmers. At Mangondi, farmers

now have increased access to more fertile land, forests products and wild animals than households in the communal area. Resettled farmers, comparatively, have larger grazing land which can sustain larger herds than in the communal area. Farmers at Mangondi also enjoy better access to markets as they are closer to both the Mwenezi and Rutenga service centres. In this regard, it can be argued that despite the irregularities associated with the FTLRP, resettlement increased the potential for household incomes compared to those in communal areas. Opportunities for livelihood diversification have been created by the FTLRP but they are yet to be fully realised due to limited post-settlement support.

In view of the discussion above, it is clear that the full socio-economic benefits of the land reform are still to be realised. The shortage of inputs and the collapse of marketing systems for crops militate against higher productivity. In addition, the FTLRP was undertaken during a period of an adverse macro-economic environment. This has negatively impacted on agricultural production and new farmers at Mangondi do not seem to be making maximum use of their agricultural land.

### Food Security and Self Reliance

From the discussion above, it is apparent that although the thesis argues that land redistribution can help improve the welfare of rural farmers, households in Mwenezi have not yet attained food security and self reliance. This explains why farmers in both the communal and resettlement area continue to broaden their livelihoods bases. Nonetheless, most of the ten households who were interviewed at Mangondi said resettlement has improved their food security.

If carried out in a more effective and equitable manner, land and agrarian reforms can help decrease the vulnerability of the rural poor. Government and the donor community can play important roles in building the capacity of new farmers to be self-reliant. New farmers require post-settlement support in the form of access to credit facilities, extension, training, input support, reliable and efficient transport, access to fair markets and the provision of vital social amenities like clinics and schools. These are currently not adequately available for A1 and A2 farmers in resettlement areas. Poor infrastructure, lack of inputs and market support has resulted in poor agricultural production at both Dinhe and Mangondi. Attempts at agrarian reform have failed due to poor investment in attendant infrastructure and post-settlement support. Consequently, agrarian reforms in Mwenezi have failed to secure a dignified future for the inhabitants of the district and generations to come.

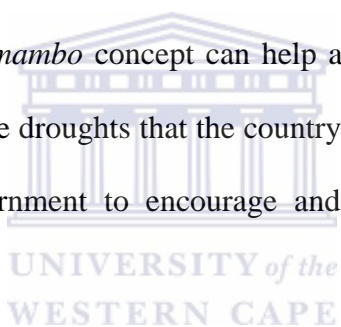


In addition, for sustainable land reform to be attained, agricultural activities also need to be carefully selected and implemented. The district's food security can be improved by promoting the cultivation of small grains and cotton, which are drought resistant. Currently, the Venda, Shangan and Pfumbi ethnic groups largely grow small grains like sorghum, millet and rapoko. The autochthons in Mwenezi have traditionally relied on drought resistant small grains. On the other hand, Shona immigrants from Chivi, Gutu and other districts tend to focus on maize and cotton.

The production of vegetables and the management of drought resistant small livestock like goats should also be encouraged. Donkeys are an important source of draught power

for households which do not own cattle. In addition, the donor community, AREX and government can help farmers appreciate the importance of small grains. Communities can be advised on good post-harvest crop management in order to reduce losses.

Rural communities can be encouraged to construct food grain banks through the '*zunde ramambo*' concept. This is a traditional system whereby chiefs set aside land that is cultivated communally. The produce is stored in granaries at the chief's homestead. The grain or food is reserved for use in times of severe drought and famine. The food is also used to assist society's most vulnerable, particularly orphans, widows, the terminally ill and the aged. The *zunde ramambo* concept can help augment food relief efforts by the donor community. The severe droughts that the country has been experiencing in the past six years necessitated government to encourage and popularise the *zunde ramambo* concept.



However, the *zunde ramambo* concept is controversial and has power relations problems as it entrenches power in the chiefs and the ruling elite, thereby compromising equity. In addition, the *zunde ramambo* concept, arguably, can defer government responsibility in the event of crop failure due to the shortage of inputs and lack of investment in farming.

The thesis also noted that the consultation and implementation of development projects should be based on local level solutions. They should capture the aspirations of the various sectors of society and be derived from community initiatives (cf Leach, Mearns and Scoones 1999). There is need for a human centred development that focuses on the

empowerment of local communities and the utilisation of local resources and local knowledge systems.

The FTLRP can help develop the potential of the new farmers to produce sustainably. Although the land reform was chaotic, it can be reformed. Consequently, there is need to review and reform the country's agricultural policy to empower the new farmers and make them self-sufficient and enable them to farm sustainably. The new farmers need to cut the dependence syndrome and in the long run rely on local resources and local knowledge systems. This can be possible if incentives are made available to the farmers.

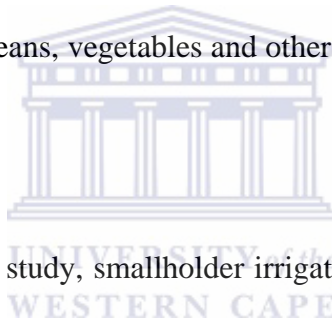
#### Land Reform and Smallholder Irrigation Schemes

Additionally, the study has pointed out that dry land or rain fed agriculture plays a significant role in the livelihoods of rural communities in Mwenzi. This is despite the district's adverse agro-ecological conditions (cf Wolmer 2001). However, dry land cultivation, especially of the staple maize, alone is not sustainable in the absence of irrigation and other livelihood options. In lie of this, the study recommends good water management. Irrigation water is important in coping with drought. Consequently, Manzungu and Machiridza (2005:1) assert that:

A discussion of access to land alone, without extending it to water, in a semi-arid environment does not bode well for an informed analysis of the agrarian question in general or an understanding of how sustainable smallholder agricultural production can be structured (also see Cleaver 1995).

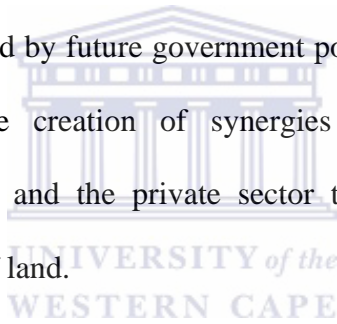


It can, therefore, be argued that land redistribution alone, without investment in water harvesting and access to irrigation water, can not eradicate rural poverty in dry districts like Mwenezi (see Woodhouse, Bernstein and Hulme 2000). In fact, if fully utilised, water from the Manyuchi Dam can help turn Mwenezi into a major agricultural producer in Zimbabwe. However, at Mangondi, resettlement has not improved farmers' access to water. In fact, water shortage is a source of conflict between some A1 and A2 farmers. No irrigation is taking place at Mangondi. The Triangle owned Mwenezana Sugar Estate remains the major user of the water from the Manyuchi dam. New farmers at Mangondi need to be helped and encouraged to venture into sugar cane production as out-growers. They can also grow maize, beans, vegetables and other crops under smallholder irrigation schemes.



Given the evidence from the study, smallholder irrigation schemes would go a long way in widening the livelihood portfolios of communities around the Manyuchi Dam and along the Mwenezi River, whose irrigation potential is being underutilised. Although irrigation has improved the food supplies of households, who are under the Dinhe Irrigation Scheme, agrarian reforms have largely failed to improve rural farmers' access to irrigation water. The thesis also noted the government's concern for the need to resuscitate smallholder irrigation projects across the country as a way of coping with incessant droughts. However, there is need for political will on the part of the local and national leadership to transform these proposals into objective reality.

Overall, it can be concluded that the FTLRP has not been sustainable thus far. It has not fully addressed the development aspirations of the youth, women, ensured equity and protected the natural environment. In addition, the FTLRP has not benefited the poor and landless, but the political elite and supporters of the ruling ZANU (PF) party. In this regard, the thesis findings fit well into the analyses raised in the literature reviewed in the preceding chapters. Nevertheless, the FTLRP has presented new opportunities, challenges and livelihoods options for communities in resettlement areas. Despite all its weaknesses, Zimbabwe's FTLRP needs not to be viewed as an end but a process that can help ensure food security for rural households. However, the configurations of the land reform are likely to be shaped by future government policies with regard to tenure, post-settlement support and the creation of synergies between farmers, government, international donors, NGOs and the private sector to ensure its viability and being accessible to those in need of land.



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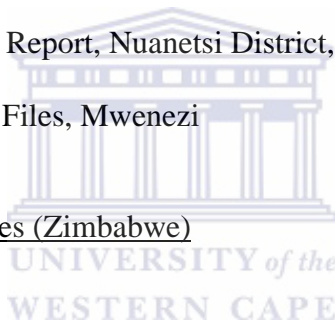
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