



MIDLANDS STATE UNIVERSITY

**STATE-COMMERCIAL FARMERS' RELATIONS IN POST-COLONIAL
ZIMBABWE: FROM WILLING-SELLER-WILLING-BUYER DISPENSATION TO
THE NEW DISPENSATION (1980-2018)**

BY

TAWANDA WILLIAM CHIBANDA

(R0432617)

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN DEVELOPMENT STUDIES AT THE,
MIDLANDS STATE UNIVERSITY**

**SUPERVISOR: DR. T.M. MASHINGAIDZE
CO-SUPERVISOR: PROF. S.J. NDLOVU-GATSHENI
NOVEMBER 2020**

DECLARATION

I, TAWANDA WILLIAM CHIBANDA, declare that this thesis entitled, **State-Commercial Farmers' Relations in Post-Colonial Zimbabwe: From Willing-Seller-Willing-Buyer Dispensation to the New Dispensation (1980-2018)** is my own original work and that all the sources contained in this thesis have been accurately reported and acknowledged, and that this document has not previously, either in its entirety or in part, been submitted for the purposes of obtaining an academic qualification or examination at any other university or institution.

T.W. CHIBANDA

R0432617

DEDICATION

To the late Pamisani Kadakure, thank you for being a role model and rest in peace elder. To farming unions, your voices on the land question remain critical.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to all the people who made this study a success.

I give glory to the Lord for granting me the strength and wisdom to accomplish this study.

I am greatly indebted to my supervisors, Dr T M Mashingaidze for his thoroughness and robust analysis of every part of the study and Professor S Ndlovu-Gatsheni for his guidance and analysis.

My sincere gratitude goes to colleagues in the Midlands State University's Department of Development Studies and Faculty of Arts members for their support. I wish to appreciate colleagues outside the Faculty of Arts for their support and guidance. To the Midlands State University Research and Post-graduate Studies Office, thank you for the support structures and availing the opportunity to carry out this study.

I also appreciate the participation of the farming unions, their leadership and members for their views that were critical to the study.

Political and civil society members were also instrumental in providing interesting and important views to the study; for that I am eternally grateful.

My appreciation also goes to all my family members for their support and constant encouragement. Special appreciation goes to my sister Nyarai Chibanda for her unwavering support and my mother for believing in me. To my wife Mazvita, I appreciate your prayers and for being there in every step of the way. My son Keane, for the love and smiles you always show, I will cherish you forever.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

BIPPA	Bilateral Investment Promotion and Protection Agreements
CFU	Commercial Farmers Union
EPZ	Export Processing Zone
ESAP	Economic Structural Adjustment Programme
ICFU	Indigenous Commercial Farmers Union
JAG	Justice for Agriculture
GMB	Grain Marketing Board
JPAC	Joint Presidents Agricultural Committee
LHA	Lancaster House Agreement
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
MFA	Matabeleland Farmers Association
NCA	National Constitutional Assembly
NFAZ	National Farmers Association of Zimbabwe
RAU	Rhodesian Agricultural Union
RFLA	Rhodesian Farmers and Landowners Association
RNFU	Rhodesian National Farmers Union
SACFA	Southern African Commercial Farmers Association
UDI	Unilateral Declaration of Independence
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe African National Union- Patriotic Front
ZFU	Zimbabwe Farmers Union
ZJRI	Zimbabwe Joint Resettlement Initiative
ZNFU	Zimbabwe National Farmers Union
ZTA	Zimbabwe Tobacco Association

Table of Contents

DECLARATION	i
DEDICATION	ii
LIST OF ACRONYMS	iv
Introduction	1
Historical Background	7
Theoretical Framework	21
Corporatism and the Commercial Farmers Union.....	21
African Farmers and the state: A De-colonial Framework.....	26
Relevance of Coloniality to state-commercial farmers' relations in post-colonial Zimbabwe.....	29
Why Decoloniality?	31
Conceptual Framework	37
Statement of the Problem	43
Objectives	45
Research Questions	46
Significance of the Study	47
Methodology and Sources	49
Data Gathering Instruments	50
Target Population	53
Literature Review	55
CHAPTER 1	75
STATE-COMMERCIAL FARMERS' RELATIONS FROM (1980-1992)	75
The Lancaster House Agreement and the land question	75
Farming groups that existed at independence	81
The Commercial Farmers Union and the State (1980-1992)	85
Dennis Norman's Influence	86
Unity Attempts	89
Close ties between white farming leadership and government officials	92
Matabeleland disturbances and CFU Apoliticism	97
Beginning of Friction	100
New appointments in the Agricultural Ministry and isolation of the CFU	111
Conclusion	113
CHAPTER 2	115

GROWING TENSIONS BETWEEN THE STATE AND THE COMMERCIAL FARMERS UNION (1992-2001)	115
.....	
The Land Acquisition Act	118
The Politics of Land Acquisition	125
White farmers abandoning Apoliticism.....	139
Conclusion	145
CHAPTER 3.....	146
THE <i>THIRD CHIMURENGA</i> AND ITS EFFECT ON RELATIONS BETWEEN THE STATE AND COMMERCIAL FARMERS' ORGANISATIONS	146
War Veterans, farm invasions and anti-white rhetoric	148
Racialisation of land and the breakdown white farmer resistance to land reform	157
Sanctions and the blame game	160
Reaction of the Black farming community to <i>Third Chimurenga</i>	163
Response by White Farmers to the <i>Third Chimurenga</i>	168
The emergence of Justice for Agriculture	178
Conclusion	188
CHAPTER 4.....	190
BLACK FARMERS, THE STATE AND THE RISE OF BLACK ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT DISCOURSES	190
.....	
The Indigenous Commercial Farmers Union	191
The 'Favoured Union,' Zimbabwe Farmers Union.....	199
ZNFU versus NFAZ in the merger	211
Black Economic Empowerment	223
Conclusion	231
CHAPTER 5.....	232
THE STATE AND NEW FARMER SUPPORT SCHEMES:.....	232
A CASE OF BLACK EMPOWERMENT?	232
Command Agriculture	251
Conclusion	266
CHAPTER 6.....	267
THE POLITICS AND ESSENCE OF WHITE FARMER COMPENSATION	267
Unpacking Compensation.....	272
Legal interpretation of Compensation.....	274
Who is to be compensated and how?	277

White farmers reaction to compensation	284
Black farmers' reaction to compensation.....	292
Statutory Instrument 62 of 2020 and the Compensation Debate	308
Regional Developments on Compensation.....	312
Way Forward on the Compensation issue for Zimbabwe	315
Conclusion	318
Conclusion of the Study.....	319
REFERENCES	322
CHRONICLE OF EVENTS.....	338

ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to interrogate state-farmer relations in independent Zimbabwe. It specifically unpacks how farmer unions negotiated and bargained with the post-colonial government for better access to market, finance, extension services and favourable land ownership regimes. It is a qualitative study which draws data from document analysis and oral interviews. The specific focus of this study is to analyse relations between the state and commercial farmers from the willing-seller-willing-buyer dispensation to the new dispensation. The study mainly focuses on commercial farmers' lobbying and advocacy and the various strategies they developed in engaging the government to enhance commercial farming endeavours in Zimbabwe. By focusing on the relations between the state and commercial farmers organisations the study seeks to shift the angle of analysis from the conventional narratives on agriculture in Zimbabwe that largely focus on land distribution politics. The central argument presented is that state-commercial farmers' relations witnessed revisions and changes as a result of the emotive politics of land distribution. In terms of the aims, the study interrogates how the Commercial Farmers Union interacted with the state, it also examines the fragmentation of the Commercial Farmers Union leading to the birth of splinter unions such as Justice for Agriculture. The study analyses how reactionary entities such as JAG worked with the state. The study also examines the relationship between the state and black commercial farmers unions such as the Indigenous Commercial Farmers Union and the Zimbabwe Farmers Union. The study unpacks how the state has supported black farmers. The study deploys the theory of corporatism in explaining the relationship between the state and white farmers operating under the Commercial Farmers Union ambit. De-coloniality is used in analysing the relationship between the state and black farmer organisations such as Zimbabwe Farmers Union and Indigenous Commercial Farmers Union. In terms of contribution to knowledge, the study adds black farmer unions to the matrix of state-farmer relations given that previous works largely focused on analysing relations between the state and the white dominated CFU. The study also interrogates the current dispensation of white farmer compensation and analyses how it impacts on state-farmer relations. Finally, the thesis makes a strong case that the unresolved land question is central in understanding state-commercial farmers' relations in post-colonial Zimbabwe.

Key words: State; Commercial Farmers; Relations; Willing-Seller-Willing-Buyer; Third Chimurenga; Corporatism; De-coloniality

Introduction

This study interrogates state-commercial farmers' relations in post-colonial Zimbabwe. It specifically unpacks how farmer unions negotiated and bargained with the post-colonial government for better access to market, finance, extension services and favourable land ownership regimes. The study mainly focuses on commercial farmers' lobbying and advocacy organisations and the various strategies they developed in engaging the government to enhance commercial farming endeavours in Zimbabwe. By focusing on relations between the state and commercial farmers' organisations the study shifts the angle of analysis from the conventional narratives on agriculture in Zimbabwe, which narrowly focus on land distribution politics. Some of the conventional narratives include that of Palmer who focused on land and racial domination.¹ Scholars such as Moyo, Marongwe and Alexander have also given more attention to land distribution politics.²

The study explores the formation, mutations and activities of farmer unions such as the Commercial Farmers' Union, Justice for Agriculture, the Indigenous Commercial Farmers Union and the Zimbabwe Farmers Union. The question of how these entities related to each other in advancing their collective interests is also unpacked. Analysis of the relationship between the state and the farmers' unions took into consideration the political and economic events unfolding in Zimbabwe and the effect of these events on the relationship between the state and farmers organisations'. The relations between the state and the farming community underwent numerous revisions and changes. According to Palmer, the relationship witnessed closer ties in the 1980s, largely because key government officials

¹ R. Palmer, *Land and Racial Domination in Rhodesia*, Heineman, London, 1977.

² S. Moyo, "The Land Occupation Movement and Democratisation in Zimbabwe: Contradictions of Neoliberalism", *Millennium International Studies*, Vol 30, 2, 2001, pp.311-330, also N. Marongwe, 'Farm Occupations and Occupiers in the New Politics of Land in Zimbabwe' in A Hammar et al. *Zimbabwe's Unfinished Business: Rethinking Land, State and Nation in the Context of Crisis*, Weaver Press, Harare, 2003 and J Alexander *The Unsettled land: State Making and the Politics of Land in Zimbabwe 1893-2003*, Harare, Weaver Press, 2006.

and the leadership of the farming unions particularly the Commercial Farmers Union opted for dialogue and stronger ties.³

The main argument advanced by this study is that state-commercial farmers' relations underwent numerous revisions and changes, and this was as a result of the emotive politics of land distribution. Farmer organisations, like any civil society organisations, strive to ensure that they have cordial relations with the state that enable them to bargain and protect their interests when it comes to land matters. It becomes problematic for these organisations if political leaders in power would label them as hostile; the repercussions are that those governing would use the land to dismantle and even mute the voices of farmer groups that are perceived to be a threat to the status quo.

By focusing on state-commercial farmers' relations, this study opens new pathways to Zimbabwe's land and agrarian studies scholarship. Interest groups such as farmers' organisations have often been neglected on matters of land, land policy and agricultural production. According to Cooper, farmers' organisations, in some cases, have been treated as synonymous with exclusive white clubs or white elite groupings, hence researching on such groups will offer valuable insights into how the new black governments interacted with such groups.⁴

Central to the politics of land re-distribution is how the land question has been politicised and even racialised. At independence, Zimbabwe inherited a bifurcated land tenure system based on race. This meant that most of the arable land was controlled by about 6 000 white commercial farmers who accounted for close to 90% of all agricultural production, a third of the country's salaries and exported 40% of the country's goods. The

³ R. Palmer, "Land Reform in Zimbabwe 1980-1990", *African Affairs*, Vol 89, 355, 1990, pp.163-181.

⁴ F. Cooper, "Possibility and Constraint: African Independence in Historical Perspective", *African History*, Vol 49, 2, 2008, pp.167-196.

racially driven tenure system divided land into commercial farms, largely white owned and communal areas dominated by blacks. The government at independence had two objectives in relation to land; that was to correct the historical and racial imbalance in land ownership and to alleviate the overcrowding in the communal areas.⁵

The land reform objective at independence was also guided by the Lancaster House political settlement that resulted in a negotiated constitution. Notably, the land issue was to be dealt with through the willing-seller-willing-buyer sunset clauses which helped to protect the property rights of white commercial farmers. The political settlement focused more on defusing the land issue rather than resolving it. Relations between the state and white commercial farmers during this time were cordial since white farmers' interests with respect to land remained secure. The expiry of the sunset clauses in the 1990s witnessed the pursuit of a radical approach to land acquisition, creating friction between the state and white commercial farmers. From 2000 the unresolved land question became increasingly politicised resulting in state-sanctioned invasions of white farms leading to further deterioration of relations between the state and white farmer organisations.

It also becomes imperative to explore how commercial farming interest groups broadly engaged the government to boost agricultural production. Furthermore, the study analysed the divergences and tensions within and among the commercial farming interest groups such as the white dominated Commercial Farmers Union (CFU), the splinter union Justice for Agriculture (JAG), the black led Indigenous Commercial Farmers Union (ICFU) and Zimbabwe Farmers Union (ZFU) over modes of engaging the government and issues of advocacy. Thus, the study reveals that the commercial farmers' organisations were

⁵ S. Moyo, "The Political Economy of Land Acquisition and Redistribution in Zimbabwe", 1990-1999, *Southern African Studies*, Vol 26, 1, 2000, pp. 5-28.

heterogeneous and dynamic entities whose agendas and advocacy positions were also shaped by race, personalities of their leaders and prevailing national political and economic orientations.

In the 1980s, the government had a functional and patronising relationship with the Commercial Farmers' Union because it acceded to most of the demands from the white commercial farmers and also it did not reconfigure the racially skewed land allocation regime. However, by 2000 the government had assumed a radically different position of supporting black led agriculture, especially through increased ownership of land. That dispensation became known as the *Third Chimurenga* where white dominated commercial farming was no longer a priority for the government. White led farmers' unions were now peripheral in the calculus of state-commercial farmer relations.

Bratton postulates that the white farming community were convinced that they could differentiate their land and politics and ensure that this position could work in their interest. This withdrawal characterised the response of the white farming community to politics.⁶ The white farming community simply believed in farming and making money, and stayed away from politics. The belief was that this was the only way through which they could survive. However, such a cosy relationship changed and was later on characterised by antagonism. This, according to Pilosof, was because antagonistic characters had replaced competent managers of dialogue. Such competent characters included Bobby Rutherford, the CFU president from 1986 to 1988 and his successor John Brown. These two had closer ties with the government. On the government side, the appointment of Dennis Norman, a former

⁶ M. Bratton, "The Comrades and the Countryside: The Politics of Agricultural Policy in Zimbabwe", *World Politics*, Vol 39, 2, 1987, pp. 174-202.

president of the CFU, as the Minister of Agriculture was also key in building closer ties between the state and farmers' unions.⁷

According to Bratton, the appointment of CFU presidents such as Alan Burl from 1992 to 1994 marked the genesis of tensions with the state since he was well known to be very rude and undiplomatic. On the government side, the coming in of Witness Mangwende as the Minister of Agriculture in 1992 further complicated matters. Bratton adds that, he was new to the ministry and did not have any relationship with the white farming community. To further complicate issues, he also focused his attention on the merger of all farming groups under the Zimbabwe Farmers Union so as to strengthen indigenous farmers' groups and weaken the influence of the Commercial Farmers' Union. He had also been brought in to push for radical farm acquisitions coinciding with the end of the sun-set clauses set by the Lancaster House Constitution.⁸

The sunset clauses in the negotiated Lancaster House constitution dealt with the land question in the new Zimbabwe. The focus of these sun-set clauses was that land could be acquired on a willing-seller-willing-buyer basis. This meant that the government could only acquire land from white farmers that were willing to sell, and the government could not put in place a radical land reform process. The period covered by these clauses was going to be ten years and it allowed white farmers to continue with farming without being disturbed. However, over the decade the ZANU (PF) government became increasingly less secure as a result of the failing economy and the emergence of a strong opposition. Attention was now shifted towards the land question.

⁷ R. Pilosof, "Remaining Apolitical in a Political Crisis: Exploring Interest Group Politics", *Developing Societies*, Vol 26, 1, 2010, pp. 71-97.

⁸ M. Bratton, "Micro-Democracy? The Merger of Farmer Unions in Zimbabwe", *African Studies Review*, Vol 37, 1, 1994, pp. 9-37.

In 2000 with the strong determination to acquire land, the government went on to support the farm invasions, which in an attempt to foreground the *Chimurenga* continuum narrative, was interpreted as the *Third Chimurenga*. This meant that white farmers would be removed from their land and in most cases by force. The farm invasions resulted in angry confrontations over land. As a result of the invasions, white farmers were no-longer central in the calculus of land distribution politics and agricultural policy. To black farmers, the invasions represented a symbolic attainment of what the liberation struggle sought to attain which was land. Black farmers would also benefit from inheriting farm improvements and also land left out by white farmers, it also meant that they could now influence land matters.

According to Hussein, farmers' unions are defined as a collective of agricultural producers that formulate dynamic organisations that ensure free membership and pursue specific common interests of their members. Farmer organisations also develop technical and economic activities that benefit their members and also sought to maintain relations with partners operating in their economic and institutional environment.⁹ The Future Agriculture policy brief postulates that in Africa, farmer organisations do share elements of traditional and formal organisations. Farmer organisations also have got roots in local contexts and customs even though most of them are organised around economic principles.¹⁰ Farmer organisations are crucial in well functioning agricultural systems. They are important in handling price negotiations for produce coming from their members and also help in knowledge transmission on best practices for farming. Membership to a farming organisation

⁹ K. Hussein, "Producer Organisations and Agricultural Technology in West Africa: Institutions that give farmers voice", *Development*, Vol 44, 1, 2001, pp.61-66.

¹⁰ The Future Agriculture Policy Brief of 2005, "Understanding African Farmers' Organisations", accessed at www.future-agricultures.org on 26 June 2015.

helps farmers to acquire new ideas and technical knowledge for responding to challenges associated with ecological areas and natural resources.¹¹

An important characteristic of traditional groupings is the issue of inclusion. It ascribes to the fact that, everyone is a member. However with formal farmers' organisations, such as co-operatives, unions, associations and federations there is an element of exclusivity. This is because they are membership-based organisations formed by a specific group of farmers to ensure services and to articulate the interests of their own members. Further, they can be locally based and as a result they will concentrate on village and inter-village levels or can function at national and regional levels as unions and federations and others can operate at the global level.¹² Strong and vibrant farmers' organisations that legitimately represent their members can play a role in influencing agricultural policy and practice.

Historical Background

The Commercial Farmers Union (CFU) history can be traced as far back as 1890. During this time, the Rhodesian Landowners and Farmers Association (RLFA) was established with the main goal of organising settler agriculture. Hodder-Williams regarded the early settler farmers and landowners as more of land speculators rather than real farmers. This was because they were largely involved in selling land for profit rather than commercial farming.¹³ The Rhodesian Agricultural Union was formed in 1903 and it was based in Mashonaland Province. Its formation was also regarded as an opportunity to structure and organise colonial agriculture. In 1903 the inaugural edition of the Rhodesian Agricultural

¹¹ C. Mutami, "Small-holder Agricultural Production in Zimbabwe A Survey," *Sustainable Development*, Vol 14, 2, 2015, pp.140-157.

¹² M. Bratton, "Micro-Democracy? The Merger of Farmer Unions in Zimbabwe", *African Studies Review*, Vol 37, 1, 1994, pp. 9-37.

¹³ R. Hodder- Williams, *White Farmers in Rhodesia 1980-1965, A History of the Marandellas District*, London, Macmillan, 1983.

Journal was launched. In 1905 the Matabeleland Farmers Association was formed to advance the interests of farmers in that region who were mostly involved in ranching.¹⁴

In the 1920s there was a huge growth in the large-scale commercial agriculture sector, which resulted in the emergence of two large bodies to co-ordinate farming activities. These bodies were the Rhodesian Agricultural Union based in Mashonaland and the Matabeleland Farmers Association from the Matabeleland region. In 1942 it was clear to the farmers that there was a strong need to have a single body which would advance the needs of commercial agriculture and this led to the union of the two bodies resulting in the creation of the Rhodesian National Farmers Union (RNFU). The Rhodesian Tobacco Association was also incorporated as a commodity branch. At independence in 1980, the Rhodesian National Farmers Union changed its name to the Commercial Farmers Union.¹⁵

In terms of the representation, the Commercial Farmers Union was the key representative body for commercial farmers. According to Bratton and McKenzie, the organisation regarded itself as a representative body which advanced the interests of professional farmers in Zimbabwe. Its membership was determined by intensive and large scale agricultural production. Its vision and aim was the promotion of a stable and competitive agricultural business environment and providing advice. It also supported farmers with technical and extension services, inputs, marketing aspects, business management, labour relations, advice with land and dealing with issues of compensation.¹⁶

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ History of CFU accessed at www.cfuzim.com on 20 November 2015.

¹⁶ M. Bratton, "The Comrades and the Countryside: The Politics of Agricultural Policy in Zimbabwe", *World Politics*, Vol 39, 2, 1987, pp. 174-202. McKenzie, in his thesis, describes the CFU as an organisation standing for the interests of large scale commercial farmers with the mandate to also look into technical and marketing issues and advice on land. J. McKenzie, "Commercial Farmers in the Governmental System of Colonial Zimbabwe, 1963- 1980", PhD Thesis, University of Zimbabwe, 1989.

The CFU is governed by an elected council which comprises a president and vice president, eight regional branch chairpersons (representing 73 local farmer associations) and the chairpersons of eight commodity associations. By virtue of compulsory union membership under the law, the union is able to charge a levy on the produce of its members. The CFU also has investments in agribusiness enterprises and this has made the union financially self-sufficient. Administratively and technically, the CFU resembles a first-world institution. Supported by a permanent salaried staff of 120 persons, it provides an array of research, analytic, advisory and advocacy services to members.¹⁷

The relationship between the white commercial farmers represented by the CFU and the state underwent numerous changes and revisions. The coming into power of a new black government in 1980 inspired fear in commercial farmers who were mostly white. According to Miller and Hill, there was real fear within the farming community that ZANU-PF success would lead to the complete destruction of white commercial agriculture.¹⁸ Hill adds that,

In every white Rhodesian farmers' mind is fear, fear on the economic trajectory in a new Zimbabwe, there was also fear of losing property and even jobs, fear of being humiliated and even be outnumbered, fear of a resurgence in violence and the strong will to frustrate white farmers.¹⁹

According to Pilosof and Selby, the Commercial Farmers' Union regarded itself as an apolitical organisation. This approach became more pronounced after independence, which led to disengagement from politics by commercial white farmers. They believed they could separate their land and politics and make such a stance work to serve their needs.²⁰

¹⁷ M. Bratton, "Micro-Democracy? The Merger of Farmers Unions in Zimbabwe", *African Studies Review*, Vol 37, 1994, pp. 9-37.

¹⁸ B. Miller, "Vuka Viewpoint," *The Farmer*, March 28, p.3,1980 and D.Hills, *The Last Days of White Rhodesia*, Chatto and Windus, London, 1981, pg. 181.

¹⁹ D. Hills, 'The Last Days of White Rhodesia.'

²⁰ R. Pilosof, "Remaining Apolitical in a Political Crisis: Exploring Interest Group Politics", *Developing Societies*, Vol 26,1,2010,pp. 71-97, Selby concurs with Pilosof on CFU apoliticism describing it as a tactic not to antagonise those in power in order to safeguard the white farmer interests' on land. See A. Selby, "Commercial Farmers and the State: Interest Group Politics and land Reform in Zimbabwe," PhD Thesis, Oxford, 2006.

Makumbe highlights that, “white commercial farmers said in 1980 we will not participate in politics; we will farm and make money”.²¹ This was also an admission that they were going to stick to issues that affected them and also that they were going to support the ruling government in order to survive.

Immediately after independence the new government reacted swiftly to calm the fears of the farming community. Hill and Selby show that the then new Prime Minister Robert Mugabe made his intentions clear through a declaration, which signified reconciliation and an attempt to calm the fears of white farmers.²² This message resonated well with the farming community, in particular the commercial farmers. The Prime Minister was also invited to the CFU congress in 1981 and his address helped to ease the white farmers’ fears:

Who doubts that our lives and the lives of seven and half-million people lie in your hands? I therefore believe that you, the farmers, hold the future of our nation in your hands. I close this speech with the assurance that government will do all in its power to assist you in the task of building a great Zimbabwe.²³

In a bid to calm commercial farmers’ fears, the state made significant steps which included the appointment of Dennis Norman, a white commercial farmer and leader of the Commercial Farmers Union, as Minister of Agriculture.²⁴

According to Palmer, Pilosof and Selby, people like Denis Norman, John Lourie and Dr Robbie Mupawose facilitated communication between the government and the CFU thereby ensuring that there was dialogue. In some instances, the CFU leadership openly

²¹ J. Makumbe and P. Aldern, “The Zimbabwe Constitution: Race, Land Reform and Social Justice” in H. Cornwell and E. Stoddard (eds.) *Global Multiculturalism*, Rowman and Littlefield, 2001, pg. 215.

²² D. Hills, “The Last Days of White Rhodesia”. Selby describes the speech by the then Prime Minister Mugabe on reconciliation as important in calming the fears of white farmers especially the prospect of losing land as a result of the new black government fulfilling its war of liberation promise of re-distributing land. See A. Selby, ‘Commercial Farmers and the State: Interest Group Politics and Land Reform in Zimbabwe’.

²³ “We Need You, Says Mugabe”, *The Farmer*, 11 August, 1980 p.18.

²⁴ A. Selby, ‘Commercial Farmers and the State: Interest Group Politics and Land Reform in Zimbabwe’.

declared their allegiance to the then Prime Minister Mugabe and ZANU PF.²⁵ Selby notes that Bobby Rutherford, the CFU president from 1986 to 1988, was nicknamed “a card-carrying political harlot who spent more time with government officials rather than his members”. John Brown, who succeeded Rutherford, was quoted as saying that “the ZANU PF government was the ideal government for commercial farmers and is the best that this country has ever seen”.²⁶ This shows how the leadership of the Commercial Farmers Union decided to closely align with those in power.

The political disturbances in Matabeleland in the 1980s became a litmus test on the relationship between the CFU and the state. The reconciliation gestures offered to white farmers under the CFU by the then Prime Minister Mugabe, was not offered to the people of Matabeleland. This was the base of Joshua Nkomo, then a rival of Prime Minister Mugabe and a leader of the Zimbabwe African People’s Union (ZAPU). Tensions between the two men and their political bases and parties continued after independence and there were several clashes between their armed forces.²⁷ As regional and political mistrust worsened, many parts of Matabeleland experienced unrest. In 1983, Prime Minister Mugabe deployed an armed unit known as the Fifth Brigade to crush the rebellion led by the dissidents. This wave of violence claimed an estimated 20 000 lives.²⁸

In spite of security concerns raised by farmers in the region, the CFU journal, *The Farmer*, did not mention mass violence perpetrated by the Fifth Brigade; rather it lauded

²⁵ R. Palmer, “Land Reform in Zimbabwe, 1980-1990”, *African Affairs*, Vol 89, 1990, 355, pp.163-181, Pilosof emphasises the importance of smooth communication patterns between those in government and leaders of the CFU. R. Pilosof, “Remaining Apolitical in a Political Crisis Exploring Interest Group Politics”, *Developing Societies*, Vol 26,1, 2010, pp. 71-97. Selby illustrates that leaders of the CFU such as Denis Norman and John Laurie had close ties with those in government and government officials such as Dr Robbie Mupawose were widely respected by the white farming community. See A. Selby, ‘Commercial Farmers and the State : Interest Group Politics and Land Reform in Zimbabwe.’

²⁶ A. Selby, ‘Commercial Farmers and the State: Interest Group Politics and Land Reform in Zimbabwe.’

²⁷ J. Muzondidya, ‘From Buoyancy to Crisis 1980-1997,’ in *Becoming Zimbabwe* edited by B. Raftopolous and A. Mlambo, Harare , Weaver, 2009, p.169.

²⁸ I. Phimister, “The Making and Meaning of the Massacres in Matabeleland”, *Development Dialogue*, Vol 50, 2, 2008, pp.199-218.

security forces for eradicating the threat of ‘dissidents’ in the area, even as the actions of the Fifth Brigade and escalating violence decimated the white community in the Midlands and Matabeleland provinces.²⁹ Pilosof, points out that at least fifty white farmers and their families were killed by dissidents. In May 1982, Brian Dawe, a farmer in Chinhoyi, was gunned down by three AK waving ‘dissidents’.³⁰ Pilosof adds that *The Farmer* was subject to censorship by the CFU and portrayed the government as firmly in control despite security concerns by farmers in the region. In *The Farmer*, Mugabe’s reaction to the dissidents’ activities was covered and he was quoted as follows: “I can assure you the ‘dissidents’ cannot escape the hand of justice. In due course we are going to rid this region of these elements which are committed to banditry”.³¹

Censorship of *The Farmer* magazine was influenced by who was at the leadership helm during that period. The CFU presidents such as Laurie, Rutherford and Brown had established close relations with ZANU PF officials and would not want to jeopardise such ties. The CFU and *The Farmer* remained their silent in order to be viewed as ‘apolitical’. This would also mean that the CFU would muzzle *The Farmer* and force it to respect and follow the CFU and party line.³²

With the violence in Matabeleland and Midlands over and their relationship with the government intact, white farmers began to feel more secure about their position in Zimbabwe. The 1990s saw dramatic changes in the relationship between the CFU and the state. The smooth communication patterns suddenly disappeared as there were changes in government and also on the farmers’ side. Bratton and Selby point out that on the farmers’ side, the appointment of antagonistic leaders such as Alan Burl (1992-1994) who was known

²⁹ ‘Moral low’ *The Farmer*, 16 July, 1984, p. 7.

³⁰ R. Pilosof, “For Farmers, By Farmers , Using The Farmer to write the history of white farmers in Zimbabwe” 1980-2002, *Media History*, Vol 19,1, 2013, pp. 32-44.

³¹ Ibid.

³² R. Pilosof, ‘Remaining Apolitical in a Political Crisis: Exploring Interest Group Politics.’

to be very rude in character and lacking diplomatic skills, complicated negotiations with the government on issues of land.

On the government side, Witness Mangwende (1989-1992) was appointed as Minister of Lands, Agriculture and Rural Resettlement. This complicated matters as he was new to the ministry and did not have a relationship with the white farmers. He was known for his hard-line views and combative style. His appointment to the ministry would also ensure that an aggressive land reform process would be pursued in view of the expiry of sun-set clauses on land acquisition³³. Bratton further adds that the new Minister of Agriculture, in responding to a cabinet directive, immediately set in motion the process of amalgamation of farmer unions. This was also to coincide with an announcement by the government to acquire land for resettlement estimated to be six million hectares of commercial farmland under the National Land Policy of July 1990. The ministry apparently sought to strengthen its hand in an expected struggle over land reform with the CFU by consolidating African farmer opinion behind the government's position. The president's of the National Farmers Association of Zimbabwe (NFAZ) and the Zimbabwe National Farmers Union agreed to the minister's request to amalgamate all farmer unions in July 1990.³⁴

The National Farmers Association of Zimbabwe represented the majority of Zimbabwe's peasant cultivators who had user-rights between two to four hectares of fertile land and shared communal grazing. Born in 1980, the National Farmers Association of Zimbabwe originated in the Master Farmer movement in the former Victoria (now Masvingo) province in the 1950s. After independence, the NFAZ successfully increased its base which

³³ M.Bratton, 'Micro-Democracy? The Merger of Farmers Unions in Zimbabwe,' Selby also describes former minister Witness Mangwende 'as new to the agriculture ministry with no relationship to white farmers and the CFU and his tenure marked the beginning of the collapse of smooth communication patterns that had been developed. See A. Selby, 'Commercial Farmers and the State: Interest Group Politics and Land Reform in Zimbabwe.'

³⁴ M.Bratton, 'Micro-Democracy? The Merger of Farmers Unions in Zimbabwe'.

included uncertified and women farmers from rural areas countrywide. Membership peaked in 1988 with some 4000 clubs, 85 000 paid up members and an estimated 150 000 occasional adherents.³⁵

The Zimbabwe National Farmers Union (ZNFU), which started as the Bantu Farmers Union in the mid 1930s, was later renamed African Farmers Union in 1942 and ZNFU in 1980. It was formed to represent the special interests of smallholders who owned private farms in the then African Purchase Areas. These areas constitute what is now known as the small-scale commercial sector. The areas contain farms in the range of 20 to 200 hectares, averaging 80 hectares. Farmers in this sub-sector aspire to commercial production, use intermediate levels of agricultural technology and employ seasonal labour. At independence, the ZNFU membership stood at 9 500 and rose to 12 500 by 1991 with the addition of urban plot-holders.³⁶

Union congresses were hastily convened to ratify the unity call and to take steps to establish a Zimbabwe Farmers' Union (ZFU). In a joint congress on 19 August 1992 the former ZNFU president was elected as the new president of ZFU and three vice presidents were also elected, two of whom were formerly senior members of NFAZ.³⁷ The Commercial Farmers Union resisted efforts to join the merger insisting that the needs of large-scale and small holder agriculturalist were incompatible on issues of land tenure, production technology and business management.

The CFU also regarded itself as having strong democratic systems internally as seen by the fact that its president was bound by decisions of the CFU Council, while in smallholder unions, power was concentrated in the hands of the president of NFAZ and

³⁵ M. Bratton, "Farmer Organisations and Food Production in Zimbabwe", *World Development*, Vol 14, 3, 1986, pp. 367-384 and The Constitution of National Farmers' Association of Zimbabwe (NFAZ).

³⁶ M. Bratton, 'Micro-Democracy' and The Constitution of Zimbabwe National Farmers Union (ZNFU).

³⁷ Constitution of the Zimbabwe Farmers' Union, Clause 3.1

ZNFU. Smallholder leaders also resisted joining the CFU pointing out that without a strong organisation and qualified staff of their own, smallholders could be easily submerged in any amalgamation.³⁸

To reflect the fragmentation of farmer interests in Zimbabwe, a new Indigenous Commercial Farmers' Association was formed in August 1990 led by Paul Tangi Mukondo. It emerged from among black members of the CFU and ZNFU. As a loose organisation of emergent African farmers who purchased large-scale farms after independence, the ICFA's aim was to wrest special benefits from the government, especially for agricultural credit and quality farmland under the expanded land reform programme. Both the CFU and ZNFU made bids to include ICFA members in their ranks; the CFU stood to benefit politically by showing that it had African members in its ranks and the ZNFU president was aiming to expand his political base in his bid to lead a merged union. In response, the leaders of ICFA stated that they wanted to work within existing unions meaning that they would work with every farmers' union to achieve their interests. This move would help the organisation to remain independent and not be swallowed by existing unions. The move was also a strategy by the organisation to distance itself from the rivalry between CFU, ZNFU and NFAZ.³⁹

The disintegration of the Joint Presidential Agricultural Committee (JPAC) in 1991 over the issue of land reform further isolated the CFU. The Joint Presidential Agricultural Committee had been established in 1985 to facilitate the merger of all farming unions and it included the presidents of the CFU, ZNFU and NFAZ. It also acted as a platform through which the leaders of the farming unions exchanged ideas on farming and engaged the government on issues of agricultural policy. Despite the collapse of the merger talks, there

³⁸ *The Horizon*, "Farmers' unions merge in historic congress, but tribalism nearly wreck unity", 20 August, 1992, p. 8.

³⁹ M. Bratton, 'Micro-Democracy? The Merger of Farmer Unions in Zimbabwe' and The Constitution of Indigenous Farmers Association (ICFA).

was hope that the JPAC would continue to meet. However, in 1991, the CFU in 1991 broke ranks with the committee and issued its own land policy proposal calling for safeguards on land seizure and compensation. It went on to convene a meeting addressed by the minister, which revealed differences between white farmers and the government on issues of land. In this polarised atmosphere, the leaders of the three unions lost confidence in the JPAC which immediately stopped meeting. On one hand, the CFU was now alone with regards to issues of land policy and its lone voice could not deter an aggressive land reform approach by the government. The indigenous farmers on the other hand, had clear intentions to create a merger under the ZFU in line with the interests of the state.⁴⁰

The expiry of the sun-set clauses in the Lancaster House Constitution allowed the government to pursue compulsory acquisition. To kick start the process of land acquisition, the 1992 National Land Policy was unveiled and it had the following objectives: to promote equality and accessibility to land; to democratise land tenure systems and gurantee security of tenure for all land holdings; to ensure that there is participatory processes in the use and planning of land, and to promote sustainable and efficient use and management of land.⁴¹

Moyo, Nyawo and Barnard point out that land acquisition through the willing-seller-willing-buyer principle was seemingly very slow and white commercial farmers were either not prepared to sell or requested exorbitant prices. The white farmers determined the speed of the land reform process. The government became a reactive buyer, with the private sector on the fore-front of identifying land holding and thus influencing what was to be available for resettlement.⁴²

⁴⁰ Minutes of Joint Presidential Association Council Meeting of 17 February 1986, 19 February 1990 and in January 1991.

⁴¹ S. Moyo, *The Land Question in Zimbabwe*, Sapes, Harare, 1995, pp. 10.

⁴² S. Moyo, 'The Agrarian question,' in I Mandaza (ed) *Zimbabwe The Political Economy of Transition 1980-1986*, London, 1987, pp.165-202. Nyawo-Shava and Barnard argue that the white farmers during the willing-

In pushing the agenda for land acquisition, Parliament passed the Land Acquisition Act on 8 May 1992. The main objective of the legislation was to transfer authority over property rights from the courts to the executive arm of the state so as to speed up land transfers. The Act also showed the process for compulsory take-over of any rural land, encompassing the purposes for agricultural settlement. Furthermore, the Act empowered the responsible minister to designate rural land for future acquisition. Importantly, the Act provided for the creation of a compensation committee to determine compensation for land improvements. The Act also established that disputes over compensation were to be resolved by the Administrative Court.⁴³

The CFU realised that rapid land reform would threaten both white confidence and their livelihoods. In response, farms earmarked for resettlement would be available in very limited numbers. Some white farmers also took the government to court in order to secure their farms. In using this strategy, the CFU could contest any policies by the government that they felt infringed on their rights or threatened to undermine their privileged status, especially on land. As long as the cases were being entertained in the courts, the time it took to resolve the conflicts would be beneficial to the farmers in that they continued with farming, harvesting and profiting from the land.⁴⁴

The pressure from the IMF and World Bank on the Zimbabwean government to cut down its budget resulted in scaling down on resettlement. The move meant less pressure

buyer-willing-seller dispensation maintained an upper-hand with regards to land ownership and the hands of the new government were tied and could not speed the process of land re-distribution. See V. Z. Nyawo-Shava and S. L. Barnard, "The Trajectory of Land Reform in Zimbabwe: Post Independent era 1980-2000", *Contemporary History*, Vol 35, 1, 2010, pp.62-80.

⁴³ N. Kriger, *Zimbabwe's Guerilla War: Peasant Voices*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1992, p. 6.

⁴⁴ A. Selby, 'Commercial Farmers and the State: Interest Group Politics and Land Reform in Zimbabwe'.

from the government for white farmers to release land.⁴⁵ Realising the relentless determination by the state to acquire land, white farmers became politically active. In 1999 the Movement for Democratic Change entered into the political mainstream. The party became a real political challenge to the ruling ZANU (PF) party. The new party derived its base from the urban areas and among the middle class. White farmers quickly endorsed the MDC and hoped that once it gets into power it would reverse the radical land reform process. The open documentation by the international media of white farmers presenting Morgan Tsvangirai with cheques deeply angered the ruling party and placed white farmers in the same arena with opposition political parties.⁴⁶

Palmer and Raftopolous are of the opinion that, the year 2000 marked a huge turning point with regards to state-commercial farmer relations. The government attempt for a constitutional referendum seriously jeopardised the relationship between the state and CFU representing the white farmers. The government sponsored draft contained a clause that obliged Britain as the former colonial master to pay compensation for land taken by the government. The white farming community was highly concerned by the clause fearing that any delay by the British to pay compensation would be used by the state as the basis to refuse compensation to white farmers that would have been evicted. The referendum itself was associated with rhetoric, which attacked the white farming community. The core message delivered by these attacks was that citizens had to vote yes in order to send a clear message to the white settlers and take what is rightfully theirs, which was land.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ S. Moyo, "The Political Economy of Land Acquisition and Redistribution in Zimbabwe, 1990-1999", *Southern African Studies*, Vol 26, 1, 2000, pp. 5-28 and S. Moyo, "Economic Nationalism of Land Reform in Zimbabwe", *Southern African Political Economy Series*, Occasional Paper No 7.

⁴⁶ J. Makumbe and B. Raftopoulos, *NGOs, The State and Politics in Zimbabwe*, Harare, Sapes, 2000.

⁴⁷ R. Palmer, 'Mugabe's Land Grab in Regional Perspective,' in B. Bower, T.A.S and C. Stoneman (eds.) *Land Reform in Zimbabwe: Constraints and Prospects*, Ashgate, London, 2000. Raftopolous points out that white farmers had fears with the proposed draft constitution in 2000 and this pushed them to mobilise their workers for a NO vote. B. Raftopoulos, 'The State in Crisis: Authoritarian Nationalism, Selective Citizenship and

Raftopoulos and Meredith seem to agree on the fact that white farmers knew that on their own they could not alter referendum results, but instead mobilisation of farm workers would significantly impact on the referendum result. White farmers urged their workers to vote no, anticipating that the no vote would also send an embarrassing defeat to the government and would also ensure that their land interests would be protected. This kind of participation by white farmers has also been labelled as political reawakening.⁴⁸ Mugabe was shaken by the defeat. However, he came out in a conciliatory mood promising to respect the wishes of the people of Zimbabwe. The ZANU (PF) government heaped all the blame for the defeat in the referendum on white farmers and promised retaliation in volatile political language.⁴⁹

According to Marongwe and Pilosof, the loss in the referendum became the catalyst for farm invasions. These kinds of occupations were well co-ordinated and began to spread out. The farm invasions first started in Mashonaland East and also spread to Masvingo and then Manicaland. The invasions caught the CFU totally unprepared. During the invasions war veterans were on the forefront and also had the support of local communities and also farm workers.⁵⁰ The farm invasions had devastating effects on white farmers. Terrible experiences were also noted from former white farmers. In Shamva a white farmer known as Mark Butler

Distortions of Democracy in Zimbabwe,' in Hammar et al (eds), *Zimbabwe's Unfinished Business: Rethinking Land, State and Nation in the Context of Crisis*, Weaver Press, Harare, 2003.

⁴⁸ B. Raftopoulos, *Zimbabwe: Race and Nationalism in Post-Colonial State*, Sapes, Harare, 2003, Meredith discusses the conscious effort of commercial farmers to reject the 2000 draft constitution by mobilizing their farm workers, M. Meredith, *Mugabe: Power and Plunder and the Struggle for Zimbabwe*, London, Simon and Schuster, 2007.

⁴⁹ B. Raftopoulos, 'The State in Crisis: Authoritarian Nationalism, Selective Citizenship and Distortions of Democracy in Zimbabwe, in A. Hammar, B. Raftopoulos and S. Jensen (eds.) *Zimbabwe Unfinished Business: Rethinking Land, State and Nation in the Context of Crisis*, Harare, Weaver Press, 2003.

⁵⁰ N. Marongwe, 'Farm occupations and Occupiers in the New Politics of Land in Zimbabwe,' in Hammar et al (eds.), *Zimbabwe's Unfinished Business: Rethinking Land, State and Nation in the Context of Crisis*, Weaver Press, Harare, 2003. Pilosof argues that white farmers were also blamed by the state for mobilising the rejection of the draft constitution and as a result state sponsored farm invasions emerged targeting white farmers, R. Pilosof, "The Land Question Unresolved: An essay Review", *Historia*, Vol 53, 2, pp. 270-279.

had farm invaders staying at his front gate for eighteen months.⁵¹ The invasions also carried subtle messages, the livestock mutilations and crop burning became synonymous with war years. The invasions sought to break any white farmer resistance to the process. For black farmers, farm invasions symbolically achieved what the liberation struggle sought to attain, which was access to land for the black majority.

Divisions over how to engage with the government prompted an institutional breakaway of the evicted farmers who went on to form Justice for Agriculture (JAG) in June 2002. The main mandate of JAG is to secure justice, peace and freedom for the agricultural sector and to expose the illegal and unconstitutional nature of farm takeovers.⁵² JAG has also supported evicted white farmers that have taken the government to court. The Mike Campbell case of 2008 in which the SADC Tribunal ruled in favour of the evicted farmer has been used as reference point by JAG in its quest to confront the state on issues of compensation. However, the court ruling was immediately dismissed by the ruling party on the grounds that it was an interference on state sovereignty by a regional body.

Since assuming power in November 2017, President Mnangagwa's administration made some changes around land ownership, signalling a departure from the radical and anti-white position that characterised former President Mugabe's regime. The current administration has made commitment to follow the constitution which obliges the state to pay former white farmers compensation. Compensation will be for improvements made on the land before it was acquired. The constitution is also clear that no compensation shall be payable for agricultural land acquired for resettlement purposes. The finance minister Mthuli Ncube indicated that the government has made progress in compensating white farmers and the white farmers themselves have also managed to come up with a figure on what they want

⁵¹ 'Farmer Mark Butler experiences as farm invasions intensify', *The Farmer*, February, 2002.

⁵² *Daily Telegraph*, 'Breakaway Splits in Zimbabwe's White Farmers Union', 10 September 2003.

as compensation. The finance minister has indicated that evaluations of the improvements have been carried out across all provinces using white farmers' guidelines.⁵³

Theoretical Framework

This study is premised on two theories which help to explain state-commercial farmers' relations in post-colonial Zimbabwe. In interrogating white farmers and CFU's relations with the state I deploy the theory of corporatism and simultaneously use the prism of de-coloniality to unpack the complex relations between black farmers, their representation which include ICFU and the ZFU and the post-colonial government.

Corporatism and the Commercial Farmers Union

According to Edmund Phelps corporatism is a system in which economic activity is controlled by large interest groups.⁵⁴ Viser and Hemejerick show that corporatism involves, "the state devolving part of its most distinctive resource, legitimate coercion and the capacity to make and enforce binding agreements to organised groups it does not control."⁵⁵

Corporatism received ample attention in the 1970s and 1980s when it was believed that it was emerging as an alternative economic system. Corporatist scholars put forward the view that 'corporatism' is an institutional order in which interest groups come together under the guidance of the state to reach an agreement on policies for the management of the economy.⁵⁶ While corporatism in the 1990s focused on describing an alternative economic system, the emphasis shifted to the rules by which policies were made and the way interest

⁵³ *The Herald*, 'Government ready to Compensate White Farmers', 17 August, 2018

⁵⁴ E. Phelps, *Mass Flourish*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2013, pg.4.

⁵⁵ V. Jeller and A. Hemerijck, *A Dutch Miracle: Job Growth, Welfare Reform and Corporatism in the Netherlands*, Amsterdam University Press, 1997, pg.66.

⁵⁶ P. Schimtter, "Still the century of corporatism", *Review of Politics*, Vol 36, 2, 2000, pp. 85-131.

groups interacted with the state.⁵⁷ Focus is now on how the state delegates its authority to interest groups because of their strong influence in society.

Schmitter puts forward the view that the reason why the state would delegate its authority to interest groups or civil society is because the state would perceive these interest groups to be powerful and not possible to ignore them. The state becomes dependent on these groups for policy formulation and guidance on particular issues, which these interest groups have knowledge over.⁵⁸ This means organisations are brought closer to the state since they demonstrate that they are a powerful group and could make it hard for the state to govern without their participation in policy and decision-making.

In explaining a corporatist arrangement, Chirot illustrates that the state recognises one organisation, for example a farmers' organisation or labour union, as the legitimate representative of interests of individuals or organisations. The state identifies an organisation that will be regarded as the representative and crafts an unequal partnership with such an organisation. These associations or civil society groups become involved in the policy-making processes and can also help the state in crafting policy.⁵⁹

Echols adds that corporatism includes other aspects rather than just a working relationship between the state and interest groups. A robust interventionist state often assists to organise how it relates various sectoral organisations. The state bases its intervention on the pretext that the government is the guardian of the common good of a national interest that overtakes sectoral interests. The state does not attempt to dominate directly in a corporatist

⁵⁷ E. Gellner, *Conditions of Liberty, Civil Society and its Rivals*, Penguin Press, New York, 1994, pg 7.

⁵⁸ P. Schmitter and G. Lehmbruch, *Trends Toward Corporatist Intermediation*, London, Sage, 1979, pg 8.

⁵⁹ D. Chirot, "The Corporatist Model and Socialism", *Theory and Society*, Vol 9, 2, 1980, pp. 363-381.

arrangement. It leaves some degree of independence to the organisations within their respective spheres of operation.⁶⁰

Corporatist scholars further point out that as much as organisations in corporatist arrangements work with the state on policy, they are also strong enough to resist state power if their interests are threatened. They also compete with the state for authority over key aspects of policy. Thus, the state has to look for an institutional arrangement in which it can co-operate with such civil society organisations.⁶¹ Scholars such as Schmitter have also added that such strong organisations have also been able to capture the state in as much as the state is the engineer of a corporatist system.⁶²

Levy adds that in a corporatist order, civil society is not just an intermediary; they are a power-base between the state and the individual in society and thus they co-operate with and can resist the state. Thus, dominant groups in corporatist systems are no walk-over by the state once they feel that the relationship is no-longer working in their favour. This can lead to confrontation or serious power struggles between the two.⁶³

In applying the lenses of corporatism to the relationship between the state and the CFU, the following observations can be made which justify the use of the theory to explain this relationship. Upon electoral victory in 1980 the ZANU (PF) government inherited a racially skewed land ownership regime, which was protected by the sunset clauses of the negotiated Lancaster House Constitution. As a result of the sunset clauses, the state could not embark on land reform and land was only to be acquired under the willing-buyer-willing-

⁶⁰ J. M. Echols, 'Soviet Politics in the Brezhnev Era: Pluralism or Corporatism,' in D Kelley (ed) *Soviet Politics in the Brezhnev Era*, New York, Praeger Press, 1980.

⁶¹ E. Phelps, *Mass Flourish*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2013, pg. 14.

⁶² P. Schmitter, "Still the Century of Corporatism", *Review of Politics*, Vol 36, 1974, pp.85-131.

⁶³ J. Levy, *Rationalism, Pluralism and Freedom*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2015, Pg. 7.

seller basis and this was a heavy blow to the government and nationalist leaders that had promised to change the status quo with regards to land ownership once in power.

White farmers under the CFU were secure as a result of the restrictive sunset clauses since they could continue the business of farming without disturbance from the government on the issue of land reform in the first ten years of independence. At the same time, peasant farming success was hindered by lack of agricultural resources and successive droughts.⁶⁴ The CFU at this juncture was a very strong organisation which could not be ignored by those in power. A working arrangement had to be crafted in order to get the CFU to be closer to the government.

In as much as the CFU is not a conglomerate of all farming groups, its influence with regards to agriculture policy and production was very strong at independence. Small-holder unions such as ZNFU and NFAZ represented indigenous black farmers though they had larger numbers in terms of membership compared to the CFU. The CFU was more organised structurally because it collected levies on produce from its members, it had investments in agri-business and was financially independent. The organisation had 73 associations spread out across the country, making its presence felt. Those in power were also convinced of the strong influence the CFU could have in terms of agricultural policy and as such the CFU needed to be brought closer to the government.⁶⁵

In bringing the CFU closer to it the state embarked on several strategies. The message of reconciliation by the former Prime Minister Robert Mugabe was well received by white farmers who were worried that once the new black government was in power it could immediately embark on radical land reform to revenge colonial injustices pertaining to land.

⁶⁴ R. Palmer, 'Land Reform in Zimbabwe, 1980-1990'.

⁶⁵ M. Bratton 'Micro-Democracy? The Merger of Farmers Unions in Zimbabwe'.

The Prime Minister also went on to address the congress of the CFU in 1982 and declared that white farmers were needed in rebuilding the economy and in sustaining livelihoods, further calming fears of the white minority farmers under the CFU and bringing them closer to the government.⁶⁶ This relationship was further solidified by the close ties between leaders of the CFU and those in government. John Laurie who was CFU president and Dr Robbie Mupawose, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture had a very close working relationship. Some of the leaders of CFU such as Bobby Rutherford were labelled as political prostitutes who spent more time with government officials than their base. The appointment of Dennis Norman as Agriculture Minister and former leader of the CFU contributed to the CFU working closer with government.⁶⁷

In corporatist arrangements dominant interest groups do not confront the government as long as the government serves their interests. The *Gukurahundi* massacres in Midlands and Matabeleland provided a litmus test to the relationship between the state and the CFU. White farmers were affected with the clashes between PF ZAPU and ZANU PF after the deployment of the North Korean trained Fifth Brigade. Some of the white farmers were killed and others physically harmed, but the CFU chose not to criticise the ruling government as doing so would jeopardise the solid working relationship.⁶⁸

Levy and Schmitter are also of the view that notwithstanding the state being the brains behind a corporatist arrangement and leading force in such an arrangement, interest groups are not passive players and can resist state actions if it threatens their interests. With the expiry of the sunset clauses in the 1990s, the state moved in to begin the process of land acquisition, which marked the beginning of tension with the CFU. The CFU was forced to

⁶⁶ 'We Need You, Says Mugabe', *The Farmer*, 11 August, 1980, pg. 18.

⁶⁷ R. Pilosof, "Remaining Apolitical in a Political Crisis, Exploring Interest Group Politics", *Developing Societies*, Vol 26, 1, 2010, pp. 71-97.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

find its political voice in order to protect its hold on land. Initially, white farmers responded by taking the government to court in a bid to delay the land reform process and also to make a statement to government. To some extent, this frustrated state efforts towards land reform. However, as the political strength of the ruling party was waning, land became the solution to political survival. The ruling party focused its attention on acquiring more land thereby jeopardising the working relationship with white farmers and the CFU.

As white farmers intensified their political participation leading to the confrontation with the state, their capacity to influence land ownership and policy was also reduced. As farm invasions spread across the country targeting white farmers, the CFU was no longer central in land policy and agricultural production. The close working arrangement crafted in the 1980s between the state and CFU suddenly disappeared leading to the hostility between the two. The current discourse of compensation is also an attempt to re-build relations with CFU and craft a new corporate relationship though the organisation is no longer influential as it was in the 1980s in terms of agricultural policy, land possession and distribution.

Having shown how Corporatism can be theoretically applied to unpack the nature of relations between the state and white commercial farmers in Zimbabwe, the next section turns to an explication of how this thesis can deploy Decoloniality to understand and explain the relationship between the state and African farmers.

African Farmers and the state: A De-colonial Framework

The De-colonial theory is predicated on power, knowledge and being as units of analysis, which makes it ideal for a deeper understanding of black farmers' relations with the state in post-colonial Zimbabwe. At stake in the unpacking of these relations is how power dynamics changed or remained unchanged particularly with regards to financing and power possibilities of black empowerment and representations, how the very being of black people

as farmers who were previously excluded from commercial activities changed or remained the same, and finally how knowledge, not only of farming as a commercial venture, but of the overall shifting subjectivity of farmers played out and influenced policy-making. Agricultural policy, land and land distribution from a farmer interest perspective were largely influenced by the white dominated CFU. The proliferation of black farmer organisations was necessary to challenge and eradicate the hegemony of CFU on land and agricultural policy issues.

All this is necessary given the background of African farmers emerging from colonialism and its legacies that have come to be known as coloniality. Coloniality is an analytical concept developed by the Peruvian sociologist Quijano and other radical Latin American scholars such as Mignolo, Escobar, Torres and others to explain the replication of colonial-like relations of exploitation and subordination of black people within the contemporary capitalist world created by western modernity.⁶⁹ Torres refers to ‘coloniality’ as,

...long standing patterns of power that emerged as a result of colonialism that define culture, labour, inter-subjective relations and knowledge production well beyond the strict limits of colonial administration.⁷⁰

Coloniality names the continuity of colonial forms of domination after the end of formal colonialism. Grosfoguel also notes that:

...Although colonial administrators have been almost entirely eradicated and the majority of the periphery is politically organised into independent states, non-European people are still living under crude European, Euro-American exploitation and domination.⁷¹

Santos is of the opinion that, stratification of society based on race, is a product of western abyssal thinking. This kind of thinking is about making distinctions among the people. Santos

⁶⁹ S. J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, “Beyond the Equator, There are no sins, Coloniality and Violence in Africa”, *Developing Societies in Africa*, Vol 28, 4, 2012, pp. 419-440.

⁷⁰ N. Maldonado Torres, “On Coloniality of Being Contributions to the Development of a Concept”, *Cultural Studies*, Vol 21, 3, 2007, pp. 240-270.

⁷¹ R. Grosfoguel, “The Epistemic Decolonial Turn”, *Cultural Studies*, Vol 21, 3, 2007, pp. 211-223.

believes that, an imaginary abyssal line differentiate the sub-alternised darker races whites that are guaranteed of opportunities.⁷² Those regarded to live on top of the abyssal line were said to belong to the zone of being, while those that stay below the line are said to belong in the zone of non-being. Due to these imagined radical differences, whites of western European descent attained a privileged social status, while darker indigenous races were placed at the periphery without any privileges.

Quijano regards race as the most efficient instrument of social domination the scholar argues that Europeans were more privileged than those without European descent, as a result the white race assumed dominance over the darker races of the world.⁷³ With an elevated position in the social hierarchy, whites came to control four key elements of coloniality; control of authority, control of gender and sexuality and control of subject of knowledge.

As noted above, there are three main yardsticks which anchor coloniality, they include power, knowledge and being. On power and its link to coloniality Taylor describes, it in terms of a structural organisation of the world system in which the US and Europe have established a power system that enables the white race to dominate not only the global economy, but to be epistemologically and culturally hegemonic.⁷⁴

On coloniality of knowledge, Maldonado focuses on the effect of colonisation on a variety of areas of knowledge production. Coloniality prioritises knowledge from Europe and regards knowledge from white race as superior, while disregarding knowledge from the global south. This entails a power structure which illustrates hegemony of epistemology by

⁷² B. S. Santos, "Beyond Abyssal Thinking: From Global Lines to Ecologies of knowledges", *Political Review*, Vol 30, 1, 2007, pp. 45-89.

⁷³ A. Quijano, "Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism and Latin America", *Nepantla*, Vol 1, 3, 2000, pp. 533-580.

⁷⁴ L. Taylor, "De-colonising Citizenship: Reflections on the Coloniality of Power in Argentina", *Citizenship Studies*, Vol 17, 5, 2001, pp. 596-610.

the west.⁷⁵ Ndlovu-Gatsheni points out that as a result of western modernity expansion, subaltern knowledges that were regarded as not being useful to the colonisers were removed and replaced with alien Euro-centric knowledges.⁷⁶

Torres explains the coloniality of being as the dynamic influence or power that discriminates the different parts of the world using ranking of humanity basing on ontological conceptions in the sense of being. Race is placed at the epicentre of the structuring of global system where whites of European descent are found at the top of the global social hierarchy and enjoy more benefits over other racial groups.⁷⁷

Relevance of Coloniality to state-commercial farmers' relations in post-colonial Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe was colonised by the British who considered themselves superior and dominated the indigenous people. Analysing the history of land in Zimbabwe sheds light on how de-coloniality can explain state-commercial farmers' relations. The Land Apportionment Act of 1930 preserved close to 49 million acres white ownership and production and left 17.7 million acres of land unassigned to either the white preserve or the Tribal Trust Lands. A study conducted by the colony's Land Commission with the support of the British government in 1925 discovered that the vast majority of blacks were in support of the reservation of land for their use and many were angered by the manner in which the legislation was implemented and for favouring and protecting white interests. The overpopulated and overstretched tribal trust lands compelled a large number of blacks to

⁷⁵ N. Maldonado Torres, "On coloniality of Being: Contributions to the Development of a Concept", *Cultural Studies*, Vol 21, 2, 2007, pp. 240-270.

⁷⁶ S. J. Ndlovu Gatsheni, "Coloniality of Power in Development Studies and the Impact of Global Imperial Designs in Africa", Inaugural Lecture delivered at the University of South Africa, Senate Hall 16 October, 2012

⁷⁷ N. Maldonado Torres, "On coloniality of Being: Contributions to the Development of a Concept."

leave their rural livelihoods and pursue wage employment in cities or on white owned commercial farms.⁷⁸

Following the Unilateral Declaration of Independence, land legislation was amended with the Land Tenure Act of 1969 put in place which mirrored the 1930 Land Apportionment Act. It reduced the amount of land reserved for white ownership to 45 million acres and reserved another 45 million acres for black ownership. However, the most fertile farmlands in the regions one, two and three were reserved for whites. Abuses of the system continued; some white farmers took advantage of the legislation to shift their property boundaries into land formerly designated for black settlement without notifying the owners.⁷⁹

The lenses of coloniality were very much present in the draconian legislations that were passed to govern land distribution in the colonial era. Colonial forms of domination were evident in decision-making as blacks did not have say in land matters. Knowledge of indigenous systems and practices was rendered useless when it came to land and production with emphasis being placed on Eurocentric or white knowledges. With regards to coloniality of being the black people faced greater discrimination with regards to skewed land ownership, which favoured the white race. Though they were the minority, whites had more access to fertile and large tracts of land.

The attainment of independence did not alter the racially skewed process of land ownership. The Lancaster House negotiated constitution restricted government's ability to acquire land, which was only going to be acquired under the willing-buyer-willing-seller principle for a ten-year period. The government only acquired 3 million hectares for resettlement of indigenous people well short of 8 million hectares it intended to achieve. This

⁷⁸ P. Mosley, *The Settler Economies: Studies in the Economic History of Kenya and Southern Rhodesia 1900-1963*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009, p 13.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

placed white farmers' at the centre of agricultural production and their representative union, the CFU, was in a very strong position to influence agricultural policy. The new government had no option but to work with and listen to the CFUs. White farmers were nicknamed the silos of the nation much to the detriment of the black farming community which was largely confined to subsistence production.⁸⁰ The few blacks that managed to penetrate into commercial farming were absorbed by the CFU, where they faced discrimination as they could not make decisions.

Why Decoloniality?

De-coloniality focuses on ensuring that independent territories do not permit colonial patterns of power to continue to tie them to the former colony. Coloniality should be removed through the pursuit of de-coloniality.⁸¹ Maldonado points out that, de-coloniality focuses on removing power relations of power and knowledge conceptions that created the gender, geopolitical and racial hierarchies that emerged into being or established new and more powerful forms of expression in the modern colonial world.⁸²

In de-colonising knowledge, Grosfoguel stipulates that this can possible if there is an acknowledgement the prevalence of epistemic racisms and universalism in the current global epistemic systems.⁸³ He recommends that there is need to introduce epistemic freedom as a way of liberating knowledge and produce plurivesality within the knowledge relm. By abandoning imperial epistemology this gives freedom to the sub-alternised from Euro-focused knowledge.⁸⁴ Ndlovu-Gatsheni adds that de-colonising knowledge accommodates

⁸⁰ R. Palmer, 'Land Reform in Zimbabwe, 1980-1990.'

⁸¹ S. J Gatsheni, "Why de-coloniality in the 21st century", *Thought Leaders*, Vol 48, 3, 2013, pp.10-15.

⁸² N Maldonado-Torres, "On Coloniality of Being: Contribution to the Development of a Concept", *Cultural Studies*, Vol 21, 2, 2007, pp.240-270.

⁸³ R. Grosfoguel, "A De-colonial Approach to Political-Economy, Boarder Thinking and Global Coloniality", *Philosophy and Politics*, Vol 1, 2013, pp.89-98.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

insights and knowledge from the global south without disregarding progressive aspects of Euro-American epistemology and the best of modernity.⁸⁵

The de-colonisation of epistemology precedes de-colonisation of being. Maldonado views de-colonisation of being as the freedom from the control and monopolisation of euro-centred being, knowledge, power and politics.⁸⁶ Grosfoguel highlights that the sub-alternised people of the world who despite gaining liberation continue to portray issues and reason as though they are in Europe and are part of the white race they must be able to speak freely from where they are situated both physiologically and geographically. Doing this would emancipate the subaltern.⁸⁷

The need to de-colonise power is rooted in how economic, political and global relations between the north and south remain colonial. The United States, Britain and the European Union continue to determine rules of the engagement to the rest of the world through international institutions they control. Mignolo asserts that de-colonisation of power is focused on ensuring justice and equality in terms of global, political and economic power. It therefore encourages developing countries to put pressure on Euro-American dominance in a bid to dismantle it thereby ensuring the inclusion of the global south in decision making.⁸⁸

Ndlovu-Gatsheni emphasises that de-coloniality should be regarded as political, epistemological and an antithetical approach that aim to expose and dismantle coloniality. It calls for the ex-colonised citizens to start viewing themselves and the world in a different perspective. The ex-colonised are challenged and motivated to re-order the global system in a

⁸⁵ S. J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, "Why de-coloniality in the 21st century", *Thought Leaders*, Vol 48, 3, 2013, pp.10-15.

⁸⁶ N. Maldonado-Torres, "On Coloniality of Being: Contributions to Development of a Concept", *Cultural Studies*, Vol 21, 4, 2007, pp. 244-270.

⁸⁷ R. Grosfoguel, "The Epistemic De-colonial Turn", *Cultural Studies*, Vol 21, 3, 2007, pp. 211-223.

⁸⁸ W.D. Mignolo, "Geo-politics of Sensing and Knowing on De-Coloniality, Border Thinking and Epistemic Dis-obedience, Conference Essays on Education, *Philosophy and Politics*, Vol 1, 3, 2013, pp.129-150.

manner that allow them to speak as equals in global engagements so that colonial systems of power that interprets labour, power, culture and race are dismantled to the ground.⁸⁹

Application of the lens of de-coloniality in understanding black farmer organisations

The emergence of indigenous farmer interest groups was significant in removing the hegemony of CFU with regards to agricultural production and policy influence. At independence, the ZNFU and NFAZ were the only farming interest groups representing indigenous farmers. The Zimbabwe National Farmers Union (ZNFU) was formed in 1945 to represent the special interests of small-holder farmers who owned private farms in the African Purchase Areas. This contained farms in the range of 20-200 hectares. At independence, membership of ZNFU stood at 9500 rising to about 12 500 by 1991. In as much as ZNFU membership surpassed that of the CFU, most of its members were regarded as small-scale farmers and remained at the periphery with regards to policy and decision-making on issues of agriculture.⁹⁰ The CFU and its members were the face of agriculture and little was done by the CFU to equip small-holder farmers with knowledge of farming, thus production from small-holders was largely confined to subsistence.

The National Farmers' Association of Zimbabwe represented the majority of Zimbabwean farmers namely the peasant cultivators who have use rights to two to four hectares of arable land and share communal grazing. Its membership was a staggering 150 000 surpassing any farmers organisation at independence. Despite having the bulk of members, the interest group was confined to the margins of communal farming and some of its members worked on white commercial farmers where they tapped knowledge on

⁸⁹ S. J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, "Coloniality of Power in Post-colonial Africa, Myths of De-colonisation", Council for Development of Social Science Research in Africa, Daka, 2013.

⁹⁰ M. Bratton, "The Comrades and the Countryside: The Politics of Agricultural Policy in Zimbabwe", *World Politics*, Vol 39, 1987, pp.174-202.

agricultural production.⁹¹ The major characteristic with regards to communal farming is subsistence farming leaving white farmers under the CFU to be the face of successful commercial agriculture.

The government's insistence on a merger of all farming unions from 1988 was also meant to break the monopoly of the CFU on land ownership and influence on agricultural policy. In 1990 a new Indigenous Commercial Farmers Association (ICFA) was formed and it emerged from African farmers who purchased large-scale farms after independence, some of the members belonged to the CFU. The aim of the organisation was to wrest special benefits from the government, especially for agricultural credit and quality farmland. The emergence of the ICFA represented a major attempt by black farmers to change the face of commercial agriculture which had been a preserve of white farmers under CFU.⁹²

However, the state proved to be a hindrance with regards to the progression of the ICFA into a union. Successive ministers of agriculture denied the organisation recognition with regards to attainment of a union status. This meant that the ICFA for a very long period remained confined to being an association; this meant that it could not influence agricultural policy and did not have a say on matters of agricultural production. As an association, it also meant that those who would want to join the organisation had to either register with the CFU or ZFU first to get recognition from the government before they joined the organisation. Being denied a union status also meant that the organisation could not charge levies on produce of its members and this greatly undermined funding within the organisation.

The organisation was only given union status in 1996 after the founders of the organisation began to be very active in politics and chose to support the ruling party. The

⁹¹ M. Bratton, "Farmer Organisations and Food Production in Zimbabwe", *World Development*, Vol 14, 3, 1986, pp.367-384.

⁹² M. Bratton, "Micro- Democracy? The Merger of Farmer Unions in Zimbabwe", *African Studies Review*, Vol 37, No 1, 1994, pp. 9-37.

interactions between the state and ICFU serve to highlight that in as much as imperialism was eradicated after independence, the challenges facing indigenous people relate to those in power, and who in some instances adopt colonial tendencies of exploitation and even divide and rule tactics. The leaders have also become selfish and use power to safeguard their interests. The ICFU progression indicates that despite the attainment of independence those in power would undermine any perceived threat to their interests' even if it means it is an indigenous farmer organisation. The state could not recognise the ICFU because it resisted to be part of the proposed merger of all farming bodies under the ZFU, this is despite the members of the ICFU raising objections that its commercial interests won't be effectively catered for in such an arrangement.

The emergence of ZFU in August 1992 at the instigation of the government was another attempt to de-mystify commercial agriculture from being solely a white farmer preserve. The CFU resisted to be merged with other unions representing indigenous farmers namely ZNFU and NFAZ; the president of the CFU made the following statement against the merger: "the needs of large scale and small-holder agriculturalist were incompatible on issues of land tenure, production technology and business management."⁹³

This signalled a clear tactic of discrimination based on land ownership and race. It separated farming groups and perpetuated a common narrative that small-holders should remain in that category. Most of these small-holders were Africans and large-scale land holders were white commercial farmers. The CFU was also aware that getting into the merger would also mean key positions would be taken by indigenous organisations because of their numbers in terms of votes.

⁹³'CFU President statement on the merger', *The Financial Gazette*, 14 November 1991.

The creation of the ZFU also resembled a counter organisation that focused on breaking the hegemony of CFU on policy and agricultural issues. The creation of ZFU was also timed to coincide with the first attempt by the state to acquire land as seen by the Land Acquisition Act of 1992. By having indigenous farmers on its side, the state had guaranteed support to acquire land and change the face of commercial agriculture. However, state influence in the build-up to the merger and after the merger is very worrying since it undermined the independence of the union. Successive leaders of the ZFU have largely been determined by the state, undermining the internal democracy within the union. The leaders have also in some instances pursued personal enrichment, in the process weakening their commitment to the organisation. The ZFU from an analytical angle resembles a captured organisation by the state which only rubber stamps state interests on land policy.

Black Economic Empowerment is crucial in ending coloniality in that it seeks to ensure that the locals dominate the economic sector which was largely confined to the white race. In Zimbabwe the mantra of indigenisation became extremely popular in the 1990s as young black business people sought to expand their influence in the economy. The formation of the Indigenous Business Development Centre (IBDC) led by Ben Mucheche, and later on Chemist Siziba and Strive Masiyiwa, was meant to create a platform for black individuals to break white monopoly in business. In the later part of the 1990s the empowerment discourse saw the entry of the likes of Roger Boka and Phillip Chiyangwa under the Affirmative Action Group. Roger Boka did not waste time in blaming white monopoly capital for all the suffering of the black people. The empowerment discourse became radical in this phase. Roger Boka managed to penetrate into the tobacco sector, which was dominated by whites through building one of the largest tobacco auction floors. However, in as much as radical black economic empowerment is integral in the attainment of de-coloniality, the empowerment process was also riddled with a lot of corruption. Boka and Chiyangwa

became closely linked with those in power and this enabled them to increase their wealth and also increase their influence in government.

State support towards black farmers is also meant to ensure that black farmers succeed with regards to commercial agriculture. Most of the white farmers under the CFU also benefited from colonial government support. The current drive of compensating white farmers who lost land in the land reform process has deeply divided the black farming community, with the government insisting that this is in line with the constitution, which mandates the state to pay for improvements made in the event of land expropriation. Some black farmers have pointed out that paying for compensation to former white farmers is tantamount to rewarding colonialism. During the time of colonial conquest, land was taken by force and most indigenous people were driven to reserves which were largely unproductive. Thus, paying for compensation is viewed as appreciating the skewed land ownership patterns created under colonialism.

Conceptual Framework

The study will grapple with the following issues: state, commercial farmers, state-commercial farmer relations, the sunset clauses, that is, the willing-seller-willing-buyer and also the *Third Chimurenga* from a de-colonial epistemic perspective introduced above. This is because all these multi-level relations are permeated by power, knowledge and being.

According to the Duhaime legal dictionary a state in modern day politics is regarded as an association that has total control upon a territory or geographic setting. States possess the following characteristics, ability and capacity to control an area oftenly referred to as a territory; having citizens or people who constitute the population of the state; ability to set up

institutions which have the power to make rules and recognition by international institutions as well as other states.⁹⁴

Commercial farmers are farmers who grow crops for profit. Commercial farming is also regarded as a modernised method of farming that is practised on a larger scale. In this type of farming there is the use of vast land, labour and machines. Commercial agriculture is different from subsistence farming because the key objective of commercial agriculture is attainment of huge profits through economies of scale, specialisation, utilisation of capital-intensive farming techniques, labour saving technologies and attainment of huge yields per hectare.⁹⁵

With regards to the state-commercial farmers' relations, the study will analyse the dealings and complexities surrounding the relationship between the state and commercial farmers' organisations in Zimbabwe. The land question remains the source of political tensions in Zimbabwe since colonisation, when the country was referred to as Southern Rhodesia and then Rhodesia. Among indigenous black communities and between white settlers and black rural communities the land question was a central theme. Under British colonial rule and under the white minority government that in 1965 declared its independence from Britain, the colonial government took control of the large tracts of productive land relegating the indigenous people to marginal reserves which were unproductive.

White minority rule came to an end after a violent struggle for liberation and the land question was a major issue. Through negotiated talks brokered by the British government it led to a settlement known as the Lancaster House Agreement.⁹⁶ The Lancaster House Agreement of 1979 created the opportunity for majority rule in Zimbabwe through the ballot.

⁹⁴ Duhaime Law Dictionary accessed at www.duhaime.org on 22 April 2020.

⁹⁵ 'Understanding commercial farmers and farming' accessed at www.agriuniverse.co.zw on 21 April 2020.

⁹⁶ R.Palmer, 'Land Reform in Zimbabwe, 1980-1990'.

This resulted in Robert Mugabe of ZANU PF becoming victorious ending Ian Smith's Unilateral Declaration of Independence of 1965. The Lancaster House Agreement dealt with the issues of having a constitution, pre-independence arrangements and ceasefire.⁹⁷

Represented at the conference were the British Government, the Zimbabwe-Rhodesia Administration represented by Prime Minister Muzorewa and the Patriotic Front led by Robert Mugabe and Joshua Nkomo. The land question dominated much of the talks and the United Kingdom as a former colonial power understood the need for a land settlement programme. The Chairman of the conference, Lord Carrington, made the following statement,

We recognise that the future Government of Zimbabwe, whatever its political complexion, will wish to extend land ownership. The government can of course purchase land for agricultural settlement, as we all have seen. The independence constitution will make it possible to acquire under-utilized land compulsorily, provided that adequate compensation paid. Any resettlement scheme would clearly have to be carefully prepared and implemented to avoid adverse effects in production.⁹⁸

The process of land acquisition was limited to the willing-seller-willing-buyer principle contained in the sun-set clauses of the negotiated Lancaster House Constitution. This meant that the new government would be bound by the provisions of these sunset clauses and section 16 dealt with land issues articulated below.

The new government would not embark in any compulsory land acquisition and if land was acquired the state would promptly pay enough compensation. White commercial farmers who had decided to sell their land would highlight the currency they opted to be paid in, depending on the countries they had relocated to. The state had the power to distribute land for public and resettlement purposes, but compensation had to be paid out in foreign

⁹⁷ G. Magaramombe, 'Rural poverty: Commercial farm workers and land reform in Zimbabwe', A paper presented at the SARP Conference on Land Reform and Poverty Alleviation in Southern Africa, Pretoria, 4-5 June, 2001, pg. 22.

⁹⁸ R. Palmer, 'Land Reform in Zimbabwe, 1980-1990'.

currency.⁹⁹ As part of the land reform process, between 1980 and 1989 the state purchased land on the market. In terms of agrarian changes, new government had its hands completely tied as any major re-distribution of land was not possible. For white commercial farmers, the period allowed them to continue with their monopoly to land and influence on agricultural production giving them an edge with regards to agricultural policy and production.¹⁰⁰

As for relations between the state and commercial farmers, partnership in the 1980s was as a result of the recognition by the state of the importance of the commercial farming sector which placed farmers, especially white farmers under the CFU, closer to the state. The state had to comply with the provisions enshrined in the sunset clauses and could not pursue compulsory acquisition of land. Closer relations also emanated from close communication between government officials and the leadership of farmer interest groups. With the expiry of the sunset clauses in the 1990s, friction between the state and the white farming community was bound to emerge as the state remained resolute on compulsory acquisition of land.

In the 1990s black farmer organisations emerged, and the strong ties between the state and black farmers developed as a result of determination by the state to have a farmers' body which unites all farming unions in the country. This policy, along with an envisaged accelerated land reform programme, sought to break the economic and political power of white farmers. The Indigenous Commercial Farmers' Association (ICFA) was formed in August 1990 from among black members of the CFU. The ICFU refused to merge with other indigenous organisations fearing that the merger would not advance the interest of commercial farming. Eventually the CFU was left out of the merger leaving the Zimbabwe

⁹⁹ V. Z. Nyawo-Shava and S. L. Barnard, "The Trajectory of Land reform in Zimbabwe: Post Independence era 1980-2000", *Contemporary History*, Vol 35, 1, 2010, pp. 62-80.

¹⁰⁰ S. Moyo, "Land Reform and Redistribution in Zimbabwe since 1980", *Southern African Studies*, Vol 26, 2, 1990, pp. 29-75.

National Farmers Union (ZNFU) and National Farmers Association of Zimbabwe (NFAZ) to create the Zimbabwe Farmers Union in August 1991.

In analysing relations between the state and commercial farmers during the *Third Chimurenga*, it is important to trace the origins of the word *Chimurenga*. The term *Chimurenga* is a *Shona* word which translates to a violent uprising or a major revolt. In *Ndebele* language it is translated to *Umvukela* with the same interpretation of a violent revolt and uprising. The name *Chimurenga* is linked with Zimbabwe's earliest indigenous society's resistance to colonisation by the British South Africa Company led by Cecil John Rhodes. Both *Shona* and *Ndebele* societies employed military confrontation in responding to colonialism. This form of resistance has been classified as the first *Chimurenga*.¹⁰¹

The failure of the first *Chimurenga* to avert colonisation resulted in continued attempts to breakdown colonisation with nationalists such as Robert Mugabe, Joshua Nkomo, Josiah Tongogara and Dumiso Dabengwa on the forefront. This period is regarded as the second *Chimurenga*; the cornerstone of the second *Chimurenga* was to attain independence and this was to be achieved through the eradication of the white dominated government, which had deprived the locals political freedom. This has also been classified as the liberation struggle. As a result of the second *Chimurenga* the white dominated Rhodesian government was dismantled. In 1980 Zimbabwe attained political independence and majority rule under the stewardship of Prime Minister Robert Mugabe of the Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF). In the post-independent period, the government of Zimbabwe was pre-occupied with addressing colonial legacies with a focus on re-distribution of land and mineral resources.

¹⁰¹ M. T. Vambe, "Versions and Sub-Versions: Trends in *Chimurenga* musical Discourses in Post-Independence Zimbabwe", *African Study Monograph*, Vol 24, 4, 2004, pp. 167-193.

In 1998 the local populace began to question what was perceived as the government's reluctance to re-possess land from white farmers. The war veterans who were fighters of the second *Chimurenga* were again on the frontlines agitating for land re-distribution. In 1998, Chief Enoch Zenda Svosve of the *Svosve* area of Mashonaland East province invaded Deskop Farm and this marked the beginning of land reform under the *Third Chimurenga*. This led to the legalisation of land re-possession by the Zimbabwean government in 2000 under the fast-track land reform programme, which was known as the *Third Chimurenga*.¹⁰² The motive behind the *Third Chimurenga* was to acquire and re-distribute vast fertile land owned by the minority white community to indigenous people who had for long been living in overpopulated, dry and unproductive areas of the country. The *Third Chimurenga* created an opportunity to compliment political independence with social and economic independence through land.¹⁰³

The *Third Chimurenga* was characterised by violent confrontations over land between the invaders led by war veterans and white farmers. Relations between the state and the white farming community became strained during this period. White farmers could no-longer be central in the calculus of land ownership and production. Within the white farming community under the CFU deep divisions emerged on whether to continue talks with the government during this period; this led to the emergence of splinter groups such as Justice for Agriculture that opted for confrontational approaches to the land issue. On the part of the black farming community, the *Third Chimurenga* created avenues to empower indigenous people by enabling them to own land. Black farmer unions such as Zimbabwe Farmers Union supported the radical stance to land ownership, which empowered indigenous people.

¹⁰² K .Gumboreshumba, 'Be warned Chimurenga Revolution is an organism', *The Herald* 20 August, 2013.

¹⁰³ J. Moyo, 'The Third Way, Zimbabwe Last Chimurenga', accessed at www.newzimbabwe.com , on 20 January 2015.

The current discourse of compensation announced by the administration of President Emmerson Mnangagwa represents a new dimension to land distribution politics in Zimbabwe. The basis of the approach is to provide financial compensation on improvements made by evicted white farmers. It is a strategy which broadly appeals to the international community given the government's quest to re-engage with western investors that had closed the window under the late Mugabe regime as a result of the violent process during the land reform. As for relations with the farming community, some white farmers have welcomed the gesture as an avenue to repair relations and the beginning of steps to find closure on the land question in Zimbabwe. Black farmers have raised concerns on why white farmers should be paid, arguing that they forcefully acquired land during the colonial era. The central argument in this study is that state-commercial farmers' relations witnessed revisions and changes as a result of the emotive politics of land distribution.

Statement of the Problem

This study examines the relationship between the state and commercial farmers' organisations in Zimbabwe. The central problem is to locate the effect of the emotive politics of land distribution on state-commercial farmers' relations in post-independent Zimbabwe. Given the centrality of land in the relationship between the state and commercial farmers, it becomes necessary to interrogate how land distribution politics shaped state-commercial farmers' relations. In tracing the land issue as a central problem to the study, the willing-seller-willing-buyer principle of the Lancaster House negotiated constitution will be the first point of analysis.

Section 16 of 'sun-set' clauses dealing with the land issue under the Lancaster House Constitution dealt with the land question in the following manner: that any land to be acquired by the Zimbabwe government on a willing-seller-willing-buyer principle had to be

fully paid for in foreign currency and that (under Section 4) only underutilised land will be made available for resettlement. The key principle under the willing-seller-willing-buyer dispensation was that land could only be acquired by the government from white farmers that were willing to sell their land under the prevailing market conditions. This meant that any process of land resettlement would be based on the goodwill of white farmers willing to sell their land to the government. This meant that government's hands were tied and could only wait for the expiry of the sunset clauses after ten years of independence.

With regards to relations, the partnership which emerged in the 1980s between the state and white commercial farmers was a result of the fact that the state could not effect any compulsory acquisition due to being tied to the provisions of the sunset clauses. The smooth communication patterns, which existed between leaders of the government and those from white commercial farmers, resulted in closer relations.

However, the expiry of the sunset clauses of the Lancaster House negotiated constitution in the 1990s created room for the government to kick start the process of land acquisition. Once land acquisition was in motion, relations between the state and the white farming community began to crumble. To complicate matters, smooth communication patterns between the state and white farmers collapsed as radical and undiplomatic elements were now in government and at the helm of leadership of white commercial farmers. Black farmer organisations emerged in the 1990s also at the insistence of the state. The creation of the Zimbabwe Farmers Union in 1992 and support for the emergence of Indigenous Commercial Farmers Association (ICFA) in 1990 was meant to build a strong support for radical acquisition of land and also break white monopoly on land and agricultural policy.

The *Third Chimurenga* symbolised a new phase with regards to land distribution politics. Land reform was characterised by state-sanctioned violence targeted at white

farmers. Evidently, the phase symbolised the complete collapse of relations between the state and the white farming community under the CFU. Deep divisions emerged within the white farming community under CFU on how to respond to the radical process of land distribution leading to the emergence of splinter groups such as Justice for Agriculture (JAG) that have agitated for confrontation and fair compensation of dispossessed white farmers.

Land distribution in Zimbabwe is currently dominated by the discourse of compensation in line with the current administration's agenda of re-engagement. In line with the provisions of the Constitution, the compensation drive being pursued is focusing on improvements made. How this affects relations between the state and commercial farmers depends on the views of farmers and also commitment by the state to fulfil its pledge to compensate farmers. The reaction to the discourse has been mixed, with the CFU welcoming the gesture but being cautious on the amount to be given to farmers. On the part of black farmers, concerns have been raised on why compensation should be paid to those that forcefully acquired land during the colonial era.

Objectives

The major aim of this study is to analyse the relationship between the state and the commercial farmers' organizations in post-independent Zimbabwe. Analysis of the relations will pay particular attention to the following: the willing-seller-willing-buyer, the *Third Chimurenga* and the current discourse of compensation

Sub-Objectives:

- 1 To assess how the Commercial Farmers Union related to the state.

- 2 To examine the fragmentation of the Commercial Farmers' Union and analyse the birth of new organisations such as Justice for Agriculture and discuss how the splinter groups such as JAG relate with the state.
- 3 To examine the rise of the Indigenous Commercial Farmers' Union (ICFU) and the Zimbabwe Farmers' Union (ZFU) and analyse how they have related with the state.
- 4 To analyse how the state has supported black farmers.
- 5 To examine the politics of land distribution in Zimbabwe and understand how it has affected state-farmer relations.

Research Questions

The study is premised on the following research questions:

- 1 What factors have influenced relations between the state and commercial farmers' organisations in post-independent Zimbabwe and how have these relations evolved over the years?
- 2 What was the nature of relationship between the state and the Commercial Farmers Union?
- 3 What caused the fragmentation of the commercial farmers' unions in the post-colonial dispensation?
- 4 What caused the formation of Justice for Agriculture and how does it relate with the state?
- 5 How did the Indigenous Commercial Farmers Union and the Zimbabwe Farmers Union emerge and how do they relate with the state?
- 6 How has the state supported black farmers?
- 7 How did land re-distribution politics influence relations between the state and farmer organisations?

The importance of these research questions is that they elicited information with regards to the nature of the relationship between the state and the commercial farmers' unions. These research questions will also highlight the centrality of the land issue and its impact on the relationship between the state and farmer organisations. The research questions will seek to establish the reasons behind the fragmentation of the CFU and the emergence of splinter groups such as Justice for Agriculture. The research questions also scrutinise how black farmer organisations such as the Zimbabwe Farmers Unions and the Indigenous Commercial Farmers Association (ICFA) emerged and how they deal with the state.

Significance of the Study

The study is motivated by the desire to explore the state and commercial farmers' relations in post-colonial Zimbabwe. The study covers the period beginning 1980 since a new black government led by Robert Mugabe of ZANU (PF) came into power, thus potentially re-defining relations with farmers' organisations. The ruling party had to fulfil the goals of the liberation struggle, one of which was to re-distribute land in a just manner. The Mugabe government was also faced with the dilemma of how to navigate land distribution given the fact that the negotiated Lancaster House constitution had sunset clauses on land, restricting land acquisition to the willing-seller-willing-buyer principle. It therefore becomes crucial to see how the government related with commercial farmers under this principle relating to the land question. The study's endpoint is 2018 because this is when the discourse of compensation emerges. How the government is dealing with it and the reaction of farmers individually and as unions are important to the study.

Not much has been written with regards to the relationship between the state and the commercial farmers' organisations in Zimbabwe.¹⁰⁴ This study acknowledges these works and

¹⁰⁴ J. A. McKenzie, 'Commercial Farmers in the Governmental System of Colonial Zimbabwe, 1963-1980', PhD Thesis, University of Zimbabwe, Harare, 1989, A. Selby, 'Commercial Farmers and the State: Interest

goes further to analyse the relations between the state and commercial farmers analysing the formation and disintegration of the Commercial Farmers Union and the formation of splinter group such as Justice for Agriculture.

Hodder-Williams in 'White Farmers in Rhodesia 1890-1965: A History of the Marandellas District' focuses on the interactions of settler farmers and the government; Scott Taylor in 'Business and Politics in Zimbabwe's Commercial Agriculture Sector' analyses the institutional strength of representative associations in Zimbabwe; Michael Bratton in 'Micro-Democracy? The Merger of Farmers Unions in Zimbabwe' examines the role of politics in the creation of ZFU and Dennis Norman in 'The Odd Man in Mugabe's White-hand Man' provides a testimony on commercial agriculture in Zimbabwe. Norman's version is influenced by events that occurred during his tenure as a government minister

This current study also goes further to analyse black farmers and how they related with the state by looking at the Zimbabwe Farmers Union and the Indigenous Commercial Farmers Union, explore their dealings with the state and also assess their rivalries with the white dominated Commercial Farmers Union. Additionally, the study also analyses the current discourse of compensation and assesses the reaction of farming unions towards this approach by the current administration.

With regards to the contribution of the study to policy, it is crucial to note that farming unions are central in determining agricultural and land policy in any country. Thus, understanding their relationship with the state also helps to explain the extent to which their lobbying is crucial in determining land policy. Further analysis of state-farmer relations is

Group Politics and Land Reform in Zimbabwe', PhD Thesis, University of Oxford, Oxford, 2006 and R. Pilossof, 'The Unbearable Whiteness of being: White Farmers Voices from Zimbabwe and their narration of recent past, 1970-2004,' PhD Thesis, University of Sheffield, 2010.

crucial in understanding the land question in Zimbabwe as well as in finding answers to the un-resolved land question in Zimbabwe.

To development practice, land and agrarian issues are central to the development discourse. Understanding state-commercial farmer relations enhances knowledge of land and agrarian issues in Zimbabwe. This is because the study analyses state commercial farmers' relations during the willing-seller-willing-buyer period, the *Third Chimurenga* and the current discourse of compensation. The land question in Zimbabwe is very pertinent in understanding Zimbabwe's development trajectory. Thus, understanding state-commercial farmers' relations in post-colonial Zimbabwe generates important knowledge in the field of development work.

Methodology and Sources

The term methodology has been defined by Jansen and Warren as the practical 'how' of any given component of a research.¹⁰⁵ Jansen and Warren also adds that on methodology it looks at how a researcher systematically structures a study so as to obtain valid and reliable results that relates to research objectives.¹⁰⁶ The study used a qualitative approach; the methodology is ideal because it focuses on facts and opinions about the relations between the state and the commercial farmers organisations in Zimbabwe. The study is informed by the descriptive research design. Kerlinger describes a descriptive research design as a design that seeks to obtain information concerning the current status of a phenomenon.¹⁰⁷ It is also directed towards determining the nature of the situation as it exists at the time of the study.

The study of this nature requires a multi-disciplinary approach and use of a variety of tools. In this regard, the study mixed theory and extensive field work. Qualitative research

¹⁰⁵ D. Jansen and K. Warren, 'What exactly is Research Methodology?' accessed on www.grandcoach.com on 19 June 2020.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ R. Kerlinger, *Qualitative Research Methodology*, Hutton and Moris, London 1986, Pg. 14.

was crucial because it enabled the researcher to learn, participate and be involved in the research. The methodology was also crucial because it enabled the researcher to have facts and opinions about the relationship between the state and commercial farmers in post-colonial Zimbabwe. Quantitative research would not be ideal because analysis of relations between the state and commercial farmers cannot be quantified. Crucial to qualitative research is that the research embraces views of participants, asks questions and collects data based on the views of the participants. With qualitative research, the research will seek to understand people in terms of their understanding of the world. Without doubt, by looking at state-commercial farmer relations the research focused on allowing respondents to give their intimate knowledge of how relations developed and even disintegrated.

The starting point was critical analysis of state-commercial farmer relations under the willing-seller-willing-buyer dispensation focusing on the reasons behind close relations in the early 1980s and then the beginning of friction in the 1990s. Furthermore, the analysis explored how the collapse of communication channels affected the white commercial farmers as well as the implementation of the *Third Chimurenga* and its implications on state-commercial farmers' relations. Understanding the reasons behind the creation of black-led farmer organisations such as the Zimbabwe Farmers Union was also crucial to have a balanced analysis. The research also analysed the current discourse of compensation and its implications on state-commercial farmer relations. To make the analysis robust, the research then engaged in document review.

Data Gathering Instruments

Document analysis has been defined by Bowen as a type of qualitative research whereby documents are translated by the researcher to give voice and meaning around a

particular topic.¹⁰⁸ Document analysis involved an in-depth look into primary and secondary evidence. With document analysis, the researcher had a clear path on the kind of questions to be asked for an interview. Documents that were consulted include secondary sources such as published and unpublished books, research papers from academics and journal articles, which provided insights into state-commercial farmers' relations in post-colonial Zimbabwe. The research also captured primary materials that deal with farmer organisations in Zimbabwe and this involved electronic sources, magazines such as *The Farmer*, newspapers and information from the internet. All these were used to gather evidence on the dealings between the state and commercial farmers in post-colonial Zimbabwe. Document review materials were also obtained from libraries across various universities, research institutes, farmers' organisations and the National Archives of Zimbabwe. Reports from farming bodies such as the Commercial Farmers Union, Justice for Agriculture and the Zimbabwe Farmers Union were also ideal for review. Minutes of meetings of joint presidential committee of farmer organisations were also analysed. Document review was also instrumental in gathering background and contextual information on state-commercial farmer relations in post-colonial Zimbabwe. The researcher then utilised individual unstructured face to face interviews in English. Minichiello et al regards unstructured interview as interviews which do not pre-determine questions and even answers. Unstructured interviews rely on social interaction between the researcher and the informant.¹⁰⁹

In the event that English as a language was difficult to use, respondents had the option to use vernacular languages. In the study, at least sixteen face to face interviews were conducted between the researcher and white commercial farmers under the CFU banner; the

¹⁰⁸ G. Bowen, "Document Analysis as a qualitative research method," *Qualitative Research Journal*, Vol 9, 2, 2009, pp.27-40.

¹⁰⁹ V. Minichiello, R. Aroni, E Timewell and L. Alexander *In-depth Interviewing: Researching people*, Hong Kong, Longman, Cheshire Private Limited, 1990.

leadership of the CFU; JAG members; black commercial farmers under ZFU and ICFU, academics with an interest in land matters in Zimbabwe and political players with an understanding of state-commercial farmer relations in post-colonial Zimbabwe.

Interviewing this broad array of respondents allowed the researcher to have balanced, more nuanced and more measured responses on state commercial farmer relations in post-colonial Zimbabwe. In addition, having a broad array of responses was also ideal in getting various reasons pertaining to changes in state-commercial farmer relations and also understanding how the emotive politics of land distribution affected state-commercial farmer relations. Unstructured face to face interviews were crucial in allowing the researcher to probe further and get deeper analysis of how state-commercial farmers' relations evolved and even disintegrated. In this case, unstructured face-to-face interviews allowed the researcher to probe information obtained from document analysis. Unstructured face to face interviews also allowed participants to draw from their experiences with regards to farming and how the state has related to commercial farming unions. The researcher avoided straight responses common in structured interviews and allowed respondents to be flexible and enjoy the process.

An official letter from the University identified the researcher as a registered Doctor of philosophy student and explained the purpose of the study. Interviews were audio taped and also in some cases extensive notes were taken. With interviews, the researcher was also able to explain issues needing clarification and which also encompassed issues of confidentiality and honesty with regards to information. It was also ideal to allay fears given the sensitivity of the research. The researcher also relied on interview responses from other researchers which were relevant to the research. Triangulation of data was used for document analysis and unstructured interviews. This triangulation was crucial in enhancing validity and

reliability. The data collected was analysed qualitatively and evaluated to determine its worthiness. The researcher intensively engaged literature and also listened to informants as much as possible to obtain explicit meanings and views.

The researcher then categorised the data into thematic areas, thoroughly weighed the data gathered and interpreted it before drawing conclusions. Cohen and Marion define sampling as a,

shortened approach in investigating the whole population. This is a method whereby information is gathered from a part of the whole population to get information on how the whole situation is like.¹¹⁰

I employed qualitative sampling procedure that includes purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is ideal because it allowed for flexibility, latitude and convenience especially for such an open-ended topic. The researcher was able to identify respondents with an understanding of state-farmer relations in post-independent Zimbabwe and such respondents were able to provide relevant data.¹¹¹ This means specific respondents were targeted because of their intimate knowledge of state–farmer relations. The various respondents alluded to were drawn from white commercial farming and black-oriented farming organisations, academia, civil society and political players. These respondents were selected based on their understanding of state-commercial farming relations in Zimbabwe. These informants were well acquainted with knowledge of state-commercial farmers’ relations in post-colonial Zimbabwe.

Target Population

Scholars have come up with different definitions for population, but these definitions point out to one conclusion. Research population refers to the total number of units from

¹¹⁰ C. Cohen and D. Marion, *Social Science Research Methods*, Huxton, London, 1994, Pg. 18.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

which data can be collected.¹¹² The population sample or study sample consisted of thirty-five people with direct link to and knowledge of commercial farming in Zimbabwe. The respondents were also drawn from different regions in Zimbabwe. The study was focused on Zimbabwe, a landlocked country once seen as the bread-basket the entire region due to its productive commercial farming sector. However, this changed after the *Third Chimurenga* which dismantled commercial white farming, leading to growing levels of food in-security in the country. Administratively, the country is divided into ten provinces with three main languages spoken including English, Shona and Ndebele though in practice sixteen languages have official language status.

In view of the challenge of covering the whole country, the researcher conducted interviews in the following provinces: Harare, Midlands, Bulawayo, Mashonaland Central and Manicaland. These were ideal since they have main offices for commercial farming unions such as CFU, JAG, ICFU (ZCFU) and ZFU and most key political players, academics and civil society organisations involved in land matters are also located there. Moreover, respondents drawn from these areas create a balanced approach in gathering data. A lot of fundamental changes with regards to commercial agriculture are also found in these areas, which is critical in the analysis of state-commercial farmers' relations.

The researcher was also fortunate in that the country has witnessed leadership changes; this has also led to new approaches to the land issue in Zimbabwe. Currently, the administration in power is pursuing re-engagement, which is also being pursued through dealing with the land question. A shift towards compensation of white farmers represents a change of tone and has implications on relations between the state and commercial farmers. The study interrogated the responses of the white and black farming community to the issue of compensation.

¹¹² C. Cohen and D. Marion, 'Social Science Research Methods.

Literature Review

In analysing literature on the relationship between the state and commercial farmers, it is necessary to consider the works of classical scholars on civil society in general. According to De-Tocqueville, democracy bases upon the emergence of voluntary associations. These associations enable citizens to participate politically and to demand accountability from the state officials.¹¹³ Femia in reference to Gramsci points out that, civic groups such as churches, unions and interest groups can ensure legitimacy of the ruling regime by either reinforcing or challenging the way power is exercised.¹¹⁴ Gramsci discusses the relevance of civil society within a state and argues that, “when the state is shaken, a steady structure of civil society emerges, the state was only an outer ditch behind which there stood a power system of fortress and earthworks.”¹¹⁵ Gramsci views civil society as essential in providing support to the state and without civil society it might be difficult for the state to be stable and those in power to govern well.

The works of classical scholars are handy to this study in the sense that farmer organisations are part and parcel of the civil society. Their relationship with the state will highlight the extent to which they remained independent to pursue their interests and also their capacity to hold the state accountable for its actions.

Theoretical frameworks that account for the development and status of voluntary associations and the relationship of such groups to the state have also been put forward and include the pluralist model informed by studies of Hodgkin and Wallestein who illustrate that pluralism imagines a society that is composed of equal individuals who by their own will combine into a variety of interest groups. These individuals multiple cross-cutting interests

¹¹³ A. De-Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, New York, Harper and Row, 1966, pg. 10.

¹¹⁴ J. Femia, *Gramsci's Political Thought; Hegemony, Consciousness and the Revolutionary Process*, Oxford, Clarendon, 1981, pg. 8.

¹¹⁵ A. Gramsci, *Selections from Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, New York, International Publishers, 1971.

prevent the emergence of monolithic social classes or occupational lobbies. In this poly-centric setting, the state is neutral arena and occasional arbiter of political conflicts, exerting minimal authority.¹¹⁶ The study values the theory and explores how different farmers' organisations emerged and their interaction with the state. The study also critiques the theory by interrogating whether the state was neutral with regards to the formation of farmers' organisations. The pluralist model underestimates the autonomous power of the state and the advantages enjoyed by states elites in using resources to pursue their own interests in civil society organisations.

Nyang'oro and Shaw are of the view that state-civil society relations can also be explained by importing the construct of corporatism from Europe and Latin America.¹¹⁷

Stepan defines corporatism as,

a set of policies and institutional arrangements for structuring interest representation, the state often charters or even creates interest groups, attempts to regulate their number and gives them appearance of a quasi-representational monopoly along with special prerogatives. In return the state claims the right to monitor representational groups to discourage the expression of narrow based conflictual demands.¹¹⁸

This view is also relevant to the manner in which state-commercial farmers' relations in Zimbabwe evolved. In as much as the laws of Zimbabwe stipulate that farmer unions are independent private associations over which the ruling party and cabinet officials have no legal authority, the study examines the role of the state in the establishment of farmer organisations and complements the view by looking at how farmers' unions were organised and the strategies they used to engage with the state.

¹¹⁶ T. Hodgkin, *Nationalism in Colonial Africa*, London, Fredrick Muller, 1956, pg.5 and E. Wallenstein 'Voluntary Associations', in *Political Parties and National Integration in Tropical Africa*, edited by J. Coleman and C. G. Roseberg, Berkley, University of California Press, 1964, pg. 318.

¹¹⁷ J. Nyangoro and T. Shaw, *Corporatism in Africa: Comparative Analysis and Practice*, Westview Special Studies on Africa, Boulder, 1989, pg. 15.

¹¹⁸ A. Stepan, *State and Society: Peru in Comparative Perspective*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1978, pg. 46.

A neo-patrimonial approach is also commonly used by scholars such as Jackson and Roseberg, Callaghy, Sandbrook, Joseph and Bayart. These scholars point out that, instead of regarding state-society relations as driven simply by the efforts of top leaders to incorporate social groups, there is need to recognise that intermediate leaders launch their individual bids to get aligned to power and access public resources. The maintenance of personalistic forms of authoritarianism requires more than a strongman at the top, it also rests on a network of barons who exercise political control in return for material reward and a base of followers who are socialised to defer authority to the big man.¹¹⁹

Chazan in analysing the neo-patrimonial school of thought points out that as a result of neo-patrimonial discourse the following questions about civil society emerge:

Is there micro-democracy in the associations of civil society, if not, what sort of political regimes actually prevail there? What norms of decision-making guide leaders and followers of civic sector? How do they initiate or respond to the prospect of corporate relations with the state?¹²⁰

The neo-patrimonial views are also relevant to the study since it interrogated the role of leadership within farmer unions in developing close ties with state officials and the effect of such ties on the independence of farmer unions.

South African perspective on state-commercial farmers' relations

Giliomee points out that the decision by the Dutch East India Company to develop a station at the Cape, halfway between its head office in Amsterdam and its trade interests in the Far East was never meant to be more than that. At the end of five years after Van Riebeeck arrived in what is now known as Table Bay, land was given to nine company servants the so-called vryburgers translated to free citizens. The first group of white farmers

¹¹⁹ R. Jackson and C. Roseberg, *Personal Rule in Black Africa*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1980, T. Callaghy, *The state-society struggle: Zaire in Comparative Perspective*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1984 and J Bayart, *The State In Africa: The Politics of the Belly*, London, Longman, 1993.

¹²⁰ N. Chazan, J. Mortimer, J. Ravenhill and D. Rothchild (eds.) *Politics and Society in Contemporary Africa*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1988, pg. 6.

who received over 11 hectares of land each on the Liesbeeck River were within part of the original plan because Van Riebeeck believed it could be best for the company to have a compact community of farmers working on land intensively on a rotational system.¹²¹ Giliomee's insights are useful in highlighting how the colonial administration was instrumental in setting up commercial farming.

Wilson in explaining how white commercial farming developed in South Africa posits that state efforts to improve agriculture gained momentum after 1910. This was because ability to have subsidised credit was realised by the creation of a Land Bank in 1912. The Land Act of 1913 which followed after the bank was established dealt with the problems that were affecting white farmers that is, limited labour supply and the fear that Africans would surpass them in the market for land.¹²² Keegan adds that white land owners were changed into a class of capitalist farmers as a result of a vast array of direct and indirect subsidies, market and trade protection and favourable water and labour regulation. This state involvement became the cornerstone for the change from backward agriculture to a modern agribusiness capable of exporting to markets worldwide.¹²³

Fraser concurs with the suggestion that just like in Zimbabwe prior to independence, white farmers in South Africa enjoyed political and economic support from the white minority regime.¹²⁴ The Nationalist Party that ruled South Africa from 1948 until independence negotiations drew most of its support from this constituency. Since white farmers virtually dominated the commercial agriculture sector, they had access to government

¹²¹ H. Giliomee, "Broedevtwis, Intra-Afrikaner conflicts in the Transition from Apartheid", *African Affairs*, Vol 91, 364, 1992, pp. 339-364.

¹²² F. Wilson, "Farming 1866-1966" in M Wilson and L Thompson (eds.) *The History of South Africa 1870-1966*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1971, pg. 104.

¹²³ T. Keegan, "Primitive Accumulation and Class Formation in the Making of Agrarian Capitalism in South Africa", collected seminar papers, *Institute of Commonwealth Studies*, Vol 16, 40, 1990, pp. 198-211.

¹²⁴ A. Fraser, "White Farmers' Dealings with Land Reform in South Africa: Evidence from Limpopo Province", *Royal Dutch Geographic Society, KNAG*, Vol 1, 99, 2008, pp. 24-36.

subsidies, on international competition and labour market policies they had protection and state support that helped them secure access of cheap labour.¹²⁵ These views will be useful to the study on state-commercial farmers' relations.

Wiedeman in discussing the relationship between the state and white farmers in the post-independence period in South Africa argues that white farmers mostly affiliated with AgriSA, formerly the South African Agricultural Union, have lobbied for a land reform process based on market-led agrarian reform where land is transferred to competent black farmers.¹²⁶ This neo-liberal approach is also reflected in the AgriSA report which states that, for land reform to be successful it should,

be in line of the constitution, grant full recognition to economic and market realities, not being reliant on state bail outs and utilising private and public partnership.¹²⁷

Twala and Khosa agree with Weidman on the link between neo-liberalism and land politics in South Africa. The scholars note that white farmers' association influence in post-1994 emanates from their ties with the agro-industry sector and the desire to maintain the agro-industry business under the neo-liberal framework and also have significant influence over government.¹²⁸ Fraser points out that when it comes to land reform in South Africa, farmers unions such as the white dominated Transvaal Agricultural Union (TAU) are against any type of land reform. Their perception is that any type of land reform threatens property rights. The group has threatened to use violence if any of their affiliated farmers lose land.¹²⁹

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ M. Wiedeman, "Who Shaped South Africa's Land Reform Policy?" *Politikon*, Vol 2, 31, 2014, pp. 219-238.

¹²⁷ AgriSA, AgriSA's Holistic Plan on Land Reform in South Africa, available at www.agrisa.co.za on 22 February 2014.

¹²⁸ W. Twala and M. Khosa, 'Land and Sustainable Development in South Africa,' in K. Amanor and S. Moyo (eds.), *Land and Sustainable Development in Africa*, United Kingdom, Zed books, 2008.

¹²⁹ A. Fraser, 'White Farmers' Dealings with the Land Reform in South Africa.'

The views of these scholars are instructional for the study particularly with regards to the reaction of white farmer organisations to land reform.

Analysis of literature from South African scholars reveals that white farmers in South Africa do not wield as much influence in politics compared to their counterparts in Zimbabwe. This is because white economic power in South Africa is largely felt in industry. Interestingly, their lobbying for market-friendly land reform is in line with what the powers in government would prefer. However, recent policy pronouncement on land expropriation without compensation has created friction between white-dominated unions such as AgriSA and the state.

Zimbabwean Perspective

With regards to literature on state-commercial farmers' relations in Zimbabwe, Hodder Williams' work focused on the interactions of settler farmers and the state and he noted differences and areas of tensions between the state and settler farmers. The author decides to concentrate less on the attitudes and beliefs of white Rhodesians and places more focus on the historical, economic and social factors from which their political attitude and belief emerged. The core focus of the author was to analyse in depth the rise of social and economic institutions for a period in a specific rural community in order to shed insights on the politics of Rhodesia during this century. The author emphasises that this will illustrate the often- incongruent inter-play between central government policy and local demands.¹³⁰

Hodder Williams' study has, however, been criticised by other authors such as Pilosof who have labelled it a micro-narrative masquerading as a national study. Hodder Williams seems to have failed to live up to the promises he made in the title of his monograph. In justifying his case-study of Marandellas, Hodder Williams points to the issue

¹³⁰ H. Williams, *White Farmers in Rhodesia, 1890-1965: A History of the Marandellas District*, Palgrave and Macmillan, 1983, pg .1.

of accessibility as the driving force behind the choice. Nevertheless, his works are pertinent in showing the development of white agriculture and their dealings with the state during the 1960s. However, the deficiency in his works lies in his sole concentration on white farmers within a specific locality. In contrast, this research will broaden its angle to look at commercial farmers both white and black and their representative unions as well as assess their dealings with the state. Impartiality will also be key in providing robust analysis.

McKenzie's thesis examines commercial farmers' lobbying from 1963-1980. The author focuses attention on two major white farmer representatives the Rhodesian National Farmers Union (RNFU) and the Rhodesian Tobacco Association. The foundation of his study is premised on providing a historical narration of settler agriculture in Rhodesia and how farmer representatives merged to form (RNFU).¹³¹ The study covers the period commencing 1963 and discusses aspects which cover issues such as farm labour supply, and the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) and how it impacted on settler agricultural production as well as the sanctions that came after. McKenzie notes that agricultural leaders and the state had a symbiotic relationship in the face of sanctions:

The political preferences of agricultural leaders were clearly significant in their dealings with the government particularly in the early days of sanctions, most (RNFU) and (RTA) presidents saw maximum advantage in co-operating with a cabinet which they regarded as being basically sympathetic to farmers.¹³²

McKenzie's work is critical in laying a foundation for studies on white farming; it was used by Selby and Pillosof in their studies of white commercial farming. The two representative unions for white farmers during the colonial era (the RNFU and RTA), were crucial in the foundation of the Commercial Farmers Union, which is also captured by this study. McKenzie looks at the role of leaders in farmer unions in interacting with state officials and

¹³¹ J. A. McKenzie, 'Commercial Farmers in the governmental system of colonial Zimbabwe, 1963-1980', PhD Thesis, University of Zimbabwe, 1989, p50.

¹³² Ibid.

how this fostered good relations this study as with the case of Selby's works managed to analyse the role of leaders within farming bodies. However, the deficiency in McKenzie's work is that sole focus has been on white farmers, a gap which this research fills by including black farmers in its analysis and focusing on events in the post-colonial period.

Bratton, in looking at farmer organisations in Zimbabwe, highlights that Zimbabwe at independence had the strongest institutional infrastructure for agricultural research, extension and marketing. The country also had a vast array of agricultural interest groups representing diverse farmer preferences or a wide range of policy issues.¹³³ Bratton adds that white commercial farmers were favoured by public policy before independence in 1980, however in post-colonial Zimbabwe the state also shifted its focus towards empowerment of black farmers and their unions. In terms of the relationship between the state and farmers unions he states that,

the boundaries between the state and voluntary associations are often blurred in practice, not only because the state plays a role in chartering representative bodies, but also because public officials and civic leaders construct personal political ties.¹³⁴

This view is important to the study in terms of understanding how leaders of the farmers' organisations interacted with state officials. In support of the neo-patrimonial discourse, Bratton is of the opinion that within farmers' organisations in Zimbabwe, non-state elites sometimes sacrifice the autonomy of the associations they lead by collaborating with state-sponsored initiatives to structure interest representation.¹³⁵ This study values this input with regards to analysing the extent of democracy within farmer organisation. However, Bratton focuses his analysis on testing the neo-patrimonial theory on the creation of ZFU. This current study does not dwell on the internal organisation of farmer bodies only, but their

¹³³ M. Bratton "Micro- Democracy? The Merger of Farmer Unions in Zimbabwe", *African Studies*, Vol 37, 1, 1994, pp. 9-37.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

responses to the land question as well as their dealings with the government on the issue of land.

Stephen Burgess focuses his attention on the National Farmers Association of Zimbabwe (NFAZ) with regards to agricultural policy. He argues that NFAZ had a strong political voice to express demands for better prices, markets, transport and land. He further adds that at independence NFAZ aggregated and articulated small-holder demands nationally to policy makers who often responded favourably. NFAZ influence was also on land and thus it provided a political clout for communal farmers. The author points out the union of indigenous farmers in 1991 diminished the influence NFAZ and also destroyed the voice of communal farmers.¹³⁶

The insights provided by the Burgess on small-holder voices are also of importance to this study since it also explored state relations with black farmer representation. The study went further and also explored ZNFU and ICFU indigenous unions and assessed how they related with the state on issues of agricultural policy. This complemented the understanding of small-holder voices put forward by the Stephen Burges.

The institutional strength of organisations is critical in determining relations with stakeholders. Scott Taylor analyses the institutional strength of representative associations in Zimbabwe and assesses the nature of their relationship with the state. Taylor is of the opinion that in state-commercial farmers' relations, the white-managed CFU is more influential and extracts certain benefits from the state while the black run ICFU is neither influential nor is it a favourable beneficiary of policy or state largesse. Taylor dismisses the indigenous oriented ICFU influence on agricultural policy arguing that the leaders of the organisation failed to get

¹³⁶ S. F. Burgess, "Small-holder Voices and Rural Transformation in Zimbabwe and Kenya Compared", *Comparative Politics*, Vol 29,2,1997, pp. 127-149.

the attention of the government despite pursuing partisan politics to attract government's attention.¹³⁷

Taylor's analysis is important for the study in that it compares the lobbying influence of the CFU with that of indigenous unions such as ICFU. However, Taylor praises the CFU and attacks the ICFU despite it being a new organisation trying to cement itself in an arena dominated by the CFU. His approach seems to be clouded by issues of race hence tended to be biased in favour of the CFU. The study analysed both the CFU and indigenous farmers looking at their strategies in engaging the government on issues of agricultural policy and production. Taylor further examined the difficulties faced by indigenous organisations such as ICFU, which emerged in the 1990s, when it comes to influencing agricultural policy.

Selby's study on Commercial Farmers and the State in Zimbabwe analyses how commercial farmers interacted with the state and how the state and commercial farmers competed for access to and control of land and other resources. His major focus was on the CFU and its members and as a son of a white farmer he felt it necessary to convey white farmer experiences with the black government.¹³⁸ Selby's other study looks into the collapse of the alliance between the state and white farmers and dwells on such issues as radicalisation of land policy, lack of awareness by white farmers and weak counter strategies with regards to land reform.¹³⁹

Selby's works are crucial to the study especially his discussion of the CFU, its leadership and engagement with state officials on issues of land. However, the study transcends Selby's works by looking at the fragmentation of the CFU and emergence of

¹³⁷ S. D. Taylor, "Business and Politics in Zimbabwe's Commercial Agriculture Sector", *African Economic History*, Vol 27, 2, 1999, pp. 177-215.

¹³⁸ A. Selby, 'Commercial Farmers and the State: Interest Group Politics and Land Reform in Zimbabwe': PhD Thesis, University of Oxford, 2006, pg. 13.

¹³⁹ A. Selby, "Radical Realignment: The Collapse of the Alliance between the White Farmers and the State in Zimbabwe", 1995-2000, *Centre for International Development*, Queen Elizabeth House, Oxford, 2008, pg. 2.

splinter groups such as Justice for Agriculture (JAG); black farmer representation and how it related with the state; its tensions with the CFU; state support towards black farmers and analysis of the current discourse of compensation and the reaction of farming unions. Pilosof commends Selby's study and calls for deeper analysis on the dynamics of the land question in Zimbabwe. Pilosof asserts that, there is need for studies on the complexities of the white farming community, the new land occupiers and how they view the old owners, the state and the new situation.¹⁴⁰

Pilosof's study dwells on personal experiences of white farmers. The author justifies writing on white farmer voices by making the following statement:

White farmer voices have been severely under-represented in academic literature on post-colonial Zimbabwe, their voices have been at best neglected if not written out of so much of Africa's post-colonial history much to the literature's detriment.¹⁴¹

Pilosof uses Coopers' view that, "this is by no means an attempt to say that white voices or experiences are more important than black ones".¹⁴² The scholar further argues that any research piece on groups such as white elites, who have crafted ways to function and sustain their positions in independent African states, provides very useful perspectives into how the new black government conceive of the nation and ways to manage it.

Pilosof uses the '*The Farmer*' magazine of the CFU as a tool of analysis in looking at white farmer experiences. In an article on 'apoliticism' of white farmers, the author explores the fortunes of '*The Farmer*' magazine and how its main body the CFU controlled, censored and manipulated '*The Farmer*' and the coverage it gave to the growing crisis in

¹⁴⁰ R. Pilosof, "The Land Question (Un)Resolved: An Essay Review", *Historia*, Vol 53, 2, 2000, pp.270-279.

¹⁴¹ R. Pilosof, "The Unbearable Whiteness of Being: Land, Race and Belonging in the Memoirs of White Zimbabweans", *Historical*, Vol 61, 3, 2008, pp. 621-638.

¹⁴² F. Cooper, "Possibility and Constraint: African Independence in Historical Perspective", *African History*, Vol 49, 2, 2008, pp. 167-196.

Zimbabwe. Pilosof emphasises that in doing so, the white farming community was far from a cohesive entity. Pilosof argues that,

the CFU policy of apoliticism affected the freedom of ‘*The Farmer*’ at both times and ultimately led to the magazine closure in 2002. Apoliticism meant that the white farmers retreated from the political arena with the belief that this could safeguard their interests on land thereby ensuring survival.¹⁴³

Pilosof emphasises that the importance of ‘*The Farmer*’ as a source is that it offers the opportunity to explore the evolutions in discourse within the white farming community, the process of transition and the ambiguities of independence for a group like white farmers.¹⁴⁴

White farmer voices can inform our understanding of white farmer experiences with regards to the land question in Zimbabwe. The study values ‘*The Farmer*’ as a source of evidence with regards to the happenings within the CFU and the community of white farmers. However, the study will not engage in the debate of whiteness since it has no relevance to this research. It moves away from Pilosof’s and Selby’s narratives that focus more on understanding white farmer experiences. This analysis will also involve rigorous scrutiny of splinter groups within the CFU, the emergence of black farmer representatives and their dealings with the state as well as their interactions with the CFU. The study analyses the current discourse of compensation and the reaction of farmer unions.

Selby’s latest work explores the strategic repositioning of commercial farmers across the independence transition period in Zimbabwe. Selby illustrates that crucial questions about commercial farmers and their positions within white society during the transition period have not been answered convincingly and notes the following about white farmers’ role in pre-independence and post-independence transition process in Zimbabwe:

¹⁴³ R. Pilosof, “Remaining Apolitical in a Political Crisis, Exploring Interest Group Politics”, *Developing Societies*, Vol 26, 1, 2010, pp 71-97.

¹⁴⁴ R. Pilosof, “For Farmers by Farmers Using ‘*The Farmer*’ Magazine to write the history of white farmers in Zimbabwe, 1980-2002,” *Media History*, 2013, Vol 19, 1, pp. 32-44.

White politics during the transition period was more complex than the contemporary discourse suggests, and white farmers were increasingly pro-active in the political process of negotiation and transition. This has important implications for the subsequent land debate and questions of farmer resistance during this time.¹⁴⁵

Selby's analysis will be useful to the study, in particular his discussion on white farmers' participation in the Lancaster House deliberations of independence and the tactics they used to relate with the new government after independence.

The latest book by Denis Norman provides a testimony by a man who served as a government minister for seventeen years. It is a record of events from the inside. He begins the book by tracing his life in Oxfordshire in England where he was born in 1931 into a family involved in farming. Twenty-two years later he travelled to Southern Rhodesia and became an assistant on a tobacco farm.¹⁴⁶ In describing his life at that time he mentions that, "there was no electricity, and very poor water supply, we were back to paraffin burning fridges, a wood –burning stove and light provided by paraffin-burning lamps".

The most significant changes in Norman's life occurred when he purchased himself a farm and began to rise in the white farming community by then under RNFU. Political influences in farming communities, according to him, were very strong and in particular Smith's Unilateral Declaration of Independence in 1965, which positively and negatively affected the white farming community. His eventual appointment to the presidency of the RNFU, now CFU, also coincided with the Lancaster House agreement and Norman attended the talks on behalf of the CFU and his reflection of the Lancaster House talks is that,

¹⁴⁵ A. Selby, "From 'Open Season', to 'Royal Game': The Strategic Repositioning of Commercial Farmers across the Independence Transition in Zimbabwe", *Centre for International Development*, Queen Elizabeth House, Oxford, 2016, pg. 3-4.

¹⁴⁶ D. Norman, *The Odd Man in Mugabe's White-hand Man*, Weaver Press, 2018, Harare.

to many observers, it was considered to be the last chance to obtain a reasonable agreement which would satisfy or pacify all political shades of opinion, despite in many quarters hopes not being very high.¹⁴⁷

Shortly after the talks, elections were conducted, and Denis Norman was persuaded by Lord Soames to become a minister of agriculture in the first black government. In describing the former President Robert Mugabe he said, “I worked closely with Mugabe and witnessed his initial pragmatism and inclusiveness deteriorate over time through corruption and bad judgement and ill advices.”¹⁴⁸

On the significance of him being in government as white person, Norman regards it as important in calming the fears of the white farming community especially the fear of losing land to the new government. In cementing relations between the CFU and the state, Norman became the communication link between the two and gives praise to John Laurie, the CFU president from 1984, with whom they had a great working relationship. He also had a good working relationship with indigenous farming groups, in particular ZNFU led by Gary Magadzire, and he also pushed for the merger of the farming unions. Norman also admits that things took a turn for the worst when,

the whole decision-making process within the country began to slow down as those who should have been responsible for keeping the wheels of government turning, were incapable of doing so either through idleness or incompetence.¹⁴⁹

To him, bad decisions were on the military operations in Congo and farm invasions, which badly affected agriculture. As for the future of the country, Norman is of the opinion that, “much could be achieved over a ten-year recovery period, agriculture was and could become once again, the pivotal industry in the country.”¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

Denis Norman's views are important in that they give inside information from a man who was in government heading the key Ministry of Agriculture dealing with land matters and farmers groups. His views will be of great importance in analysing state-commercial farmer relations in post-colonial Zimbabwe.

Ethical Considerations

All informants were assured that their contributions were required for the purposes of a thesis and were guaranteed of their security and confidentiality. On those that chose to be anonymous they have been recognised in the study as such. In instances where informants wanted their identities known, despite sensitivity of the information, this has also been done within the study. Those that did not want to speak or engage in issues were respected. The research has treated each contribution with outmost importance and will not endanger any informants. Those that have contributed with sensitive files have remained anonymous for security reasons.

Structure of the Thesis

The introduction sets the stage and introduces the study on state-commercial farmers' relations in post-colonial Zimbabwe. Focus is on the following: introduction, background, conceptual framework, significance of the study, limitations of the study, statement of the problem, objectives, research questions, research methodology, literature review and ethical considerations. These help to give context to the study of state-commercial farmers' relations.

Chapter One analyses state-commercial farmers' relations from 1980-1992. It argues that partnership between the state and the white farming community represented by the CFU was as a result of the fact that the state could not acquire land due to restrictions imposed by the sunset clauses of the negotiated Lancaster House constitution. This gave a grace period to white farmers to continue with the business of farming without any problems from the state

with regards to land reform. Closer communication ties between the state and the white farming community were attributed to close relations between government officials and the leadership of the CFU. Black farmer organisations such as ZNFU and NFAZ were in existence at independence and attempts were made for them to work with the CFU under the Joint Presidents Agricultural Committee (JPAC). Attempts were also made by the government to create an umbrella organisation for all farming groups in Zimbabwe resulting in the formation of the ZFU. However, the expiry of the sunset clauses after ten years marks the beginning of tensions between the state and CFU as the state could now kick start land acquisition. The collapse of communication channels as a result of undiplomatic characters in leadership positions from both the government and the CFU contributed to the deterioration of relations. In 1990 there was an announcement of a new Land Policy which signalled the intention of the state to acquire land, setting the stage for tensions between the state and the CFU. The state also supported the indigenisation drive to achieve black economic empowerment and within that realm, the Indigenous Commercial Farmers Association (ICFA) was formed; the CFU tried without success to lobby the group to exist within its ranks. The formation of ZFU coincided with the passage of the Land Acquisition Act of 1992 signifying the beginning of rivalry between the CFU and indigenous farmers groups.

The second chapter examines why there were increasing tensions between the state and the white farming community from 1992-2001. It argues that the tensions increased due to the state's determination to acquire land. The Land Acquisition Act of 1992 sets the tone for a series of state attempts to acquire land. With such determined efforts by the state to acquire land, tensions between the state and CFU began to increase. There were other factors such as the collapse of communication channels between the state and the CFU; the 1992 drought, which exposed the variances in responses from the CFU, ZFU and ICFU; the emergence of the MDC and white farmers' embracing of the party leading to political

reawakening of the white farming community; the involvement of white farmers in the constitutional referendum by mobilising their farm workers to vote NO, which resulted in ZANU PF experiencing its first electoral loss as well as the beginning of farm invasions culminating into the *Third Chimurenga*.

Chapter Three looks at farm invasions and their implications on state-commercial farmers' relations. It argues that the farm invasions were well coordinated with the war veterans being immune to any criminal prosecution for their actions of targeting white farmers. Relations between the state and CFU had collapsed. Attempts by white farmers to counter the invasions were unsuccessful because the state could use its institutions such as the police and the army to counter any action by the white farmers. The reaction of the black farming unions, of condemning the invasions, is different from that of the immediate beneficiaries of the invasions who regarded the invasions as marking an end to white farmer discrimination in commercial agriculture. Lack of cohesion among white farmers during this period led to the emergence of splinter groups such as JAG claiming to represent the evicted white farmers. JAG stance has been to confront the state with demands for fair compensation for evicted farmers. Since the white farmers were no-longer central in agriculture, the focus of the state shifted towards supporting black farming unions.

The fourth chapter explains why black farmer organisations emerged and argues that the following factors are central: racial exclusivity of the CFU and the resistance of the CFU to be part of the merger which led to the creation of the ZFU. In composition, the ZFU was dominated by ZNFU, which represented small scale farmers, and NFAZ which represented communal farmers. The presence of the political hand in the creation of ZFU undermines the independence of the organisation and explains why the leadership of the group are prepared to advance the interests of the state and pursue their selfish agenda. In addition, within ZFU

there are also rivalries between ZNFU and NFAZ. This creates instability within the organisation. The emergence of the Indigenous Commercial Farmers Association (ICFA) and the politics of engaging with the government to get a union status, illustrates that the state became a hindrance to the growth of indigenous organisations. The indigenisation drive and its quest to promote black economic empowerment expose how individuals like Boka manipulated the process to acquire wealth and increase their influence within the government.

In Chapter Five the study examines state support measures to new farmers from 2000-2018. With determination to ensure that black farmers' under the Zimbabwe Farmers Union succeed, the state put up a raft of measures which include champion farmer, operation *maguta*, farm mechanisation programme and the recent command agriculture. At the heart of the support mechanisms is the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe, but its involvement has also created criticism as the bank is accused of diverting from its mandate of being the lender of last resort. These support measures have also not been immune to abuse and corruption by senior government officials working closely with community leaders in some cases.

The sixth chapter analyses the politics of compensation being pursued by the administration in power. This has coincided with the efforts of the administration to re-engage with western investors. Compensation is mainly for improvements made by evicted white farmers under the CFU. There have been varied reactions from the farming unions and farmers with the CFU welcoming the gesture, but also urging caution on the amount being given against economic realities. On the part of the black farmers, ZFU leadership has described the process as noble and necessary in finding closure to the contentious issue of land reform. The leadership of ICFU has also described the move as positive in concluding the land reform. Most white farmers welcome the gesture. However, some have complained

that the payment is not enough considering the developments that were done on farms, most of them are old and poverty stricken and in an inflationary environment the money does not adequately compensate them. Black farmers regard the process as betrayal considering how, historically, colonial authorities forcefully acquired land and have not paid compensation to black people who suffered from the alienation of their land. Paying compensation to white farmers is also seen as a departure from the liberation ethos and pan African agenda reinforced by former leader Robert Mugabe, which is land ownership for landless blacks. Regional developments in South Africa, which is pursuing land expropriation without compensation, is an interesting case given that the ANC led government intends to implement it without following the Zimbabwean style and threatening investor confidence. Threats from AgriSA for a lawsuit against the measure will certainly be a real test to the ANC government. Namibia, led by SWAPO, is currently calling for a muscular approach to deal with land reform and replace the current willing-seller-willing-buyer dispensation. The SWAPO led government is calling for land expropriation with fair compensation and how to implement this with government accused of corruption and claiming not have funding for land is also a real challenge.

In concluding the study, the main argument advanced in the thesis is that state-commercial farmers' relations were influenced by the emotive politics of land distribution in Zimbabwe. State-commercial farmers' relations in the 1980s were characterised by partnership because the sunset clauses of the Lancaster House constitution restricted any manoeuvres by the state to acquire land. This gave white farmers a grace period to continue the business of farming without restrictions. In the 1990s, once the sunset clauses expired, the state could now begin land acquisition which marked the beginning of tensions with white farmers. In need of strong support among farmer unions on compulsory acquisition of land, the state initiated moves for the emergence of an umbrella body for farmer organisations,

which was dominated by indigenous smallholder and communal farmers since the CFU resisted to be part of the group. The beginning of farm invasions represents the highest level of tension between the state and the white farming community. The land invasions showed that the CFU was no longer central to land and agricultural policy. Black farmers welcomed the invasions since they led to the collapse of white dominance in agriculture and the rise of black commercial farming. The current drive of compensation is also an attempt to repair relations with the white farming community. However, some black farmers have expressed concerns and choose to see the process as rewarding colonialism.

CHAPTER 1

STATE-COMMERCIAL FARMERS' RELATIONS FROM (1980-1992)

This chapter looks at the relationship between farmers' organisations and the state from 1980-1992. The chapter unpacks how the Lancaster House Agreement adopted the willing-seller-willing-buyer sunset clauses in dealing with the land question. The chapter then analyses the farming bodies that existed at independence and their role with regards to agricultural policy and production. The chapter then examines the relations between the state and the CFU during the willing-seller-willing-buyer dispensation. Analysis of the relations between the state and the CFU will also consider the following factors: actions taken by the new black government to reach out to white farmers and the response of white farmers to reconciliation gestures by the government.

The chapter analyses the connection between leaders of the CFU and government officials and how this connection helped to create cordial relations. The chapter also examines the relationship between the CFU and black farmer representations such as the ICFU, ZNFU and NFAZ. The chapter also looks at the expiry of the sunset clauses of the Lancaster House Agreement and the implications of the expiry of such clauses on relations between the state and the CFU. The chapter then analyses the impact of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme on commercial farmers and farming unions. The chapter concludes the discussion by examining the emergence of the ZFU and its stance on the land question as well pointing out its rivalry with the CFU.

The Lancaster House Agreement and the land question

The Lancaster House Agreement (LHA) of 1979 paved the way for majority rule in Zimbabwe through the ballot that saw Robert Mugabe rise to power, ending Ian Smith's

Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) of 1965.¹ Magaramombe notes that the agreement covered ceasefire, elections, independence and provided a negotiated constitution.² Represented at the conference were the British Government, the Zimbabwe Rhodesia Administration and the Patriotic Front led by Robert Mugabe and Joshua Nkomo. Within the discussions at Lancaster House land reform took centre stage. The UK government agreed to contribute to the costs of financing compensation to white farmers willing to sell their land and rally the support of the international donor community. The British government sought resolutions from Kenya's experience. Kenya also experienced a land problem, and the British sought to diffuse the problem by buying out white farmers.³ It was hoped that a similar solution could be applied to the land issue in Zimbabwe. Financial assistance in the manner of a development fund would be used to attract the liberation movements to come to an agreement with the Rhodesian government. With regards to the fund, the British accepted to give 75 million pounds to purchase farms owned by whites who did not want to continue to farm in a new Zimbabwe.⁴

Farmers and business leaders embraced the prospects of the Lancaster House conference. White farmers had the following concerns; they were worried on whether they would be allowed to continue with commercial farming and whether they would be given compensation in the event of losing land. A negotiated settlement restricted the chances of a radical land reform. With regards to why ZANU PF had to negotiate, the reasons were that Britain and the Frontline States applied pressure for a negotiated settlement backing it with

¹ V. Nyawo-Shava and S. L. Barnard, "The Trajectory of Land Reform in Zimbabwe: Post-independence era 1980-2000", *Contemporary History*, Vol 35, 1, 2010, pp. 62-80.

² G. Magaramombe, "Rural Poverty: Commercial farm workers and land reform in Zimbabwe", Paper presented at SARN Conference on Land Reform and Poverty Alleviation in Southern Africa, Pretoria 4-5 June, 2001, Pg. 22.

³ R. Palmer, "Land Reform in Zimbabwe 1980-1990", *African Affairs*, Vol 89, 355, 1990, pp. 163-181.

⁴ V. Z. Nyawo and S. L. Barnard, 'The Trajectory of Land Reform in Zimbabwe Post-Independence era 1980-2000'.

the threat that financial and symbolic support would be stopped and secondly after the exposure of Nkomo's secret meetings with Smith, Mugabe realised the danger of being excluded and isolated. Thirdly the nationalists were not ready for a rapid and large-scale take over and did not share clear objectives. They also lacked the experienced of administration, so a negotiated transition was an ideal avenue.⁵

A crucial aspect of the Lancaster House constitution was the 'Land Clause' contained the Bill of Rights, it forbidden the large-scale re-distribution of farms, reduced compulsory acquisition of under-utilised land and assured compensation. The specific protection of white interests grew from the view that their ability to influence land matters was about to be diminished considerably. The Patriotic Front had outrightly refused to recognise the 'Land Clause' in advance and was convinced that they would be an immediate large- scale land reform without compensation.⁶

Dennis Norman the President of RNFU which changed to CFU travelled to London during the negotiations to gather support for a well coordinated land reform programme using his 1976 land policy position paper. His presence at the talks led to criticism from the Zimbabwe-Rhodesia delegation who believed that a RNFU presence was not required. David Smith inquired if there was lack of confidence in the Zimbabwe- Rhodesia delegation and asked, "Whether Mr Norman thought he could do better than himself and Mr Cronje".⁷

According to CFU minutes, Norman's presence at the Lancaster House conference was, to ensure that the CFU had representation, to press on the need of compensation and highlight concerns towards the various positions on land that were being advanced by the

⁵ C. Stoneman and L. Cliffe *Zimbabwe, Politics, Economics and Society*, Pinter, London, 1989.

⁶ A. Selby, 'From Open Season to Royal Game', 'The Strategic Repositioning of Commercial Farmers across the Independence Transition in Zimbabwe 1972-1985', *Queen Elizabeth*, Oxford, 2016.

⁷ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting 31 October 1979- Section on deliberations with what transpired at Lancaster House Conference.

Patriotic Front, government delegation and the British government.⁸ Norman was requested to put forward a land policy and submitted the version of the willing–seller-willing-buyer paper upon which the negotiated constitution was to be anchored.⁹ The Bill of Rights clause protected the interests of the white farming community and restricted the ability of those attaining power to push for a radical land reform which was expected by their constituency. The lobbying power of the CFU was a clear indication for those coming into power to try by all means to craft a working arrangement with the union so as to ensure that it does not become a threat to those in power.

In place of the fund, a compromise solution was also reached. In exchange for assuring existing property rights for white farmers in Zimbabwe for ten years, the UK government would meet half the costs of resettlement needed.¹⁰ There was no provision in the Lancaster House Agreement to establish a specific fund to support land reform, however the British government did play a full part around the International Zimbabwe Donor’s Conference (ZIMCORD) of March 1981. At that conference, more than 630 million pounds of aid was pledged with Britain encouraging donors to take part by responding generously to Zimbabwe’s requirements.¹¹

Land reform during the Lancaster decade in Zimbabwe was state focused. The government was the main buyer of land this depended on broader settlement planning framework established by the government. The onus was on the government in deciding to

⁸ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting 10 October 1979- CFU position to be presented at Lancaster House.

⁹ CFU Council Meeting Minutes of 31 October 1979, Deliberations of what transpired at Lancaster House Negotiations.

¹⁰ I. Mandaza, ‘The Political Economy of Transition,’ in I. Mandaza (ed.), *Zimbabwe: Political Economy of Transition*, Dakar, Codesria, 1986.

¹¹ C. Stoneman, *Zimbabwe’s Prospects’: Issues of Race, Class, State and Capital*, London, Macmillan Publishers, 1988.

buy available land on the market or provide one year no present interest certificate, which allowed private buyers to purchase land that was advertised.¹²

Under the market-based land acquisition approach, the landholders, to large extent, determine the amount, location, quality and cost of land, meaning that land reform was controlled by them. It could also mean that the pace, meaningfulness and genuineness of the programme were largely meant to protect their own interests. It also would mean that the government and the beneficiaries alike could not drive the process in terms of their needs and their urgency.¹³

The willing–seller-willing-buyer principle provided white commercial farmers a grace period to weigh their options with regards to land ownership and farming. Space would also be made available to allow financial assistance to trickle in for the purpose of compensating those leaving.¹⁴ There would be immediate re-distribution of land by the new post-colonial state. The state’s hands were tied by phrases that indicated that by agreeing to the Lancaster House Agreement (LHA) the parties that participated undertook among other things to, respect and adhere to the constitution and comply with the pre-independence arrangements. The state did however, retain the right to expropriate land for public resettlement purposes, but compensation had to be paid in foreign currency.¹⁵ The state was also mandated to pay white commercial farmers who had opted to sell their land and would specify what currency they preferred to be paid in, depending partly on the country they had relocated to. This stipulation would, however, be subject to a constitutional amendment in the

¹² T. Lebert, “Backgrounder-land and agrarian reform in Zimbabwe”, Working Paper by National Land Committee, Pg.7.

¹³ S. Moyo, ‘The Land Question,’ in I Mandaza (ed), *Zimbabwe: The Political Economy of Transition*, 1980-1986, Dakar, Codesria, 1986.

¹⁴ R. Palmer, ‘Land Reform in Zimbabwe, 1980-1990’.

¹⁵ H. Moyana, *The Political Economy of Land in Zimbabwe*, Mambo Press, Gweru, 1984.

1990s.¹⁶ With regards to agrarian transformation, the hands of the new government were effectively tied since any significant redistribution of land was ruled out. The bottom line of the principle was to protect white commercial farmers and their interests.

As Palmer and Cliffe note, the government was well aware that 90 percent of the country's needs in terms of food requirements were being produced by white farmers following the deterioration of peasant agriculture. Peasant agriculture had not been successful as a result of factors such as lack of financial subsidies, unavailability of a market locally and abroad coupled with deliberate efforts to remove them. In the end, the peasant farmers were reduced to subsistence farming producing only for their families and not contributing economically towards the economy of Rhodesia.¹⁷

This meant that the commercial white farmers were left alone to enjoy the viability of the agricultural sector. Thus, they were regarded as the silos of the nation and this also earned them immense respect. According to Nyawo and Barnard such respect had given them a bargaining chip and edge over the rest to the extent of having a political say in decision-making forums and this was detrimental to the black farmer, who had no recognition, and no authority nor voice to be meaningful. The principle of willing-seller-willing-buyer helped the white farmer from the brink of doom given the uncertainty of a new black government with regards to land reform. In fact, white farmers occupied a strong position because the new government was well aware of the implications of a radical stance to land reform.¹⁸

¹⁶ S.Moyo, *The Land Question in Zimbabwe*, Sapes, Harare, 1995.

¹⁷ R. Palmer, 'Land Reform in Zimbabwe 1980-1990', Cliffe points out that when it comes to food production white farmers were dominant and were able to meet the country's food requirements. Cliffe adds that peasant production had dropped in the early 1980s due to a variety of factors notably lack of subsidies and lack of markets, L. Cliffe, "Zimbabwe's Agricultural Success and Food Security", *Review of African Political Economy*, Vol 43, 2, 1988, pp. 4-25.

¹⁸ V. Z. Nyawo and S. L. Barnard, 'The trajectory of Land Reform in Zimbabwe: Post Independence era 1980-2000.'

The fact that the agriculture sector of 1980 was a formidable pillar for economic growth meant that a decision to embark on land reform would not be economically favourable. To reform land would be to disrupt the progress and growth the country was enjoying, and this scenario favoured white commercial farmers. It also follows that the one who had an economic leverage would have an upper hand in politics. In addition, they had the leverage to manipulate their economic and political importance.¹⁹

They had the leverage to manipulate their economic advantage to influence policies. It could not be imagined that they may use money to frustrate and discourage change as well as threaten to stop producing food or raw materials if their positions or privileges were not respected. However, it was possible to place conditionalities before any transformative policies could be passed. This was the advantage of the white farmers such that abuse went on under the guise of the promotion of the county's economic growth; this meant that not much land changed hands between 1980 and 1990.²⁰

According to Norman, in the life span of the Lancaster Agreement about 8,5 million acres of land were purchased from whites by mutual consent and paid for by the UK to the tune of 44 million pounds in aid. However, the number of blacks resettled on this land fell short of the government target of over one million. Norman adds that part of those resettled people abandoned the land because of lack of financial, material and technical support.²¹

Farming groups that existed at independence

There were three main lobby groups in the agricultural sector, each representing a different scale of producer. To begin with, the Commercial Farmers Union, its history can be

¹⁹ R. Riddle, 'Zimbabwe's Land Problem: The Central Issue,' in W. H. Morris (ed.), *From Rhodesia to Zimbabwe Behind and Beyond Lancaster House*, Toronto, 1980.

²⁰ I. Mandaza, "The State and Politics in Post-White Settler Colonial Situation in Zimbabwe" in I. Mandaza (ed.) *The Political Economy of Transition 1980-1986*, Codesria, Dakar, 1986.

²¹ A. Norman, *Robert Mugabe and the Betrayal of Zimbabwe*, London, 2004.

traced back as early as 1890. During this time the Rhodesian Landowners and Farmers Association were established; Hodder Williams describes them more as land speculators rather ordinary settler farmers.²² However, the settler farmers viewed these bodies as crucial in advancing their interests and helping in the organisation of agriculture. The Rhodesian Agricultural Union was formed in 1903 and it was based in Mashonaland; it was again an attempt to organise settler agriculture. The first edition of the Rhodesian Agriculture Journal was published the same year. In 1905 the Matabeleland Farmers Association was formed to advance the interests of farmers in that region who were mostly involved in ranching.²³

Around 1920s large scale commercial farming had grown in the country to such an extent that it was represented by two main provincial bodies namely Matabeleland Farmers Association and the Rhodesian Agricultural Union. In 1942 it was evident to farmers that there was need for one national body to represent the interests of commercial agriculture and as a result the Matabeleland Farmers Association and Rhodesian Agricultural Union merged to form the Rhodesian Farmers National Union (RNFU), which also incorporated the Rhodesian Tobacco Association as a commodity branch. At independence RNFU changed its name to the Commercial Farmers Union (CFU).²⁴

Bratton notes that from a peak membership of some 6500 members in the 1970s, the CFU membership stood at about 4000 at independence and at about 4500 in 1991. The CFU is governed by an elected council which comprises a president and vice president, eight regional branch chairmen representing seventy-three local farmers associations. The fact that the union has a compulsory membership under the law, it also charges a levy on the produce of its members and has investments in agribusiness enterprises, which makes the organization

²² H. R. Williams, *White Farmers in Rhodesia 1980-1965: A History of the Marandellas District*, London, Macmillan, 1983.

²³ H. R. Williams, 'White Farmers in Rhodesia 1980-1965'

²⁴ J. A. Mckenzie, 'Commercial Farmers in the Governmental System of Colonial Zimbabwe, 1963-1980, PhD Thesis', University of Zimbabwe, 1985.

financially self-sufficient. Administratively and technically, the CFU resembles a first world institution supported by a permanent salaried staff of 120 persons. In addition, it provides an array of research, analytic, advisory and advocacy services to members.²⁵

There were also groups advancing the interests of black farmers. The Zimbabwe National Farmers Union (ZNFU) which started as the Bantu Farmers Union in mid 1930s was later renamed the African Farmers Union in 1942 and ZNFU in 1980. It was formed to represent the special interests of small holder farmers who owned private farms in the then African Purchase Areas. These areas constitute what is now known as the small-scale commercial sector. The African Purchase Areas contain farms in the range of 20 to 200 hectares, with farms mostly averaging 80 hectares. It can be noted that the farmers in this subsector aspire to commercial production, use intermediate levels of agricultural technology, and employ seasonal labour. At independence, the ZNFU membership stood at 9500, rising to around 12,500 by 1991 with the addition of urban plot-holders though, in practice, only about one-third of this number had paid up licences.²⁶ Bratton argues that like the CFU, the ZNFU drew its financial strength from a levy on its members' agricultural sales as authorized under the Farmers Licensing and Levy Act of 1971.²⁷ With such kind of resources, the ZNFU ran a modest programme emphasizing advocacy on producer price, agricultural credit and water development.

Another grouping, the National Farmers Association of Zimbabwe (NFAZ) represented the majority of Zimbabwe's farmers, namely the peasant cultivators who have use-rights to two to four hectares of arable land and share communal grazing. The association

²⁵ M. Bratton, 'Micro-Democracy? The Merger of Farmers Union in Zimbabwe.'

²⁶ M. Bratton, "Farmer Organisations and Food Production in Zimbabwe," *World Development*, Vol 14, 3, 1986 pp.367-384.

²⁷ M. Bratton, "The Comrades and the Countryside: The Politics of Agricultural Policy in Zimbabwe", *World Politics*, Vol 39, 2, 1987, pp. 174-202.

was born in 1980, NFAZ originated in Masvingo formerly Victoria, it started as Master Farmer movement. After independence, the NFAZ successfully expanded its base to include uncertified and women farmers from communal areas countrywide. Membership of the association peaked in 1988 with some 4000 clubs, 85000 paid up members and 150 000 occasional adherents. However, two years later these numbers declined. Interesting to note is that more than half of the members, though none of its national leaders, were women.²⁸

By the late 1980s, with financial support from external donors, the NFAZ established and staffed an administrative structure with headquarters in Harare and field officers in every provincial capital. Its main activities were to represent the needs, especially for transport and marketing depots, of farm households that were breaking into agricultural marketing. The association was registered as a welfare organization under the Societies Act and was recognized by the government as the legitimate representative of communal and resettlement farmers countrywide.²⁹ These agricultural interest groups came to play influential roles in national politics in Zimbabwe.

The CFU was also able to respond to the government's withdrawal of agricultural research and extension services for commercial farmers by mounting a parallel set of private services for its members.³⁰ According to Mathai, the vibrancy of the CFU was only matched by that of the Kenya Planters Cooperative Union (KPCU), an influential coffee association in Kenya. At the time of Zimbabwe's independence in 1980, ZNFU and NFAZ were the only self-managed national smallholder unions on the continent.³¹ Barnett argues that, in other countries smallholder unions were either limited to particular regions such as the Gezira

²⁸ S. F. Burgess, "Small-holder Voice and Rural Transformation: Zimbabwe and Kenya compared", *Comparative Politics*, Vol 29, No 2, 1997, pp.127-149.

²⁹ M. Bratton, 'Farmer Organisations and Food Production in Zimbabwe'.

³⁰ S. D. Taylor, "Business and Politics in Zimbabwe's Commercial Agriculture Sector", *African Economic History*, Vol 27, 2, 1999, pp. 177-215.

³¹ J. K. Mathai, *Coffee in the Kenyan Economy: An Economic Analysis*, Nairobi, East Africa Literature Bureau, 1974.

Tenants Union in Sudan.³² In Zimbabwe, the ZNFU and NFAZ helped organize smallholders to respond positively to production and marketing incentives made available by the new ZANU PF government.

Bratton observes that while farmer unions were created by the blessing of the state, they had institutional autonomy. The CFU and ZNFU were established through legislation requiring farmers to be licensed and levied by the unions while the NFAZ, prompted into existence by government agricultural extension staff, received a small operating grant from the public budget.³³ The law of Zimbabwe stipulates that farmer unions are independent private associations over which the ruling party and cabinet ministers have no legal authority. The constitutions of the unions highlight that the principal objective is to protect and advance the interests of farmers and the promotion and development of a viable agricultural industry.³⁴ The organisations' constitutions further make it clear that they are to remain apolitical.

The Commercial Farmers Union and the State (1980-1992)

This section analyses the relations between CFU and the state during the willing-buyer-willing-seller dispensation. The relationship between the government and the white farming community underwent numerous revisions and changes. According to Rukuni the victory of ZANU (PF) in the 1980 elections came as a rude surprise to most of the white farmers. Considering the stance taken by ZANU PF during the liberation struggle pertaining to matters of land, concern and dismay were justified on the part of the white farmers.³⁵ Miller adds that there was tremendous fear within the farming community on the basis that

³² T. Barnet, 'The Gezira Scheme: Production of Cotton and the Reproduction of Underdevelopment,' in *Beyond the Sociology of Development*, I Oxaal (ed), London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975, pp. 183-207.

³³ M. Bratton, 'Micro-Democracy? The Merger of Farmer Unions in Zimbabwe'.

³⁴ M. Bratton, 'Farmer Organisations and Food Production in Zimbabwe'.

³⁵ M. Rukuni, Report to the *Commission of Enquiry into Appropriate Agricultural Land Tenure Systems*, Harare Government of Zimbabwe, 1994.

ZANU PF success would lead to the complete destruction of white agriculture.³⁶ The fear of white farmers is summarised in this statement by Miller,

More than paper promises are required if there is to be a renewal of confidence of those whose skills and expertise are vital components to the welfare, prosperity and development of this land, and foremost among these with the know-how are farmers whose confidence has been severely tested and who stand to lose most through the implementation of foolish political doctrine which is directly responsible for so much chaos in the Third World, to now lose confidence of agriculture and in agriculture-can only spell national disaster.³⁷

Hill adds that during this period of independence, sentiments of white farmers were that of,

fear, fear of economic uncertainty in the new Zimbabwe, fear of losing jobs and property, fear of being outnumbered and humiliated, fear of the black man's latent frustration and violence.³⁸

However, despite this overwhelming concern by farmers, the new government at independence made significant overtures to calm down the fears of white farmers. The remarks of Prime Minister Mugabe were key in establishing relations between the state and white farmers and white farmers did not expect the reconciliation message,

If yesterday I fought you as an enemy, today you have become a friend and an ally with the same interest, loyalty, rights and duties as myself. If yesterday you hated me, today you cannot avoid the love that binds you to me and me to you, the wrongs of the past must now stand forgiven and forgotten.³⁹

Dennis Norman's Influence

Dennis Norman's appointment as the new Minister of Agriculture was another attempt by the government to reassure whites and the white farming community that their position in a new Zimbabwe was safe. A deal was struck between the Prime Minister and Lord Soames to appoint Denis Norman as the Minister of Agriculture. The Prime Minister perceived this appointment to be pragmatic and technical. Dennis Norman had initially rejected it and even

³⁶ B. Miller 'Vuka Viewpoint', *The Farmer*, 15 March, 1980, pg.3.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ D. Hills, *The Last Days of White Rhodesia*, London, Chatto and Windus, 1981.

³⁹ 'Prime Minister's Reconciliation Speech on 17 April 1980' adapted from *The Herald* 17 April 1980.

when the announcement of the cabinet was done he still had not agreed to take the role.⁴⁰ However, he embraced the appointment and was aware of the challenges he faced. In commenting on Denis Norman's appointment, John Laurie former President of the CFU (1980-1982) said, "Denis Norman helped to steady the ship and prevent turmoil in Zimbabwe immediately post-independence in 1980".⁴¹

The Director of CFU Gilpin had this to say in describing the move of appointing Denis Norman in cabinet and as a Minister of Agriculture,

It was a smart move by the Prime Minister Mugabe, Denis Norman was highly respected in the farming community and being a white person in a black government was very much appealing to the white farmers who had become so unsure of their future in a new Zimbabwe.⁴²

When Prince Charles arrived in Harare for the independence ceremony, Mugabe in introducing Denis Norman to the prince said, "My minister of agriculture, who knows nothing about politics", and Prince Charles in reply said, "Well I sincerely hope that he knows something about agriculture".⁴³

In his acceptance speech upon receiving a farming 'Oscar' in 1981, Denis Norman urged the white farming community to throw their weight behind, stating that

I have the privilege and it is a privilege of serving in the greatest team of all, the team of the government, under the guardianship of the greatest captain of all that is Prime Minister Robert Mugabe.⁴⁴

The importance of this statement was its attempt to rally white farmer confidence and support towards the new government led by Prime Minister Mugabe. Norman still felt that this

⁴⁰ D. Norman, *The Odd Man in Mugabe's White hand Man*, Weaver Press, Harare, 2018.

⁴¹ "Tributes to the late Minister of Agriculture", *The Times UK*, accessed at www.thetimes.co.uk on 16 January 2020.

⁴² Interview with CFU director Ben Gilpin in Harare on 18 March 2018.

⁴³ D. Norman 'The Odd Man in Mugabe's White-Hand Man'.

⁴⁴ CFU archives Batch No 14 1981 – The farming 'Oscars' is a self congratulatory award, presented annually to a prominent member of the farming community for contributions to agriculture.'

confidence was lacking. The CFU leadership had played a role in the negotiations at Lancaster and this call was for fellow members to be on-board. Denis Norman was key in providing a useful channel of communication between the farming community and the government. He was instrumental in dealing with ‘awkward situations and handling politicians’ in their dealings with the government. He was nicknamed, ‘Nothing Wrong Norman’ because of his penchant of focusing on the positive despite being faced with difficult situations.⁴⁵

According to Bratton, from the early days of independence, the government of Zimbabwe pursued a corporatist agenda which included structuring interest representation through a single interlocutor in each sector. The government promoted the principle of one sector, one union for industry, labour and the public service. In the agricultural sector, the government called for an amalgamated union to speak with one voice for all farmers regardless of scale of production. Several ministers of agriculture raised the issue upon assuming office, reflecting their own preferences and instructions coming from the highest executive levels of government. Prime Minister Mugabe was said to be in favour of union merger as means of rectifying inherited economic imbalances between races and consolidating ZANU PF influence over the countryside.⁴⁶

Dennis Norman as the Minister of Agriculture also worked tirelessly to advocate for a merger between the CFU and ZNFU. These unions reached an agreement in principle on the formation of the Zimbabwe Farmers Union. The logic of starting with large and small-scale commercial farmers was that their members were similarly oriented to market production on privately owned land. However, the agreement broke down in October 1981 over disputes with regards to the distribution of ZFU Council seats and the government’s last

⁴⁵ D. Norman, ‘The Odd Man in Mugabe’s White-Hand Man’.

⁴⁶ M. Bratton, ‘Micro-Democracy? The Merger of Farmer Unions in Zimbabwe’.

minute preference to include a peasant farmer organisation known as the communal farmers union.⁴⁷ In December 1984 it was again reported in the public press that the merger was imminent, this also included NFAZ and its communal area members. This was backed up by the ZNFU Council resolution.⁴⁸ Again this effort failed as the CFU resisted getting into such a merger arguing that the process was being rushed and they needed time for everyone to be onboard. A NFAZ member in explaining CFU's reluctance noted this,

the CFU was deeply worried that if it were to get into such a merger with indigenous groups by virtue of their membership, they would dominate decision making, moreover the CFU was very concerned on the financial affairs of NFAZ in particular its financial records which were in shambles. A merger would have meant that the CFU would have to financially bankroll its partners and most of the white members of the CFU did not welcome this prospect.⁴⁹

After this failed effort, the government had to put the unity proposal on hold and instead the leaders of three unions CFU, ZNFU and NFAZ took the initiative to form an umbrella committee known as the Joint Presidents Agricultural Committee (JPAC) in October 1985. This was a forum for discussion on issues of common concern focusing on farming. The JPAC proved to be a practical and worthwhile forum in which frank and full discussions took place focusing on economics, viability, crop reports, marketing, labour and security.⁵⁰

Unity Attempts

The JPAC helped to unite to some extent farming groups operating in the country namely the CFU, ZNFU and NFAZ despite their differences in size and interests; the JPAC helped these groups with exchanging viable information on farming. Notably, the JPAC was a voluntary committee whose federal organizational structure was farmers' alternative to a

⁴⁷ M. Bratton, 'Farmer Organisations and Food Production in Zimbabwe'.

⁴⁸ 'The Merger of Farming Unions a done deal' *The Herald* 14 December 1984.

⁴⁹ Interview with Mr Robert Chingodza NFAZ member 17 in Bindura Mashonaland Central, February, 2017.

⁵⁰ Minutes of JPAC first inaugural meeting 15 October 1985, Deliberations on the purpose of JPAC and Responses on Reports from Presidents of Farming Unions.

government planned institutional merger. Under the ambit of the JPAC the committee resolutions were nonbinding and the three presidents could disagree among themselves. In practice, the JPAC was a compromise arrangement which enabled farmer unions to demonstrate a nominal responsiveness to government demands for amalgamation. The NFAZ and CFU each sought to preserve a distinct racial and producer identity, each considering that it will be dominated by the other in a merged union. The JPAC became the final source of submissions from unions to government for annual review of controlled agricultural prices.⁵¹

The Prime Minister Robert Mugabe was also invited to address the CFU congress in August (1981) which was significant in cultivating trust and closeness between the state and farmer unions. He stated:

There will be a place for white farmers, who have an important role to play in our new nation you must go on farming, there is a place for you in the sun, who doubts that our lives and the lives of seven and half million people lie in your hands? I therefore believe that you, the farmers, hold the future of our nation in your hands. I close this speech with assurance that government will do all in its power to assist you in the task of building a great Zimbabwe.⁵²

White farmers, in particular the Commercial Farmers Union, welcomed such gestures and were relieved to find their place in the country more secure. Despite these assurances some white farmers did vacate their land and left the country. However, many stayed on encouraged by the Prime Minister's reconciliatory tone. With the contest for political control over, the CFU aligned themselves with the victors.⁵³ This was not surprising considering the fragility of white farmers' position.

In relating to the theory of corporatism, Schmitter argues that corporatism is an institutional order in which interest groups come together under the guidance of the state to

⁵¹ M. Bratton, 'Micro-Democracy? The Merger of Farmer Unions in Zimbabwe',

⁵² 'We Need You, Says Mugabe', *The Farmer*, 1980, pg. 18.

⁵³ R. Pilosof, "For Farmers, by Farmers Using The Farmer magazine to write the history of white farmers in Zimbabwe", 1980-2002, *Media History*, Vol 19, No 1, 2013, pp. 32-44.

reach at an agreement on policies for the management of the economy.⁵⁴ Anderson adds that within a society there are civil society actors who are too powerful for the state to ignore hence the state becomes dependent on these organisations on matters of policy. In other words, governance of the state will become difficult unless the state crafts a working relationship with these powerful civil society organisations.⁵⁵ The new government led by Prime Minister Robert Mugabe sought to create a working relationship with the CFU representing the white commercial farmers. In doing so, the government realised that the CFU was a powerful organisation as seen in its lobbying at the Lancaster House Agreement and also its influence on agricultural production. Thus, the state made attempts to bring the CFU closer to it so that it can help the new government without much experience with issues of agricultural policy. The state put forward a raft of measures to get the co-operation of the CFU. Ignoring the CFU would have resulted in economic uncertainty, making it hard for those in power to govern.

The Land Acquisition Act of 1985 drafted under the Lancaster House Agreement, gave the government the first right of purchase of white farms for resettlement by blacks. The intention was to support the smallholder sector in improving their farming methods and subsequently move away from subsistence farming towards production for the market. The new farmers would thrive with the government opening up markets, financing and advisory services for them. In as much as this agricultural approach addressed the central thrust of the land problem, which is one of redistributing land, conversely, it neglected the issue of property rights.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ P. Schmitter, *Still the Century of Corporatism?*, *Review of Politics*, Vol 36, 1, 1974, pp. 85-131.

⁵⁵ C. Anderson, 'Political Design and the Representation of Interests,' in *Trends Towards Corporatist Intermediation*, P. Schmitter and G. Lehmbruch (eds.), London, Sage, 1979, pp. 271-297.

⁵⁶ M. Rukuni, Report on the *Commission of Enquiry into Appropriate Agricultural Land Tenure Systems*, Vol 1, Harare, Government of Zimbabwe, 1994.

The resettlement scheme was essentially opening channels for subsistence farmers to improve their lot by according them access to services, markets, loans and other cognate resources with no commitment to give them property rights. In the future of Zimbabwe's land issue, property rights became the crux of the land problem. The mid-eighties witnessed a prosperous resettlement programme with peasant farmers eager to come out of subsistence farming and produce for the market, without giving much thought to the tenure issue.⁵⁷ The white farmers did not feel threatened at all as their land ownership rights remained intact.

Close ties between white farming leadership and government officials

Palmer, Selby and Pilosof are in agreement that close relations between farmers and the government were facilitated, firstly by the importance of the sector to the state and also by the key members of government and the CFU hierarchy that sought closer ties and communication.⁵⁸ The individuals in key positions and their characters influenced relations between the state and the white farming community. The appointment of Denis Norman the former president of the RNFU or CFU as the Minister of Agriculture in 1980 was a crucial gesture of reconciliation by the government towards white farmers. Both agricultural sectors namely lands, water development and farming fell under a single ministry making it easy for him to make decisions. Norman had three key objectives to fulfil that is, promoting commercial and communal farming, ensuring food security for the nation and the region, generating foreign currency through agriculture exports. He was pivotal in articulating farmer demands and ensuring favourable government support. The pronouncement of what was

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ R. Palmer 'Land Reform in Zimbabwe, 1980-1990', Selby argues that crucial in cementing relations in the 1980s was the realisation by those in power of the importance of white commercial farming to the economy and livelihoods and also closer ties that emerged between leaders of the CFU and those in government, A. Selby 'From Open Season to Royal Game': The Strategic Repositioning of Commercial Farmers across the Independence Transition in Zimbabwe, 1972-1985, *Centre for International Development*, Queen Elizabeth House, Oxford, 2016, Pilosof also emphasises on the importance of strong communication links between those in government and the CFU leadership, R. Pilosof, "Remaining Apolitical in a Political Crisis Exploring Interest Group Politics", *Developing Societies*, Vol 26, 1, 2010, pp. 71-97.

described as a ‘favourable maize producer price’ for the 1981 season was as a result of his influence in government.⁵⁹ However, the dependence on Norman made the CFU to be very vulnerable and his removal in 1985 from the ministry eroded the CFU’s ability to engage the government effectively.

On the white farmers’ side, in 1982 Jim Sinclair the CFU president at that time was named ‘communicator of the year’ by the Prime Minister. Sinclair was described in the white farming community as a consultative leader and always opted to deal directly with government officials and senior ruling party figures. His appointment to the boards of the National Railways of Zimbabwe, the Cold Storage Commission, the Forestry Commission, and his appointment to the Ridell Commission illustrates that he was respected by the new government and the Prime Minister. Sinclair was also vocal in support of the merger of the CFU and black farming unions.⁶⁰

John Laurie who came in 1984 after Sinclair is widely praised within the CFU. He was described as the ‘straightest of the presidents, the honest broker of the alliance’. Laurie was believed to be closer to the Prime Minister than Denis Norman. He also used these ties to advance the interests of white farmers. He was appointed on a number of public and private sector directorships. Laurie also worked with the former First Lady Sally Mugabe on the board of the Save the Children Foundation and became a friend to the first lady. In an effort to cement ties with those in government, Laurie encouraged the CFU members at provincial and district level to establish ties with district and provincial administrators.⁶¹

Bobby Rutherford succeeded Laurie in 1986; he was not well known within the white farming community and assumed the presidency due to the institutional culture of the CFU

⁵⁹ CFU Archives Batch No12 1981 – Denis Norman appointment as the minister of agriculture.

⁶⁰ A. Selby, ‘Commercial Farmers and the State: Interest Group Politics and Land Reform in Zimbabwe’.

⁶¹ R. Pilosof ‘Remaining Apolitical in a Political Crisis Exploring Interest Group Politics’ and A. Selby ‘Commercial Farmers’ and the State: Interest Group Politics and Land Reform in Zimbabwe.’

that the vice president becomes the president in the event that the president leaves office. Rutherford vigorously pursued the CFU policy of working closely with the government. He was unfortunate in that he failed to unite the white farming community behind him. This is because he was believed to be a fully paid up member of ZANU PF with dark political ambitions.⁶² His tenure was also described as a very difficult one within the CFU as he spent most of his time with government officials and neglecting his duties as the president of the union.

The successor to Rutherford was John Brown in 1989 and is well known for his political statements which were pro-ruling party. His famous quotation was that the government “is the best for commercial farmers that this country has ever seen”.⁶³ This suggests that the politicking had intensified with a clear strategy to promote closer ties. On the government side, Dr Robbie Mupawose replaced Ted Osborne as permanent secretary for agriculture during the civil service transformation of 1981. Mupawose, a technocrat, had previously chaired Tobacco Research Board and was well known in farming circles. He established strong communication lines with the white farming community and presidents of the CFU and had a good relationship with Denis Norman. Mupawose resigned in 1987 and was replaced by Dr Boniface Dzimande who had no strong ties with the white farming community.⁶⁴

The 1985 elections had an effect on communication patterns between the government and the white farming community. The ruling ZANU PF considered the elections as a test of the degree of reconciliation adopted by whites. John Laurie as CFU president tried to convince Denis Norman to form an opposition party for white moderates and progressives to

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ A. Selby ‘Commercial Farmers and the State.’

run against the Conservative Alliance of Zimbabwe (CAZ) which was a reshaped Rhodesian Front, for the 20 reserved white seats. Norman declined, preferring instead to remain independent politically; he also believed that politicisation of commercial farming goals might destroy their negotiating power. The CAZ won 20 seats.⁶⁵

In response, the Prime Minister Mugabe though victorious in elections accused the white community of retaining their privileged positions without appreciating the reconciliation gesture. Following the elections, the Prime Minister Mugabe dismissed Norman from the agriculture portfolio, he wrote to Norman indicating that whites had not appreciated what he had for them and he will therefore give them a black minister.⁶⁶ This indicated that those in power could not differentiate between the whites and the white farming community. It also revealed that the ghosts of the past were very much part of the present and that there was growing intolerance to continued white hegemony.

After Norman's removal after the 1985 elections, he was replaced by Moven Mahachi as the Minister of Agriculture. The minister was seen as pragmatic and had strong ties with CFU president David Hasluck. His replacement David Karimanzira in 1988 was described as knowing nothing about agriculture and was a politician through and through.⁶⁷ These perceptions help to explain an attempt by the CFU members to understand government and party through individuals with references such as 'moderates and radicals' and in some cases 'competent and incompetents'. This version became prevalent from 1990 as the land debate intensified.

⁶⁵ A. Selby, 'From Open Season to Royal Game': The Strategic Repositioning of Commercial Farmers across the Independence Transition in Zimbabwe, 1972-1985.'

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

Mlambo highlights that the spells of drought in 1984 also disorganised the government especially its focus on land reform forcing it to divert its attention to dealing with the dry spell. Mlambo adds that new black farm owners were not spared either, most of them deserted and returned to communal areas in search of better conditions. Climatic change was not yet an issue by then, so much so that most black farmers lacked the expertise to survey their parcels of land and draw up feasibility plans on what to grow on what soil. As a result, periods of drought drained most of their energy, given that initially they were placed in agro-ecological marginal, drier and climatically erratic land and worse, they lacked the experience of dealing with the impact of drought.⁶⁸ Such circumstances worked in favour of white farmers who had in their possession huge funding options enough to stand unexpected disasters.

The First Phase of the land reform in Zimbabwe can be termed as a moderate programme. According to Moyo, in the period 1980 to 1989, land reform was centred on government purchases of land that was available on the market and its distribution to beneficiaries in the context of heterodox economic policies which resulted in increased public expenditure on social services and peasant agriculture.⁶⁹ Logan adds that in the first phase, the state's target was to obtain and redistribute close to 8.3 million hectares of land to about 162 000 families. The programme was to be carried out with funds coming from Britain, Zimbabwe, the EU, the African Development Bank and the Kuwaiti government.⁷⁰

According to the Government of Zimbabwe report, phase one was successful in a number of important ways, including the provision of infrastructure such as boreholes. The

⁶⁸ A.S. Mlambo, "Land Grab or Taking Back the Stolen Land: The Fast Track Land Reform Process in Zimbabwe in Historical Perspective," *History Compass*, Vol 3, 1, 2005, pp. 1-26.

⁶⁹ S. Moyo, "Changing Agrarian Relations after the Re-distributive Land Reform in Zimbabwe", *Peasant Studies*, Vol 38, 5, 2000, pp. 907-966.

⁷⁰ I. B. Logan, "Land Reform, Ideology and Urban Food Security: Zimbabwe's *Third Chimurenga*," *Economic and Social Geography*, Vol 98, 2, 2007, pp. 202-224.

state claims that by enabling resettled farmers to produce high value crops such as paprika and tobacco, the programme made them better off than their communal counterparts.⁷¹ As for white farmers, Makumbe and Alden point out that the white farmers said in 1980,

We will not participate in politics, we will simply farm and make money, in other words they were saying to hell with politics, thereby distancing themselves towards issues of good governance and democracy in order to safeguard their interests on land.⁷²

Matabeleland disturbances and CFU Apoliticism

The political events in Matabeleland in the 1980s were a litmus test for the delicate relationship between the farmers and the new government. According to Phimister, the same reconciliation offered to farmers by Mugabe was not extended to the people of Matabeleland, the support base of Joshua Nkomo and his political party the Zimbabwe African People's Union.⁷³ Tensions between Mugabe and Nkomo continued to increase after independence and there were several clashes between their respected forces. As political and regional distrust worsened, many parts of Matabeleland witnessed significant civil unrest. In 1983, under the pretext that unrest in Matabeleland was being caused by forces loyal to ZAPU, Mugabe deployed a military regiment named the Fifth Brigade to deal with the unrest. What emerged was a wave of horrific violence estimated to have claimed the lives of 20 000 people, while hundreds of thousands were tortured, assaulted, raped or had their property destroyed.⁷⁴

White farmers were also victims of the tragedy engulfing Matabeleland. By 1987, more than 50 white farmers and their families had been murdered by dissidents. In May 1982 Brain Dawe a farmer in Chinhoyi was gunned down by 3AK-waving 'dissidents'. *The*

⁷¹ Government of Zimbabwe Report, 'People First Zimbabwe's Land Reform Programme', Ministry of Lands, Agriculture and Rural Resettlement, and the Department of Information and Publicity, Harare, 2001.

⁷² J. Makumbe and P. Alden, 'The Zimbabwe Constitution: Race, Land Reform and Social Justice,' In H. G. Cornwell and E. W. Stoddard (eds.) *Global Multiculturalism*, Rowman and Littlefield, Lanham, pp. 215-237.

⁷³ I. Phimister, "The Making and Meanings of the Massacres in Matabeleland", *Development Dialogue*, Vol 50, 3, 2008, pp. 199-218.

⁷⁴ J. Muzondidya, 'From Buoyancy to Crisis, 1980-1997,' in B. Raftopolous and A. Mlambo (eds.), *Becoming Zimbabwe*, Harare, Weaver Press, 2009.

Farmer published the Prime Ministers response to the killing, “I assure you the dissidents cannot escape the hand of justice, in due course we are going to rid this region of these elements which are committed to banditry”.⁷⁵

The magazine repeated these positive commitments by the government and portrayed the government as wholly committed to end the dissident threat. In an in-depth look into the region in 1983, *The Farmer* had this opinion:

The police and 5 Brigade members that we saw were turned out in clean kit, looked fit and well-armed, however the security forces are often handicapped by the reluctance of victims or witnesses to report the incidents, government’s heavy military commitment to the area leaves no doubt as to its intention to restore law and order.⁷⁶

The report by the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace sought to blame dissidents rather than the government for undermining peace; the following acknowledgement was made:

It is generally accepted by all parties that dissidents were responsible for all the murders of white farmers and their families in the 1980s, while the impact of dissidents on civilians was perceived as less harsh by far than that of 5th Brigade, the impact of the dissidents on the small commercial farming communities was dramatic.⁷⁷

The CFU continued to put its faith in the government, which it portrayed as fully motivated to resolve the security concerns in the region. This representation was in line with that of the leadership of the CFU at the time. For example, the CFU president John Laurie remarked that, ‘the commercial farming sector is fully aligned with the government’s fight for stability and law and order’.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ ‘Farm Murders Worry the Union’ *The Farmer*, May 1982, pg. 9.

⁷⁶ ‘Our Farmers Aid in Times of Trial’ *The Farmer*, 25 June, 1983.

⁷⁷ The Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe Report, ‘Breaking the Silence, Building True Peace’: A Report on the Disturbances in Matabeleland and the Midlands 1980 to 1988, 1997, Harare, Pg. 38.

⁷⁸ ‘From the President’s Desk’ *The Farmer*, 24 May 1984.

As the violence continued, the subsequent CFU president Bobby Rutherford reiterated this sentiment,

Numerous meetings have taken place with ministers and members of the security forces, and I wish to assure you the farmers' determination and concern to see an end to the harassment and unwarranted loss of life.⁷⁹

The CFU deliberately muzzled its own publication to ensure it does not mention gross human rights violations by the Fifth Brigade on the ordinary civilians and rather focus on the efforts of the security forces in eradicating dissident threat. For example, when the security forces killed the notorious bandit Gwasela in 1987, it was celebrated as a milestone achievement.

The farmer made the following acknowledgements:

The news that Gwasela has been killed has come as a great relief to many people, not least the people whom he and his gang have terrorized over the last few years, farmers, farmers' workers, officials, tribesmen, have all been victims of his ruthless and inhuman acts, it is good that ordinary people realise that there is nobody who is above the law and that criminals would be dealt with.⁸⁰

According to Pilosof, the CFU practised self-censorship of its own bulletin, the reason being that members of the CFU hierarchy such as Laurie, Rutherford and Brown had very close ties to ZANU PF and sought to keep things that way. Having survived the coming of majority rule, it is clear that the CFU wished to preserve its cosy relationship with the government.⁸¹

Pilosof adds that,

having to renegotiate and re-imagine their place in newly independent, black Zimbabwe was a complicated process for a wholly white commercial entity, the CFU and the farmer had the difficult task of ensuring they still spoke to and for their white rural constituencies, while, at the same time, showing themselves willing and active participants in the new national projects of Mugabe's Zimbabwe.⁸²

⁷⁹ 'Farmers must be Vigilant, *The Farmer*, September 3, 1987 pg. 7.

⁸⁰ 'Welcome End of a Ruthless Menace,' *The Farmer* Nov 26, 1987, pg. 18.

⁸¹ R. Pilosof, 'Remaining Apolitical in a Political Crisis: Exploring Interest Group Politics'.

⁸² R. Pilosof 'For Farmers, By Farmers, Using *The Farmer* magazine to write the history of white farmers in Zimbabwe'.

Offering criticism on events in Matabeleland would have put that partnership in jeopardy, so, to avoid such a scenario, the CFU censored *The Farmer* and forced it toe the CFU and the party line. The problem with the CFU's stance on apoliticism is that it was based on supporting the government in order to secure interests on land. Apoliticism in the mind of the CFU also resulted in the CFU leadership of the ruling party. The white farmers were prepared to be apolitical as long as their future and livelihoods were not tampered with. When the regime of Robert Mugabe began to push for radical land acquisition in the 1990s white farmers were forced to re-discover their political voice.

Beginning of Friction

According to Moyo, white farmers also had a conscious effort to thwart land reform. Aided by the guarantees offered to them by the Lancaster House Agreement, the Ministry of Lands and Agriculture was their ear and in liaison with the Agriculture Minister, being white, as well as influences in other ministries, the Commercial Farmers Union managed to keep the land reform in check. Their resolution was to ensure that farms for resettlement would be available in trickles, if at all. The union bolstered their position by ensuring that white commercial farmers remained secure through taking the government to court to just make a point.⁸³

Moyo adds that CFU used the court to contest any policies by the government that they felt impinged on their rights or threatened to squeeze them into smaller space. For them, the court would decide who had the legitimate right to keep the land. Also, as long as the case was in the court, the time the courts took to resolve the differences would benefit the farmers in that they continued to farm and harvest from the land.⁸⁴ This explains why in the future

⁸³ S. Moyo, "The Political Economy of Land Acquisition and Redistribution in Zimbabwe", *Southern African Studies*, Vol 26, 1, 1994, pp. 1-12.

⁸⁴ S. Moyo 'The Political Economy of Land Acquisition and Redistribution in Zimbabwe'.

the ZANU PF government introduced a radical transformation in the judiciary to ensure that land judgments do not derail the land reform process.

The 1990s witnessed fundamental changes in the relationship between the government and the farmers. The relationship began to erode significantly, which had ramifications on the privileged status of white farmers. Selby illustrates that the year 1990 in particular represented a decisive watershed in relations between the two. The smooth communication patterns broke down owing to the personalities which took over. Selby adds that, competent managers of dialogue had moved on and were replaced by much more antagonistic and less subtle characters. Alan Burl (CFU president from 1990-1992) was well known for his undiplomatic manner and rudeness in character and on the government side there was Witness Mangwende who was totally new to the ministry and did not have any relationship with the farming community.⁸⁵ Such an atmosphere symbolized collapse of the avenue of engagement especially on the farmers' side, which increasingly placed them on an island which could threaten their existence.

The 1990s were dominated by the discourse of indigenisation under the mantra black economic empowerment, which focused on promoting black participation in big business. In 1990, the Indigenous Business Development Centre was established in response to the Zimbabwean government's Economic Structural Adjustment Programme and the need to broaden indigenous participation in the business economic life of the country. The IBDC's focus was on the promotion of SMEs as engines in expanding the economy and the creation of employment. Its founding members included Strive Masiyiwa and Chemist Siziba. The

⁸⁵ A. Selby, 'Commercial Farmers and the State: Interest Group Politics and Land Reform in Zimbabwe'.

formal black economic empowerment in the 1990s made little impact in reforming white controlled sectors such as farming.⁸⁶

The Indigenous Commercial Farmers Association (ICFA) had emerged in the 1990s after being established by a group of black commercial farmers who felt excluded in the CFU. The ICFA regarded itself as the legitimate voice for black commercial farmers and emphasised on the need for the government to focus its policy on supporting black commercial farmers so as to stimulate agricultural productivity.⁸⁷ As a loose organization of new African farmers who purchased large-scale farms after independence, ICFA's aim was to wrest special benefits from government, especially for agricultural credit and quality farmland under the expanded land reform programme. Both the CFU and ZNFU made bids to include ICFA members in their unions, the CFU stood to benefit politically by demonstrating that it had African members and the ZNFU president sought to enlarge his political base in his bid to lead the union. However, the leadership of the splinter group expressed that they wanted to work within existing farmers' unions. The Minister of Agriculture, Witness Mangwende, vehemently opposed the formation of this splinter union and argued for support towards the new Zimbabwe Farmers Union.⁸⁸ The main motive of the government was to absorb all farmers into a single representative, which could break the influence of the white commercial farmers and also help to cement government's political base.

The founders of ICFA immediately faced the challenge of getting a union status from the government. Agriculture Ministers namely Witness Mangwende and Kumbirai Kangai refused to grant the organisation union status on the basis that this would create confusion at the time of the merger. Absence of a union status meant that the group could not charge

⁸⁶ D. Muleya, 'Umbrella body formed for Empowerment', *The Independent* 20 March 1990.

⁸⁷ S. D. Taylor, "Business and Politics in Zimbabwe's Commercial Agriculture Sector", *African Economic History*, Vol 27, 2, 1999, pp. 177-215.

⁸⁸ M. Bratton, "Micro-Democracy? The Merger of Farmer Unions in Zimbabwe," *African Studies Review*, Vol 37, 1, 1994, pp. 9-37.

levies on produce; remaining as an association also meant that the group could not wield much influence on agricultural policy. Funding became a headache for the organisation forcing its founders James Nherera, Davison Mugabe, Tererai Mugabe, Jeremiah Bonda and Paul Mutangi to bankroll the association in its early days.⁸⁹

In demonstrating the slow pace of land resettlement under the willing-seller-willing-buyer clause, Nyawo and Barnard note that land acquisition and land costs from 1979-1989 was characterised by unevenness and unpredictability and also that the process was unsustainably expensive. Commercial farmers were deliberate in the exorbitant prices for land; they deemed the high prices a deterrent to massive transformation in land reform. In 1979-1980, 162 555 hectares of land were bought for \$ 3 104 380 at \$ 19 per hectare. By the end of the decade, in 1988-1989, 78 097 hectares, far less compared to 1979-1980, had been bought for close to five times the price of 1979-1980. Not only was there less land to buy, but that which was being bought was on great demand and, therefore, the prices for it had shot through the roof. The fluctuating number of farms to be bought as well as the ever-changing prices contributed in frustrating proper plans by the government in policy making. The willing-seller-willing-buyer principle did not coerce white commercial farmers to sell their land so that there could be equitable distribution.⁹⁰ The willing-seller-willing-buyer principle enshrined in the Lancaster House Agreement was simply an act of subterfuge to discourage a winner-takes all scenario at the dawn of Zimbabwe's independence.

Riddle adds that the talks at Lancaster had vague provisions for containing the land question. The main provision for resolving land distribution contained ill-defined conditions regarding the authority for decision-making and the level of compensation for confiscated

⁸⁹ S. D. Taylor, "Business and Politics in Zimbabwe's Commercial Agriculture Sector," *African Economic History*, Vol 27, 2, 1999, pp. 177-215.

⁹⁰ V. Z. Nyawo and S. L. Barnard, 'The Trajectory of Land Reform in Zimbabwe: Post Independence era 1980-2000'.

land.⁹¹ The Lancaster House constitution was largely a ploy by the British to buy time for white farmers in Zimbabwe to adjust and to stay or to decide to move out of the country. Thus, the zeal to acquire land remained the defining entity in farmer–state relations in post-independence Zimbabwe.

The ‘willing-seller–willing-buyer’ compromise had originally been designed to reassure and protect white interests at a difficult period of political transition. Ten years after, the Zimbabwe government felt it had provided an extra ordinary degree of reconciliation and stability towards white farmers. Moreover, political pressure on the government to provide a robust approach to land reform, particularly in dealing with resettlement and compensation issues, forced the government to adopt a second phase of land reform.⁹² This phase was set into motion by the announcement of a National Land Policy in March 1990. The key aims of this policy were to secure an additional 5 million hectares to accommodate about 110 000 families, to embark on price controls on land, to introduce a land tax, to pay for land acquired in local dollars rather than in foreign currency, to put in place a maximum farm size and the principle of one man one farm and ensure transfer of land to locals situated in regions 2 and 3.⁹³

The National Land Policy made it possible for the state to make two important departures from the Lancaster House Agreement. Firstly, the definition of ‘just’ in the ‘just compensation’ clause became a policy rather a market principle, and then secondly, the definition of ‘willing’ in the willing-seller clause became a purview of the state. What remained of the Lancaster House Agreement principles in the 1990s was at best ‘pre-determined compensation to ‘coerced seller’ and at worst non-compensation to owners of

⁹¹ R. Riddle, ‘Zimbabwe’s Land Problem: The Central Issue,’ in W. H. Morris (ed.), *From Rhodesia to Zimbabwe Behind and Beyond Lancaster House*, Toronto, 1980, pg. 1-3.

⁹² I. Logan, “Land Reform, Ideology and Urban Food Security: Zimbabwe’s *Third Chimurenga*”, *Economic and Social Geography*, Vol 98, 2, 2007, pp. 202-223.

⁹³ S. Moyo, ‘Political Economy of Land Acquisition and Redistribution in Zimbabwe, 1990-1999’.

derelict land'. The renunciation of the Lancaster House Agreement principles in the National Land Policy marked the genesis of tensions between Britain and Zimbabwe over issues of land.⁹⁴ Moreover, the expiry of the Lancaster House sunset clauses on land, after the first ten years of independence, changed the nature of the land debate.

Alexander illustrates the response of the CFU to this policy and its president John Brown had this to say about the new policy on land: "In my opinion, what is called the New Land Policy is not yet a policy, it is a number of principles, some excellent, some fair and some downright wrong."⁹⁵ The CFU questioned how government would attain such ambitious targets, and when it comes to resettlement the CFU contested government's projections on it as there were significant areas that had been acquired though not yet settled.⁹⁶ In reacting to the policy, indigenous farmers' representation focused their response on who can best attain empowerment, the ZNFU representing mainly purchase area farmers and emphasised that its master farmer heritage can ensure an inclusive and a broad based approach to resettlement. The Indigenous Commercial Farmers Association (ICFA), which had emerged in the 1990s after being established by a group of black commercial farmers who felt they were being excluded in the CFU, was of the opinion that resettlement should target local farmers capable of commercial production and should target underutilised land belonging to white farmers .⁹⁷

The New National Land Policy differentiated itself from the previous resettlement model by identifying itself as the second phase of land reform. In the 1980s land reform had focused on the destitute and the landless and was focused upon small scale farming. Plans for the 1990s regarded commercial farmers as the most ideal beneficiaries of land reform and this

⁹⁴ S. Moyo, *The Land Question in Zimbabwe*, Sapes, Harare, 1995.

⁹⁵ J. Alexander, *The Unsettled Land: State Making and the Politics of Land in Zimbabwe 1893-2003*, Weaver Press, Harare, 2006.

⁹⁶ 'The New Land Policy not making sense' letter from the President's Desk, *The Farmer* 18 March 1990.

⁹⁷ S. D. Taylor, 'Business and Politics in Zimbabwe's Commercial Agriculture Sector'.

would be attained concurrently with considerations of small-scale miners to be chosen on the grounds of productive potential.⁹⁸ The Ministry of Agriculture and technical departments such as Agritex shifted official objectives towards large scale black commercial farming. This was because resettlement had not made significant on increasing market production and that poverty reduction could only be achieved through economic growth, which could only be achieved through increased productivity and appeared to be only realised through proper commercial systems.⁹⁹

Moyo and Skalnes point to a shift by the government on aims around the land from the normative and political focus towards broader economic goals.¹⁰⁰ During a parliamentary debate over the commission to examine the results of resettlement, the Minister of Agriculture Witness Mangwende stated:

indeed, we have all agreed that the initial phase of resettlement had its weaknesses particularly on settler selection issue, it was designed to solve a political reality. The government had to avail land irrespective of whether they were productive or not, there was no time to plan, select and train these people, the second should be a productive one.¹⁰¹

The Joint Presidents' Agricultural Committee (JPAC) collapsed in 1991 over issue of land reform. In February 1990, the three presidents presented a common policy paper on land reform agreeing that only underutilised land should be acquired by the government and that only experienced and productive farmers should be resettled. This agreement was shattered in January 1991 when the CFU broke ranks with other unions and issued its own land policy proposal calling for safeguards on land seizure and compensation. As a result of the collapse

⁹⁸ R. Palmer, 'Land Reform in Zimbabwe, 1980-1990'.

⁹⁹ S. Moyo, "Economic Nationalism and Land Reform in Zimbabwe", *Southern African Political Economy Series*, Occasional, Paper, No 7, 1994.

¹⁰⁰ S. Moyo and T. Skalnes, "Zimbabwe's Land Reform and Development Strategy: State Autonomy, Class Bias and Economic Rationality", Research Paper, *Institute of Development Studies*, University of Zimbabwe, Harare, 1990.

¹⁰¹ 'Parliament Hansard 14 May 1991' - Debate on Land Resettlement.

of the JPAC, the leaders of ZNFU and NFAZ began serious talks for a merger under the proposed Zimbabwe Farmers Union.¹⁰²

The effect of Structural Adjustment Programme on commercial farming

In the 1990s government adopted the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme which had implications on commercial farming. The ESAP package included currency devaluation, reduced government expenditure, promoted privatisation and market liberalisation. Although portrayed as a home-grown solution, the package was an IMF and World Bank prescription. The reasons behind the adoption of ESAP included firstly, the fact that an economic crisis had emerged from excessive borrowings and government expenditure leading to a balance of payment crisis. Secondly these models were being implemented across the globe and being used as reform measures as well as justification to obtain balance of payment support from these International Financial Institutions.¹⁰³ Bernard Chidzero, the Finance Minister, was pro-financial liberation throughout the 1980s and he advocated for the approval of the package.

The results of the reform package were immediate, inflation rose and real wages purchasing power got diminished. In the face of competition manufacturing industries contracted and unemployment levels skyrocketed. Government cuts on spending affected social infrastructure and services particularly in rural areas. Income disparities widened leading to more hardships for the poor.¹⁰⁴ On how ESAP affected commercial farming, the following issues emerge: market deregulation provided farmers with diversification opportunities, they could access export markets, or they could exploit restructured domestic markets. Export incentives included a 9% tax reduction and an export retention scheme

¹⁰² 'The Joint Presidential Agriculture Committee of Farmers Collapse' *The Financial Gazette* 22 January 1991.

¹⁰³ A. S. Mlambo, *The Economic Structural Adjustment Programme: The Case of Zimbabwe, 1990-1995*, 1997, University of Zimbabwe, Harare.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

allowing exporters to retain a proportion of income of foreign currency with which to import inputs. Divisions emerged between exporters and producers targeting domestic markets.¹⁰⁵ In CFU records, Anthony Swire–Thompson, CFU Vice President, commented on this issue, “current policies are encouraging everyone to grow roses or tobacco and food producers have no incentives at all.”¹⁰⁶ Input costs increasingly reflected export prices and the exporter versus producer for local market divide became visible among farmers.

In the dairy industry, government’s reluctance to decontrol milk prices, placed dairy farmers in cost price fix. According to *The Farmer* stock feed prices had risen by more than 100% leading to a 60% increase in input costs whilst milk prices had reduced. The dairy producers were angered and argued that deregulation had been started at the wrong end of the chain. Pressure on domestic producers encouraged many to move into export crops.¹⁰⁷ The ESAP also exposed variations in farmers’ entrepreneurship and management skills. On labour issues, the importance of skilled labour began to challenge racial norms, and, in some cases, young white farm assistants worked alongside or under black managers. In pursuing skilled labour, poaching of labour became dominant among white farmers.¹⁰⁸ Land disputes also emerged, with successful farmers expanding their production. In some parts such as Mazowe and Marodzi ‘water wars’ emerged among irrigators as they battled for ‘water rights’.

The economic package also changed parameters of farmer activities, interests and lifestyles. Imported luxury goods became available after two decades of restrictions and some

¹⁰⁵ S. Moyo, *Land Reform under Structural Adjustment in Zimbabwe-Land Use in Mashonaland Provinces*, Elanders Gotab, Stockholm, 2002.

¹⁰⁶ Minutes of Joint Presidential Council 16 March 1992–Discussions on Export Incentives and their effect on commercial agriculture.

¹⁰⁷ ‘Dairy farmers on the brink of collapse’ *The Farmer*, 26 May 1992.

¹⁰⁸ W. Chambati and S. Moyo, “Impact of Land Reform on former workers and farm labour process”, Harare, *African Institute for Agrarian Studies Monograph*, 2004.

farmers purchased power boats, luxury vehicles and constructed larger farmhouses.¹⁰⁹ These kinds of displays of wealth also played a part in driving class and race resentment. In parliament Minister Mangwende remarked:

We all know that some commercial farmers after they have accumulated enough wealth prefer to buy planes than to build decent accommodation for farm workers who made them rich.¹¹⁰

While some white farmers were successful under ESAP with a combination of support from CFU and individual innovation, the story was very different in the black community. The ESAP had disastrous effects and exposed the strength of unions representing black farmers. The ICFA, which drew its membership from black commercial farmers, noted that majority of its members were on the verge of collapse. This was because unlike white farmers who prospered with subsidised bank loans supported by the colonial government, in post-independent Zimbabwe the government did not support such a facility and during ESAP black commercial farmers that had borrowed money from banks found themselves in a very difficult position since they could not cope with increased interests rates.¹¹¹

Some of the ICFA members also faced the prospects of losing land after the government in 1992 gazetted land for acquisition. The list also included land belonging to some black commercial farmers. With this double tragedy, the organisation noted that morale was very low amongst its membership. The ICFA was also denied a union status by Minister Mangwende on the grounds that it had to join with other black farmer organisation under the ZFU. The organisation chose to remain independent and as a result it remained confined to an association status which meant that it did not have influence in policy and would not be supported by the state. Had it been given a union status it could have charged levies on

¹⁰⁹ S Moyo, 'Land Reform under Structural Adjustment in Zimbabwe - Land Use Change in Mashonaland Province'.

¹¹⁰ Parliament Hansard 16 September 1992.

¹¹¹ Interview with Mr Makombe President of the ICFU in Gweru, on 22 December 2019.

produce of its members giving it more money which was desperately needed by its bankrupt membership. The founding members were forced to continue bankrolling the organisation which proved to be very strenuous.¹¹²

The ESAP greatly affected small-scale and semi-commercial farmers who belonged to the ZNFU. Those that had borrowed money from banks found themselves caught up in a debt cycle, with huge interest rates increasing their debt. Unlike white commercial farmers who were supported by the CFU in accessing inputs, the ZNFU failed to help its members during this difficult time as it was financially crippled to do so, the majority of its members were not honouring subscription payments to the union. With the union unable to help its members, each member had to fight for survival on their own and some had to quit farming altogether since they could not cope with increased costs of inputs. With the cost of inputs skyrocketing, it also meant that indigenous farmer productivity was going to be reduced.¹¹³

Communal farmers were equally devastated by ESAP and most of these farmers fell under the NFAZ. Financially, the NFAZ was extremely crippled with no alternative funding options except to continuously ask the government for financial support. Under ESAP government had to cut back on subsidies, rendering farming groups like NFAZ vulnerable. With most its members drawn from the rural communities and financially challenged, NFAZ did not offer any meaningful support towards its distressed membership. Communal farmers became very dependent on inputs donated by NGOs; they could not afford the increased costs associated with adopting the economic reform package.¹¹⁴

¹¹² S. D. Taylor, 'Business and Politics in Zimbabwe's Commercial Agriculture Sector'.

¹¹³ M. Bratton, 'Micro-Democracy? The Merger of Farmer Unions in Zimbabwe'.

¹¹⁴ S. Burges, 'Small-holder Voice and Rural Transformation: Zimbabwe and Kenya compared'.

Rugube also shows that adoption of ESAP also led to the slowing down of redistribution because the government was forced to reduce its spending.¹¹⁵ However, Moyo observes that ESAP witnessed the expansion of land markets to foreigners and aspiring black commercial farmers, leading to increased private subdivisions and consolidations. Moyo adds that the acquisition by blacks of large-scale farms led to a growth of 15% in terms of area of commercial farmland held by blacks. This led to intra-capitalist competition for land, which escalated under the indigenisation ideology. Some blacks were co-opted by capital into large scale farming.¹¹⁶

New appointments in the Agricultural Ministry and isolation of the CFU

The appointment of Witness Mangwende as Minister of Lands and Agriculture in 1990 indicated a new role for the ministry. He was described by farmers who knew him as uncompromising and a difficult character to work with. His appointment into the ministry coincided with the push for a merger of indigenous farmers groups under the ZFU. His approach to the merger was to push it through despite concerns raised by communal farmers from NFAZ who felt the merger was for semi-commercial and small-scale farmers under ZNFU.¹¹⁷

In August 1992 ZFU was created and its key mandate was to ensure that indigenous farmers are organised under an umbrella union. This union would assist these farmers with agricultural support key in ensuring agricultural production. At its first inaugural congress Gary Magadzire, the leader of ZNFU, was elected as the president and he wasted no time in setting out his agenda,

¹¹⁵ L. Rugube, 'Land Transactions Monitoring and Evaluation of Public and Private land markets in Zimbabwe', Paper Prepared for Land Tenure Centre, University of Wisconsin –Madison Centre for Applied Social Science, University of Zimbabwe, 2003.

¹¹⁶ S. Moyo, 'Land Reform under Structural Adjustment in Zimbabwe - Land Use Change in Mashonaland Province'.

¹¹⁷ M. Bratton, 'Micro-Democracy? The Merger of Farmer Unions in Zimbabwe'.

my fellow brothers and sisters in farming, thank you for this opportunity, me and my team are not going to waste time our focus is to ensure that black farmers succeed, our success is going to be determined if land ownership patterns which favour the white race are changed.¹¹⁸

The message from the incoming president was a warning to white farmers that ZFU was going to be on the side of the government when it comes to land reform. It was a very cautious approach which was meant to please those in power. Going against them was tantamount to rebellion for an organisation created with the support of the state. The Minister of Agriculture at the same congress capitalised on the opportunity to set out the government agenda:

Today we celebrate the birth of an indigenous farmer organisation, I tell you his Excellency is pleased with this idea and I believe working together will ensure that land reform will be a success, we want to celebrate black success in farming and as your president has indicated through allocating productive land to indigenous farmers.¹¹⁹

The Ministers' words again reinforced the need to push through a radical agenda with regards to land reform. This agenda was going to be achieved through co-option of the ZFU leaders and its huge membership to support the government's land reform. This partnership was also meant to isolate the CFU and cast its membership as hostile to land reform. The crafting of the Land Acquisition Act of 1992 signalled a new phase of land reform; this highlighted the collapse of a working arrangement between the state and the CFU.

The basis of a corporatist arrangement is for the state and an influential civil society to craft a working relationship. In as much as the state is the driver of corporatism, civil society groups in such an arrangement co-operate or work closely with the state to further their interest. According to Levy, the role of civil association in such an arrangement is to act as an intermediary. They are not just an intermediary in that they are a power base in between

¹¹⁸ 'ZFU to champion black farmer Interests', *The Herald* 20 August 1992.

¹¹⁹ 'ZFU to champion black farmer Interests', *The Herald*, 20 August 1992.

the individual and the state, but also in the sense that they co-operate with or resist the state.¹²⁰ The state initiated a working arrangement with the CFU at independence; this was because the government had realised that it could not ignore the influence of the CFU on matters of agricultural production and policy.

Moreover, the sunset clause in the negotiated Lancaster House constitution, which protected white farmers in the sense that the state could not initiate compulsory land acquisition, was critical in shaping this corporatist relationship. Thus, the state opted to bring the CFU closer to it so that agricultural production could not be disturbed. In bringing the CFU closer to it, the state would be able to closely monitor the CFU preventing it from becoming a threat to state power. Furthermore, by closely working with the state, the CFU sought to ensure that this relationship would safeguard white farmer interests on land. The expiry of the sunset clauses in the 1990s changed the relationship between the state and the CFU. The state began the process of land acquisition and the white farmers resisted such attempts. The kind of co-operation in the 1980s was beginning to crumble as the land debate was beginning to intensify, with the state's determination to acquire land on the one hand and the CFU attempts to protect their land ownership privileges on the other .

Conclusion

In conclusion, the chapter has managed to highlight how the relationship between the state and commercial farmers evolved during the willing-buyer-willing-seller dispensation. The relationship at first was characterized by mutual co-operation which was seen through closer ties and a form of engagement being created between the state and the CFU. This engagement emerged as a result of close ties between those in government and the leadership

¹²⁰ J. Levy, *Rationalism, Pluralism and Freedom*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2015.

of the CFU. The chapter examined how the CFU sought to maintain close ties with the state even in instances where it did not agree with state actions.

The chapter has also explored manoeuvres by the state of creating an umbrella body for farming unions in Zimbabwe, the intention being that of breaking the influence of CFU on matters of land and agricultural policy. The CFU later withdrew from the initiative, leaving the ZNFU and NFAZ to form the ZFU. Additionally, the chapter has also explored the political and economic changes in the country and how they affected state-commercial farmer relations. To that end, the formation of the ICFU to advance the interests of black commercial farmers coincided with the discourse of indigenisation which was being promoted by the government. The following chapter looked at the growing tensions between the state and CFU and how this undermined the corporate relationship.

CHAPTER 2

GROWING TENSIONS BETWEEN THE STATE AND THE COMMERCIAL FARMERS UNION (1992-2001)

The chapter examines increasing tensions between the state and the white farming community as a result of state attempts to acquire land. The period 1992-2001 significantly affected the relationship between the state and white farmers represented by the CFU. The chapter explores the Land Acquisition Act of 1992 and explains the intentions of the government in crafting this Act. This will then be followed by the response of the CFU and black farmer organisations to the Act.

The chapter looks at the 1992 drought season and how farming unions handled the disaster. The chapter then discusses the evolving nature of the land debate and analyses how this was affecting the relationship between the state and the CFU. Furthermore, the chapter analyses how white farmers began to be politically active, particularly their participation in the constitutional referendum and their association with the Movement for Democratic Change. The chapter then examines the response of the state to the active political participation of white farmers.

Corporatist scholars are of the view that in a corporatist arrangement between the state and the dominant civil society group, the arrangement can witness tensions over policy direction. In the thinking of corporatist scholars, civil society associations can also be very strong enough to resist state power. They compete with the state for authority over key aspects of policy. This can lead to power struggles threatening the co-operation between the state and dominant civil society organisations.¹ Analysis of the relations between the state and the CFU would show that the co-operation which existed in the 1980s deteriorated and the relations were characterised with tensions during the 1990s. This was because from the

¹ D. Chirot, "The Corporatist Model and Socialism," *Theory and Society*, Vol 9, 2, 1980, pp. 363-381.

1990s the state was now able to commence compulsory land acquisition. The CFU, which had been brought closer to the state on issues of agricultural policy was now being pushed out of the arrangement. The focus of the state was on power consolidation through land acquisition targeting white farmers. In response, the CFU adopted various strategies to resist attempts by the state to compulsorily acquire land. Increasing tensions between the state and the CFU also meant that the CFU could no-longer bargain, in its favour, on issues of agriculture.

The political leadership revived promises of land redistribution in the campaign for the March 1990 elections. This greatly resonated with the populist discourse adopted by liberation movements in many African countries. Kriger points out that peasant access to redistributed land was overshadowed by black elite demands for access to commercial farms and the government desire to encourage the resettlement of master farmers and agricultural college graduates who had farming skills.² On the government's side, there was great determination to pursue land acquisition. Later in 1990, the government amended the constitution (section 16) to remove the restrictive clauses on compulsory land acquisition and compensation. This enabled the government to acquire all land, including utilized land, buildings and improvements to land.

On the aspect of compensation, this had to be fair rather than adequate and paid within a reasonable time rather than promptly. The amendment was also significant in that it also sought to remove the courts from deciding on issues of fair compensation. The parliament was empowered to rule on the principles of assessing compensation and the time period for compensation to be paid. Predictably, these constitutional changes were

² N. Kriger, "Liberation from Constitutional Constraints: Land Reform in Zimbabwe", *SAIS Review*, vol 27, 2, 2007, pp. 65-72.

controversial with the judiciary.³ Moreover, the draft land bill to encompass these amendments also focused on excluding the provision of fair compensation, which was found to be unconstitutional.

The 1992 Land Bill aimed to alter both the basis and nature of land identification and the amount and timing of compensation. Certain issues of the bill concerned farmers, firstly, the capacity to designate land compulsorily and secondly, changes of the compensation clause from 'adequate' and 'timely' to 'fair' and 'staggered'. Fair implied a political levy on the price of land, whilst staggered removed any urgency from the government to pay compensation.⁴ To individual farmers, there was no incentive to offer land under the conditions of the bill and moreover, valuing land using the prevailing market rates was still operational.

In support of white farmers was also the judiciary; Chief Justice Anthony Gubbay criticised the constitutional amendments, arguing that the compensation clause in its new form amounted to empty promises for farmers. The Chief Justice added a warning that property was a pillar of the constitution.⁵ The ZFU submitted proposals to the government registering concerns about the land bill and particularly the clauses regarding compulsory designation and compensation.

The ZFU was concerned that some of its members particularly semi-commercial farmers belonging to the ZNFU were also not going to be spared in the event of designation and another worry was that land was going to be taken from productive black commercial farmers to communal farmers who largely focused on subsistence survival. This kind of

³ N. J. Naldi, "Land Reform in Zimbabwe: Some Legal Aspects", *Modern African Studies*, Vol 31, No 4, 1993, pp. 585-600.

⁴ 'Anxiety over the Land Bill', *The Farmer* 17 January 1992.

⁵ 'Chief Justice expresses concern over the constitutional amendments', CFU Council Minutes 10 January 1992.

worry exposed the ZNFU and NFAZ rivalry within the ZFU, with the former representing semi-commercial to small-scale farmers and the later focusing on communal farmers. The ICFU expressed concern at the compensation clause.⁶ This was because the organisation sought to promote the success of black commercial farmers and some of its members could potentially lose land and also fail to get a fair compensation. Some members of the ICFU had secured bank loans to finance their operations. Thus, the catastrophe of losing land and failing to secure fair compensation would hurt them badly.

The Land Acquisition Act

The debate on the Land Acquisition Act of 1992 in parliament also exposed resentment towards white farmers with regards to land reform. Hon Bhebhe MP commented that,

we need to keep a close eye on the white commercial farmers, they are playing games with the nation, white farmers are devoting most of their time on safari business where you spend very little, all you have to do is to construct a tall wire, to provide water fountains from farm to farm, most of the commercial areas are not being effectively utilised and some have become gardens.⁷

The Minister of Agriculture, Witness Mangwende, in support of Hon Bhebhe's views added, "right now, the majority of them (referring to white farmers) own six or more farms which are mostly underutilised".⁸

These sentiments by politicians sought to justify a narrative that white farmers were uncompromising when it comes to land reform and also possess huge tracts of land which was not being utilised. Thus, in the Minister's and Hon Bhebhe's view land acquisition should target white owned farm-land. These sentiments also sought to canvass more support for the Land Acquisition Act of 1992.

⁶ ZFU and ICFU land proposals appended to the minutes of CFU Council Meeting of 26 February 1992.

⁷ Hansard Record of Parliamentary Debate 3 March 1992.

⁸ Hansard Recording of Parliamentary Debate 12 March 1992.

In March 1992 parliament passed the Land Acquisition Act, the main objective of the act was to transfer jurisdiction over property rights from the judiciary to the state executive, and especially the ruling party to speed up land transfers. The Act also highlighted the procedure for the compulsory acquisition of any rural land, including for the purposes of agricultural settlement. Under the Act, 'rural land' was defined to exclude communal lands, land in urban centres, and certain categories of state land. The Act further empowered the responsible minister to designate rural land for future acquisition. The minister had to indicate the period, not exceeding ten years, within which the designated land would be acquired. Importantly, the Act provided for the creation of a compensation committee to determine compensation for land and improvements on it. The Act also established that disputes over compensation were to be resolved by the Administrative Court.⁹

In Moyo's view, market reform did not manage to provide satisfactory quantities or quality of land and it was therefore necessary to shift towards compulsory acquisition and purchase. Moyo states that,

government opted for a transparent, legal and administrative framework for land acquisition, which was democratically put in place by parliament and which is clear on compensation. The Land Acquisition Act focus was on ensuring an administratively swift process in acquiring land by reducing legal contestations of land designations, while clearly showing the reasons for land designations. Government established an appropriate legislative and administrative machinery to pursue a credible land redistribution programme.¹⁰

Logan postulates that the Land Acquisition Act made it possible for the state to make two important departures from the Lancaster House Agreement. Firstly, the definition of 'just' in the just compensation clause became a policy rather than a market principle and

⁹ Government of Zimbabwe, Land Acquisition Act (Chapter 20:10), Harare: Government Printer, 1992.

¹⁰ S. Moyo, "Economic Nationalism and Land Reform in Zimbabwe", *Southern African Political Economy Series*, Occasional Paper, No 7, 1994.

secondly, the definition of 'willing' in the willing-seller clause also became the purview of the state. Therefore, what remained of the Lancaster House Agreement principles in the late 1990s was at best, 'predetermined compensation' to a 'coerced seller' and at worst, non-compensation to owners of derelict land. The author adds that, the state position is that these provisions were necessitated by the need to reinvigorate a process, which had been stalled by the lack of commitment by white farmers.¹¹

According to Sachikonye, the explicit renunciation of the Lancaster House Agreement by the National Land Policy and the Land Acquisition Act resulted in western donors withholding their financing for land reform thereby creating an impasse between the state and the western donors. This forced the state to intensify its hostile approach to land reform, first from a moderate market-led to an increasingly statist, radical model and second from land reform with significant emphases on productivity to land reform merely as land redistribution without a focus on infrastructure support.¹²

Kruger adds that the enactment of the Act represented a decisive moment in state-farmer relations in Zimbabwe. In sensing the inevitability of the land reform process in Zimbabwe, the CFU in 1991 offered a proposal for land reform in Zimbabwe which underscored how the distribution process should proceed. The proposal was seemingly protecting the interest of white farmers since it offered land for acquisition that did not alter the skewed ownership of land which significantly favoured the white farmers.¹³ Moreover, few farmers had volunteered to offer their land for acquisition which made the proposal fall in its tracks. The Land Acquisition Act transferred power on deciding on land matters from

¹¹ B. I. Logan, "Land Reform, Ideology and Urban Food Security: Zimbabwe's *Third Chimurenga*", *Economic Social Geography*, Vol 98, 2, 2007, pp. 202-224.

¹² L. Sachikonye, 'The Promised Land: From Expropriation to Reconciliation and *Jambanja*,' in B. Raftopoulos and T. Savage (eds.), *Zimbabwe: Injustice and Political Reconciliation*, Harare, Waver Press, 2005.

¹³ N. Kriger, Liberation from Constitutional Constraints: Land Reform in Zimbabwe, *SAIS Review*, Vol 27, 2, 2007, pg. 65-72.

the Judiciary to the Executive arm of the state. The declaration made by the President that “land was a political issue and land redistribution would not be derailed by the courts.”¹⁴ This symbolized a new rhetoric alien to white farmers.

Kruger points out that President Robert Mugabe and his deputy Joshua Nkomo revived promises of land redistribution in the campaign for the March 1990 elections. Passing the Land Acquisition Act was tantamount to starting a new war with the white farming community. Kruger adds that, the Act though symbolical in redefining land redistribution, suffered from successful litigation by landowners which derailed its full implementation.¹⁵ For farmers the trust towards the state became eroded as the state became more focused on land acquisition targeting the white farming community.

Moyo points out that the Act had implications on Zimbabwe’s relations with Britain; this was because Britain had pledged to finance the land reform on a willing-seller-willing-buyer basis. The Act symbolized a new era on land reform, which was coupled with attempts of compulsory acquisition. This led to hostile relations between Zimbabwe and Britain with regards to land distribution. Three key points of disagreement became apparent: firstly the extent to which redistribution should include small and medium black capitalist farmers to the exclusion of poor and landless peasants; secondly, the insistence by Britain that land redistribution be gradual, releasing 50 000 hectares per year for fewer than 3 000 households and thirdly, the conditionality of British support for demand-driven acquisition and for decentralized and civil society engaged institutional approaches which, for Zimbabwe, limited the role of the central government.¹⁶

¹⁴ R. Choto, ‘The Courts can not intervene in Land Matters says Mugabe’, *The Financial Gazette*, 18 June 1992.

¹⁵ S. N. Kruger, ‘Liberation from Constitutional Constraints: Land Reform in Zimbabwe’.

¹⁶ S. Moyo, “Economic Nationalism and Land Reform in Zimbabwe”, *Southern African Political Economy Series*, Occasional Paper, No 7, 1994.

In response to the Act, the CFU stated:

We were very surprised with this piece of legislation we had no input on it whatsoever, as CFU we support land reform which is pursued in a fair and transparent manner, the Act would cause uncertainty and anxiety among our members and we hope that the government will clarify its intentions on this piece of legislation.¹⁷

The ICFU position on the Land Acquisition Act was contained in a statement issued by one of its founder members James Nherera who had this to say:

It should be one farm per-owner and excessively large private units should be sub-divided into viable units, the viability of farm sizes to has to be determined by experts from the ministry of lands based on a suitable farming system of a particular area and farms belonging to absentee landlords should be acquired.¹⁸

The statement was in agreement with government position that white farmers had a lot of underutilised land which could be acquired by the government. The position of the group concerning the Act is not surprising considering that the group was lobbying to be given a union status by the government. Thus, making statements contrary to the government would undermine the organisation's chances of being given a union status.

Moyo points out that Zimbabwe's land policy and tensions over land emanated from various policy reforms that included macro-economic policy transformations, which changed markets for land, commodity trade and incentives for the supply of agrarian services. Agricultural policy after independence was earmarked on widening smallholder involvement in markets and diversifying the range and value of agrarian markets. Under ESAP the policy influence was on incentives from currency depreciation, agricultural market liberalization, agricultural export market promotion subsidies, and trade liberalization benefits on lowered tariffs for imports of inputs and equipment and labour deregulation.¹⁹

¹⁷ 'CFU Council Statement on the Land Acquisition Act of 1992', appended to minutes of the CFU Council Meeting in 15 March 1992.

¹⁸ Statement from the ICFA founder member James Nherera on the 'Land Acquisition Act' of 1992.

¹⁹ S. Moyo, 'The Political Economy of Land Acquisition and Redistribution in Zimbabwe 1990-1999'.

With shifts on land and related market values, land itself became intensely contested since demands for land increased from various newly formed indigenous black farmer interest groups grew. Interest groups such as the Smallholder Ostrich Corporation, the Zimbabwe Ostrich Producers Association and the Indigenous Commercial Farmers Union promoted new export land uses and bolstered demand for land. The key trend during the 1990s seemed to be a gradual revision of the strategy of compulsorily acquiring under-used land with partial compensation for land improvements, towards a policy of using donor funds to buy willingly offered land.²⁰

The 1992 Drought impact on commercial farming

Rain shortages between December 1991 and November 1992 amounted to probably the worst drought in Zimbabwe's recorded history. The CFU regarded it as the 'worst it has ever seen', the ZFU described it as 'catastrophic and devastating to farming', and ICFU branded it as a 'dark shadow in commercial farming'.²¹ In Matabeleland the effects were catastrophic as the drought resulted in the loss of thousands of cattle leading to near collapse of the ranching industry. The CFU also noted that the drought affected livestock and crops and created massive unemployment in the communal areas which were badly affected. The communal areas were the constituency base of the NFAZ and most of its members had their crops and livestock wiped out, becoming dependent on food handouts of non-governmental organisations. The severity of the drought was because it affected all parts of the country and lasted a very long period. Livestock could not transported locally; all major crops wilted, and water storage shortages persisted through to the irrigated winter crop and following season's

²⁰ S Moyo, 'The Political Economy of Land Acquisition and Redistribution.'

²¹ J. Mpunzi, 'Farming Unions devastated by droughts', *The Mirror* 15 May 1992.

storage levels. The drought also caused the economy to contract leading to a negative growth rate which was the first in a decade.²²

In Masvingo regional representatives of the CFU commenting on the 1992 drought in the area described it as,

disastrous, unimaginable, worst on earth, absolutely destructive, it is right to say that this is the saddest position that most commercial farmers in the region have ever found themselves in and the situation in the communal lands is even dire.²³

With these prevailing circumstances, stock theft, poaching and petty theft increased in commercial farms close to communal areas. Drought was blamed for the increase of such crimes.²⁴ The alliance between farmers and the state was supported and undermined by different elements of the drought. The drought reinforced the dependency on commercial farmers for food security and, in particular, white farmers became crucial in providing the desperately needed grain to sustain livelihoods. For farming unions such as the ZFU, the drought exposed their ill-preparedness to handle natural disasters. This was the case as result of the fact that they did not have enough knowledge and resources to handle such calamities. The majority of the members of ZFU particularly communal farmers complained of being left out all alone by their union and forced to beg to NGOs for survival.²⁵ This was in sharp contrast to the CFU which supported its members with advice and resources to deal with the drought. The drought also highlighted the stark contrasts between communal areas and the commercial land, an increasingly inconvenient and awkward contradiction which emerged in the land debate.

²² Deliberations on drought by the CFU Council, Minutes of the Council Meeting 29 January 1992.

²³ 'Masvingo Report on Drought', CFU Council Meeting of 29 January 1992.

²⁴ Members of the CFU Council deliberated on the increase in crime and resolved that drought is the cause, CFU Council Minutes of 10 March 1992.

²⁵ M Bratton, 'Micro-Democracy? The Merger of Farmer Unions in Zimbabwe'.

The Politics of Land Acquisition

In 1994 the Affirmative Action Group (AAG) was created as a result of a split from Indigenous Business Development Centre (IBDC). The group was led by Phillip Chiyangwa who went on to team up with Roger Boka and set the tone for what became known as the radical black economic empowerment.²⁶ Roger Boka did not waste time in directing his attacks on white farming community. His anti-white actions saw him on 31 March 1996 publishing a full-page advertisement in several newspapers reproducing an old photograph of a black Kenyan carrying a white man across a swollen river. The caption read, “White Zimbabweans idea of a good African, we want our country Zimbabwe and our economy to be in our hands and no dogs or guns will stop this revolution.”²⁷

The CFU responded by accusing Boka of stirring racial hatred. To the surprise of the CFU Boka received loud praise from those in government.²⁸ With his influence in government increasing, Boka became influential in farming particularly in the tobacco sector forcing radical changes to policies which had benefited white farmers. Boka began lobbying those in government claiming that the country’s biggest export was being held hostage by white farmers.²⁹ The campaign propelled Boka into prominence, with former President Mugabe labelling him a black empowerment pioneer. Capitalising on this relationship with the President, drastic changes were made in the tobacco sector mostly to Boka’s own benefit. Government could now offer guarantees to black traders for all their tobacco purchases; the establishment of his own bank and later on tobacco auction floors illustrate the influence of Boka on those in government. His rise to prominence symbolised the radicalisation of black

²⁶ ‘New Lobby Group Challenges IBDC’, *The Mirror* 22 April 1994.

²⁷ H. Saburi, ‘Roger Boka Obituary’, *The Herald*, 23 February 1999.

²⁸ ‘Roger Boka souring hatred and the government needs to take action’, The CFU President letter in the *Farmer* 3 April 1996.

²⁹ H. Saburi, ‘Roger Boka Obituary.’

empowerment, putting white farmers and the CFU in a line of fire, as attacks on white hegemony in agriculture intensified.

Since the early 1990s, the ZANU PF leadership perceived the law to be more of a hindrance than a vehicle to achieve land redistribution. In 1991 during and after the emergency meeting with farmers, Witness Mangwende pleaded with white farmers not to use courts. In a heated meeting between Patrick Chinamasa, the then Attorney General, and the farming community representative David Hasluck, the Attorney General threatened that if white farmers resorted to the legal route, the government would simply change the constitution.³⁰ In 1993 in the Government Gazette, the initial listing of lands for compulsory acquisition was published. After publishing it, President Mugabe in support of the Attorney General Patrick Chinamasa, reiterated that land was a political issue and land redistribution would not be derailed by the courts. The President declared that he would, “not brook any decisions from any court that rules against government policy and that if the law did not suit the modalities of land then they would simply change the law.”³¹

To back up this rhetoric, Simon Khaya Moyo, a parliamentarian, declared that “the land issue is a political issue and it is not for the judiciary to resolve.”³²

The state’s quest to acquire land remained in full scale. On Independence Day in April 1993, the President reiterated the need for the state to adjudicate the land process and emphasized the centrality of the ruling party within the state. In 1994 he re-emphasised this view when opening parliament, his intentions focused on resettling people on another five million hectares of land.³³ Increasing control of the land by the ruling party was in direct

³⁰ Commercial Farmers Union situation reports of 1992-1999 accessed at www.cfuzim.org on 16 May 2018.

³¹ ‘Courts can’t derail land reform says the President’, *The Herald*, 18 April 2003.

³² Hansard Record of Parliamentary Debate 17 March 1993.

³³ President Mugabe State of the Nation Address captured in the Hansard of May 1994.

conflict with some of the recommendations of the Rukuni Commission, the CFU and donors who called for adequate consultations and representation of all stakeholders. At cabinet level, the re-invigoration of the Ministry for Lands and Water in 1995, as had been done in 1980 and 1985, meant that all land issues were to be dealt with by this ministry and moreover, Dennis Norman had been reappointed Agriculture Minister, but no longer dealing with land matters.³⁴ The President apparently joked with Dennis Norman, highlighting that he no longer trusted him with the lands portfolio because it was too important.

In 1996 the new Land Identification Committees, appointed by the ruling party and consisting of ZANU PF members, government personnel and Agritex officials excluded white commercial farmers. David Hasluck, a CFU Director, noted that the administration of the land issue changed enormously during 1996 when Mugabe shifted control and responsibility from the Ministry of Lands and Water into the confines of ZANU PF's Central Committee.³⁵ The 1996 presidential election and the April 1995 general election witnessed the intensity of political rhetoric around the land issue. The whites were branded as racist and unpatriotic. These kinds of sentiments did not stop and in a presidential campaign in 1996 President Mugabe threatened to take the land within the next five years if the British government did not resume its funding for land acquisition which it had terminated. Threats were also directed at white farmers and he warned that he did not want to send squatters to invade farms, but that he would consider it if the British did not fund land compensation or if farmers remained intransigent.³⁶ David Hasluck (CFU Director) was invited to the ZANU PF Politburo in 1996 and asked why so few whites attend rallies; his reply was that "it is difficult

³⁴ 'President Makes Cabinet Changes' *The Mirror* 11 September 1995.

³⁵ Minutes of the CFU President's Council Meeting 29 January 1996.

³⁶ N. Kriger, ZANU PF Strategies in General Elections, 1980-2000: Discourse and Coercion, *African Affairs*, Vol 104, 414, 2000, pp. 1-34.

to pluck up the courage to attend a mass rally if you were going to be castigated as a white racist that had frustrated government's land programme."³⁷

After attending another invitation of the ZANU PF Central Committee meeting on 18 February 1996, David Hasluck reported back to the CFU council that the land issue has become politically sensitive and will be used vigorously in any political campaign.³⁸ This anti-white rhetoric continued, but the CFU did not have a clear strategy to contain this new phenomenon. In May 1996 Peter Mac Sporrán noted that the political situation had deteriorated from bad to worse and that farmers were in a difficult time. His suggestion was to lobby and improve the public relations status of the Union with the general public in the belief that public awareness would mediate and moderate the land agenda. Another member and partner of the CFU, Rob Webb (President ZTA) wanted more macro-political and economic debate in order to generate better farmer awareness of bigger issues. Mr Hasluck explained the difficulties of differentiating between election hype, empowerment rhetoric and genuine policies. Mr Taylor from the Matabeleland branch felt that more attendance at political events was needed.³⁹ Such varied suggestions highlight CFU's awareness of the problems but diminishing ability to respond to them.

Within the government, moderate officials such as Robbie Mupawose tried to calm growing tensions by creating lines of communication between farmers and the government on the land issue, but events were fast moving beyond their control. The new minister with the task of engaging with the white farmers, the late Kumbirai Kangai 1996-1998, in his first meeting with the farmers, warned that political views within government and party were hardening. This was because the white farmers were giving token compromises. To further

³⁷ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting 27 March 1996.

³⁸ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting 27 March 1996.

³⁹ Minutes of the CFU Presidents Council meeting, 24 May 1996.

illustrate his resentment of the white farmers' attitudes towards the land reform, the Minister described the white farming sector as a 'lion that had eaten and eaten but refused to let anyone near the prize.' In his address to the CFU congress in August 1996, he frankly told the farmers to come up with offers for land or else the ruling party will resort to identify it themselves.⁴⁰ Interesting to note is that several ministers who had accepted invitations to the Congress, failed to turn up, illustrating the response of the ruling party owing to the perceived intransigence of the of the CFU.

The issue of land reform in the eyes of the Commercial Farmers Union had to be achieved through the strategy of a land market, identifying extensive areas of unsettled state land, and identifying underutilised parastatal land particularly that belonging to the Agricultural Research Development Authority (ARDA).⁴¹ The farming community, especially the Commercial Farmers Union, felt that there was hypocrisy in identifying productive white-owned land when government farms were underutilised. Even government officials admitted that was the case; Robbie Mupawose, the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture, acknowledged the need to change land utilisation within the state sector. To make matters worse, *The Farmer* (the CFU magazine) documented the designation of a working 6 000ha ranch adjoining Nuanetsi Ranch. The ranch measuring about 300 000 hectares, was owned by the Development Trust of Zimbabwe (DTZ) and according to the article in the magazine part of this land is virtually derelict.⁴² This was like adding gasoline on fire; state officials especially in the agriculture and lands ministries felt insulted by the CFU and rebuked the CFU leadership describing it as full of ego and greediness.⁴³ The CFU

⁴⁰ 'Minister Kangai warns white farmers, *The Herald* 16 August 1996.

⁴¹ S Moyo, *The Land Question in Zimbabwe*, Sapes, 1995.

⁴² 'Naunetsi Ranch is idle' *The Farmer* 26 October, 1996.

⁴³ M Gumbo, 'Government angry with the actions of white farmers', *Financial Gazette*, 28 October 1996.

was putting itself in a tight corner and further closing any channels of communication with the state.

By 1996, the race issue became the linchpin at the core of the land politicisation process, and this resonated with the empowerment agenda being pursued by the state. At the ZANU PF 1996 congress, CFU gathered that 2028 farms had been identified for compulsory acquisition. When the CFU asked for clarification from the government, Minister Kangai highlighted that political reasons were at the heart of this process. Towards 1998 his acknowledgement of the use of the political reasons helped to demonstrate how politicisation of the land had become the central theme in Zimbabwe's land reform.⁴⁴

Alarmed by the new direction of events, white farmers decided to pursue the legal route as an avenue to protect their livelihoods. The belief was that by using the legal route this would also help to expose technical and legal shortcomings on the government's land reform and this route would also help to delay the process thus, giving farmers some time to think of the best course of action. Of the 1993 listings, four farmers contested their cases legally. Two interesting cases included those brought by Henry Elseworth and Alistair Davies and in all these cases the white farmers won. On Hereford farm's case, the court case took a very lengthy period and the Minister again lost the case at the Administrative Court whose decision was never respected and eventually the farm was taken over. Max Rosenfels, from Matabeleland had a farm identified for acquisition in 1996 which he conceded the following year but had still not been compensated two years later.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ A. Selby, "Radical Realignments: The Collapse of the Alliance between White Farmers and the State in Zimbabwe 1995-2000", *Centre for International Development*, Queen Elizabeth House, Oxford, 2006, Pg. 6.

⁴⁵ Justice for Agriculture Trust, 'Reckless Tragedy: Irreversible? A survey of Human Rights Violations and Losses Suffered by Commercial Farmers and Farm Workers in Zimbabwe, Harare 2008.

In 1997 a mass designation of farms was launched which included listing of about 1471 farms. This created immense unease on the part of the white farmers and forced the CFU legal representative, Alex Masterson, to write to the government asking for a clear position on the land reform programme. He had even warned the CFU council against using court action before negotiation. David Hasluck, a member of the CFU council, also believed that this route would sour relations with the state and could further create discord within the CFU.⁴⁶

The CFU further established the Agricultural Promotion Trust as a central fund from which members could draw to fight designation independently. With this strategy, the CFU was simply admitting that the legal route would remain the option given the determination of the state to intensify acquisition. Close to 1200 appeals were lodged after the 1997 listings, resulting in renewed anti-white rhetoric especially in 1998 when Minister Kangai threatened to designate the farms of all racists and critics of government. The President again warned that the land issue was political and would not be derailed by the courts. His deputy Joseph Msika also claimed that white farmers were responsible for the politicisation of the land issue because they took the government to court.⁴⁷ This highlighted breakdown of trust and communication between the state and white farmers.

Commissions of inquiry have become a distinct feature in Zimbabwe's land reform process. Their mandate has largely been to play advisory roles especially with regards to land matters. One of the commissions of enquiry launched was the Rukuni Commission in 1994. Its mandate was to explore Zimbabwe's land and agriculture structure. It managed to rope in several key stakeholders in the farming sector in Zimbabwe. This included traditional leaders,

⁴⁶ Minutes of the CFU President's Council Meeting 25 February 1997.

⁴⁷ 'White farmers have been warned', *The Herald* 28 May 1998.

representatives of different farming groups, academics and prominent members of the agriculture industry. Professor Mandivamba Rukuni was chairing the commission.⁴⁸

The report offered important findings and gave the government some crucial recommendations especially on each farming sector. Notable recommendations to the state were that there was need to retain, but decentralize communal tenure in communal areas, to allocate longer-term leases in purchase and resettlement areas with a view to granting private tenure, and to retain freehold tenure in commercial areas. The Commission noted that there was pressure on land especially within communal areas and also recommended the appointment of an independent board to adjudicate land distribution in such areas as well.⁴⁹

The report was endorsed by the CFU, the Indigenous Commercial Farmers Union, the Zimbabwe Farmers Union, the World Bank and the British government. However, despite providing important findings, most of the recommendations of the commission were never implemented. Professor Rukuni himself highlighted that politicians and the lack of technocrats in the agriculture ministry were to blame for the failure of implementation of his findings. In contrast, Minister Kangai blamed a range of political views within the party and the resistance of white farmers to land reform as the reasons behind the failure of the Rukuni Commission while Dr Mupawose pointed out the polarizing perspectives between the CFU and the government as undermining the recommendations of the Commission.⁵⁰

The land question was not only a domestic quagmire for the Zimbabwean nation state, instead the matter spilled into diplomatic circles especially creating tensions with the former coloniser Britain. The Lancaster House Agreement paved the way for majority rule in Zimbabwe through voting. The land issue took much of the time with regards to the

⁴⁸ M Rukuni, 'Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Appropriate Agricultural Land Tenure Systems'.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ A .Selby, 'Commercial Farmers and the State: Interest Group Politics and Land Reform in Zimbabwe'.

discussions at the conference. The United Kingdom understood the need for a land settlement and the Chairman of the conference Lord Carrington pointed out that Britain had agreed to contribute to the costs and to rally the support of the international donor community. Towards this fund, the British agreed to contribute seventy-five million pounds to buy out farms owned by whites who did not want to continue to farm.⁵¹ After the 1992 Land Acquisition Act, diplomatic relations deteriorated further and in 1993 the British informed the CFU that they would not fund a compulsory reform process. To the British, the only option was to fund a market-based reform programme. The government was also in a dilemma because it did not have funds especially for the resettlement exercise.

To increase pressure on Britain to support the land resettlement programme, President Mugabe used his 1996 election campaign to press Britain for funding commitment. The speech was characterised by threats which marked a new turn of relations with the British. The President made it clear that if the British government were not prepared to make any more money available for land resettlement, an accelerated programme to finalise the land issue would be in place and implemented during the next five years. In 1996, Baroness Chalker promised support in funding resettlement, but maintained that Britain would support the willing-seller-willing-buyer format. However, the President remained adamant that if British funding was not available, he would take the land by force.⁵²

The state went further to set July 1997 as deadline for the British to resume funding. However, in Britain political changes in 1997 which led to the removal of the Conservatives from power and the coming in of the Labour government significantly altered relations. Claire Short, the Development Secretary, in a letter to Minister Kangai in 1997 refuted

⁵¹ V. Z. Nyawo-Shava and S. L. Barnard, 'The Trajectory of Land Reform in Zimbabwe: Post independence era 1980-2000'.

⁵² G. Magaramombe, 'Rural poverty: Commercial farm workers and land reform in Zimbabwe'.

British responsibility to fund the land reform and underlined that her government was not going to meet the costs of the land purchase in Zimbabwe. She ended by underscoring that the only way the British would support land reform was if it becomes part of the poverty alleviation strategy.⁵³ This letter significantly fuelled increasing tensions between the British and the Zimbabwean government.

According to Chan the Zimbabwean government described the letter as incredibly insensitive, with a complete lack of respect for the Zimbabwean administration.⁵⁴ The British attempted to rectify the situation by indicating that a representative of the Prime Minister would attend the Donor Conference in 1998. However, this gesture was too late; the rift had become open and was further elaborated as a stance to perpetuate neo-colonialism. Closer communication links between the British government and the ZANU PF government simply collapsed creating a new phase of hurtful and undiplomatic language.⁵⁵

The CFU failed to garner crucial support in its quest to resolve the land question. By 1995 most black commercial farmers had not been embraced fully within the CFU structures. The CFU had manifested itself as an 'all-white boys' network. Many black farmers felt socially awkward at country clubs and were often ostracized by cliques that formed at club bars after farmer meetings. Racial exclusivity within the CFU was shown through the absence of black members within the CFU council.⁵⁶

Towards the year 1997 the ruling party, state and farmer relations had reached another phase. Minutes of the CFU in September 1997 pointed out that the public relations are very difficult and that farmers are the focus of a lot of bad press, especially with the respect to

⁵³ S. Moyo, 'The Political economy of land acquisition in Zimbabwe, 1990-1999'.

⁵⁴ S. Chan, *Robert Mugabe: A life of Power and Violence*, Tauris, 2003, London, Pg. 15.

⁵⁵ S. Moyo 'The Political Economy of Land Acquisition in Zimbabwe, 1990-1999'.

⁵⁶ S. D. Taylor, 'Business and Politics in Zimbabwe's Commercial Agriculture Sector'.

farm-worker conditions and the land issue. The minutes also noted the involvement of war veterans and the negative effect on white farmers. A month later, the CFU council concluded that commercial farmers were under fire from all directions and that their views were increasingly irrelevant to major decisions.⁵⁷

The farmers were now in a delicate and precarious situation which was characterised by hostile developments. A significant development was the introduction of a levy on tobacco production. This levy was introduced in 1996 by the treasury rather than the Ministry of Agriculture following a politburo directive. The farming community reacted with shock and displeasure against the levy. The Zimbabwe Tobacco Association and the CFU argued that the tax should be levied on the buyers, not the producer and that five percent tax on income was excessive, especially for small farmers.⁵⁸ The 1996 tobacco levy illustrated the irrelevance of farmer lobbying to agricultural policy. The ZTA's response was reactive and defensive; its attempts to confront the state failed because the CFU council argued for a more sober engagement with the state.

Dennis Norman as the Minister of Agriculture was instrumental in opening channel of communication between farmers and the government. When the bill to introduce a tobacco, levy was presented in parliament he was on holiday. *The Farmer* described the passage of the bill as fast-tracked and noted an atmosphere of haste and secrecy surrounding the proposed levy. The Zimbabwe Tobacco Association bitterly complained to Dennis Norman about the levy arguing that he made assurances that the levy would have compromises which were not considered. In May, government increased the levy to ten percent, leading to the

⁵⁷ Minutes of the CFU President's Council Meeting, 29 October, 1997.

⁵⁸ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting 28 February 1996.

disgruntlement of farmers.⁵⁹ This was another sign that white farmers were no longer a formidable force and that government was now prepared to fight them in every sector.

Peter Richards, the Zimbabwe Tobacco Association president, accused ruling party MPs of failing to understand economic fundamentals. The association attempted to lobby, campaign and even tried to negotiate with the government. However, all these channels failed leaving them with no option, but to direct all their frustrations and anger towards Dennis Norman who tried and failed to deal with the issue.⁶⁰ In 1997 Dennis Norman retired citing advanced age and he denied political pressure was involved. It is obvious that heavy criticism from tobacco farmers and empowerment groups as well as humiliation of being side-lined from major decision-making processes would eventually force him out.

The levies also created institutional splits. In January 1997 the Zimbabwe Tobacco Association relinquished all land initiatives to the Commercial Farmers Union. However, the ZTA soon retreated and reverted to independent lobbying. The agricultural levies were a divisive issue in a divisive period and captured the cocktail of interests and strategies among different groups. The CFU was hugely concerned at the ZTA's independent lobbying and its own restructuring. Amidst this confusion the agricultural levies illustrated three important points, firstly, the exclusion of commercial farmers from policy decisions, secondly the shift towards new taxes on commercial farming, and thirdly that the revenues were not being directed towards land reform or agriculture.⁶¹

The political muscle of the white farmers was severely reduced during the 1990s. Farmer leaders during this period faced greater challenges and the room for diplomatic manoeuvres was limited. Commercial farmers established settlement schemes locally such as

⁵⁹ 'Farmers left out in the cold with the Tobacco Levy', *The Farmer*, 18 May, 1996.

⁶⁰ A. Selby, 'Commercial Farmers and the State: Interest Group Politics and Land Reform in Zimbabwe'.

⁶¹ S. Price, 'Collapse of a strategic Partnership in farming', *The Daily Telegraph*, 15 January, 1997.

the Percival farm in Macheke, Wenimbi scheme near Marondera and the Angwa Makonde. A national level scheme was established through the Farm Development Trust (FDT). It was started by the Zimbabwe Tobacco Association in 1994 and the FDT was run by a representative board appointed from the agricultural industry and its unions and reported directly to the Ministry of Lands and Agriculture.

The trust established projects at Panorama farm in Centenary and Bratton Farm in Matepatapa. It then assumed administration of Percival and Lot 10 Wenimbi where local farmers had been helping fourteen resettled farmers. By the end of 1995, the FDT had expanded to about 300 hectares under tobacco on four projects, in which more than 150 farmers benefited. The programme attracted donor attention and funding and its PR success was recognised when President Mugabe officially toured the Centenary FDT projects in 1996 and commented favourably.⁶²

By the end of 1997, six schemes were promoting nearly 250 black farmers. The financial expenditure of the scheme illustrated the high costs of undertaking a carefully managed and monitored resettlement and raised fears of high costs of extensive resettlement. Alan Ravescroft, a founder of the Trust, even highlighted that the scheme had a lot of positive aspects, but there is simply no way it could be replicated on a national scale. The costs of the exercise showed how expensive a managed resettlement scheme was likely to be. The FDT also suffered political interference. The selection of Panorama farm in Centenary had met extreme resistance from local politicians, who wanted to run it themselves and it was only the presence of high-profile board members that overcame these.⁶³

⁶² Background of the Farmers Development Trust obtained from a handbook by the Zimbabwe Tobacco Association.

⁶³ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting – deliberations on political interference in the Farmers Development Trust affairs 18 July 1997.

Farmers also offered other gestures such as supporting communal farmers with land preparation, inputs and management advice. However, these initiatives were not substituting the land reform and illustrated how irrelevant local relations could be at national level. Negative elements, perceived and real, such as social isolation, racism and wealth accumulation would tend to undermine any olive branch coming from white farmers. Moreover, as the politicisation of land increased, farmer initiatives were treated more and more suspiciously.

Internally, the CFU was weakened due to its awkward relationship with the tobacco sector. The ZTA was a more united, streamlined and economically powerful body. However, the limitations of its power were exposed during the deliberations over the 1996 Tobacco Levy. The CFU minutes note that later on in October 1999 ZTA had met the President privately and began to pursue their own land route.⁶⁴ This signified growing rifts and undermined strength of the CFU. Other divisions between farmers emerged at grassroots. During the 1996 Presidential elections campaign some farmers in the Centenary areas donated maize to ZANU PF. This elicited favourable comments from the party but prompted harsh criticism against those farmers that did not.

Towards the end of 1996, the President's Council put forward concerns that CFU councillors at local and district level were undermining central council. Following the 1997 listings, farmers in the Mashonaland Central province criticised the CFU for doing little to protect them. Individual farmers began to negotiate their way off the list through the governor, Border Gezi, who was deleting and adding farms without consultations with the relevant minister.⁶⁵ The leadership of the CFU was furious, arguing that this was prompting

⁶⁴ CFU Council Meeting Minutes of 15 October 1999- deliberations on the split with Zimbabwe Tobacco Association.

⁶⁵ CFU Council Minutes deliberations on how Governor Boarder Gezi is engaging some white farmers.

splits. This highlighted how weak the CFU was in instilling discipline and unity within its ranks especially at a time of crisis.

White farmers abandoning Apoliticism

The coming of the Movement for Democratic Change on the political scene ratcheted up tensions on the political scene; the party became a viable alternative especially to the disgruntled middle class and anyone yearning for a new democratic dispensation. The white farming community openly embraced the party; it represented an avenue which could protect their interest which was the land. White farmers thought once the MDC gets into power the chaos and anarchy with regards to land reform could be halted with an organised and slow process of land reform. The open documentation by the international media of white farmers presenting Morgan Tsvangirai with cheques deeply angered the ruling party and placed the white farmers directly in the same team with the opposition.⁶⁶

Populist land invasions in the 1970s and 1980s usually focused on abandoned or underutilised sections of larger farms. The pre-election invasions of 2000 were different, they mainly targeted highly developed properties with large workforces, particularly in Mashonaland. Farmers who had openly campaigned against the referendum, through transport, worker activism or t-shirt printing became victims of witch-hunts. A notable example is Brian Martin, who held an MDC rally at Arda farm and subsequently faced harassment and vilification from war veterans.⁶⁷

The campaign of the ruling party was anti-MDC; anyone associated with the political party became a prime target hence the white farming community became part and parcel of the political agenda. Farmers' resources were often used against the MDC. As their political

⁶⁶ 'White Farmers in Zimbabwe endorse the MDC', *The Mail and Guardian* accessed at www.mg.co.za on 16 February 2017.

⁶⁷ 'White farmers accused of working with the MDC', accessed on Voice of America News at www.voanews.com on 18 February 2017.

fortunes changed, white farmers were intimidated to supply fuel and transport for ZANU (PF) rallies as well as being forced to supply resources at gun point. At the highest political level, deep hatred of the white farming community was becoming open. Thus, in 2000 President Mugabe declared that notorious or racist whites will be evicted. This was a very alarming remark associated with unanswered questions such as, how would these distinctions be made and who would make them?⁶⁸ David Stevens and Alan Dunn were murdered because of their association with the MDC. At national level Roy Bennet and Ian Kay became part of the MDC leadership and the consequences of such association resulted in both of them losing their farms.

The result of 2000 general election, as is now the trend with elections in Zimbabwe, became highly disputed especially given lack of foreign involvement in the process. For the state security arm, the voting patterns provided information on which districts and on which farms had openly opposed ZANU (PF). In Marondera white farmers pointed out that the manner in which boxes were supplied and counted allowed election officials to identify which farms had voted for the MDC.⁶⁹ Many farmers within the white farming community remained anti ZANU PF. However, this approach was quietly taken anticipating also that economic collapse and international pressure would eventually remove the Mugabe government. Another strategy was towing the party line during electioneering and then quietly vote the other way.⁷⁰

International concerns about the land reform process were labelled as neo-imperialism and the international media was presented as simply taking the sides of the whites who had for long enriched themselves and ignored the plight of indigenous landless blacks. *The*

⁶⁸ A .Selby, 'Losing the Plot: The Strategic Dismantling of White Farming in Zimbabwe 2000—2005'.

⁶⁹ 'Farmers in Marondera report on electoral irregularities', *The Farmer* 15 June 2000.

⁷⁰ Interview with anonymous CFU member in Bulawayo on 18 September 2016.

Herald newspaper further created an impression of how the land reform in Zimbabwe would fit aptly with regards to historical legacies and alienations within the region especially South Africa and Namibia. White farmers were also projected as unrepentant racists and therefore deserving all that was happening to them.⁷¹

The year 2000 represented a very sad turning point within the farming community, in particular the relationship between the state and the white farmers. The constitutional referendum resulted in the collapse of interaction between the two. According to *The Farmer* the government-sponsored draft constitution contained a clause that obliged Britain as the former colonial master to pay for the compensation of land taken by the government.⁷² The farming community was highly concerned about such a clause. The referendum itself was associated with rhetoric which attacked the white farming community. According to *The Farmer*, advertisements leading up to the referendum openly attacked the white farming community and the state broadcaster went further to urge the citizens to vote yes in order to send a clear message to the white settlers. It was deemed that the Yes Vote would mean taking back what is rightfully theirs; and this was the land.⁷³

This kind of blitzkrieg by the state media made the white farmers to coalesce around the No Vote. Their numbers could not have a big impact in altering the result, but the huge labour force became a viable weapon which could work to their advantage. Selby highlights that as the National Constitutional Assembly mobilised in urban areas for a No Vote, the farmers began to mobilise their workers urging them to reject the draft constitution. They printed and distributed t-shirts and leaflets calling for a NO Vote.⁷⁴

⁷¹ 'Africa must speak with one voice on land' *The Herald* 15 August 1999.

⁷² 'Draft Constitution Obliges Britain to Compensate Commercial Farmers', *The Farmer*, 27 January, 2000, pg.7.

⁷³ 'Words to remember', *The Farmer*, February 17, 2001, pg 5.

⁷⁴ A. Selby, 'Commercial Farmers and the state: Interest Group Politics and Land Reform in Zimbabwe',

The CFU magazine *The Farmer* highlights how the mobilisation of farm workers was undertaken. Some farmers would invite all their employees to a meeting to explain the importance of registering and voting in the referendum. In particular, the farmers urged their workers to vote for a NO to the referendum.⁷⁵ This kind of scenario has been branded, in some instances, as a political reawakening on the part of the white farmers. This kind of participation placed them in direct collision with the ZANU PF government. According to Raftopolous, Mugabe was shaken by the defeat at the referendum. However, he came out in a conciliatory mood and promised to respect the wishes of the people of Zimbabwe. Raftopoulos adds that the response of the ruling party to the defeat was ruthless and swift. The ZANU PF government heaped all the blame for the defeat in the referendum on the white farmers and promised retaliation in volatile political language.⁷⁶

Freeman adds that,

analyses of ZANU PF as militaristic, vertical, undemocratic, violent and repressive party that preferred to conduct politics through the barrel of a gun was once again confirmed, this vengeance and anger was brought to bear not only targeting the political opposition the MDC led by Tsvangirai and his party, but all those who were labelled as supporting him, the white farmers easily fit into this scenario with ease.⁷⁷

The loss in the constitutional referendum is regarded as the immediate catalyst to farm invasions. Once they started, the white farmers' voice became increasingly weak and much of their speaking was done through their mouthpiece, *The Farmer*, which began to explicitly highlight the farm invasions and also the role of MDC in trying to unseat the ruling party.

⁷⁵ 'Bottom Line', *The Farmer* March 2, 2000, Pg. 23.

⁷⁶ B. Raftopoulos, 'The State in Crisis: Authoritarian Nationalism, Selective Citizenship and Distortion of Democracy in Zimbabwe,' in A. Hammar, B. Raftopoulos and S. Jensen (eds.), *Zimbabwe's Unfinished Business: Rethinking Land, State and Nation in the Context of a Crisis*, Harare, Weaver Press, 2003.

⁷⁷ L. Freeman, "A Parallel Universe-Competing Interpretations of Zimbabwe's Crisis", *Contemporary African Studies*, Vol 32, 3, 2014, pp. 349-366.

According to Marongwe and Pilosof, these kinds of occupations became well-coordinated and began to spread out. In the last week of February 2000, the invasions were reported in Masvingo. These also spread to Mashonaland and Manicaland and involved war veterans and people from the communal areas, chiefs and urban residents.⁷⁸ These kinds of invasions caught the CFU totally unprepared. In its magazine, the CFU admitted that it was shell shocked with the new stance taken by the government and that this was simply punishment for rejecting the draft constitution and it was planned from the highest level. Even Information Minister, Chen Chimutengwende, admitted that the No vote complicated the white farming community position.⁷⁹

The farm invasions also varied, after the 2000 referendum the invasions were aimed at MDC supporters, which resonated with ZANU PF election strategy. War Veterans established base camps in each area, and these were used to facilitate the election campaign. Farm workers were also forced to attend re-education sessions during the night. As soon as the official implementation of the fast track programme was put in place, farm invasions became more formalised. The government plan distinguished between small-scale A1 and medium/large scale beneficiaries. Farm invasions and occupations were intertwined with official gazettes from Provincial and District land committees. Such kind of committees were dominated by the army, civil servants, ruling party officials, war veterans, members of the local government, local party officials and local traditional leaders.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ R. Pilosof, "The Land Question (Un)Resolved: An Essay Review", *Historia*, Vol 53,1, 2008, pp.270-279, Marongwe points out that immediately after the rejection of the state sponsored draft farm invasions which were state sponsored began in Masvingo spreading to other areas of Mashonaland and Manicaland N. Marongwe "Farm Occupations and Occupiers in the new Politics of Land", in A Hammar, B Raftopoulos and S Jensen (eds) *Zimbabwe's Unfinished Business: Rethinking Land, State and Nation in the Context of Crisis*, Harare, Weaver Press, 2003.

⁷⁹ P. Ruhanya, 'Farm seizures begin', *The Daily News*, 18 May 2001.

⁸⁰ J. Alexander, "Squatters, Veterans and the State in Zimbabwe" in A Hammar, B Raftopoulos and S Jensen (eds) *Zimbabwe's Unfinished Business: Rethinking Land, State and Nation in the Context of Crisis*, Harare, Weaver Press, 2003.

Most of the invasions were led by prominent war veterans supported by local communities and some angered farm workers. In some cases, help was also bussed in to increase numbers and even thugs were also hired to create mayhem. In Mashonaland Central province, if any politician identified a farm for personal allocation, there was little chance of such an intention being unsuccessful. In some cases, senior politicians were simply side-lined by their juniors as evidenced by Governor Manyika who constantly clashed with Vice President Joseph Msika especially on many takeovers in the Mazowe Valley.⁸¹ The farm invasions could simply be described as a fast-moving, organised and flexible agenda, which was earmarked to intimidate the voters and meet personal interests of key party figures. Sadly, the violence resulted in the deaths of some white farmers such as David Stevens, Martin Olds, Alan Dunn and Tery Ford.

In analysing these developments using lenses of corporatism, one can conclude that the CFU was prepared to abandon co-operation with the state as its interests were no-longer safeguarded in the corporatist arrangement. The determination of the state to acquire land put into jeopardy the co-operation which prevailed in the 1980s. The CFU was not in support of the government policy with regards to land acquisition and put forward its own policy proposals which were rejected by the state. Tensions over policy direction on land acquisition led to the collapse of the relations between the state and CFU. As a result of the tensions, there was no-longer co-operation and co-ordination between the state and the CFU on issues of land and agricultural production. With the collapse of the working arrangement between the two, each of the parties sought alliances with other parties to garner support on land. Some of the CFU members closely aligned with the MDC hoping that if the MDC party gets into government would not push for a radical land reform process and on the part of the state,

⁸¹ D. Muleya, 'Elliot Manyika and Vice President D. Msika Clash on Farm Take-overs In Mash-Central, *The Zimbabwe Independent* 27 July, 2001.

the war veterans were brought back into the picture to help push for radical land distribution. This radical land distribution resulted in angry and violent confrontations over land, igniting a revolutionary war known as the *Third Chimurenga*.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the chapter has laid out the growing intensity with regards to the land debate. The increasing tensions between the state and the CFU were as a result of the land question. The state immediately after the expiry of the sunset clauses of the negotiated Lancaster House constitution began to put in place measures to kick start land acquisition. These measures included using legislation, executive power and government institutions.

The working relationship between the CFU and the state which had prevailed in the 1980s was no longer subsisting in the 1990s since the state and the CFU failed to agree over how to deal with land acquisition. Key individuals that had created communication ties between the state and CFU were no longer in the horizon. Radical members from the farmers' side and the government side had taken over, resulting in tensions between the state and the CFU. The implications of farm invasions on state-farmer relations are discussed further in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

THE *THIRD CHIMURENGA* AND ITS EFFECT ON RELATIONS BETWEEN THE STATE AND COMMERCIAL FARMERS' ORGANISATIONS

This chapter analyses the dynamics of the *Third Chimurenga* with regards to land distribution in Zimbabwe. The chapter exposes the role and attitude of the state during this phase of land distribution. The chapter discussed how white farmers were affected and how they responded to the *Third Chimurenga*. With the spread of state-sanctioned violence spearheaded by war veterans on white owned farms, the plight of the white farming community became part of regional and international headline news. Images of white farmers who were beaten, killed, exiled and driven from their homes became the heart of coverage very much on land invasions and their dramatic consequences. As for the voice of the farmers, it was one of shock, horror and dismay at events surrounding them and a complete sense of disbelief that the government could do such a thing to such an important sector of the economy and country.

This chapter explores various strategies employed by the white farming community in responding to state sanctioned violence on white owned farms. At the heart of these strategies is the umbrella union for the white farming community that is the Commercial Farmers Union. Its strategy of dealing with the government determined how the white farmers individually and collectively responded to the farm invasions. At the heart of the strategies employed by white farmers was how to preserve the prized possession which is the land. The reaction of black farmer organisations to the invasions is also analysed .The chapter unpacks changing relations between the state and white farmers emanating from land politics in Zimbabwe. The chapter discusses the mutations occurring within the CFU and assesses how splinter groups such as Justice for Agriculture (JAG) emerged and related with the state.

The term *Third Chimurenga* has been variously defined and placed within the land context in Zimbabwe. Vambe is of the view that etymologically the term *chimurenga* can be located to one of the county's founding father Murenga Sororenzou who is revered for his fighting spirit, prowess and his capacity to compose war songs that encouraged his troops to remain fighting against their enemies in pre-colonial Zimbabwe. He also stress that *Chimurenga* has to be appreciated not in the narrow paradigm which only looks at visible and organised forms of struggles by African nationalists in the Zimbabwe of the 1890s, 1970s and 2002, but should be seen widely as realisation of the ideology of liberation.¹ Boysen, Sibanda and Maposa regard the *Third Chimurenga* as the epitome of a physical process that symbolises the continuation and accomplishment of the fight to resolve historical land imbalances created by draconian colonial laws. In this scenario, the *Third Chimurenga* is interpreted as an addition of the heroic wars of first and second *zvimurenga* which means many or multiple uprisings.²

Madziyauswa adds that these uprisings were fought in 1896-1897 and 1966-1979. The author characterises *Chimurenga* as a process or strategy towards land repossession by the majority of the local groups standing up against white minority commercial farmers. Madziyauswa adds that the *Chimurenga* wars can be regarded as chronological due to the overriding motive to redress the colonial land inspired inequality.³ The deliberate use of the term *Chimurenga* according to Ranger is also meant to proclaim the continuity of

¹ M. T. Vambe, "Versions and Sub-Versions: Trends in *Chimurenga* Musical Discourses of Post Independent Zimbabwe," *African Study Monograph*, Vol 25, 4, 2004, pp. 167- 193.

² S. Boysen, "The Dualities of Contemporary Zimbabwean Politics , Constitutionalism versus the Law of Power and the Land", in *African Studies Quarterly, Special Issue, "Zimbabwe Looking Ahead"*, Vol 7,2, 2003,pp. 2-10, and F. Sibanda and R. Maposa, " Beyond the *Third Chimurenga* ?: The Ontological reflections on land reform programme in Zimbabwe, 2000-2010", *Pan African Studies* , Vol 6, 8, 2014, pp.58-74.

³ T. Madziyauswa, "Fetishisation and knowledge: A Case of Patriotic history in Zimbabwe", *Journal of Bamaenda, Langua*, Vol 3, 6,2004, pp. 199-222.

Zimbabwe's revolutionary tradition.⁴ Chitiyo is of the view that the *Chimurenga* mythology has become the core element of state survival and agrarian transformation. He compares the Zimbabwean approach and characterises it as 'a populist version of socio-agrarian reform', with the South African version which is more 'incremental, rational and closely tied to the global agenda of development as governance.'⁵ Ndlovu-Gatsheni characterises *Third Chimurenga* as another name for a pan Africanist ideology that is opposed to colonialism and imperialism.⁶

Alexander and McGregor point out that the *Third Chimurenga* was the final phase in the liberation of Zimbabwe; there were confrontations over the land between white farmers and invaders. The thrust of the *Third Chimurenga* was to empower indigenous people through changing the racially skewed land ownership system that had favoured the whites and undermined the majority black population.⁷ To achieve this, a war scenario became the major trait of the *Third Chimurenga* and in vernacular language it became known as *Hondo yeminda* or 'battle for the fields'.

War Veterans, farm invasions and anti-white rhetoric

At the fore-front of the *Third Chimurenga* were war veterans, who emerged from oblivion to become central in the land politics. The rise of Chenjerai Hunzvi as the leader of the war veterans was critical in the creation of a strong relationship between the state and former leaders of the liberation struggle. Immediately after being appointed as the head of the

⁴ T. O. Ranger, "Rule by historiography: The struggle in contemporary Zimbabwe" in R Muponde and R Primorak (eds), *Versions of Zimbabwe*, Harare, Weaver Press, 2005.

⁵ K. Chitiyo, "Harvest of Tongues Zimbabwe *Third Chimurenga* and the making of an Agrarian Revolution" in M. Lee and K. Colvard (eds.), "Unfinished Business: The Land Crisis in Southern Africa", *African Institute of South Africa* (AISA), 2003, pp. 159-193.

⁶ S. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Do Zimbabweans exist? Trajectories of Nationalism, National identity formation and Crisis in Post Colonial State*, Oxford, Peter Lang, 2009.

⁷ J. Alexander and J. McGregor, "Elections, Land and the Politics of Opposition in Matabeleland", *Agrarian Change*, Vol 1, 4, 2001, pp. 510-517.

war veterans association, Chenjerai Hunzvi pressured the former President Mugabe for a meeting which the President eventually agreed to. At this meeting the President surprisingly caved to the demands of the war veterans and agreed to give each veteran \$50 000 as gratuity, a monthly pension of \$2000 and promises of land. The money was unbudgeted for and following the announcement the economy collapsed as the inflation levels sky-rocketed. The gratuity alone exceeded total expenditure on land since independence.⁸ Adding to the economic woes leading up to 2000, was a decision to send troops to the DRC to prop up the government of Laurent Kabila under attack from Uganda and Rwandan backed rebels. The Minister of Finance, Simba Makoni, admitted that almost Z\$1million was being used per day to cater for the 12 000 troops in DRC.

The war veterans became new actors in the politics of land in Zimbabwe. Denis Norman regarded the relationship between the state and war veterans as the ‘defining moment of the crisis’.⁹ Their entry into politics also coincided with the listing of 1471 farms for acquisition on 11 November 2000. In the successive congresses of the ruling ZANU PF, war veterans dominated proceedings and consolidated their influence within the party. This swung the balance of power away from the technocrats and firmly towards radical alliances. For ZANU PF, the war veterans were a valuable constituency symbolically and strategically. This newfound influence re-shaped the politics of the land deadlock and accelerated the deteriorating relationship between white farmers and the state.¹⁰

⁸ J. Alexander, ‘Squatters, Veterans and the State in Zimbabwe, in B. Raftopoulos and A. Hammar and S. Jensen (eds.) *Zimbabwe’s Unfinished Business : Rethinking Land , State and Nation in the context of a Crisis*, Weaver Press, 2003, p.100.

⁹ Interview with Denis Norman by Angus Selby on 10 October 2004, contained in *Commercial Farmers and the State: Interest Group Politics and Land Reform in Zimbabwe*, PhD Thesis, University of Oxford, 2006.

¹⁰ A. Selby, ‘Commercial Farmers and the State: Interest Group Politics and Land Reform in Zimbabwe’.

The war veterans became central in the farm invasions that followed from the year 2000 and became more of an ideal tool for the ruling party than genuine agrarian reformers. Gates to white farms were smashed down, houses and buildings ransacked and burned. Zimbabwean television showed pictures of people spilling into farms shouting ‘*hondo hondo*’ which means war-war.¹¹ In support of these invasions the former President Mugabe declared that, “Zimbabwean people are reclaiming the land that is their heritage”.¹²

The President refused to call out the security forces to enforce the law or protect the white commercial farmers and their land. The invasions were seen as a popular uprising and labelled *Third Chimurenga*. Not surprisingly, the invasions coincided with the June 2000 elections and the President knew that his support base in the urban areas had swayed to the MDC. With the land reform, ZANU PF led by Robert Mugabe hoped to clinch electoral victory with the support of the rural areas where 70% of the population is based.¹³

Anti-white sentiment worsened from 2000 targeting white farmers who were also blamed for all the problems facing the state; they were also regarded as the enemies of the state. In a speech to celebrate independence in 2000, President Mugabe declared that, “our present state of mind, is that you are our enemies because you have really behaved as enemies of Zimbabwe”. The President then went on to add on television that, “we are now full of anger, our entire community is angry and that is why we now have the war veterans seizing the land”.¹⁴

¹¹ J. Alexander, *The Unsettled Land: State Making and the Politics of Land in Zimbabwe 1893-2003*, Harare, Weaver Press, 2006.

¹² ‘Mugabe supports farm invasions’, *Mail and Guardian*, accessed at www.mg.co.za on 10 February 2016.

¹³ N. Marongwe, “Farm Occupations and Occupiers in New Politics of Land in Zimbabwe”, in A. Hammar, B. Raftopoulos and S. Jensen (eds.) *Zimbabwe’s Unfinished Business: Rethinking land, State and Nation in the context of Crisis*, Weaver Press, Harare, 2003.

¹⁴ K. Chitiyo, “Harvest of Tongues Zimbabwe’s *Third Chimurenga* and the making of an Agrarian Revolution”, in M. Lee and K. Colvard (eds.), *Unfinished Business: The Land Crisis in Southern Africa*, African Institute of Southern Africa, AISA, 2003, pp. 159-193.

This kind of anti-white rhetoric was meant to please the war veterans and to encourage them to continue with the farm invasions. The rhetoric fell on very fertile ground ready to enforce the message. What followed were more invasions of farms across the country. These were characterised, in some cases, by state-sponsored violence popularly known as *Jambanja*. According to a journalist Tagwirei Bango, *Jambanja* simply meant state sponsored lawlessness. The police were not expected to intervene or arrest anyone in a *Jambanja* scene because those taking part had prior state blessing or approval.¹⁵ The term *Jambanja* also encompassed a range of violent and angry confrontations on land which varied in degree, severity and manner. Only two interest groups, the war veterans and ZANU (PF) supporters, were allowed to engage in this form of lawlessness.¹⁶

Alexander and McGregor agree that in many cases the war veterans maintained that they had received direction from the national level of their association regarding which farms to occupy. Government officials supplied lists of farms. In addition, army personnel, members of the Central Intelligence Organisation and the police were also directly involved in some occupations.¹⁷ Kriger is of the view that the so-called war veterans leading the *Jambanja* were not all genuine. The author looks at the age of the invaders and notes that most of these invaders were the youth who supported old people found in communities. In some cases, the invaders were simply hired thugs.¹⁸

The nature of the invasions served different purpose; after the 2000 referendum, they were focusing on the general election of June the same year. The farm occupations targeted

¹⁵ T. Bango, 'Jambanja' invasions escalate, *Daily News*, 27 November, 2001.

¹⁶ J. Chaumba, I. Scoones and W. Wolmer, "From *Jambanja* to Planning: The Reassertion for Technocracy in Land Reform in South-eastern Zimbabwe", *Modern African Studies*, Vol 41, 4, 2003, pp. 540-551.

¹⁷ J. Alexander *The Unsettled Land: State Making and the Politics of Land in Zimbabwe 1893-2003*, Harare, Weaver Press 2006, McGregor points out that the war veterans leading the farm invasions received orders from their superiors, J McGregor *The Politics of Disruption: War Veterans and the Local State in Zimbabwe*, *Journal of African Affairs*, 2002,101, pp. 9-37.

¹⁸ N. Kriger, Zimbabwe: Political Constructions of War Veterans, *African Political Economy*, Vol 30, 96, 2003, pp. 323-328.

MDC supporters and were a critical ZANU (PF) election strategy. War veterans established base camps on particular farms which were used to ensure electoral campaigning. Farm workers were forced to attend re-education sessions which were held throughout the night. After the official implementation of the fast track programme in August, the farm invasions became more legitimised.¹⁹ The government's fast track plan differentiated between A1 (small scale) and A2 (medium/large scale) beneficiaries. Farm occupations were then synchronized with official gazettes from provincial lands and district lands committees. These structures were dominated by army, civil servants and ruling party officials many of whom were also war veterans. The District lands committees were chaired by the District Administrators and also consisted of members belonging to the local government, local party officials and local traditional leaders.²⁰

According to Buckle, invasions differed between regions and areas, but many were led by prominent war veterans with support from local communities or disgruntled farm workers. In some cases, hired help was bussed to encourage numbers and thugs were used.²¹ In most cases if a prominent war veteran or politician identified a particular farm there was little chance of opposing the takeover such that in some instances local support, court orders, negotiated downsizing proposals and even high level interventions were rarely successful. Buckle further adds that the process was fast moving, organized and flexible and purely focused also to intimidate the electorate and to meet the demands and opportunism of key party members.²²

¹⁹ J. Alexander, "Squatters, Veterans and the State in Zimbabwe", In A Hammar, B Raftopolous and S Jensen (eds) *Zimbabwe's Unfinished Business: Rethinking Land, State and Nation in the Context of Crisis*, Harare , Weaver Press ,2003.

²⁰ S. Moyo and P. Yeros, "Land Occupations and Land Reform in Zimbabwe: Towards the National Democratic Revolution", In S. Moyo and P. Yeros (eds.), *Reclaiming the Land: The Resurgence of Rural Movements in Africa, Asia and Latin America*, London Zed Books, 2005.

²¹ C. Buckle, *African Tears: The Zimbabwe Land Invasions*, Johannesburg, Covos Day, 2001.

²² Ibid.

Chitiyo points out that as invasions gathered momentum, in some cases they appeared to run out of control especially with the involvement of hired thugs. The murders of David Stevens, Martin Olds, Alan Dunn and Terry Ford had some elements of organisation. Despite some evidence of the people who committed such crimes, no prosecution was undertaken and in some instances the police were too afraid to make arrests.²³ In 2000 the President went further to give a clemency order; part of the clemency stipulated that there was going to be a free pardon to be given to every person liable to criminal prosecution for any politically-motivated crime committed during the period 1st January 2000 to 31st July 2000.²⁴ This further highlights that the chaos was somehow state-sanctioned and that blanket immunity was to be availed.

By the end of June 2000, the CFU reported that 1525 or 28% of farms owned by its members had been taken. The war veterans, police and politicians had immense influence on events in most farms. The confrontational tactics employed by those occupying farms bred violence and intimidation which fuelled fears and concerns of white farmers. The murder of several white farmers forced a huge number of farmers to plead for more action and protection from the farmers union.²⁵ In response to farmers' pleas, the CFU in a statement in its magazine publication, *The Farmer*, highlighted that if the union is not offering advice it is because there is no advice to offer. It further went on to clarify that events in the farms differ from region to region and that some invasions are hostile, some deadly, but others are apologetic and even humorous.²⁶

This lack of advice, level of concern and lack of robust action created deep anxiety within the farming community. The farmers were also not amused at all with the decision by

²³ K. Chitiyo, 'Harvest of Tongues: Zimbabwe's *Third Chimurenga* and the Making of an Agrarian Revolution'.

²⁴ General Notice 457A of 2000, Constitution of Zimbabwe, Clemency Order No 1 of 2000.

²⁵ C. Buckle, *Beyond Tears: The Zimbabwe Land Invasions*, Johannesburg, Jonathan Ball, 2002.

²⁶ 'Words to remember', *The Farmer*, 17 February, 2001, Pg 5.

the CFU to keep communicating with the government and the war veterans to find a solution.²⁷ This deep hostility to talks was emerging due to the fact neither government nor the war veterans respected any promises or arrangements made. Moreover, the continuation of murders of white farmers deepened hostility to talks. However, in its publication, *The Farmer*, the CFU defended its position highlighting that if it were to walk out of the talks the violence on the farms would increase either by tenfold or even hundredfold. Its belief was that continued engagement with the government was contributing in reducing the escalation of violence on the farms.

The farmers increasingly found themselves in a very complicated position especially their closer links with the Movement for Democratic Change. Their open campaigning for the party placed them in a very precarious position. The vivid scenes of white farmers presenting the leader of the MDC with cheques broadcast on international news agencies such as the CNN, created deep anger especially from President Robert Mugabe. His response to the actions of the white farmers came out through actions and harsh statements filled with rage. At the ZANU (PF) annual congress of 2000 he remarked, “Our party must strike fear into white man, they must tremble.”²⁸

The CFU continued to regard itself as an apolitical entity. However, the ruling party regarded local level political participation by farmers as an indication that indeed farmers were now full-fledged political players. Before the 2000 general elections, war-veterans and ruling party militants moved into areas such as Concession, Mvurwi and Centenary districts.²⁹ Farmers that had openly campaigned against the referendum by providing transport, mobilising workers and printing of t-shirt were singled out for severe punishments.

²⁷ ‘Land Invasions by War Vets Castigated, *The Farmer*, 23 March, Pg. 9.

²⁸ Extract from Robert Mugabe’s speech at an extraordinary ZANU PF Congress, December 2000.

²⁹ CFU archives Batch 2 of 2000, chronicle of farm invasions.’

Individual farmers such as Brian Martin who had organised a rally for the MDC faced severe harassment from the war veterans. Farmers' resources were often forcibly used against the MDC and most farmers were forced into supplying fuel or transport for ZANU (PF) rallies and in some cases had assets and resources extorted at gun point. Blackmailing was also a feature which was used to force farmers to compel their workers to support the ruling party or risk losing their farms.³⁰

In 2000, President Mugabe made a declaration denouncing notorious and racist farmers; the declaration further threatened farmers with eviction. The targeted group were those farmers that had openly associated with the MDC. At national level, prominent white farmers such as Roy Bennet was eventually forced from his farm by war veterans and the army after he had won the Chimanimani seat.³¹

The process of land reform itself became heavily politicised. Notably, the ruling party's campaign slogan in 2002 was 'Land is the economy and the economy is the land.' This simply succeeded in placing the land at the pinnacle of the political, economic and social spheres. Moreover, the statement also emphasised the need to resolve the land problem as it will be the answer to the nation's problems. The media became the source of propaganda, channelling radio jingles with full emphasis on the importance of every patriotic Zimbabwean reclaiming a piece of land. The opposition supporters were also warned that if they did not apply for land they would lose out. Those who opposed land reform were clearly branded as enemies of the state working closely with the MDC and British imperialists.³²

³⁰ Remarks from farmers and farm workers based at Marondera farms after attending meetings addressed by ZANU PF politicians extracted from Voice of America accessed at www.voanews.com on 22 January 2017.

³¹ 'Divide and Rule', *The Farmer*, 5 December, 2001, pg. 1.

³² 'Land is the Economy and the Economy is Land, The Sunday Mail 22 March 2002 accessed at www.sundaymail.co.zw, on 23 January 2017.

According to Stiff the land reform process became internationalised. As soon as the international community raised human rights concerns about the process, the government of Robert Mugabe dismissed these sentiments as neo-imperialism. The government queried the international community focus on white farmers whilst the local black people had suffered and did not have access to productive land.³³ Stiff further adds that Mugabe sold the issue of land reform to a willing regional audience, playing on historical legacies of land segregation. Predictably, this drew a lot of sympathy from most of the regional neighbours especially Namibia and South Africa.³⁴ With the help of immense propaganda, images of the liberation struggle were rekindled and all white farmers were vilified as racists who deserved what was happening to them.

However, the benefits of the land reform process to the new black farmers were quite good. Availability of residual fertilizer and low seed banks helped with ensuring low input cultivations. For A2 beneficiaries, issues such as farmhouses became important. Moreover, the evictions of the white farmers were also symbolic in the sense that it marked the achievement of one of the purposes why the liberation struggle was prosecuted. The government of Robert Mugabe further went a gear up declaring that the land had been liberated and now belongs to indigenous people.³⁵

According to Hill, most members of the peasantry, without any other option to sustain livelihoods, were forced to rely on the communal areas as a form of social security. As the economy deteriorated, land became an even more important means of survival for many. The free allocation and the association with some prosperity of white farmers became a huge appeal. Many displaced farm workers without places to call home resorted to self-

³³ P. Stiff, *Cry Zimbabwe: Independence – Twenty Years On*, Galapago, Alberton, 2000.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ L. Cliffe, J. Alexander, B. Cousins and R. Gaidzanwa, “An Overview of Fast Track Land Reform in Zimbabwe,” *Peasant Studies*, 38, 5, 2011, pp. 907-938.

provisioning by squatting on underutilized and often marginal land. Urban middle classes that were sympathetic to the MDC began to apply for land believing that ZANU (PF) had the mandate and authority and that they might miss an opportunity.³⁶ According to Hammar and Raftopoulos, “the land was the bedrock to the crisis and for the white farmers their failure to realize the origins to the crisis further removed them from much of the society.”³⁷ However, the white farmers deeply believed that they have been left all alone to handle ZANU PF and as such could not be blamed.

In an article in *The Farmer*, the CFU stated that,

Everyone has advice, but no one has lifted a finger to help that includes the MDC, everyone also expects that white farmers through CFU can take on ZANU PF on their own. Moreover, there was no support at all leaving white farmers to deal with ZANU PF.³⁸

The image of the white farmers, especially from the indigenous people point of view, was not good at all. White farmers were often seen as aloof, wealthy and racist and hence when the President launched verbal attacks on them the remarks fell on very fertile ground both domestically and regionally.³⁹ In reference to the unpopularity of the CFU image, Selby highlighted that black commercial farmers established the Indigenous Commercial Farmers Union (ICFU) in 1991 because the CFU was not inclusive of black farmers. Racial exclusiveness of the CFU was its biggest weakness and greatest threat.⁴⁰

Racialisation of land and the breakdown white farmer resistance to land reform

The ruling party escalated the issue of race in 2000; this was largely because of the fact that the white community was seen as standing in the way of the land reform process. At

³⁶ G. Hill, *Battle for Zimbabwe: The Final Countdown*, Cape Town, Zebra Press, 2003.

³⁷ A. Hammar and B. Raftopoulos, “Zimbabwe’s ‘Unfinished Business Rethinking Land, State and Nation’”, in A. Hammar, B. Raftopoulos and S. Jensen (eds.) *Zimbabwe’s Unfinished Business: Rethinking Land, State and Nation in the Context of Crisis*, Harare, Weaver Press, 2003.

³⁸ Out in the Cold and All Alone, *The Farmer*, 22 August, 2000, pg 8.

³⁹ ‘Making themselves Unpopular’, *The Farmer*, 28 November, 2000.

⁴⁰ A. Selby, ‘Commercial Farmers and the State: Interest Group Politics and Land Reform in Zimbabwe’.

the 2000 ZANU PF Congress, Mugabe pointed out that, ‘the party should strike the white man with fear.’ This was simply an appeal to the ruling party’s support base to launch violent farm attacks on white farmers. The former vice president Joice Mujuru encouraged land invaders to return with ‘blood soaked t-shirts of white farmers’ and Jocelyn Chiwenga, the former wife of the then army chief also added that ‘she had not tasted white blood since 1980 and had missed that experience’.⁴¹ The rhetoric of race, war, blood and hate set the tone of the anti-white farmer campaign. A document with the name ‘Operation Give Up and Leave’ was distributed. It explained that the operation would target the Commercial Farmers Union and its base. This meant that the white farmers would experience the wrath of harassment and be destabilised until they desert these farms.

The farm invasions had a devastating effect on the white farming community emotionally and physically. Terrible experiences of white farmers were also noted. Mark Butler from Shamva had farm invaders staying at his front gate for eighteen months. Every day they would make it difficult for him to continue with his farming activities. In the initial farm invasions, the invaders would keep farmers awake all night with night vigils known as *pungwes*. These invaders would also constantly demand food, water, medicine, inputs and other forms of support. Any white farmer who refused to meet these demands was branded unpatriotic, racist or at the very least sabotaging the revolution. Continuation of such tactics eventually tore apart even the most tolerant and resilient white farmers.⁴²

The farming invasions also carried subtle messages. The livestock mutilations and crop burning became synonymous with the war years; the major aim was to break any farmer resistance to the process. In different parts of the country, invasions were taking place with

⁴¹ A. Chadwick, ‘White Farmers suffer in Zimbabwe’, *Daily Telegraph*, 22 September, 2000.

⁴² ‘Experiences of Mark Butler at the hands of farm invaders’, obtained from www.zimbabwesituation.co.zw on 26 February, 2016.

severe impacts. At Border Timbers, in the Eastern Highlands, mature timber plantations were set on fire and farming operations were constantly being disrupted. In some instances, settlers would cut down trees not for firewood, but to simply hurt farmers.⁴³

The farm invasions were associated with brutal killings especially of family pets. This kind of behaviour resonated with the idea that stereotyped white farmers as loving their pets more than their workers. The invaders believed that through such tactics they were challenging and demeaning everything that was very close to the white farmers. Incidents of cooking and eating rabbit pets in front of terrified farmers and their families provided another weapon of administering pain white farmers. In some cases, dogs, cats, horses and other pets were poisoned, beaten and burnt.⁴⁴ Psychologically, the invasions had the following aims: firstly, to break any resistance by white farmers and secondly, to obtain some sort of vengeance by making the present farmers pay for yesterday's crimes through symbolic disempowerment. The white farmer had traditionally been the big man of the Zimbabwean society. The farm invasions thus created ritual humiliation, violence and destruction of the white farmer's status.⁴⁵

Ritual humiliation became the order of the day with farm invasions. Spitting in the faces of farmers, making them roll in the dust, grovel on the knees, dance to and chant *chimurenga* songs and ZANU PF slogans, highlighted brutal power reversals. It was simply payback time for white farmers given the injustices of the past; they were expected to suffer in some way. A classic example of farmers' humiliation can be seen in August 2001 when twenty-one Chinhoyi farmers were arrested, shaved and forced to wear prison uniforms and then paraded on international television. News channels such as the SABC showed white

⁴³ P. Ruhanya, 'Boarder Timbers Under Siege', *Daily News*, 10 May, 2001.

⁴⁴ A. Chadwick, 'Fear and Mental break down as white farmers in Zimbabwe face farm Invaders', *Daily Telegraph*, 22 August, 2001.

⁴⁵ R. Pilossof, "Unbearable Whiteness of Being: Land Race and Belonging in the Memoirs of White Zimbabweans", *South African Historical Journal*, Vol 61, 3, 2008, pp. 621 -638.

farmer being forced to drink water out of a cattle trough. This was in retaliation of the fact that he refused to fix a water pump that had been vandalized by the same invaders.⁴⁶ White farmers were on the receiving end and their plight was worsened by the fact that the police and the law were unable to rescue and protect them.

Sanctions and the blame game

Zimbabwe's relations with the United States, Britain and the European Union deteriorated as a result of the land question. In response to human rights violations associated with the invasions, US President George W Bush on 21 December 2001 approved the Zimbabwe Democracy Recovery Act of 2001 (ZIDERA). As a result of the law, Zimbabwe could not negotiate financial support from creditors such as the International Monetary Fund since the US is the major funder of the financial institution. The ZIDERA resulted in travel restrictions on a set of individual who were primarily senior figures in the ruling party. These individuals were associated with gross human rights atrocities. The ZIDERA's aim was to force the ruling government to transition to democracy and to promote economic recovery. In 2002 and 2003, the United States renewed the ZIDERA and also included the suspension of non- humanitarian government to government assistance.⁴⁷

Furthermore, on 18 February 2002 the EU followed suit and approved the Common Council Position 2002/145/CFSP and other prohibitive measures targetting elites in the ruling party. All these measures were influenced by acts of state sponsored violence and persecution of political opponents, and crackdown of the independent media by government and the ruling party. The European Union was further infuriated by the expulsion of EU Observer Mission (EU OM) head, Piere Schori, after issuing out a damning election report of the June

⁴⁶ 'White Farmers arrested in Chinhoyi', Visuals on the SABC News Channel 17 August 2001.

⁴⁷ H. Mutlokwa, "Can Zimbabwe move beyond sanctions rhetoric?" assessed at www.thezimbabwemail.com on 19 February 2019.

2000 elections. As a result, in terms of Articles 3 and 4 of Common Council Position 2002/145CFSP, restrictive travel measures were put in place, barring top government officials and ruling elite from entering any EU territory.⁴⁸

The US condition for lifting the sanctions was for the government to institute political reforms and respect property rights. There was also hope within the US government that as a result of the smart sanctions an economic crisis would emerge leading to political instability within the country which will trigger regime change. Assistant Secretary for African Affairs at that time Chester Cocker during the deliberations for the US sanctions Act openly said that, “to separate the people of Zimbabwe from ZANU PF we have to make their economy scream and I hope you senators you have the stomach for what you have to do.”⁴⁹

The ZANU PF stance is that sanctions emerged as a result of land re-distribution from minority white commercial farmers to the majority of black population. The ruling party ZANU PF believes that European countries and the US imposed sanctions against Zimbabwe because they were upset by the corrective nature of land re-distribution. Furthermore, the ruling party also went on to blame the illegal sanctions for causing untold economic suffering and for ruining transformation within the country. President Mugabe also attacked the West for imposing sanctions and also drummed up support from other African countries to his anti-sanctions agenda. One of his famous statements was that, “sanctions have become a geo-political football kicked between the Zimbabwean government and its western foes”.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ T. Rohn, “The truth behind the sanctions in Zimbabwe”, accessed at www.theafricareport.com on 19 February 2019.

⁴⁹ B Ankumfor, “Zimbabwe all is not well”, accessed at www.newafricanmagazine.com , on 22 February 2019.

⁵⁰ Statement by Former President Robert Mugabe at the African Union Summit in November 2001 accessed at www.newzimbabwe.com archives on 22 March 2019.

Within government, there was also suspicion that the white farmers closely working with the MDC and pro-democracy groups had lobbied for the sanctions. A former government minister reacted in the following manner:

It was obvious to us in government that the CFU was an enemy to the government and some of the white farmers had strong relations with those in the labour government in the UK and the Republican government in the US, not only were they utilising this relationship to denigrate the government, their association with the MDC and ZCTU completes the puzzle of how these sanctions were lobbied.⁵¹

In the minds of government officials, the CFU was to blame for the sanctions.

However, the CFU position on sanctions is that:

We are apolitical with regards to sanctions; the blame should be on those in power during that time they failed to respect human rights and misgovern the country thereby attracting international and regional condemnation.⁵²

To ordinary citizens, responses are different due political affiliation and one notable response was:

These sanctions are unjustified simply because former President Robert Mugabe supported the *Third Chimurenga*, Zimbabwe was punished by the west, what they fail to understand is that as a result of the land reform I now have my own piece of land and I am doing so well, it's clear the west do not like us at all because of the colour of our skin we are supposed to be inferior, Mugabe refused it and we invaded farms and I will do it again for my great grandchildren.⁵³

This statement shows how some citizens were in agreement with the political narrative spearheaded by President Mugabe and the ZANU PF party. However, the opposition particularly the MDC had a different view when it came to the issue of sanctions as evidenced by the following remarks:

The sanctions came as a result of ZANU PF hostile politics, the West were very much concerned and continue to be concerned on the direction the country is heading, ZANU PF is monster which continues to devour its own children, the *Third Chimurenga* was an elite driven agenda, look at the beneficiaries of land

⁵¹ Interview with former Minister of Information and Publicity Chen Chimutengwende in Harare, 11 April 2019.

⁵² Interview with an anonymous member of the CFU council member in Harare on 18 May 2019.

⁵³ Interview with Kudakwashe Kunaka in Kwekwe on 18 August 2019.

the same individuals in power and not even the war veterans who claimed to be drivers of the *chimurenga* revolution, there is no way the international community will ignore wanton human rights violations and we will continue to lobby it to sanction and condemn the government if human rights violations persist.⁵⁴

In response, western officials insist that there are no sanctions against all Zimbabweans, but just targeted restrictions on travel against specific individuals and corporations deemed to be obstacles to democracy and human rights in Zimbabwe. They added that foreign support to Zimbabweans continues via bilateral and multilateral organisations working with local civil society. There is no doubt that hostility between the West and Zimbabwe intensified as a result of the land question, and the land remains the bedrock to the crisis. A look at the recent amendment to ZIDERA shows that it instructs Zimbabwe to enforce the SADC Tribunal ruling on land reform. Part of the amended ZIDERA reads,

it is the sense of Congress that the government of Zimbabwe and Southern African Development Community (SADC) should enforce the SADC Tribunal rulings from 2007 to 2010, including 18 disputes involving employment, commercial and human rights cases surrounding dispossessed Zimbabwean commercial farmers and agricultural companies.⁵⁵

Reaction of the Black farming community to *Third Chimurenga*

The farming invasions became a litmus test for black farming unions particularly the positions they had to take in light of how the invasions would affect agricultural production. The ZFU endorsed the urgency of the land redistribution process. Its position was that land re-distribution should benefit competent farmers, but without clarifying the criteria to be used in determining the incompetency of others when it comes to land utilisation. The following statement was issued:

⁵⁴ Interview with Murisi Zwizwai member of the MDC Alliance Executive in Harare, on 18 November 2019.

⁵⁵ H. Mutlokwa, "Can Zimbabwe Move Beyond Sanctions Rhetoric?", accessed at www.thezimbabweemail.com on 19 February 2019.

Land re-distribution is pivotal and urgent in order to correct racially driven land ownership patterns, we believe that the government should prioritise competent black farmers as this would contribute to the significant rise in agricultural production⁵⁶.

The ZFU position on customary tenure was that ‘deserving farmers’ be granted title. The union tended to divide its membership according to an unclear framework of competency, focusing its activities on the medium-scale commercial farming areas and neglecting problems specific to communal and resettlement area farmers. In 2000 when farm occupations started, the ZFU took a similar stance to the CFU’s and condemned the land occupations, arguing that they would negatively affect production on farms.⁵⁷ With regards to the position of the union on newly resettled areas, the ZFU stance is contradictory in many ways. Although the majority of the fast track beneficiaries were from customary communal areas, which are the main constituency of the union, the ZFU had not established structures in the newly resettled areas and had no official strategy on how to go about with the process.

There are various reasons behind the union’s lethargic approach to mobilising and establishing structures within fast track areas. One of the incentives of the 1992 merger was the promise by the government of Zimbabwe that the new union would have a levying authority over its members. The levying authority would have entitled the union to a fixed percentage of all agricultural commodities sold by its members through the state marketing board. However, after the merger, the government did not extend levying authority to the new union and instead raised a number of technical concerns which included questions such as ‘which producers would be levied?’ that is ‘will it be all small-holders or just ZFU members?’, ‘what rates of levy would be charged on each commodity?’.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ K. Helliker and T. Murisa, *Beyond the Crises’: Zimbabwe’s Prospect for Transformation*, Weaver Press, Harare 2008.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ M Bratton, ‘Micro-Democracy? The Merger of Farmer Unions in Zimbabwe’.

When the prospects for financing the union's activities through the levy diminished, the leadership focused their attention towards soliciting donor funds. The union re-organised itself to carry out projects that included the establishment of commodity associations in every province. In the process of re-organisation and restructuring, the union's orientation was turned towards establishing processes of upward accountability to donors. The campaigns to recruit new members and ensure that old members have paid up their subscriptions, which were popularised in the 1980s, were stopped.⁵⁹ The ZFU was restructuring in order to develop capacities to run projects and report back to donors. Therefore, it invested more energy in cultivating a relationship with donors supporting its development projects.

When the fast track land reform, driven by farm invasions occurred, the ZFU found itself in a very awkward position. On one hand, its members potentially stood to benefit from the programme, thereby creating the possibility of an increase in membership. On the other hand, its financial base survival was hinged upon donor aid and donors had taken an unequivocal anti-land reform position in 2000 and beyond.

The Indigenous Commercial Farmers Union (ZCFU) issued a statement on farm seizures through its vice president,

we don't want to displace anyone, no farmer should be moved except by his or her own choice, you cannot tell a farmer move out we are bringing other people in, no we don't believe in that, what then it means is that we should leave the farmer with sufficient land, viable land and his tennis courts and his mansion, excess land should be handed over to the state so that new farmers are offered land on commercial terms, in our view any commercial property should be purchased and we don't believe that land has to be given for free.⁶⁰

The statement suggests a convergence of interests between the ICFU and its counterpart the CFU. Most of the ICFU members came from the CFU and were also commercial farmers,

⁵⁹ K. Helliker and T. Murisa, 'Beyond the Crises: Zimbabwe Prospects for Transformation'.

⁶⁰ S. D. Taylor, 'Business and Politics in Zimbabwe's Commercial Agriculture Sector'.

which partly explain the sympathy towards CFU. Similar to ZFU, members of ICFU were very worried about how the invasions were going to affect agricultural production especially on commercial farms hence suggesting that the government should only distribute land that is in excess and in an orderly manner. The ICFU also reminded those in power of the need to take into consideration compensation as tool to acquire land.

The position of the farming unions was not considered by those in power since the ZANU PF government led by Robert Mugabe focused on using the land reform programme as tool to dismantle colonialism by giving farms to black Zimbabweans. According to Moyo, the fast track land re-distribution undermined the underlying logic of settler-colonial agrarian relations founded upon racial monopoly control over land that denied peasants of land-based social reproduction and compelled cheap agrarian labour supplies. Moyo adds that re-distribution reversed racial patterns of land ownership and broadened access to land across the ethnically diverse provinces, while replacing most private agricultural property rights with land user rights on public property.⁶¹ One of the beneficiaries of the fast-track land reform had this to say:

The white farmers were beneficiaries of an evil colonial system which took land belonging to our fore-fathers by force, and in reply to restore the dignity of our fore-fathers and of ourselves and of our children we had to take back the land by force and look at me I am a proud owner of my ancestral land.⁶²

The major beneficiaries of the fast-track land reform were peasants who now had access to better quality land and natural resources that were previously owned by a few whites under the bi-modal agrarian structure inherited from colonialism, that is white commercial farmers and agro-industrial estates on one hand and small-scale black commercial farmers and black peasant farmers on the other.

⁶¹ S. Moyo, 'Changing Agrarian Relations after the Redistributive Land Reform in Zimbabwe'.

⁶² Interview with Tendai Takawira in Mutare on 15 May 2019.

For others, the farm invasions became a payback period for white farmers who were also hated because they looked down upon their black workers. One former worker of a white farmer had this to say:

I hated him because he was selfish he looked down upon us, some days we could work for very long hours without being given food, he would curse at us most of the times, by all means we had to beg continuously if we need anything, he did not care if you are a family man you could be humiliated in front of your wife and when invaders arrived we quickly turned against him.⁶³

As a result of the invasions, others benefited through harvesting the fields and even moving into farmhouses that were left by the white farmers. Matondi credits the invasions for creating a pathway for small-holder farmers and is also of the view that a significant number of black small-holder farmers managed to access land. However, amongst the black community, farm invasions also received condemnation due to their lasting negative effect. According to Matondi as a result of the invasions, the commercial farming sector was deeply affected and never managed to get on its feet.⁶⁴ Chambati notes that large scale commercial farms that were not acquired retained an estimated 100 000 full and part-time wage workers as of 2003. As for those farms taken over, an estimated 200 000 farm workers were also displaced and like their dispossessed white farm owners, the farm workers received no compensation.⁶⁵

Matondi adds that little attention was paid to women who he says are the backbone of Zimbabwean agriculture. Of the 70% of women who live in rural areas, more than half were working in the commercial farm sector. However, with the implementation of the fast track land reform, the government failed to seize the opportunity to abandon traditional hierarchies

⁶³ Interview with Trymore Manyika in Mutare on 18 May 2019.

⁶⁴ Interview Remarks of Prosper Matondi of Ruzivo Trust a Think Tank on Agriculture Issues with Voice of America accessed at www.voanews.com on 19 November 2019.

⁶⁵ W. Chambati, "Restructuring of agrarian labour relations after Fast Track Land Reform in Zimbabwe", *Peasant Studies*, Vol 38,5, 2011, pp 1047-1068.

and give women more say in the running of expropriated farms. None of the unions for farmers raised this issue.⁶⁶

Zamchiya is of the opinion that in the aftermath of farm invasions, there was massive land underutilisation, and this was because some small-scale farmers lacked the necessary know-how and did not have enough capital to purchase the inputs, they need such as seeds, fertilizer or fuel. He also adds that many black farmers were given land but there was no clear tenure system that guaranteed that land belonged to them. That meant that the new farmers were uncertain of whether they would be able to use land in the long term or whether their wives and children would inherit the land on their deaths. To him, tenure is dependent on the political party that one supports.⁶⁷

Moyo and Yeros caution the government on the outcomes of the fast-track land reform. They argue that the immediate result of the land reform is clear; it is marked by worsening poverty and inability to supply food to the local population. Imperialism continues to exercise its financial power deliberately to isolate Zimbabwe and smother the process of agrarian reform. Thus, agricultural production has been severely impeded from recovery and the urban and rural populations have been relegated to a state of humanitarian aid. The state on its part has not yet devised a coherent plan for reconstruction and development.⁶⁸

Response by White Farmers to the *Third Chimurenga*

As the farm invasions intensified, white farmers were not unified at all especially in dealing with the crisis they were facing. A close scrutiny of various letters found in *The*

⁶⁶ Interview Remarks of Prosper Matondi of Ruzivo Trust with Voice of America accessed at www.voanews.com on 19 November 2019.

⁶⁷ Interview remarks of Professor Phillan Zamchiya with Voice of America accessed at www.voanews.com on 20 November 2019.

⁶⁸ S. Moyo and P. Yeros, "Land Occupations and Land Reform in Zimbabwe Towards the National Democratic Revolution," in S. Moyo and P. Yeros (eds.) *In Reclaiming the Land: The Resurgence of Rural Movements in Africa, Asia and Latin America*, ZED, London, 2005 pp. 165-208.

Farmer would show that in March 2000, Catherine Buckle and Nick Arkell both wrote to ask what the Union was doing and the continued deafening silence on the plight of white farmers was worrisome. White farmers felt that a more decisive and aggressive stance should be taken by the CFU and the strategy of continuing to talk with the government should be abandoned as the government could no-longer be trusted. Ian Smith, the former Prime Minister also wrote a letter criticising those calling for decisive action against the government highlighting that there was no need to provoke hostility and conflict with the powers in charge as this would endanger the white farming community.⁶⁹ These kinds of divisions highlight that the CFU had no answer when it came to farm invasions.

Farm workers have often been marginalised and perceived as passive participants especially with regards to land matters. Most farm workers felt left out of the land reform process because they were never consulted by the government and their livelihoods as farm workers were threatened. During the designations of 1997 and 1998 farm worker groups raised concerns that they had been left out in the land policy and consultations had not reached them. The constitutional amendments threatened the livelihoods of farm workers too as most of these workers realised that they were going to be neglected in land allocations. Closer ties between younger white farmers and farm managers with black managers, assistants and foremen, had encouraged and promoted political alignments. These kinds of dependency relationships between workers and owners varied considerably between different farm types, different business structures and different management styles. During the year 2000, the most politically active farmers had close working relationships with their black

⁶⁹ C. Buckle, 'For God's Sake What is Happening – We Have Had Enough', *The Farmer*, 16 March, 2000.

farm managers, assistants and foremen who also became politically active and also bore the repercussions.⁷⁰

There are other tactics of farm worker mobilisation. In Shamva workers agreed amongst themselves to drive out occupiers by organising themselves in a false portrayal of being football teams. Using a fleet of farmer's lorries, they visited each occupied farm, and violently evicted A1 settlers and war veterans. However, within days troops from the National Army descended on the area and crushed the action of the farm workers. In some places, such as in Hurungwe, farm workers joined the land seizures and turned against their owners. However, the general perception of farm workers was that they were sell outs or white puppets.⁷¹

As the farm invasions spread, the farming communities were forced to respond and adopt various strategies. At leadership level, Tim Henwood, the CFU President, was heavily criticized for inaction and of lacking political acumen, which forced him to hand over the reins to Alan Ravenscroft, Ez Mickleem and John Laurie. These were regarded as the elder statesmen of the community and all the three had been at the helm of CFU before.⁷² This illustrated two important scenarios in the farming community; firstly indecision was cropping up and there seemed to be a shift focusing on caution and compromise and secondly, there was a strong belief in resorting to familiar leaders and tactics of the past. However, the state tactfully left out the farms owned by the leaders for acquisition, which was interpreted by other members of the union as a divisive strategy and a sign of double standards.

⁷⁰ W. Chambati, "Restructuring of Agrarian labour relations after Fast Track Land Reform in Zimbabwe", *Peasant Studies*, Vol 38, 5, 2011, pp. 1047-1068.

⁷¹ S. Kibble and P. Vanlerbridge, *Land, Power and poverty: farm workers and the Crisis in Zimbabwe*, Zed, London, 2000.

⁷² D. Muleya, 'John Laurie in and Tim Henwood Out of the CFU Leadership', *The Independent*, 22 May 2001.

The spread of the invasions also led to the revival of defensive tactics from the liberation war times. District reaction units were developed similar to reaction sticks which were established during the war. Communication through two-way radio systems was key in spreading information for social and business purposes and during *jambanja* they helped coordinate farmer strategies similar to Agric Alerts during the war. The jargon of the war quickly returned, farmers revived war rhetoric, war veterans were referred to as gooks and younger invaders as *mujibas*. It represented a symbolic return to the battles of the past.⁷³

Reaction units consisted of farmers and farm workers that would rush to offer assistance to besieged farmers and quell the situation by outnumbering invaders and being witnesses to events. Such kind of strategies ensured swift response even from the police. However, with intimidation and retribution of white farmers increasing, the police became very unwilling to react to farm invasions. In some cases, farmers resorted to professional security forces such as the Tsatsi Guard led by ex-policemen Rod Bowen and Sergeant Beru, which assisted in diffusing numerous standoffs instigated by war veterans, the CIO and party supporters. However, with time, farmers became increasingly cautious especially in helping each other. In August 2001, about twenty-one Chinhoyi farmers were arrested after helping a local farmer experiencing an invasion on his farm. With time, reaction units nationwide became cautious and would often undertake standby positions rather than intervening directly. From 2002, as *jambanja* intensified with the involvement of the army, it meant that reaction units were now riskier than before and more so, the dwindling numbers of the remaining farmers forced farmers to opt for lower profiles.⁷⁴

Radio systems and e-mails helped in ensuring that incidents on farms across the country could be transmitted to the international audience at a very fast pace. Graphic videos

⁷³ CFU archives Batch 17 2001-‘White farmers defence tactics in the face of Invasions’.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

shown on international television news channels were filmed by farmers on their own home recorders and disseminated via their personal emails.⁷⁵ The independent media within Zimbabwe helped in recording the plight of farm workers and MDC supporters during the 2000 era. However, due to intimidation, farm workers became heavily reluctant to open up to the press. Apart from relying on the press, the farmers opted for compromises after realising that continued confrontation will simply place them in a very difficult position. With regards to land utilisation, some of the farmers opted for compromise, mostly through subdivisions or co-existence agreements. In some communities these were negotiated individually and in other areas collectively. In 2003, the Governor of Manicaland embraced these subdivision proposals and co-existence agreements and about 400 farmers operated on downsized farms.⁷⁶ However, changes of provincial leadership in 2004 reduced the number of farmers in these kinds of agreements.

Farmers who were making an effort to negotiate subdivision proposals were encouraged by government officials to withdraw their court cases, and even to refrain from speaking to the press and hand over their title deeds. Co-existence became the new arrangement for compromise by white farmers; it became associated with negotiations between farmers, government officials and land occupiers. For farmers, it also became a temporary strategy to buy time, make alternative arrangements and even remove fixed assets on their farms. To those that were occupying land, it became an opportunity to get entry into the farms and see how farms are operated. In many cases, these co-existence arrangements meant that the occupiers had to share the first crop yields with the former owners.⁷⁷ Negotiated compromises often resulted in crop sharing arrangements, which resulted in

⁷⁵ C. Buckle, *African Tears: The Zimbabwe Land Invasions*, Johannesburg, Covos Day, 2001.

⁷⁶ 'White Farmers opt for Subdivision Proposals in Manicaland', *The Herald*, 18 March, 2003.

⁷⁷ A. Selby, 'Commercial Farmers and the State: Interest Group Politics and Land Reform in Zimbabwe'.

scenarios whereby the farmers would prepare and plant a crop on the understanding that they would continue operating and that their new partners would contribute a share of the input costs and assume a share of the profit. Unfortunately, however, farmers who entered into such arrangements were often evicted immediately before or during the harvest.

Despite having co-existence arrangements with some settlers, such arrangements suffered from unpredictability. In Mashonaland Central province co-existence or negotiated compromises between farmers and A1 occupiers were undermined by some rogue war veterans or senior party officials. In most cases, those who invaded farms were supplied with huge amounts of alcohol. Thus, seemingly balanced negotiations would be followed by sudden unexpected violence.⁷⁸ Violence became the tool associated with invasions and white farmers were often characterised as racists and unrepentant greedy individuals who only see themselves as fit to enjoy the fruits of the land. Elderly farmers in some cases experienced worse insults partly because of their war histories and in many cases, invaders refused to negotiate with old farmers.⁷⁹ Negotiations or compromises had their complexities, the common one being that in some instances those farmers who entered into such agreements were accused of being sell-outs from their base. In most instances such arrangements could simply be ignored by invaders since there often was no paperwork to back up these arrangements. They were simply gentlemen agreements.

Farm subdivision proposals in Manicaland and Midlands were accepted in 2002 and by 2004 these two provinces accounted for two-thirds of the remaining white farmers. In Matabeleland South ranchers also reached downsizing compromises. Close to twenty tobacco farmers were still operating in the Guruve-Centenary area by the end of 2005. In some cases dairy farms were generally left alone because of their strategic importance. However, later on

⁷⁸ Interview with CFU Director Ben Gilpin on 20 June 2018 in Harare.

⁷⁹ Interview with Tim Henwood former President of the CFU in Harare on 18 September 2018.

the farmers were taken. Farms in the Export Processing Zones (EPZ) were also left out initially because they generated foreign currency. However, this was later on disregarded.⁸⁰

Some white farmers collaborated with the ruling party. The Midlands Farmers Association built close relationships with ZANU PF and key personnel in the army during the 1980s. In 2004, the CFU Midlands branch asked members to contribute towards ZANU PF celebrations of the appointment of Joice Mujuru as Vice President. In the 2005 elections the farmers also extended help towards the ruling party. In a letter to a ZANU PF parliamentarian Webster Shamu after the elections, the Selous farmers reiterated that the farming community had undertaken to donate diesel and petrol and to assist in every manner during the elections. It reminded the politician that the white farmers had to dig deeper into their pockets in order to raise donations that had been requested for a successful election campaign; they were proud that their donations had contributed to his victory.⁸¹ The Selous community also believed that it was now the turn of the politician to protect them and such protection would help build a strong alliance.

This decision to compromise principles to protect interests had precedents in the UDI period. During the late 1960s, Sir Cyril Hatty, a cereal farmer and previous Finance Minister of the Federal Government was approached to join the Centre Party by Di Mitchell to oppose the Rhodesian Front. He declined highlighting that the only thing to do when you have the cowboy government is to become a cowboy yourself.⁸² Ian King, the former MDC coordinator was very influential within the dairy sector and had good communications with ZANU PF structures. However, despite such attempts which were characterised by bootlicking and some kind of blackmail, politicians simply turned against the farmers and the

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ R. Pilosof, 'The Land Question (Un) Resolved'

⁸² J. Mckenzie 'Commercial Farmers in the Governmental System of Colonial Zimbabwe, 1963-1980, PhD Thesis, University of Zimbabwe, 1985.

farmers in the end faced forced evictions. As time passed, diminishing numbers of remaining white farmers became forced sources of help for new settlers on surrounding farms. In Tsatsi, Bert Keightely of Wengi Farm and Pip Fussell on Willsbridge operated in 2003 and 2004 in this manner. Settler demands included helping with seed, fertilizer, cultivation and expertise. Individual arrangements were usually negotiated in an environment of uncertainty and unpredictability in which bargaining positions were against white farmers. For most farmers, it was not a question of if, but when and how they would leave.⁸³

The frustrations of countering the farm invasions began to wear farmers down. The huge number of legal cases swallowed time and money, and in most cases, they did not help the white farmers at all. In government and even within the police, no one was prepared to rescue and, in some cases, listen to white farmers. In some cases, selective application of the law further made the farmers very vulnerable to being set up and in one instance Duncan Hamilton at Forrester Estates was accused of hoarding grain. Jim Arrowsmith from Glendale was arrested on allegations of destroying grain after he buried chemically treated maize that was obsolete. Lack of police action was very frustrating for white commercial farmers. Additionally, the integration of the war veterans into the police service in 2001 complicated the integrity of the police force; it became very risky for white farmers to report *jambanja* incidences as the tables will be quickly turned against them. In some cases, they were arrested.⁸⁴

Fear gripped many white farmers especially with regards to talking to the press. Before 2000, most farmers published their experiences openly, but as lack of rule of law prevailed it became increasingly difficult. Reports stopped naming farmers and then farms

⁸³ Interview with Tim Henwood the former President of the CFU, in Harare on 18 November 2018.

⁸⁴ R. Pilosof, 'The Unbearable Whiteness of Being: Land, Race and Belonging in the Memoirs of White Zimbabweans'.

before it became common to report incidences with few identifiable details. The dreaded Central Intelligence Organisation was also rumoured to be watching safe houses and planting foreign currency or other illegal goods in car boots at roadblocks. White farmers became increasingly vulnerable and it became difficult to renew passports, gun-licences and work permits. Divisions amongst whites in urban areas and those white farmers in rural areas emerged. Urban whites increasingly blamed white farmers for the political crisis. Their argument was that white farmers should have stayed out of politics; such statements highlighted the stresses, strains and squabbles within the white farming community.⁸⁵

Before the 2002 Presidential election government introduced a Statutory Instrument (SI6) requiring evicted farmers to compensate their farm workers for terminal benefits. Worker unions such as GAPWUZ exerted enormous pressure on farmers in pursuit of payment of retrenchment packages to farm workers. Farm workers, vulnerable, traumatised and manipulated increasingly turned on their employers, in some cases violently. Any mutual trust that had developed between farmers and workers was lost, gratuities drove a wedge between farmers and their workers and broke the remaining morale of many farmers.⁸⁶

For the evicted farmers, high levels of stress and psychological trauma became part and parcel of the new standard of survival. The farm invasions had enormous effect on the strength of the CFU. As farm invasions intensified, the CFU crumbled due to a variety of reasons. Ideological differences became very distinct; on one hand was a group of farmers who were prepared to compromise with the government and on the other hand, one prepared to take a confrontational stance. Central to these two groups was the issue of the 2000 general election. The first group reasoned that ZANU PF cannot be removed from power easily

⁸⁵ Interview with Tim Henwood Former President of the CFU on 18 November 2018 in Harare.

⁸⁶W. Chambati and S. Moyo, "Impact of Land Reform on former farm workers and farm labour process", *African Institute for Agrarian Studies*, Monograph, Harare, 2004.

whilst the second group felt that the elections had been rigged and there was need for the international community to ensure regime change. This radical group comprised evicted MDC supporters who were against any compromise with the ZANU PF regime. This differing stance in strategy featured prominently in the politics of the farming unions and explained clearly why the farming unions became divided over the issue of taking legal action against the government.⁸⁷

The Zimbabwe Joint Resettlement Initiative (ZJRI), the successor to the Team Zimbabwe initiative, became the epicentre of these divisions. In 2001 Nick Swanepoel (ex CFU President) and Greg Brackenridge (Bankers Association Chairman), pleaded with and warned the CFU that only compromise with the ZANU PF government was the way forward and submitted a proposal to offer a million hectares of land. The initiative lacked support right from the beginning due to the fact that John Bradenkamp, a well-known close colleague of the ruling party elites, was involved. He was very unpopular within the farming community. The leadership of the CFU namely David Hasluck, Tim Henwood and William Hughes who were well known radicals in negotiations were unwilling to compromise. They then offered their resignations which however were turned down by the council. With a new leadership whose mandate was to spearhead the initiative, the former CFU President Nick Swanepoel was asked to lead negotiations under the banner of the Zimbabwe Joint Resettlement Initiative, with the condition that he distanced himself from Bradenkamp.⁸⁸

At face value, the initiative appeared to be a very progressive measure in creating a compromise over land redistribution. One million hectares of land was identified and offered to the government. The initiative became the corner stone of the Abuja Agreement in

⁸⁷ A. Chadwick 'Divisions wreck havoc within the white farming community in Zimbabwe', *Daily Telegraph* 18 February, 2000.

⁸⁸ R. Pilosof, 'The Unbearable Whiteness of Being: Land, Race and Belonging in the Memoirs of White Zimbabweans'.

September 2001. However, the initiative collapsed and so did the Abuja Agreement due to largely radical influence within the Zimbabwean government. Moderates within ZANU PF such as Joseph Msika seemingly agreed to the initiative, but events on the ground were being influenced by militant members, notably Joseph Made (Agriculture Minister) who simply dismissed the initiative on the basis that no deal was made and will be made.⁸⁹ Radical members were not interested in compromise and caused the collapse of the initiative. Commercial farmers' attitudes towards land redistribution were portrayed as reactive. Their approach to the land reform process demonstrated a wait and see approach and there was little proactive action by white farmers and their representative (CFU).

By the beginning of the year 2002, the Abuja Agreement became increasingly very irrelevant. The failure of the Joint Resettlement Initiative brought the credibility of the CFU into question and the leadership of the CFU was criticised for simply safeguarding their own interests. Surprisingly, as the invasions spread, the leadership of the CFU did not experience disturbances in their operations. This strategy by ZANU PF was meant to separate farming leaders from their members and the result was anger from the evicted farmers who had wanted more confrontational approaches from their leaders.⁹⁰ The leadership of Colin Cloete became more increasingly compliant with the government, leading to more frustration within the membership of the CFU.

The emergence of Justice for Agriculture

Divisions over how to engage with the government prompted an institutional breakaway of evicted farmers who went on to form Justice for Agriculture (JAG) in June 2002. Justice for Agriculture is now formalised and registered as a trust with a board of

⁸⁹ P. Ruhanya 'Radicals reject ZJRI' *Daily News*, 22 September, 2001.

⁹⁰ 'Divide and Rule' *The Farmer*, 2001.

trustees compromising eight founder members who are former white farmers. At its formation in 2002, JAG was led by John Worsely Worsick as its chairman. He was described in the white farming community to be too dominating and confrontational in his leadership style. The organisation also followed this path when engaging the government. His grandfather was the founder of the Rhodesian Farmers Union in Marandellas now Marondera.⁹¹

The main mandate of JAG is to secure justice, peace and freedom for the agricultural sector, to expose the illegal and unconstitutional nature of the farm takeovers and secure accountability for events since 2005. The first task for JAG was to compile a comprehensive loss document and in August 2002, JAG facilitated a valuation consortium among estate agents to ensure independent professional valuations on land and improvements, aimed at future compensation and restitution claims. Its main aim was to represent evicted farmers whilst the CFU appeared to represent those still farming.⁹²

Justice for Agriculture's core aim is in protecting minority white farmers, "you are very important to us, so let us unite and be pro-active in controlling the future for our families and other beneficiaries."⁹³

Notably, JAG has pursued the following aims: increasing the number of loss claim documents from 350-2000 farmers and 27 500 to 155 000 workers by 23 December 2005. Creating a community network for former white farmers and establish a database of 4500 farmers. The organisation has focused on raising at least US\$ 2 million through mobilising donor support and also to submit an internationally recognised Zimbabwe Agriculture

⁹¹ S. Harris, 'A New Splinter Group in the White Farming Community in Zimbabwe', *The Daily Mirror* 24 June 2002.

⁹² Justice for Agriculture and the General Agricultural and Plantation Workers Union of Zimbabwe: Destruction of Zimbabwe's Backbone Industry in pursuit of Political Power : A Qualitative Report on Events in Zimbabwe's Commercial Farming Sector Since the Year 2000, Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, Harare, 2008.

⁹³ JAG Mission available on www.jag.org.zw accessed on 25 October 2017.

summary document.⁹⁴ With the increase of evicted farmers, many farmers stopped paying CFU levies and fewer farmers bothered to attend farmers' congresses. Colin Cloete (CFU President) believed that a non-confrontational approach would be ideal in engaging with the government and that legal action would lead to a very hostile government. The CFU suffered another split in September 2002 when CFU leadership Cloete and David Hasluck suspended Ben Freeth for publicly denouncing the government in a circulated email.⁹⁵ However, severe divisions within the CFU council led to the dismissal of both Cloete and Hasluck.

Furthermore, JAG also experienced severe internal divisions emerging from uncompromising leadership. The leadership insisted on the inclusion of a claim for consequential losses or damages in their compensation initiative. This kind of claim was also viewed as excessive by some members who argued that it would be pragmatic to only claim for land and improvements and if necessary just improvements. In 2004 in February, Agric Africa emerged and its mandate was to pursue claims for land and improvements using existing Valuation Consortium's database; this was heavily criticised by JAG leadership. The perception of JAG towards Agric Africa was that it was created to pursue a commercial gain and that members of Agric Africa committee such as Bob Fernandez, a key member of valuation consortium, had simply betrayed farmers' goals under JAG. Interestingly, figures on how much had been lost by farmers differed sharply; the valuation consortium put the figure on lost land and improvements to around US\$5 Billion and JAG estimated this to be around US\$30 billion.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ JAG Reckless Tragedy: Irreversible? A Survey of Human Rights Violations and Losses Suffered by Commercial Farmers and Farm Workers in Zimbabwe from 2000-2008, Harare, 2008.

⁹⁵ Ben Freeth Letter, *The Farmer Open Forum*, 10 September 2002 and T Bote'Cloete, Hasluck Quit the CFU' *Daily News*, 30 October, 2002.

⁹⁶ A. Selby, 'Losing the Plot: The Strategic Dismantling of White Farming in Zimbabwe'.

Splits amongst white farmers were exposed by the fact that tobacco farmers under Zimbabwe Tobacco Association pursued an independent route from the CFU and JAG and tobacco farmers had an awkward relationship with the CFU. The Zimbabwe Tobacco Association was more united, streamlined and economically powerful. In 2000, Richard Tate (ZTA President) pointed out that, “the sooner the elections are over, and ZANU PF is back in power, the sooner we can get back to the business of farming.”⁹⁷

The ZTA’s main argument was that tobacco farming remains key to foreign currency generation. With the implementation of the fast-track land reform, ZTA tried to persuade government to retain the 500 largest tobacco growers. Kobus Joubert, Tate’s successor astounded farmers in June 2002 when he urged them to be apolitical and to work with the government. He further attacked white farmer politicians accusing them of playing with the livelihoods of the white farming community and his simple advice was for white farmers to compromise.⁹⁸ This angered many evicted farmers and intensified moves to create JAG, which labelled Joubert and the ZTA as political prostitutes. The ZTA proposals appeared to have received some consideration from Vice President Msika. However, the radical wings of the ruling party were not amused at all with the proposals and by September 2002 most large tobacco farmers had been evicted. The tone of the new president at the 2003 ZTA congress was heavily critical of the government, which indicated a hostile attitude towards the government.⁹⁹

The establishment of the Horticultural Producers Council (HPC) as a commodity board in 1990 reflected the growing significance of the fresh exports and horticultural sector. By 1995 the Horticultural Producers Council had become powerful enough to ask for

⁹⁷ R. Pilosof, ‘Remaining Apolitical in a Political Crisis: Exploring Interest Group Politics’.

⁹⁸ R. Choto, “When will Joubert ever learn”, *The Standard*, 7 July, 2002.

⁹⁹ ‘ZTA proposals rejected by Cabinet’, *Herald*, 10 September, 2002.

autonomy from the CFU. The CFU leader, David Hasluck, opposed the de-merger on the basis that the CFU had financed the HPC for five years and expected some loyalty. Eventually, the council successfully lobbied for a de-merger and the CFU lost a powerful lobbying base. The strength of the CFU was beginning to diminish.¹⁰⁰

Some farmers, out of increasing frustration with the CFU, simply decided to become fully fledged politicians with the support of JAG to face the ruling party head on. Interestingly, some of the farmers were very popular and won convincingly in some constituencies. Notable among these were Roy Bennet in Chimanimani and Ian Kay in Marondera Central constituency.¹⁰¹ Their presence in politics helped to energise the opposition movement which had managed to shake the political spectrum through the victory in the constitutional referendum of 2000. On the part of the CFU, it also meant that it was losing strong members within its ranks.

Another interesting development was that the Matabeleland region regarded itself as autonomous; many Matabeleland farmers felt that they were not being consulted enough and that the CFU leadership was acting in its own interests and not defending the interests of its members. By 2004 most Matabeleland farmers distanced themselves from the CFU and even refused to pay subscriptions. Gavin Connolly argued that the CFU was not defending the interests of farmers in the Matabeleland region; he and Mac Crawford, the long-time Matabeleland CFU representative, established the Southern African Commercial Farmers' Association (SACFA). This was a symbolic re-separation of the Matabeleland Farmers' Union.

¹⁰⁰ 'Horticultural Producers Council leaving the CFU', *The Farmer*, 12 April 1995.

¹⁰¹ D. Moyo, "Former White Farmers Win Seats in parliament", *Daily News* 15 March 2002.

Doug Taylor Freeme, the CFU President dismissed the move and declared Matebeleland always had a history of autonomy anyway. The 100-year-old unification of MFU and RAU and CFU's sixty-two year- old unification of commercial farming institutions had fallen apart. By mid 2005 close to five independent groups representing interests of former white farmers emerged namely CFU, JAG, ZTA, SAFCA and Agric Africa.¹⁰² The CFU in 2006 made it clear to its remaining members that it would re-engage with the government, but also warned that it would only represent members willing to recognise the government. The divisions of the CFU were laid bare and these were based on historical factors, crop type, region, and ideology and farm structure.¹⁰³

Justice for Agriculture has also supported individual farmers to pursue their own legal cases against the government. At the forefront of these was the appeal taken to the SADC Tribunal by Mike Campbell in 2008. Mike Campbell, a Zimbabwean commercial farmer, bought Mount Carmel farm in 1974 and complete ownership of the farm was given in 1999. In July 2001 during the farm invasions, Campbell was given a notice by the government showing the intention to acquire Mount Carmel. However the notice was declared void by the High Court. In July 2004 another notice to acquire the farm was issued in the official government gazette, but no notice was given directly to Mike Campbell. However, two months later, persons purporting to be sent by Nathan Shamuyarira visited the farm and claimed the former minister had been allocated the farm. After receiving three notices of the intention to take the farm, Campbell applied to the High Court for a protection order.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² A. Chadwick, 'Breakaway Splits in the Zimbabwe white farmers union', *Daily Telegraph*, 10 September 2006.

¹⁰³ R. Pilosof, 'The Unbearable Whiteness of Being: Land, Race and Belonging in the Memoirs of White Zimbabweans.'

¹⁰⁴ Campbell Case: Decisions by SADC Tribunal accessed at www.mikecampbellfoundation.com on 22 March 2019.

Amendment 17 was added to Zimbabwe's constitution on 14 September 2005, the amendment would ensure that certain categories of land would be in the hands of the Zimbabwean government and also to remove the courts' involvement in hearing any challenge to land acquisitions. In December 2006, the Gazetted Land (Consequential Provisions) Act was enacted into law, it required all farmers whose land was compulsorily taken by the state and who were not in possession of an official offer letter, permit or lease to stop forth in occupying, holding or using that land within 45 days and to leave their homes within a period of 90 days. On October 11, 2007, before the Supreme Court of Zimbabwe had reached its judgement in the case, Campbell filed an application with the SADC Tribunal challenging the acquisition by the government.¹⁰⁵

The Tribunal concluded that it had jurisdiction to hear the case because the dispute concerned human rights, democracy and the rule of law which are binding to SADC members. Seventy-seven farmers that had faced eviction joined as parties in the proceedings against the government. The Tribunal granted an interim measure ordering the government of Zimbabwe to take no steps, directly or indirectly to evict commercial farmer Mike Campbell from the farm or interfere with his use of land. On June 2008 Mike Campbell and his wife were abducted by war veterans and militia and forced at gun point to sign a piece of paper stating they would withdraw from the main SADC Tribunal court case to be argued the following month.¹⁰⁶

The Tribunal's decision addressed four main issues which focused on the following: whether the Tribunal had jurisdiction to hear the case, whether the plaintiffs had been denied access to domestic courts in violation of the SADC treaty, whether the Zimbabwean government had discriminated against the plaintiffs on the basis of race and whether the

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

plaintiffs were entitled to compensation. The Tribunal held that it had jurisdiction to hear the case because amendment 17 had eliminated the plaintiffs' access to the domestic courts, and the plaintiffs were therefore entitled to seek remedy before the Tribunal. Notably, the Tribunal found that the plaintiffs had been deprived their right to a fair hearing before being deprived their rights. On the racial discrimination issue, the Tribunal held that the actions of the Zimbabwean government constituted indirect or de facto discrimination because implementation of Amendment 17 affected white farmers only.¹⁰⁷ The tribunal also held that the plaintiffs were entitled to compensation for the expropriation of land.

After Mike Campbell, another applicant Richard Thomas Etheredge filed a new application to declare the government of Zimbabwe in contempt of the Tribunal. The Tribunal held that the government of Zimbabwe had failed to comply with the Tribunal's previous decision. Furthermore, the Tribunal stated that it would report its findings to the SADC summit of the Heads of State and government. Despite the Tribunal judgements, Mike Campbell and his wife were eventually forced out of their home and Mount Carmel was invaded. Zimbabwe's Justice Minister Patrick Chinamasa wrote to the Tribunal to inform of Zimbabwe's withdrawal from the Tribunal; his argument was that the Tribunal did not have jurisdiction over Zimbabwe because the Tribunal's Protocol had not yet been ratified by two thirds of the total members of the SADC as required by the organisation's treaty and stated that Zimbabwe would no longer be bound by any of the Tribunal's past or future judgements.¹⁰⁸

By 2004 the Utete Commission noted that close to 1323 white farmers were still farming on 1, 2 million hectares. However, this was disputed because the provincial land records were not in order and only provided information about farmers that had been

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

officially evicted with formal documentation. The CFU indicated that close to 1 000 farmers were still operating and about a third were doing so by remote control meaning that they were not directly in charge of the farming operations. In most cases it was through co-existence agreements.¹⁰⁹ However, this was likely to have been an overestimate to retain confidence within the sector. JAG points out that close to 500 were still operating and close to 200 by remote control.

By 2005, close to 3500 farmers had been evicted and close to 2000 were in Harare, Bulawayo and Mutare. About 500 had moved to Europe, United States, Australia and New Zealand. Close to 150 were thought to be in South Africa, 150 in Zambia, 120 in Mozambique and about 100 between Botswana, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Namibia and Tanzania. Levels of tolerance, decisions about when to vacate and whether to emigrate varied as in war years. Farmers with young families often migrated sooner while those with children at school delayed departures. Elderly farmers were reluctant to start new lives or leave their friends and were increasingly unable to emigrate because of age. Some of the remaining farmers shifted to new business interests which include transport, market gardening, consulting and fuel importing.¹¹⁰

Those leaving Africa have mostly joined the Zimbabwean Diaspora in non-farming activities, some have embarked on farming in Australia. Many of those that emigrated within the region have generally remained in farming. Zambia's agricultural boom is partly attributed to Zimbabwean farmers and some of Zimbabwe's food imports have come from Zambia as well. The Zimbabwean government warned other countries about accepting racist white farmers and actively prevented the export of farm equipment.

¹⁰⁹ C. Utete, 'Report to the Presidential Land Review Committee into the Implementation of the Fast- Track Land Reform Programme' 200-2002, Harare, Government of Zimbabwe, 2003.

¹¹⁰ S. Moyo and P. Yeros, "Land Occupations and Land Reform in Zimbabwe: Towards the National Democratic Revolution," in S Moyo and P Yeros (eds) in *Reclaiming the Land: The Resurgence of Rural Movements in Africa, Asia, and Latin America*, Clairemont, 2005.

Those in government labelled JAG a non-entity and the former Minister of Lands had this to say about JAG:

You can't force the government to compensate white farmers who have been benefiting all along, you can't continue to peddle a racist narrative that the current government is against white farmers and in fact you can-not reverse land reform by a confrontational stance of using compensation as a bargain tool. JAG is pursuing toxic politics.¹¹¹

As a reactionary entity by disgruntled white farmers, JAG and its membership have not hidden their hostility to the passive manner of the CFU in engaging the government. Ben Freeth who is also a member of JAG wrote in the JAG open letter forum criticising the new magazine of the Commercial Farmers Union and its quietness on the plight of former white farmers. He commented that,

Anyone reading the magazine would be reassured that farming is fine in Zimbabwe and now that we are under the Government of National Unity. The ZANU PF leadership must be rubbing their hands in glee at this official publication of the Commercial Farmers Union.¹¹²

Justice for Agriculture's sharp criticism of the CFU was also directed at its handling of land invasions. The CFU only concerned itself with those farmers still on the land since to pursue justice for those evicted would mean confrontation with the government. Its bias towards only those farmers still on the land meant it alienated those farmers who had already been evicted. With that number increasing, sympathy for them and fear among the remaining farmers created anger against the Commercial Farmers Union and its stance of quiet diplomacy in dealing with the government. Thus, JAG's approach has been to deal with the state head on and even lobbying the international community to sympathise with evicted

¹¹¹ Interview with former minister of Lands and Land Reform Douglas Mombeshora on 17 October 2017 in Chinhoyi.

¹¹² Ben Freeth opinion on CFU contained in *JAG Open letter Forum*, on 14 January 2010.

white farmers.¹¹³ The Commercial Farmers Union had tried to distance itself from political opposition in order to try and salvage what remained of a relationship with the state.

It is evident that the *Third Chimurenga* led to the complete breakdown of co-operation between the state and the CFU. In a corporatist arrangement, the state crafts an institutional arrangement upon which it can co-operate with civil society organisations. These civil society organisations or associations get channelled into policy-making processes and often help in implementing state policy.¹¹⁴ The implications of the *Third Chimurenga* on relations between the state and commercial farmer organisations illustrates that the state and the CFU were no-longer working together. The *Third Chimurenga* witnessed a complete breakdown of relations between the state and the CFU. The farm invasions were an illustration that the CFU was no-longer central to agricultural policy and land matters. With the complete breakdown of relations between the state and the CFU, attention of the state shifted towards promoting indigenous unions.

Conclusion

In summary, the chapter has examined how state-commercial farmer relations were impacted by the *Third Chimurenga*. As a result of the land invasions, there was a complete breakdown of relations between the state and the CFU. Central to the breakdown in relations between the state and the CFU was the land question. The *Third Chimurenga* epitomises angry and violent confrontations over land between the land invaders led by war veterans and white farmers. The farm invasions had physical and emotional effects on white farmers.

In responding to farm invasions, black farmer unions condemned the invasions. However, their condemnation did not change the state position with regards to invasions.

¹¹³ 'CFU has lost the Plot by continuing to talk with the Government', Letter from JAG Chair John Worwick in *JAG Open Letter Forum* 22 March 2004.

¹¹⁴ J. M. Echols, "Soviet Politics in the Brezhnev Era: Pluralism or Corporatism", in D Kelley (ed) *Soviet Politics in Brezhnev Era*, New York, Praeger Press, 1980, pp. 1-26.

Moreover, the black oriented unions were cautious in their statements of condemnation in fear of state retaliation. The farm invasions also led to the breakdown of relations between Zimbabwe and the United Kingdom and relations between Zimbabwe and the United States. The imposition of sanctions is also connected to the farm invasions. The attempts by white farmers to respond to invasions were largely unsuccessful as often state institutions were used to crush any resistance by white farmers. Land offers by white farmers were also rejected by the state, leading to the collapse of diplomatic avenues to resolve the tensions. Within the white farming community, splits emerged over how to deal with the government in light of the farm invasions with groups such as JAG preferring confrontation and the CFU opting for negotiations. In the following chapter attention shift to black farmer, the state and black economic empowerment discourses.

CHAPTER 4

BLACK FARMERS, THE STATE AND THE RISE OF BLACK ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT DISCOURSES

This chapter analyses the relationship between black farmer unions and the state. The analysis focuses on the formation of the ICFU and ZFU. Importantly, the chapter examines how the unions have related with the state. The chapter analyses the rivalries between NFAZ and ZNFU within the ZFU. Additionally, the chapter also analyses the relationship between the ZFU, ICFU and the CFU and further unpacks the discourse of black economic empowerment by assessing its implications on commercial farming. In looking at the relationship between the state and black farmer unions, the chapter links the emotive land distribution politics and its effect on relations.

The emergence of black commercial farmer organisations was regarded as a significant step in ending white dominance in commercial agriculture. White farmers were regarded as the face of commercial farming and black farmers and their representatives were confined to small scale and communal farming. This state of affairs has its origins in Zimbabwe's colonial past and is evidence of how colonial structures remain pervasive in post-independence states. Thus, according to Ndlovu-Gatsheni coloniality should be dismantled through the pursuit of de-coloniality.¹ The existence of black oriented farmer organisations is symbolic in changing the face of farmer representation. At independence commercial agriculture was largely dominated by white farmers who formed the CFU and the minority black commercial farmers that existed were incorporated into the CFU where they faced exclusion with regards to decision making. As a result of this exclusivity within the CFU, some of the black commercial farmers went on to form organisations such as the ICFU to advance black commercial agriculture.

¹ S. J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, "Why de-coloniality in the 21st century, The Thinker", *Thought Leaders*, Vol 48, 2, 2013, pp. 10-25.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni adds that de-coloniality is concerned with dismantling relations of power and conceptions of knowledge that formed the reproduction of gender and geopolitical hierarchies. De-coloniality is seen as an antithetical political and epistemological liberating project that seeks to unmask and resist coloniality.² The emergence of black commercial farmers was crucial in ending the dominance of the CFU in agricultural policy and production. Black Economic Empowerment sought to ensure that indigenous people penetrate into the economy and dismantle white monopoly capital.

The majority of black owned commercial farms were purchased after independence in 1980. However, farm purchases by Africans actually began in the late 1970s towards the end of minority rule when restrictions on black ownership of commercial lands were eased. The large-scale commercial sector continues to be the engine of Zimbabwe's economy. This means commercial farmers' voices with regards to agricultural policy and production are crucial. In as much as Zimbabwe's commercial farming was dominated by whites under the CFU from the early 80s and even the 90s, black commercial farmers have penetrated the sector though some are still relatively new. With regards to representation of black commercial farmers, the Indigenous Commercial Farmers Union (ICFU), which is now Zimbabwe Commercial Farmers Union, becomes the first point of entry for representation of black commercial farmers.³

The Indigenous Commercial Farmers Union

The genesis of this organisation is debatable and largely depends on who one is talking to and their interests within the organisation. The founder members that are still present are in agreement that the organisation started in 1990 when it was registered as an

² S. J. Ndlovu- Gatsheni, "Coloniality of Power in Post-Colonial Africa, Myths of De-colonisation", *Council for Development of Social Science Research in Africa*, Dakar, 2013.

³ S. D. Taylor, "Business and Politics in Zimbabwe's Commercial Agriculture Sector," *African Economic History*, Vol 27, 2, 1999, pp. 177-215.

association. On the contrary, another individual who claims to be the brains behind the organisation indicates that the group already existed in the late 1980s but gained momentum in the era of indigenisation. Spearheading the interests of the group was Ben Muccheche of Muccheche Investments who was into farming and transport. Ben Muccheche was one of the founder members of the Indigenous Business Development Centre (IBDC), which lobbied the government to turn a tide from its socialist mantra to capitalism. However, with a black face in the lead the sole focus of IBDC was to attain black empowerment.⁴

Ben Muccheche with other members such as Thomas Nherera, Davison Mugabe and Tererai Mugabe set their sights to change the hegemony of white commercial farmers, replacing them with black commercial farmers. However, as a result of in-fighting, especially on strategy to engage the government to gain recognition, Ben Muccheche was pushed out leaving the others to pursue the mandate of the organisation.

The ICFU was formerly launched in 1990 as the Indigenous Commercial Farmers Association (ICFA). This is because specific legal requirements must be met for union certification. It was established by James Nherera, who went on to become the president and chairman, Mugabe Davison, Mugabe Tererai, Jeremiah Bonda and Paul Tangi Mukondo. These members had also purchased large-scale farms after independence.⁵ Most of the founding members at this point in time were from the Shona ethnic group, undermining broad representation of other indigenous identities. These individuals believed that their specific needs as indigenous black commercial farmers were not being met by the CFU their belief was that, “if we can get the CFU to advocate the same goals that we advocate then we have won.”⁶

⁴ N. Chanakira, ‘Indigenisation train by-passes Zimbabwe’s marginalised’, *The Independent*, 20 May 2003.

⁵ Interview with anonymous ICFU founding member on 13 January 2020 in Bulawayo.

⁶ S. D. Taylor, ‘Business and Politics in Zimbabwe’s Commercial Agriculture Sector’.

The aim of the ICFA was to wrest special benefits from the government, especially for agricultural credit and quality farmland under the expanded land reform programme. Most of these founder members were coming from the CFU armed with the desire to raise a successful black commercial farmer. Their participation in the CFU had also imparted them with knowledge of how to run a farming organisation. They also resisted joining the Zimbabwe National Farmers Union (ZNFU) which was by that time the sole representative of black commercial farmers in the eyes of the government. However, in principle ZNFU represented only those considered small-scale farmers or simply farmers with less than 100 hectares of land. One of the founder members had this to say about this scenario:

We could not go back to the CFU and neither could we join ZNFU which was preparing for a merger with NFAZ to create ZFU. Joining CFU would have been a grave mistake and betrayal of the cause to change the face of commercial farming and celebrate black success in commercial farming, and joining ZNFU would have meant that we could be swallowed in a merger which did not understand commercial farming and eventually our principles were not going to be realised.⁷

All was not well for the organisation as it tried to establish itself and reach out to the state. The then ministers of agriculture Witness Mangwende and Kumbirai Kangai were very hostile to the interest group and its founder members. In parliament in 1992, former minister Mangwende was asked in parliament about the organisation and his remarks were that, “who are they? I don’t know about them; I only know of NFAZ and ZNFU and talks are very much advanced for the merger of the two to create ZFU”.⁸

The minister even warned the founder members that they seem to be sabotaging government’s desire of uniting all indigenous farmer organisations under one entity. Forming another organisation, claiming to represent indigenous farming interests, was considered a slap in the face of government’s desire to unite all farming bodies. The successor to Witness

⁷ Interview with an anonymous founder member of the ICFU on 13 January 2020 in Bulawayo.

⁸ Parliamentary Hansard of 1991, Debate on the merger of ZFU.

Mangwende, Kumbirai Kangai, was much more hostile to the group and in one meeting with the members, he decreed that the association would never be recognised legally as a union as long as he had any say in the matter.⁹

This hostile stance by ministers is attributable to what was happening at that time where focus was on ensuring that the merger of NFAZ and ZNFU to form ZFU was successful. Considering that the union could bring in more than 165 000 small scale and communal farmers to the government side, it was logical reasoning to fix attention on this union. Also bearing in mind that land acquisition was in motion, getting small scale and communal farmers' support was crucial compared to supporting an idea which was still to bear fruits.

As late as 1995, the ICFA could only be described as a weak and alternative entity for black farmers. Although the association could claim to have more than 300 black commercial farmers in its ranks by 1994, it did not exist beyond its five-core leadership all of which had to personally bankroll the association to keep it afloat. The ICFA was statutorily prevented from collecting levies on produce or the issuance of licences though it could receive voluntary contributions. All its members or potential members were by law required to be members of the CFU or the ZFU whether or not they agreed with those unions' policies, strategies or advocacy efforts. This had the effect of limiting the appeal of the ICFA as well as its ability to attract members.¹⁰ One of the members of the organisation had this to say: "It was hard to stay afloat as an organisation; we had to bankroll the organisation because we believed in its ethos despite the law being brutal to us."¹¹

⁹ Interview with an anonymous founder member of the ICFU on 13 January 2020 in Bulawayo.

¹⁰ M Bratton and R J Bingen, "Farmer Organisations and Agricultural Policy", *Rural and Urban Studies*, Vol 1,1 1994, pp. 7-29.

¹¹ Interview with Mr Jeremiah Bonda member of the ICFU on 14 January 2020, in Harare.

The ICFA faced an additional strain since many black farmers who had been attracted to the association were highly indebted and their farms on the verge of being taken by banks or closing down. In a critique of the organisation, one respondent said that,

the ICFA leaders' motivation on appealing to the government for help was influenced by financial desire so that the organisation could sustain itself. They were well aware (the founders) that they could not continue to pump money into the organisation and had to devise strategies to get the government's attention.¹²

By seeking help from the government, it meant also that the founder members were now willing to compromise their independence and become agents of a patronage system. From its inception since 1990, the ICFU strongly supported land reform as long it served its interests. The interests were that land reform should ensure the subdivision of large-scale white owned commercial farms to make way for medium scale black commercial farming. On the Land Acquisition Act of 1992, the ICFA statement was that,

One farm per owner, excessively large private units should be sub-divided into viable units, viability sizes to be determined by ministry experts according to the most suitable farming system of the area, farms belonging to non-citizen absentee landlords should be acquired.¹³

This was a very careful statement which was calling for a cautious approach and criteria to acquire land. On the issue of underutilised land, the ICFU position was directed towards the white community and it argued that white farmers whose farms averaged 2400 hectares of land were not effectively using them in production. This kind stance resonated with the attitude of the state towards white farmers and white farmers had vehemently opposed this narrative.

At its first congress in November 1995, the ICFU chairman and president by then, James Nherera, advocated for 'transparency and democracy'. The remark was focused on the

¹² Interview with Professor Chigora on 17 January 2020, in Zvishavane.

¹³ S. D. Taylor, 'Business and Politics in Zimbabwe's Commercial Agriculture Sector'.

CFU hegemony with regards to commercial farming in Zimbabwe. Nherera and ICFU were very much concerned about the lack of democracy with regards to commercial agriculture associations and the fact that none of them represented black commercial farmers adequately. Nherera's plea was also directed towards the government to allow the formal recognition of ICFA as a union. The marginalisation of the organisation was as a result of hostility by ministers in the agricultural portfolio who focused their attention on the merger between small-scale farmers and communal farmers under the ZFU.¹⁴

However, after the late Kumbirai Kangai was re-assigned to the new Ministry of Lands and Water Resources, the ministry now in-charge of land reform in April 1995, the way was cleared for the ICFA to be recognised as a union. The achievement of a union status in February 1996 offered the new ICFU certain powers that eased its financial strain such as the right to issue recognised licences to members and to access and collect production levies. Without substantial donor funding or government support, the ICFU experienced a lot of difficulties in covering the organisational expenses and also meeting the agenda of its members. With regards to licensing fee, the initial licensing fee announced in 1996 of just \$500 Zimbabwe dollars per farmer per year, was not enough to fund operational costs.¹⁵ Financial challenges have remained a huge obstacle for the organisation and explain why it has failed to have a great impact like the Zimbabwe Tobacco Association.

Immediately after receiving the union status in 1996, the organisation joined the pro-indigenisation discourse, which was very dominant during that time, and focus was removing white dominance. This resonated with ZANU PF's electoral campaign strategy. The ICFU was ready to lend its name to a series of advertisements and public demonstrations that

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

affirmed support for the late President Mugabe and laid all the blame for the failures of indigenisation on white monopoly capital. The ICFU stance against white hegemony in the agricultural sector was well known; what was new was the preparedness of the leaders to get into partisan politics as a strategy to win government's attention and financial support. This was tantamount to accepting neo-patrimonial influence.

This meant that the leaders were now prepared to sacrifice the values of the organisation in order to access personal benefits from the government. In the 1996 presidential election, the ICFU with other indigenous lobby groups endorsed President Mugabe's candidacy. The ICFU called on Zimbabweans to vote for,

a leader who has decided that in final analysis, money or no money, Zimbabwean land will find its way back to its original owners and who continues to condemn all forms of harassment of indigenous farming communities by financial institutions whilst assisting the white farming community and also doing everything possible to recall loans and repossess farms owned by indigenous farmers.¹⁶

This kind of strategy by the ICFU shows how the leaders of the organisation were now prepared to do everything to get state support including entering partisan politics so as to curry favours from the government.

With regards to produce from its members, cotton and tobacco production dominate in terms of exports. Once the organisation was recognised as a union in 1996, the ICFU was also permitted to establish its own commodity associations comparable to those of the CFU. The first of such indigenous commodity group was the Zimbabwe Association of Tobacco Growers (ZATG).¹⁷ In Zimbabwe 90% of the tobacco grown is for export and the members of ZATG have also joined the production of a major export crop although they do not influence pricing. They have also faced stiff competition from ZTA which remains a

¹⁶ Herald 12 May 1996 ICFU inserted an advertisement on Indigenisation.

¹⁷ Interview with Mr Makombe the current President of ICFU now (ZCFU) on 16 January 2020 in Harare.

dominant player with regards to tobacco exports. The ICFU stance has been also to preserve pre-ESAP features of a closed economy including the marketing boards which benefited them more against larger and more mechanised and productive farming operations.

The union has since changed its name to Zimbabwe Commercial Farmers Union and its mandate is now to serve commercial farmers irrespective of the size of the farm. On why the name was changed, the current president highlighted that, “it’s moving with the times and also easy identification.”¹⁸

The ZFU has also set its sights on black commercial farmers and this seems to contradict with the mandate of ZCFU. However, the leadership of the union were quick to dispute this:

In as much as ZFU embraces commercial farmers we work together to ensure that Zimbabwe’s commercial agriculture remains viable and days of white farmer dominance are over.¹⁹

The organisation continues to compare itself with the CFU; this is because most of its founder members were products of the CFU hence there is an appreciation of how the CFU is organised. As for relations with the CFU, the leaders highlighted that they continue to exchange notes on agricultural policy and production and also have ties with CFU leadership.²⁰ An assessment of the structure of the organisation reveals that the president is supposed to serve a two-year term and is elected at congress. The president governs with a vice president and a council that are voted into office by members. This is the same model used by the CFU.

¹⁸ Interview with an anonymous member of the ZCFU council on 16 January 2020 in Harare.

¹⁹ Interview with Mr Makombe on 16 January 2020 in Harare.

²⁰ Interview with an anonymous founder member of the ICFU on 13 January 2020 in Harare.

The ‘Favoured Union,’ Zimbabwe Farmers Union

The Zimbabwe Farmers Union emerged on 19 August 1992 out of a merger between the National Farmers Association of Zimbabwe (NFAZ) and the Zimbabwe National Farmers Union (ZNFU). In the build-up to the merger, the Joint Presidents’ Agricultural Committee (JPAC) was created in 1985 and included the CFU, NAFZ and ZNFU. This meant that all farming unions were going to be under a single umbrella body to be known as the ZFU. This was going to make it easy for the government to regulate all farmers unions since they will be accommodated under a single union. The ZFU would also break up the white dominated CFU influence on land and agricultural policy since indigenous unions, because of their numbers, would dominate in terms of leadership and decision making in the union.²¹

The Commercial Farmers Union pulled out of the merger talks under JPAC in January 1991 and issued out its own land policy proposals calling for safeguards on land seizure and compensation. At this time, the National Land Policy of July 1990 was in place expressing the government’s intention to acquire more than 6 million hectares of commercial farmland. The CFU was in a very tight corner and members of the union pressured leadership to abandon merger talks and deal directly with the government on the proposed land acquisition which they felt targeted them. In as much as this might be valid reason, the CFU had worries with proposed arrangements and its concerns were that, the other two indigenous groups had more members compared to the CFU and automatically when it comes to voting they would dominate leadership and decision-making processes.

The other two unions’ finances were not strong, particularly NFAZ which relied on communal farmers’ subscriptions only and constantly depended on government’s donations

²¹ M. Bratton, “The Comrades and the Countryside, The Politics of Agricultural Policy in Zimbabwe”, *World Politics*, Vol 39, 1984, pp.174-202.

to keep it afloat and thus the CFU felt that it would be made to stretch its resources and assist other parties in the proposed partnership. The CFU also regarded itself as a democratic union as the CFU president was bound by the decision of the council and there was a customary two-year term limitation on incumbent CFU presidents as well as regular elections for all office bearers. In contrast, in the indigenous unions, no leader had stepped down or had been removed which indicated flawed internal democratic systems.²²

With the CFU cutting itself from the merger talks, NAFZ and ZNFU were now left to seal the merger. The NAFZ represented the majority of Zimbabwe farmers namely the peasant cultivators who have use rights to two to four hectares of arable land and share communal grazing. The organisation originated from Masvingo, the birthplace of its founder leader during the master farmer movement in the 1950s and transformed itself to NAFZ in 1980. NFAZ became a key political voice for farmers in expressing demands for better prices, markets transport and land. The NAFZ aggregated and articulated small-holder demands nationally to policy makers who often responded favourably.

As NFAZ influence developed, its membership grew to above 85 000 for paid up members and close to 150 000 who were occasional adherents. It was amongst the dominant farmers associations in Africa in terms of numbers and also with regards to the representation of small-holder farmers. More than half of its members were women though they did not have leadership influence. This might be because of strong patriarchal influences among communal farmers. With regards to policy influence, some of the victories of the organisation include lobbying the Ministry of Agriculture to transform the extension agency (AGRITEX) and the Research and Specialist Services (RSS) department from agencies which serviced large-scale commercial farmers to ones which would attend to small-holder needs. As a result

²² Interview remarks of CFU council member with the *Financial Gazette* on 14 November 1991.

of its lobbying, Agritex and Research and Specialist Services department created a farming unit to assist the majority of communal farmers who remained subsistence cultivators.²³

The NFAZ also persuaded the government to improve roads, transport and other infrastructure and to establish marketing depots for grain, cotton and dairy products in the communal lands. NFAZ also influenced government's land policy and further lobbied the government to constantly review producer prices so as to ensure that communal farmers benefit from their produce. The successes of NFAZ and its political influence on small-holders persuaded the government not only to meet the demands of the organisation, but also to seek greater control over the body, in particular communal farmers who would be part of the political base of the ruling party. The government could not leave out NAFZ as this would alienate it from some members of the rural base. By the late 1980s, with financial support from external donors, the NFAZ established an administrative structure with headquarters in Harare and field officers in every provincial capital.

The other merger partner was the Zimbabwe National Farmers Union (ZNFU) which emerged in the mid 1930s as the then Bantu Farmers Union later renamed the African Farmers Union (AFU) in 1942 and the Zimbabwe National Farmers Union in 1980. In the 1940s AFU sought to represent the special interests of small-holders who owned private farms in the then African Purchase Areas. The areas are now known as small-scale commercial sector; these areas contain farms in the range of 20 to 200 hectares and averaging 80 hectares. The farmers in this category aspire to be in commercial production; they also use intermediate levels of agricultural technology and employ seasonal labour. At independence, the ZNFU membership stood at 9500 rising to around 12 500 by 1991 with the addition of

²³ S.Burgess, "Small-holder Voices and Rural Transformation in Zimbabwe and Kenya Compared", *Comparative Politics*, Vol 29, 3,1997, pp. 127-149.

urban plot-holders. With regards to policy matters, ZNFU had a very strong voice on issues of producer price for maize and tobacco, issues of land, agricultural credit and water development. Successive Ministers of Agriculture sought to create ties with the organisation given that it represented emerging black semi-commercial and small-holder farmers.²⁴

ZNFU had also become the voice of black commercial farmers thereby increasing its base. The group lobbied to attract black members from the CFU so as to broaden the base and infuse the union with more experienced farmers. With the rise of the Indigenous Commercial Farmers Union in 1990, the leadership of the group were directed by the government to be part of the ZNFU as the legitimate voice of black commercial farmers and they flatly rejected the move fearing that being part of the ZNFU would place them in the same category of small-holder farmers yet they wanted to be recognised as representing successful black commercial farmers.²⁵ Government's focus was on the merger of indigenous farmer unions and thus granting union status to ICFU was likely to create confusion and was not in tandem with the prevailing land distribution politics.

The internal structure of the ZNFU was clearer than that of the NFAZ. A worrying development, however, was that the NFAZ constitution was constantly being amended to extend terms of office for leaders while the ZNFU's constitution remained as it was up to the time of the merger. Clause 6 of its constitution stated,

The Council of the Union shall consist of (a) The President (b) The Two Vice-Presidents (c) One representative each from every Branch approved and recognised by the Council (d) Two representatives each from every Producer Association recognised and approved by the Council in terms of Clause 4 (f) The Council recognises eight Branches and five Producer Associations (e) Any person

²⁴ M. Bratton *Micro-Democracy? The Merger of Farmer Unions in Zimbabwe*, *African Studies Review*, Vol 37, No 1, 1994, pp. 9-37.

²⁵ S. D. Taylor, 'Business and Politics in Zimbabwe's Commercial Agriculture Sector'.

whom council may co-opt or appoint by reason of any special skill shall not be entitled to exercise a vote at any meeting of the Council.²⁶

This helped to ensure that the union is more organised despite a worrying trend of leaders staying in power for a very long period against their constitutional stipulations. The two farming bodies became the face of the proposed ZFU.

In analysing why these two farming bodies agreed to amalgamate it is important to examine how the proposed merger was going to cater for the interests of the two farming bodies in the merger. The ZNFU, whose small membership and intermediate production position had made it marginal, seized the opportunity to become a larger and more powerful entity. The NFAZ, whose over-dependence on donor funding made its financial position precarious, recognised a chance to establish a firm resource base by folding itself into a body which was going to be given a mandate to put in place agricultural levies. NFAZ officials were also convinced that they had secured an understanding with ministry officials that levying authority would be granted to ZFU in direct response to their willingness to amalgamate.²⁷ The willingness of these bodies to join into the merger exposes how they sought to use the major to attain a complex set of interests.

The two bodies also had reservations with the participation of the CFU in the merger talks and were relieved to see it withdrawing from the talks. These reservations are explained in the following statement:

We did not have a strong organisation and qualified staff of our own at this point in time and we could have been easily submerged by the CFU in the amalgamation, while we might have had the numbers to elect leadership of an amalgamation union, commercial farmers and the CFU had staff and the expertise to set the union programme.²⁸

²⁶ Zimbabwe National Farmers Union Constitution Clause 6.

²⁷ M. Bratton and R. J. Bingen, "Farmer Organisations and Agricultural Policy: Introduction", *African Rural and Urban Studies*, Vol 1, 1994, pp. 7-17.

²⁸ Interview with Paul Mauta ZNFU member on 16 Dec 2019 in Masvingo.

The CFU presence in the union might also have intimidated other small-holder farmers which could have silenced their voice when it came to decision making. As for the mandate of ZFU in the proposed merger, the body was going to be the voice of all indigenous farmers with regards to agricultural policy and production; this meant that getting a union status for any other indigenous oriented farmer group was going to be difficult as this might be seen to be presenting direct competition to the ZFU.

The ICFU becomes the litmus example and it was denied union status at its formation in 1990 since this was coinciding with merger talks. The group was only given union status in 1996, four years after the ZFU was fully established and fully functional. The ZFU was also going to offer information and technical expertise to small-scale commercial farmers and communal farmers on issues of agriculture. Furthermore, the ZFU was also going to spearhead training in agricultural production. To the NFAZ, the proposed body was also going to spearhead the issue of levies to assist communal farmers in realising more income for their produce. The body was also going to coordinate all farming groups and create viable commodity associations. In theory therefore, the ZFU became an opportunity for small-holder farmers and communal farmers to become more organised and have a strong body with increased voice on matters of agricultural production and policy.²⁹

Politically, the proposed merger was very much important to the ruling party and thus served political purposes relating to

the numerical significance, the small-scale farming sector at that time was estimated to be around 800 000 farmers and most of these are poor and dependent on government and NGO support, of these farmers NFAZ had a huge membership of around 300 000 and this was ideal in building a strong support base for the ruling party and most of these farmers reside in rural areas which

²⁹ M. Bratton, 'Micro-Democracy? The Merger of Farmer Unions in Zimbabwe.'

constitutes 70% of the total population and is the core of the ruling party's political constituency.³⁰

This signifies that the ruling party would benefit from the union by adding more members to its support base particularly in the rural areas. With regards to the emotive land distribution politics, the statement from a respondent underscores the relevance of ZFU,

The ZFU came at time when the land issue was at the heart of politics, the state needed support especially against white farmers under the CFU who had resorted to delaying land reform by whatever means possible, having the ZFU on the side of the state was ideal in making the government's voice much stronger and giving the government endorsement to acquire more land.³¹

The ZFU emerged at a time when the land debate was beginning to intensify; the state intentions on land acquisition were also beginning to gain momentum. The pronouncement of the Land Acquisition Act needed support particularly from black farmer unions and the ZFU was central. A respondent had this to say:

It was no coincidence that the ZFU was created at the same-time when the Land Acquisition Act of 1992 was put in place thus it was ideal to have black farmers united, supporting the government's drive to land reform, the state needed an army and the army of ZFU was ideal to break CFU delaying tactics on land reform.³²

Some respondents have also dismissed the formation of ZFU regarding it as a tactic by the ruling party to fight the CFU and create unnecessary division within the farming union. A respondent remarked that,

It was merely a counter organisation to the CFU and a tactic to divert attention from the core social and economic problems affecting the country, ZANU PF wanted to create division in farming unions to break white farmers' influence and divert the nation from socio-economic issues under ESAP to issues of land reform.³³

³⁰ Interview with Professor Chigora on 15 October 2019 in Zvishavane.

³¹ Interview with Dr Chikowore on 17 November 2019 in Gweru.

³² Ibid.

³³ Interview with an anonymous member of the ZNFU on 19 October in Gweru.

It is clear how the ZFU creation was central to politics. Thus, political interference was at the heart of the formation of the organisation. The new union for black farmers emerged as a result of immense pressure from the government. Notably, the appointment of Witness Mangwende in 1992 as the new Minister of Agriculture accelerated the emergence of the Zimbabwe Farmers Union. Bratton describes him as a hardliner who significantly contributed to the growing rift between the state and the United States especially during his tenure as the Foreign Affairs Minister. His deployment to the Agriculture Ministry was seen as a bid by the state to push through its aggressive land policy and also to cripple any resistance to the exercise especially coming from the white commercial farmers through the CFU.³⁴ The other aim of his mandate was to push through an aggressive land campaign rhetoric which would fit directly with the 1990 general election campaign and to resist and repeal constitutional restrictions on land transfers.

Responding to a cabinet directive, the new Minister of Agriculture spoke highly in favour of the amalgamation of farmer unions especially targeting indigenous farmers unions such as the ZNFU and NFAZ. These speeches were timed to follow an announcement by the government declaring commitment to acquire, for resettlement, an additional six million hectares of commercial farmland under the National Land Policy of July 1990. The Ministry sought to strengthen its hand in an anticipated struggle over land reform with the CFU by consolidating African farmer opinion behind the government's position.³⁵

In as much as the two indigenous organisations would portray their union as being based on a 'unity accord', the political hand was very evident as seen in the process leading to the formation of the new umbrella union. The union congresses were speedily carried out

³⁴ M. Bratton, 'Micro-Democracy? The Merger of Farmers Union in Zimbabwe'.

³⁵ M. Bratton, 'Micro-Democracy ? The Merger of Farmers' Unions in Zimbabwe'.

with the sole mandate of ratification, which highlights that the black peasant farmers were simply pawns in a game already concluded at a higher level. Committee visits were also hastily carried out in provinces to address small-holder unions in an effort to build a broad-based support for the new umbrella body. Despite claims of broader consultations, small-holder black farmers claimed to have been left out in key consultations for structures and operationalisation of the new body.³⁶ This highlights exclusionary tags even within the new indigenous farmer union and to further show the exclusionary element, one respondent highlighted that,

we were simply told that Harare would be the focal point for everything, and the new leadership will carry out site visits to rural communities while permanent structures are being set up in Harare.³⁷

The former ZNFU president was elected as the new president of the ZFU. Three vice presidents were also elected, two of whom were former key leaders in the NFAZ. The NFAZ president, despite running for all four senior positions, was not returned to any office in the new umbrella body. The reason being that

the National Farmers Association of Zimbabwe was a junior partner in the new marriage and that key proponents of the new body were very much vocal members of the ZNFU.³⁸

Despite spirited efforts of creating an indigenous farmer organization, it is important to note that the farming community was also experiencing fragmentation which was driven by a combination of factors. A new Indigenous Commercial Farmers Association (ICFA) was formed in August 1990 from among black farmers of the CFU and the ZNFU. This new grouping was dominated by African farmers who purchased large-scale farms after independence; the new organisation's aim was to fight for special benefits for African

³⁶ M. Bratton, "The Comrades and the Countryside, The Politics of Agricultural Policy in Zimbabwe", *World Politics*, Vol 39, 2, 1987 pp. 174-202.

³⁷ Interview with Mr Mutizwa member of NFAZ on 12 Jan 2016 in Bindura.

³⁸ Ibid.

farmers from the government, focusing on agricultural credit and quality farmland under the expanded land reform programme. The CFU and the ZNFU tried vehemently to attract members of the new grouping in their farming unions. For the CFU, this would remove the white tag associated with the organization as there would be Africans in its ranks. For the ZNFU, having a new set of members would broaden their appeal as well as highlight to the government that they are a serious organization. The organisation was denied union status by the government at its formation because the state did not want to create confusion since the merger of NFAZ and ZNFU into a union representing all indigenous farming groups was being finalised.³⁹ The organisation was granted union status later on in 1996, four years after the merger had been finalised.

The ZFU and the CFU also had their differences:

ZFU was established to spearhead the interests of indigenous farmers and at the inception of the organisation our focus was helping communal and small-scale farmers in agricultural production. This assistance was in the form of technical advice and support with farming resources coming from the government. The state was very instrumental in helping to create structures and setting up the policy agenda of ZFU.⁴⁰

Strong state influence in the ZFU also undermined its autonomy as a civil society organisation spearheading the interests of its members. With regards to issues of autonomy a CFU member remarked,

The CFU is an independent body focusing on representing the interests of professional farmers who are engaged in commercial farming, the organisation is politically neutral and has autonomy to elect its leadership. The CFU is governed by an elected council which comprises a president and vice president, eight regional branch chairmen representing 73 local farmers. The organisation since its formation has always set its agenda.⁴¹

³⁹ S. D. Taylor, 'Business and Politics in Zimbabwe's Commercial Agriculture Sector'.

⁴⁰ Interview with Mrs Chinamasa member of the Zimbabwe Farmers Union on 12 January 2020 in Rusape.

⁴¹ Interview with Director Gilpin from the CFU on 16 January 2020 in Harare.

The CFU representation is largely dominated by whites and the ZFU by blacks. In terms of finances, by virtue of compulsory union membership under law, the CFU was able to put in place a levy on produce of its members. On the contrary, the ZFU as from 1992 faced a lot of challenges in securing the ability to charge levies on farm produce of its members despite promises from the government in the build-up to the merger that it was going to be allowed to charge levies. Once the merger was in place, ministry officials backtracked from the promise and began to raise fundamental questions: Which producers would be levied and will it be all small-holders or just ZFU members? What rates of levy would be charged on each commodity? How would the levy be collected and to what uses would the levy fund be put? As of 1992, the ZFU and the government remained far apart on these key issues. Without the capacity to charge levies, the ZFU finances were not strong, making it dependant on the state for survival.⁴²

Internal democratic systems are much stronger within the CFU compared to the ZFU. The CFU has witnessed a lot of leadership changes as a result of leaders sticking to their two-year constitutional term limits and members can also remove a leader if the leader fails to perform. For example, RD Swift was recalled in 1998, just a year in his first term of office because members felt he was not doing well in dealing with the government on matters of land.

On the part of ZFU, leadership has become a lifelong task and leaders have remained in office for long, undermining the two-term limits set by their constitution. Since its formation, the following leaders have taken over the reins of ZFU, Gary Magadzire took over in 1992, having been the leader AFC then ZNFU and finally, ZFU and he died in office, Silas Hungwe was elected as his replacement and also died while in office and currently retired

⁴² M. Bratton, 'Micro-Democracy? The Merger of Farmer Unions in Zimbabwe'.

major Abdul Credit Nyathi is in charge of the organisation. There is strong interference by government officials in the selection of leaders, which undermines the independence of these leaders. In some cases, these leaders are co-opted as board members in public utilities, further compromising their independence from the state. On land policy, the ZFU position on land reform is clear,

We support the government's desire to redistribute land, the land question could only be resolved through offering land to indigenous people so that they would also be given an opportunity to do farming and contribute to the improvement of livelihoods.⁴³

On the contrary, the CFU position on land has been that land reform should be carried out in a transparent and fair manner, which respects property rights and ensures compensation to those that would have lost their land.⁴⁴

Regarding policy matters in the first decade of independence before the expiry of the sunset clauses, the CFU wielded so much influence on agricultural policy and production. It could influence pricing for commodities such as tobacco and maize. The CFU could even force the government to make changes to agricultural policy if it was seen that this would undermine white farmer interests. White farmers in the 1980s were nicknamed the silos of the nation because much of the large-scale production was coming from them. However, all this changed in the 1990s when the government could now acquire land and white farmers' firm position on policy was altered.⁴⁵ The ZFU has become a strong ally of the ruling party and it has firmly supported the ruling party's policy positions on issues of agriculture.

Despite these differences, ZFU and CFU are currently working together on matters of agricultural policy and production. To co-ordinate their responses, an alliance partnership

⁴³ Interview with Mrs Chinamasa ZFU member on 12 January 2020 in Rusape.

⁴⁴ 'CFU policy on Land Reform', *The Farmer*, 15 March 1996.

⁴⁵ R. Palmer, Land Reform in Zimbabwe, 1980-1990, *Journal of African Affairs*, Vol 89, pp. 163-181.

deed has been sealed through the Zimbabwe Farmers Alliance Trust which brings the two farming unions together. The core aims of ZAFT are to improve communication, collaboration between ZFU and CFU, mobilise resources and ensure sustainability of the two unions, capacitate the two farmers unions to be more responsive to the needs of their members at all levels, and increase sustainability, productivity and profitability of the unions respective of members farming enterprises. Further aims are also to improve farmer representation at all decision-making forums in the country and beyond, improve and promote a favourable operational and regulatory environment in Zimbabwe's agricultural sector and increase the membership of the union. This platform that combines two biggest unions in Zimbabwe is a positive step in strengthening the voice of farmer unions with regards to agricultural policy and production.⁴⁶

ZNFU versus NFAZ in the merger

Within the proposed merger not everyone fully embraced the new idea of creating a merger. Small-scale commercial farmers deeply resented the move. A farmer remarked that “my land and cattle would be shared and being forced to join hands with someone who has solely focused on communal farming is not acceptable”.⁴⁷ This statement highlights the fear and lack of trust amongst indigenous farmers especially in joining hands with peasant cultivators who did not fully embrace the art of farming. The key fear amongst small-scale farmers was the issue of property rights, which they believed would be compromised if the communal farmers would lay claim to their land by cutting fences and allowing cattle to graze illegally. In Masvingo in March 1991 communal farmers were under the erroneous impression that the union merger would lead to a sharing of production assets.⁴⁸ This serves

⁴⁶ ‘The Zimbabwe Farmers Alliance Trust’, accessed at www.cfuzim.com on 16 January 2020.

⁴⁷ Interview Mr Kadare a commercial Farmer and member of ZNFU, 12 August 2015 in Mutare.

⁴⁸ M. Bratton, ‘Micro-Democracy? The Merger of Farmer Unions in Zimbabwe.’

to highlight tensions amongst black farmers, which would require immediate attention by the new leadership of the merger.

Other peasant farmers saw the merger as an opportunity to enhance democracy especially the aspect of leadership renewal within African farmer unions. The NFAZ constitution stipulated the terms to be served by the elected leaders, but some leaders had avoided the ballot, leading to lack of leadership renewal in the farmer association. Hence the new union would act as an opportunity for leadership change. A new concern for small-holder farmers in the new union related to communal area representation, a key arena in information gathering, debate and a very important avenue through which communal farmers can express their grievances.

The new set up did not give immense recognition to this kind of representation, which created concern especially from the NFAZ. In Manicaland in 1992 during a field visit, the newly elected small-scale farmers in the ZFU could not understand fully the needs of communal farmers and they did not consider seriously their concerns. Leadership positions in the new farmers union were dominated by members of the ZNFU, which created discord especially from individuals from the NFAZ.⁴⁹

Immediately when the merger talks were announced campaigning started as well, the concern amongst NFAZ leaders had to do with loss of patronage opportunities and scramble for limited union posts. Most of the positions were taken by ZNFU members.⁵⁰

Moreover, there was fear amongst leaders of NFAZ which was that former members of ZNFU will simply take over all key posts this created uneasiness amongst NFAZ members.

⁴⁹ M .Bratton, 'Micro-Democracy? The Merger of Farmer Unions in Zimbabwe'.

⁵⁰ Interview with T Mukaka a NFAZ member 12 August 2016 in Gweru.

Lack of unity especially the idea of rallying behind certain individuals simply symbolized the greedy for power coming from both NFAZ and ZNFU members.⁵¹

A key impediment in the operationalisation of the new farmers' body related to complaints, by farmers, of inadequate consultation prior to merger. The process was fast-tracked and the Interim Committee of the ZFU held dissemination meetings at provincial level countrywide. However, local union representatives often failed to spread the word about the merger. Members of the interim committee of the ZFU did not have adequate resources to travel regularly around various parts of the country, and moreover did not have the initiative to solve the problems without calling upon the big men within the organization.

In addition, this culture of waiting for big men to decide meant also that local and in some cases flimsy or small disputes would wait for the intervention of senior union officials. This scenario meant that decision making would take very long time; it also meant senior officials had a lot of issues to handle when they conduct their site visits. In some cases when these senior union members would visit communities, instead of driving the key agenda of boosting production among communal farmers, meetings would simply end on matters or disputes of farmers in the communities.⁵²

An interesting observation surrounding the new farmers' body was that other communal farmers did not understand or even care about this merger. Ignorance made them to simply regard it as a platform of distant elites centralized in the capital city. One farmer summed up the exclusivity of the new farmers' body:

Communal farmers were not very much interested because they did not know how exactly the new merger was going to help them. To them, farming was

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² M. Bratton, "Farmer Organisations and Food Production in Zimbabwe", *World Development*, Vol 14, 3, 1986, pp. 9-37.

largely to sustain their livelihoods, not to have an interest body co-ordinating their farming.⁵³

The new Minister of Agriculture dedicated his efforts immensely to the establishment of the new merger for indigenous small-scale farmers. He literally, as one observer noted, had become ‘the driver of the new farmers’ body’ and this was because each and every step taken to establish this organization was undertaken with his blessing. Several meetings to establish this organization were held at his office.⁵⁴

To show how the political hand was at the heart of the organization, one can look at state interference in the selection process of the leaders. The Zimbabwe Farmers Union interim committee had agreed that there would be a transition period after the inauguration of the new union. During this three-month interval, the ZFU presidency would rotate between the former presidents of ZNFU and NFAZ. This kind of arrangement was intended to make it easier for the integration of staff and programmes and create a conducive environment for elections which would start at the grassroots and eventually with the president of the organization.⁵⁵

This plan was however dropped at the first joint congress in Gweru due to the minister’s sudden call for elections. As one respondent noted, the minister intervened in the proceedings with a heavy hand. To show his quest for control of the farmers’ body, while at the podium, he set aside his speech and went on to declare that the transition period for the merger should be abandoned and called for immediate leadership elections. Furthermore, the minister was also accused of uttering remarks with ethnic connotations, which could polarize

⁵³ Interview with Mr Mautsa a member of NFAZ on 28 August 2017 in Kwekwe.

⁵⁴ Interview with a member of the Zimbabwe Farmers Union council on 16 August 2016 in Harare.

⁵⁵ M. Bratton, ‘Micro-Democracy? The Merger of Farmers Union in Zimbabwe’.

the new farmers' body. He stated that "he was tired seeing people from Gutu;" this was a remark targeting the NFAZ president because it was his home area.⁵⁶

Interestingly, the joint congress began to deliberate on the election issue, which was followed up by the balloting. This highly compromised the negotiated phase of transition which had been previously agreed upon. Moreover, the Minister exceeded his legal authority by intervening in the internal proceedings of a voluntary association. The state simply put itself in the selection process of the leadership to safeguard its own interest of having control and effective management of the day to day operations of the farmers' body. As one respondent noted, 'politics and the new union had become formidable allies. This was reinforced by the fact that most of the leaders of the organization were ZANU PF in orientation.'⁵⁷ One respondent had this opinion about the leadership of ZFU at the time of the merger:

The Minister of Agriculture had to endorse first, leaders that were to be voted by the congress, leadership was a pre-determined outcome within the ZFU and you got to be ZANU PF in orientation for you to be a leader.⁵⁸

Despite state influence within these bodies, the leaders of this new farmers' body were also responsible for contributing to the weakness of this new body. Farmer leaders appeared to be motivated by personal gain rather than the quest to create a robust organization. Most of these leaders actively got involved in leadership contest targeting positions that paid well or which provided access to other symbolic and material spoils. It was government practice to appoint top farmer leaders to marketing boards and other public positions which became immense inducements to leaders with political ambitions. The new ZFU president and vice president also stood to benefit directly from an enlarged base of

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Interview with a member of the Zimbabwe Farmers Union Council, 16 August 2015 in Harare.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

small-holder customers for a private agricultural supply company in which they were majority shareholders. The defection of NFAZ council members from the NFAZ candidate for the ZFU presidency was encouraged by the fact that his rival promised to increase councillors' honoraria and allowances.⁵⁹

Apart from greed, the social composition of the new body had some weaknesses. At national, provincial and district levels were older males (over 50 years of age) who had little or rudimentary education as one scholar puts it. This kind of illiteracy, especially among middle-level office-bearers, deprived members of information and freed top leaders from accountability. This problem was seen especially at the joint national councils meeting where provincial leaders were unable to read and understand the organization's constitution. Even the top leaders were ill-prepared to manage the complex tasks of steering a large-scale organization.⁶⁰ The gender composition was also a cause for concern, women voices were very absent even in communal structures and as one respondent noted,

the women did not have any meaningful representation. Indeed, at its emergence, the organization symbolized a patriarchal nature, which made it impossible for women to have any meaningful contribution.⁶¹

Within the ZNFU and NFAZ, presidents had governed for unbroken periods. Leadership within farmer organizations thus came to be regarded as a lifetime experience. With such high stakes, the prospect of leadership change was very limited and moreover, any talk of leadership transition was characterized by bitter competition in which those in charge resorted to any means necessary to win and remain in office. One respondent noted that the

⁵⁹ M. Bratton, 'Micro Democracy? The Merger of Farmer Unions in Zimbabwe'.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Interview with Mrs Ncube a member ZFU, on 12 October 2017 in Bulawayo.

merger elections of 1991 focused on reshuffling existing leaders.⁶² Hence there was always urgent need for new blood especially the youth and women.

Interestingly, after the merger, the ZFU president announced that leadership elections would be held throughout the organization. These elections were not held in an inclusive manner whereby voting would begin at the lower levels of the organization. Instead, ZFU leaders were elected from top to down, that is with the national executive being elected first, followed in order by provincial, district and grassroots councils. The other party to the merger, ZNFU, had purposely avoided a bottom up series of elections because NFAZ officials would easily have won a sizable number of positions by virtue of support from its larger peasant membership. The observance of a transition period before the election of national leaders, as initially agreed, would have allowed enough time for a bottom-up approach. One NFAZ member indicated that power struggles between former NFAZ members and ZNFU were very evident right at the beginning of the merger talks. What was also clear was a well-orchestrated plan to thwart NFAZ members' ambitions of taking over key positions in the merger.⁶³

This admission symbolizes how weak the merger was since it failed to usher internal democracy, which is key in ensuring effective representation. The decision by the executive of ZFU to overturn election results of the Midlands province, where supporters of NFAZ president had won, clearly highlights power struggles rocking the new merger. Hence one observer added that, 'the merger primarily was felt in name and practically it was for the ZNFU; the new body was the same old home for ZNFU.'⁶⁴ The distribution vote among clusters of interest was the source of tension within the new merger. Peasant farmers from the

⁶² Interview with a Zimbabwe Farmers Union Council 19 October 2018.

⁶³ Interview with a Mr Matsa member of NFAZ 8 Jan 2016 in Masvingo.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

communal areas should have the largest representation in the ZFU executive because they outnumber semi and small-scale commercial farmers. The NFAZ members were largely from the peasant farmer constituency and ZNFU was largely dominated by small-scale commercial farmers.

The ZNFU contingent vigorously opposed majority rule and proportional representation, insisting on equality between communal and small-scale farmers in the ZFU leadership. This equal sharing of votes between NFAZ and ZNFU resulted in the underrepresentation of communal farmers who were the dominant group. Therefore, it further explains why communal farmers complained bitterly about underrepresentation of their interests by the presidency owing to the fact that the president himself was an owner of farms in both large and small-scale areas and thus could not effectively represent their interests.⁶⁵

Internal management procedures have proved to be an obstacle for the ZFU and this problem was inherited from the management systems inherited from the predecessor organisations. The president seized control of everything, which meant he directly controlled the organization. Bratton argues that in order to maximize his own discretion, the president virtually removed a clear line of command. For example, he did not divide responsibilities definitively between the organisations' two co-directors or designate one as director and the other as deputy. The president resisted delegating responsibilities to his competent professional staff, which included economists. These have been side-tracked from analytic work into menial operational tasks. The president had seemingly abandoned his task of driving the agenda of the organisation and promoting teamwork. As a result, he took over-all

⁶⁵ S. Burgess, 'Small-holder Voices and Rural Transformation in Zimbabwe and Kenya compared'.

decision-making processes in all facets of administration and even involving himself in most trivial issues.⁶⁶

Failing to understand the needs of their clientele proved to be a major challenge for the new merger. The assumption that was made by the leaders was that communal, resettlement and small-scale farmers in Zimbabwe had common interests with regard to agricultural issues. This meant that key interests and needs of the clientele were simply ignored. Importantly, one can note that the small-scale commercial sector required larger amounts of inputs compared to communal farmers. Farmers on resettlement schemes had a particular interest in transforming settlement permits into a permanent and secure form of tenure. What this symbolizes was a crisis of diversity of interest which needed careful and accommodative responses. Instead, the leadership focused on reinforcing the rhetoric that all farmers had the same interests and could speak with one voice; a rhetoric totally divorced from understanding the diverse needs of the clientele. Moreover, due to greed and patronage politics, the ZFU leadership had concentrated more on securing tractors and pickup trucks, rather than mobilizing resources to cater for the needs of their clientele.⁶⁷

Instead of concentrating on responding to the needs of its diverse clientele, the leadership of ZFU spearheaded efforts of taking new tasks, some of which had no connection to the organization at all. Evidently, the ZFU leaders favoured transforming the organization into a service delivery agency for farm supplies or agricultural projects. This task had always been undertaken by other specialized government agencies, parastatals and NGOs in Zimbabwe who were better equipped to handle the issue. Hence expansion of tasks automatically meant that the leadership had a lot of issues to handle, which eventually

⁶⁶ M. Bratton, 'Micro –Democracy? The Merger of Farmer Unions in Zimbabwe'.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

crippled the organization as no tangible goals were achieved due to seemingly endless lists of tasks to be undertaken. An analyst added that this new focus by the leaders had personal interests attached to it, especially the aspect of enabling them to obtain business opportunities for agricultural services and commodities.⁶⁸

The shifting economic environment had effect on the new merger as well, but the leadership of the merger failed to adapt ZFU to the shifting economic environment. In 1990, the state adopted the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme aimed at reducing government spending and deregulating the market. This new package impacted negatively on the clientele base of ZFU as small-holder farmers faced enormous competition and also could no longer rely on protection from public regulations. Price negotiations, a key aim of ZFU, became irrelevant as price fixing on controlled commodities came to an end. This period as described by one communal farmer, was a period of immense suffering for the small-holder farmers. The ZFU seemed to be ill prepared for this sudden economic change; as an organization it did not have a robust response strategy to the crisis. In addition, its economics and education departments failed to carry out awareness campaigns to farmers on how to respond to ESAP. In comparison to the CFU, the ZFU simply lagged behind in export promotion and foreign currency generation.⁶⁹

Financially, the new merger relied heavily on member subscriptions; previously the two bodies had different ways of income generation. The NFAZ relied on grants and donations and member subscriptions constituted a very tiny percentage in income for the organization. In contrast, the ZNFU had a seemingly stronger financial base because the farmers' levy provided much of the income. The new farmers' body had a torrid task in creating a sound financial base. Securing local revenue sources remains the key strategy in

⁶⁸ M. Bratton, 'The Comrades and the Countryside: The Politics of Agricultural Policy in Zimbabwe'.

⁶⁹ 'Government Deregulation of Agricultural Commodities', *Daily Gazette* 29 July, 1993.

addressing this problem. This would mean cutting on donor dependence, which is the sole survival strategy for this organization. Having realistic licence fees has remained a huge problem owing to differences in opinion by members and moreover, most of the small-holder farmers are poor hence increasing it would simply mean reduced membership payment. This would further compromise the financial position of the body.⁷⁰

Bratton notes that promises had been made by the state for an authority levy; this levy would ensure government support to agricultural products and commodities. The NFAZ had applied for this before the merger but was advised that the issue could only be resolved after amalgamation had been finalized. Once the ZFU merger was finalised, the president quickly moved to pursue the issue of authority levy.

However, the new merger did not succeed in having an authority levy. This was largely because of state unwillingness to back up such a commitment. In fact, the state began to cite different issues surrounding the levy, which included which producers would be levied, what rates of levy would be charged on each commodity, how would the levy be collected and what would the fund be used for? Obtaining an authority levy by the ZFU would be difficult because in the context of atrophy of the rural organization of the ruling ZANU PF party, the government was unlikely to authorize a measure which would fund an alternative, non-party rural organization such as ZFU. Given the economic challenges facing the state, securing an authority levy from the state would remain largely a pipe dream.⁷¹

The Zimbabwe Farmers Union has transformed itself in some quarters especially looking at the position of the organization in the current state. The organization has managed to create a website which demonstrates that the union is embracing technological changes.

⁷⁰ M. Bratton, 'Micro-Democracy? The Merger of Farmer Unions in Zimbabwe.'

⁷¹ Ibid.

This has enabled it to engage with various stakeholders with common interests. Moreover, having a website means that the union is embracing change, making it to remain visible like the CFU.

As a civil society organization, the union has embraced values that are resonate with civil society; these include excellence, integrity, professionalism, teamwork, respect, reliability and effectiveness. These values have been supported by stating its key mandate, which is to promote and advance farmers' interests and welfare through representation, networking, information dissemination, capacity building, formation of commercially viable enterprises, environment, gender and HIV mainstreaming, and mobilization of resources and members. This highlights a functional organization with a clear mandate. The union has also created a new arm which focuses on projects and programmes. These include the ZFU vaccination programme, Fit for Life which focuses on empowering children through education, promoting conservation agriculture among small-holder farmers and also nurturing innovation among young farmers. This highlights significant transformation which has been embraced by the organization.⁷²

The administrative structure has also embraced gender as evidenced by women being part of the administrative process. This is a significant departure from the time when the merger was formed, then even at communal level there was little involvement of women in the decision-making process. Furthermore, the union has opened itself to the outside world by creating partnerships which help it to raise funds. Currently, some of the funders of the union include UNICEF, USAID, ACP and Eco-farmer. Such partnerships have helped the union in terms of funding and also in fostering synergies with different players. The organisation has also set its sights on ensuring that commercial farming becomes a success among its

⁷² 'About ZFU', accessed at www.zfu.org.zw on 11 November 2016.

members. The union is working closely with the CFU and ICFU on issues of commercial agriculture.

Black Economic Empowerment

Economic transformation during the 1980s was more visible within white dominated sectors due to the advantages in access to resources. In the 1990s a new black capitalist sector developed and promoted an agenda of economic nationalism. A younger generation of black entrepreneurs became increasingly vocal and looked to the state for economic opportunities.⁷³ In return, they served the ruling party with great loyalty. Indigenisation is seen as the transfer of wealth mostly from foreigners to natives through widened participation of the latter in the national economy. The CFU minutes from 1991 record that, “a huge empowerment had awakened throughout many black sectors.”⁷⁴

Empowerment could be promoted through radical reforms or through gradual economic linkages. The CFU was in picture of these options and their effect. At this stage, senior political figures also advocated for gradual transition. Joshua Nkomo, during discussions with the CFU, explained that, “we have experienced 100 years of tying knots and although there is little change at the moment, 100 years of knot tying cannot be undone in 10 years.”⁷⁵

Concern for black empowerment was a topical issue for those in charge, but they were also aware of the difficulties they would face. Raftopolous and Moyo point out that the rhetoric of

⁷³ B. Raftopoulos and S. Moyo, “The Politics of Indigenisation in Zimbabwe”, Research Paper, *Institute of Development Studies*, University of Zimbabwe, 1994, Pg. 1.

⁷⁴ Minutes of CFU Council Meeting 1991.

⁷⁵ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting 26 June 1991.

black economic empowerment, like the rhetoric of liberation and rhetoric of socialism, could be used and adapted for strategic advantage.⁷⁶

In the 1990s a lot of changes occurred with regards to black empowerment. The Indigenous Business Development Centre (IBDC) was established in December 1990 in response to the Zimbabwe government's Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP), and to the need to broaden indigenous participation in the business economic life of the country. At the helm of IBDC were Strive Masiyiwa who became the secretary general and Chemist Siziba who became its' president. The IBDC's strong belief was that the way towards achieving sustainable economic growth and stability, expanding the economy and creating employment opportunities was through the promotion of small to medium size enterprises (SMES). The ruling party embraced the ideas of the group since this would allow the ruling party to control the benefits of empowerment and who they accrued to. Given the dominance of white interests over the agricultural sector ten years after independence, it was the most obvious target for empowerment reform and the idea of promoting black commercial farmers appealed to many members of the elite who could reap more benefits.⁷⁷

The formal black economic empowerment of the early 1990s was very slow and did little to change white controlled sectors especially banking, mining and farming. Resource disparities continue favouring the whites. Stoneman points out that there were 7000 dams in white areas irrigating 100 000 hectares, whereas there were only 5000 hectares of irrigated land in small scale farming areas. By 1994, there were only 15 000 dams in commercial farming districts irrigating 400 000 hectares compared to only about 50 000 hectares in communal areas. Moreover, the structural adjustment programme had negatively affected the

⁷⁶ B. Raftopoulos and S. Moyo 'The Politics of Indigenisation in Zimbabwe'.

⁷⁷ P. Bond , *Uneven Zimbabwe: A study of Finance, Development and Underdevelopment*, Africa World Press, 1998 , pg. 191

black sectors more than the white sectors.⁷⁸ As a result of the continued widening disparities of wealth between the white sector and the black sector, the majority of the blacks became increasingly impatient and appealed for a more radical approach to economic empowerment.

In 1994 the Affirmative Action Group (AAG) split from the IBDC under the chairmanship of Phillip Chiyangwa a close relative of the former late President Mugabe. According to Moyo and Raftopolous, the AAG illustrated three features of affirmative action and the direction it was to follow; firstly show growing impatience and agitate for the need for radical economic transformation, and have close ties with the ruling party to gain support and also to advance personal agendas. At the heart of the AAG was the late tycoon Roger Boka who leapt to prominence as a champion of black empowerment. Boka's demands for access to the gold, finance and tobacco sectors made symbolic calls for wider economic nationalism to be the linchpin of the discourse of indigenisation and he attracted broad support among the ruling elite and the business sphere.⁷⁹

The late tycoon Roger Boka made his mark and is known for establishing the largest tobacco auction floors in the world. Boka started by having close associates in government, advancing the view that Zimbabwe's most crucial export was being manipulated by whites commercial farmers who are not loyal. He began to accuse white farmers of conspiring to keep Zimbabwe's 11 million people, many who were blacks, poor and threatened drastic measures if they did not loosen their grip on the economy. One of his famous statements was that, "I survive extremely well in a very hostile environment but without the hostility, I am not in business".⁸⁰

⁷⁸ C. Stoneman, "Agriculture" in C Stoneman (ed.) *Zimbabwe's Inheritance*, Hong Kong, Macmillan, 1981.

⁷⁹ B. Raftopolous and S. Moyo, 'The Politics of Indigenisation in Zimbabwe.'

⁸⁰ H. Saburi, 'Roger Boka Obituary', *The Herald* 4 February 1999.

The anti-white campaign propelled Boka into prominence and President Mugabe praised him and regarded him as a patriot and black empowerment pioneer. In 1994 Boka became the first black person to get a tobacco merchant licence. He then persuaded President Mugabe to give government financial guarantees to black traders for all tobacco purchases. His argument was that the guarantees were necessary because Zimbabwe's white owned banks were financing white tobacco merchants so that they could depress tobacco prices and cheat the country of revenue.

His ability to have the ear of those in power was alarming and he used it to advance his agenda. Boka then decided to build his own tobacco auction floors to break the dominance of the existing floors which were closely tied to white farmers that is the British American Tobacco. To finance this project, he had to establish a bank and the government fast-tracked his banking licence application and dropped requirements for additional shareholders. In January 1995, United Merchant Bank (UMB) opened its doors and became the major financier of the Boka Tobacco Auction floor, which managed to capture 8% of the market after its launch.⁸¹

Boka's aggressive empowerment strategy was appealing and increasingly adopted by politicians. He ratcheted up his anti-white stance by adopting tactics which incite racial hatred. In one incident he sponsored a full-page advertisement in several newspapers reproducing an old photograph of a black Kenyan carrying a white man across the river. The caption read, "White Zimbabweans' idea of a good African", adding "We want our country Zimbabwe and our economy, no dogs or guns will stop this revolution."⁸²

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² R. Block, "Roger Boka Thrived as an Icon Until his Bank went Bust", *The Wall Street Journal*, 6 September 1998.

The CFU responded by accusing Boka of inciting racial hatred to his advantage. There was also deep suspicion that the Zimbabwe Tobacco Association president of the time had been threatened because the interests of the body on tobacco marketing were not in sync with Boka's agenda. This was a very different format of empowerment policies of the early 1990s. Boka's approach was described as arrogant and ruthless, but was all the same very popular, particularly among the ruling party elite. He thus managed to secure government support, materially and symbolically for ventures in the tobacco and mining sectors.⁸³

Politicians began to show this radical approach towards black empowerment. The former Vice President Simon Muzenda, addressing members of the Save Conservancy in 1996 stated that, "this form of land use will not succeed unless indigenous businessmen are brought in as partners."⁸⁴

He gave the wildlife conservancies two weeks to come up with suggestions. The tone of empowerment had changed and government leaders, influenced by Boka's appeal, began to convey the message in different forums. Indigenisation officially was aimed at expanding black shares in the economy, but it was radicalised and became more of an avenue about promoting ruling party interests and those of its key members.

Some of Boka's businesses collapsed amid corruption which involved senior figures in the party and also his failure to follow proper corporate governance principles. His attacks on the white farming community made him a hero to those gunning for reforms in the commercial farming sector.

⁸³ CFU Council Minutes of 27 March 1996.

⁸⁴ CFU Masvingo Meeting on Save Conservancy 15 June 1996.

Boka's fearlessness in expressing himself on societal problems cultivated the anti-white sentiment which was building within the ruling party. His remarks on reconciliation highlight his divisive language:

What is the animal called reconciliation, I am an ex-combatant, we did not go to war to maintain white supremacy, there is no reconciliation my friend, if you think that blacks and whites will reconcile then you are fooling yourself, Boka doesn't like to speak to people who support reconciliation and if your child finishes school he won't get employment but white man's child has no problem and you talk about reconciliation. Mr Boka wants to talk to people with right mind. It's a pity that only the future generations will realise the importance of Mr Boka's stance. But they will have to go to the archives to get the information.⁸⁵

At his death, the late President Mugabe described and praised Boka as,

a man of action, a fearless voice and doughty fighter for black empowerment who had systematically broken into sectors hither to dominated by multinationals and white commercial outfits.⁸⁶

The ruling party used the empowerment process to extend its patronage as the key individuals dominated the process and the structure for personal enrichment and in return stayed close to the party. Boka's and Chiyangwa's influence within the ruling party increased with the support of other black businessman. Chiyangwa when asked about the sources of his riches he remarked, "I am rich because I belong to the ruling party ZANU PF and if you want to be rich like me you must join the ruling party."⁸⁷

Established members of the ruling party used their positions and connections to secure contracts, licences and access to other commercial opportunities. As a result of such processes, opportunities for corruption emerged. The issuing out of controversial tenders between 1994 and 1997 and the award of the Harare airport construction contract to Leo Mugabe, served to highlight the intricate networks of corruption involving private individuals and the state. The process of indigenisation was also exclusionist and those black

⁸⁵ H Saburi Roger 'Boka's Obituary', *The Herald*, 4 February 1999.

⁸⁶ Statement by President Mugabe at the burial of Roger Boka, *The Herald* 22 February 1999.

⁸⁷ B Raftopoulos and S Moyo, 'The Politics of Indigenisation in Zimbabwe.'

entrepreneurs that did not tow the party line met serious obstacles. Strive Masiyiwa battled for five years to obtain a licence to open a mobile network phone company. When a group of entrepreneurs led by Leo Mugabe acquired a similar licence within months, the case became a focal point of corruption and also sparked severe divisions within the party, with Joshua Nkomo threatening to resign. Eddison Zvobgo was also vocal in his support of Masiyiwa.⁸⁸

In explaining the indigenisation process in Zimbabwe, Taylor makes the following statement,

Zimbabwe's most successful black business people are thus notable for their close ties to the state and those whose rise from the ashes to riches is most suspicious, since they are already co-opted into the state network they pose no threat to the government, in fact they will likely become heirs of the ZANU PF political machine.⁸⁹

Corruption became the face of black empowerment and the noble cause of indigenisation was now thrown into disarray. On corruption, Taylor argues that the

ZANU (PF) principal tool for maintaining political power is the ideology of 'indigenisation' which is currently practiced in Zimbabwe as neo-patrimonial game that rewards inefficiency and depresses productivity. Corruption becomes more likely in the absence of political and economic competition, ZANU's monopoly on power allows it to act with virtual impunity.⁹⁰

Interestingly, as state revenues began to dwindle policy shifts took centre stage. The National Social Security Authority (NSSA) tax was implemented as a pension scheme for the workforce in 1994 but was directed to the central treasury, whilst the 1996 Tobacco levy was directed to central funds. The ruling party's business interests expanded during this period.⁹¹

A lot of questions regarding empowerment emerged: was it about genuinely transforming

⁸⁸ P. Wakatama, "Why are ZANU PF Leaders quiet?" *The Daily News* 5 June 2000 and 'Zimbabwe Airport Furore', *Mail and Guardian*, May 30, 1997.

⁸⁹ S. D. Taylor, "Race, Class and Patrimonialism in Zimbabwe" in (eds) R Joseph *State, Conflict and Democracy in Africa*, Lynne Rienner Boulder, 1999, pg. 8.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ A. M. Makwiramiti, "In the Name of Empowerment: A Case for South Africa and Zimbabwe", *Consultancy Africa Intelligence*, 16 February, 2011.

black entrepreneurs or simply aiding the ruling party's finances and their cronies? Empowerment was understood in neo-patrimonial lenses.

The emergence of black empowerment policies and activities can be theoretically understood from De-coloniality, which seeks to transform society and change perceptions that confined the indigenous to the periphery by putting them at the centre. At independence commercial agriculture was dominated by white commercial farmers under the CFU. The emergence of black farmer organisations was regarded as critical in re-shaping commercial agriculture. This was because black farmer organisations would also influence agricultural policy and production. However, the immediate threat to these unions was no-longer the hegemony of the CFU in commercial farming, but the state or the government in power. The ICFU was denied union status by government officials who regarded it as a threat to the merger of farming unions which was underway. As a result of this denial the organisation experienced existential threats.

The ZFU's emergence heralded a new era of unity among indigenous farmer organisations as small-scale, semi-commercial and communal farmers united to form the union. This meant that the new body had a very strong voice on matters of agricultural production and policy. However, the strong influence by state officials in the body undermined its independence and its ability to articulate its interests. The union represents a captured body that only promotes the state's agenda. This has also led to the undermining of internal democracy within the body. Black Economic Empowerment is regarded as crucial in the attainment of de-coloniality as it strives to end white monopoly in the economy. In Zimbabwe's case, the indigenisation drive also sought to empower the locals in the commercial farming category which was largely dominated by white farmers. Individuals such as Roger Boka and others became the face of radical black economic empowerment.

The empowerment process suddenly took a new direction which involved selfishness, personal enrichment and the extension of patronage clientele politics. In driving the agenda of black farming success, the state shifted its focus towards supporting black farmers

Conclusion

This chapter has analysed how black farmer organisations emerged. The ICFU was created by five founder members who previously belonged to the CFU. By creating the ICFA which later changed to ICFU, these individuals sought to promote black commercial farming. The ICFA faced an existential threat when government officials refused to recognise the organisation and denied it union status. The founder members in a bid to garner state support later on decided to openly enter politics and support the ruling party anticipating that this would boost their profiles. However, state support towards the organisation has not been coming despite eventually being given a union status.

The ZFU is a product of intense political pressure which led to the NFAZ and ZNFU agreeing to form ZFU. One of the anticipated benefits of being members of the ZFU was that the union was also going to be given an opportunity to charge levies. However, this was not realised. Internal rivalries between NFAZ and ZNFU have undermined the stability of the ZFU. The indigenisation drive in the 1990s was regarded as a pragmatic step meant to empower the locals by elevating them in the productive sectors of the economy. However, indigenisation got manipulated as individuals sought to extend personal enrichment. In the following chapter the discussion examines state support schemes on new farmers.

CHAPTER 5

THE STATE AND NEW FARMER SUPPORT SCHEMES: A CASE OF BLACK EMPOWERMENT?

This chapter explores various measures undertaken by the government to support new black farmers. It has been the government's aim to ensure that the new farmers would succeed to bolster the land re-distribution exercise. For many white farmers there was the expectation that the new black farmers would not match their standards in production, and they would dismally fail in the arena of commercial farming. As such, the government had to intervene to ensure that black farmers would emerge as equally productive farmers and even overtaking the white farmers who used to dominate in agricultural production. Support of the government towards new black farmers was seen in diverse areas such as inputs provision, mechanisation, institutional support, issuing out long term leases and farmer training. The support mechanisms laid bare the emotive land distribution politics. These approaches also had their successes and shortcomings. The chapter therefore explores the diverse mechanisms and their impact on black farmers.

Farmers in Zimbabwe are represented by two dominant producer organisations which are the ZFU and CFU. Other bodies such as the ZCFU are also present in advancing the interests of farmers. These organisations have other numerous affiliates, which are either crop or livestock specific. Historically, these farmer organisations have a racial divide with ZFU being dominated by black farmers and the CFU by white farmers. ZFU membership consists of small-scale and large-scale farmers and the CFU has focused on large-scale commercial farming. Both of these organisations closely work with small-scale farmers though their focus is largely commercial farming.

With regards to channelling grievances, some communal farmers use local party structures and agricultural extension officers and those that are affiliated to the ZFU use its

affiliated producer organisations. The CFU used to be the dominant force with regards to technical farming expertise and had been central to reviving agricultural production. However, this strength was severely undermined with the beginning of the fast-track land reform, which resulted in most white farmers losing their land and some leaving with their expertise on agricultural production.¹

The ZFU has been favoured by the government though its influence on matters of agriculture policy is limited since in most cases decisions on agriculture are largely influenced by the ruling party and senior government officials. This leaves organisations such as ZFU acting as rubber-stamping forces. The most visible activity of the ZFU is on negotiating producer prices, particularly cotton and maize.² However, in most of these negotiations farmers seem to lose much as pegged producer prices of staple crops are usually below production costs. With regards to government interventions in supporting black farmers, ZFU members and its affiliates have dominated the process though in some instances the support would help all the farmers regardless of their affiliation.

Socialist rhetoric shaped the process of economic policy formulation in the post-independent Zimbabwe. However, the ZANU (PF) government also accepted the reality that capitalism could not be avoided as a result of strong western influence in shaping the global economy. It also meant that the government had to embrace capitalism in setting up national goals. The government also accepted the reality that the fairly sophisticated and diversified economy had an industry that was tilted towards provision of luxury goods for a minority and dependence on the skills of consumers. As economic changes occurred, agriculture remained pivotal and contributed 40% of the gross domestic product and exports. Agriculture and

¹ C. Mutami, 'Small-holder Agricultural Production in Zimbabwe a survey', *Sustainable Development*, Vol 14, 2015, pp. 140-157.

² 'Producer price consultations begins', *The Chronicle Business*, 20 May 2016.

associated industry employed close to 70% of the country's total workforce. At the centre of obstacles in agricultural transformation was the willing seller clause in the Lancaster House negotiated constitution, which greatly reduced the government's ability to speed up the process of land reform.³

The coming in of the land reform programme resulted in a major re-configuration of land use in Zimbabwe. Over 7 million hectares of land was transferred to both small-scale farm units (the A1 model) and large-scale farms (A2 model). The accelerated land reform programme sought to reverse the legacy of colonialism, specifically, the distribution of land and inequalities associated with it brought about by the Land Apportionment Act which formalised the separation between blacks and whites. As a result of the Fast Track Land Reform Programme there was an enormous movement of people from various localities into mainly large-scale white-owned commercial farms in search of prime agricultural land. With the Fast Track Land Reform, the peasants were settled under the A1 model, which comprised villages and land use patterns similar to those found in communal areas. The A2 model consists of self-contained farms which can be used for commercial farming. The A1 plots were put in place largely to de-congest communal farming areas from where most beneficiaries were drawn. The size of arable land in the plots ranged from 5 to 12 hectares.⁴

Before the year 2000, about 1,3 million people, including farm owners and farm labourers, stayed on and off 4 660 large-scale commercial farms covering over 10 million hectares, while over 1 million households, about 5,6 million people in communal areas,

³ R. Bochwey, K. Collier, J. W. Gunning, K. Hamada, "External Evaluation of ESAP": Report by Group of Independent Experts, Part IV: Country Profile: Zimbabwe, Washington DC: International Monetary Fund.

⁴ B. Cousins and I. Scoones, "Contested paradigms of viability in redistributive land reform: Perspectives from Southern Africa", *Peasant Studies*, Vol 37, No1, 2010, pp 31-66.

subsisted on 1.6 million hectares.⁵ The UNDP pointed out that the large-scale commercial farmers owned 15.5 million hectares while 8500 small-scale commercial farmers who were indigenous Zimbabweans owned 1.4 million hectares or 5% of agricultural land. The majority of the indigenous population subsisted on 16.4 million hectares of leased and congested communal lands that represent 50% of the total agriculture land.⁶ According to the Government of Zimbabwe cited in the UNDP report of 2001, such inequality placed the land reform exercise at the centre of the governments' poverty alleviation development strategy.⁷

Moyo et al argue that, The Fast Track Resettlement programme was implemented using the A1 model in order to reduce land pressure in overcrowded communal lands and A2 model intended to create a black commercial farming sector. Farm sizes differed by agro-ecological region, with occupants in drier zones getting bigger arable land sizes. The average land sizes for regions 1, 2a and 2b was 5 hectares, while for 3, 4 and 5 it was 10 hectares of arable land. The A2 farmers got arable land ranging between 20 and 240 hectares for small-scale commercial farmers. By June 2009, a total of 725 000 hectares of arable land had been given to A1 farmers, small-scale commercial and large-scale commercial farmers were given 710 000 of arable land, 250 000 hectares for communal and 800 hectares for old resettlement.⁸

According to Chambati, the implementation of extensive land redistribution since 2000 witnessed major changes in the agrarian structure in Zimbabwe. These changes have also impacted on agricultural production and the structure of the markets. The emerging

⁵ S. Moyo, "The Land Occupation Movement in Zimbabwe: Contradictions of Neoliberalism", *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, Vol 30,2, 2001, pp. 311-330.

⁶ United Nations Development Programme, Report on Zimbabwe state of Agriculture 2002.

⁷ Government of Zimbabwe, Statutory Instrument (235A) of 16 July 2001, Grain Marketing controlled Products Declaration, Maize and wheat Notice 2001 in terms of section 29 of Grain Marketing Act (Chap 18:14).

⁸ S. Moyo and P. Yeros, "The Radicalised State: Zimbabwe's Interrupted Revolution", *Review of the African Political Economy*, Volume 3, pp. 103-121.

agrarian structure and conditions which emerged as a result of the Fast Track Land Reform created new relations, opening opportunities for some while closing options for others. The period coincided with a severe economic meltdown, which created an unfavourable environment for the performance of the formal and informal production systems. The Zimbabwean economy went through four phases namely: the promotion of bi-modal agrarian structure which was supported by small-holder farmers, another phase from 1990 to 2000 which was marked by liberalisation and state withdrawal from supporting any social services, then from 2000 to 2008 the country saw the abandonment of market based economy and lastly, the phase that saw state introduction of radicalised land reform which was also associated with a broad array of agricultural reforms.⁹

Land beneficiaries were also expected to fully utilise the allocated land and effectively contribute to food security and economic growth. However, the prevailing macro-economic instability was associated with hyperinflation, high interest rates, market failures and shortages of major productive inputs and foreign currency. The years 2008 to 2016 saw the re-insertion of capital, market liberalisation and dollarization combined with state intervention. According to the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe, it was the government belief that illegal sanctions imposed on the country and successive droughts experienced between 2001 and 2011, and also sabotage by white farmers who had lost land could be the reason behind the decline in production. There were serious allegations that commercial farmers destroyed farm infrastructure and some commercial banks were refusing to fund newly resettled farmers due to poor tenure systems, lack of collateral security and also the fact that the financiers

⁹ W. Chambati and G. Magaramombe, "The Abandoned Question: Farm workers" in S. Moyo, K. Helliker, T. Murisa (eds): *Land Reform and Civil Society in Contemporary Zimbabwe*, Pietermaritzburg, pg. 207-238.

involved in input supply were more interested in profiteering and externalisation of earnings.¹⁰

Moyo and Nyoni point out that by 2010 the number of white farmers had dropped to 300 and they operated in some agro-industrial estates. Despite the increased number of new black farmers, Moyo and Nyoni further add, emerging middle-sized capitalist farmers were also on the increase and they controlled about 40% of redistributed land on leasehold tenure provided by the state. The government also encouraged out-grower schemes as part of efforts to broaden the production base and also expanding food and agro-fuel production by the remaining agro-estates.¹¹ According to Moyo, the dilemma facing the government was how to finance agrarian reform in favour of high increase in peasantry production.¹²

The agrarian reform strategy, particularly specific policy instruments, did not begin as one holistic and coherent plan, but rather evolved in response to changing social and production conditions as well as struggles on the ground, especially as output fell and inputs shortages grew partly as a result of biting sanctions. The government, through the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe, also put in place a raft of schemes aimed at attracting agricultural funding. The immediate approach was to print money under the widely questioned quasi-fiscal activities to fund the procurement and distribution of inputs and implementation of other support measures including provision of farming equipment, fuel, cattle breeding stock, working capital and irrigation rehabilitation and development, as well as financing grain mobilisation by the Grain Marketing Board. Most of these interventions have been criticised

¹⁰ Reserve Bank, Monetary Statement 2007.

¹¹ S. Moyo and P. Nyoni, *The Land Acquisition Process in Zimbabwe*, Harare, United Nations Development Programme, 2010.

¹² S. Moyo and P. Yeros, "The Radicalised State: Zimbabwe's Interrupted Revolution", *Review of the African Political Economy*, Volume 3, 2005, pp. 103 -121.

for fuelling corruption and political patronage.¹³ The key shortcoming of the interventions by the Reserve Bank is that the bank sought to embrace every aspect of agricultural production thereby creating parallel structures and at times rendering existing structures ineffective. However, economic actors in Zimbabwe, including newly resettled farmers, survived the economic turmoil as explained by one economist,

It is their continuing existence and evident intent to be contributants to, and beneficiaries of economic recovery that is prompting the questions as to how they survived and how they withstood the almost endless buffeting of economic ills that beleaguered their operations for more than a decade.¹⁴

The government started by distributing free inputs with the major objective being to support seed production and the support included seed and fertilizer packs. The targeted beneficiaries included communal and A1 farmers. Another scheme focused on the productive sector financing which was started in 2004. Its objective was to provide agricultural credit when private finance declined; the support provided included subsidised loans at 25% interest against the 300% rate of interest that was being applied by private banks and the target group was A2 farmers. A member of the ZFU had this to say about the facility:

White farmers had benefited immensely from subsidised loans they got from the colonial government; the government realised that the new farmers could not access loans from banks. This was due to exorbitant interests from banks. As such, most of the new farmers lobbied hard through the ZFU for the government to urge banks to reduce interests on agricultural loans and also for the government to become the guarantor of these loans.¹⁵

Operation Maguta was put in place in 2005. The programme adopted a command agriculture approach in that in addition to direct supervision of farm operations, the defence forces were entitled to the entire production commodity under contract for delivery to the Grain Marketing Board and pay the farmer for his or her labour services from proceeds of the

¹³ Ministry of Agriculture Engineering, Mechanisation and Irrigation: Agriculture and Irrigation Strategy Framework, 2009.

¹⁴ Interview with Nicholas Makoni on 26 September 2017 in Harare.

¹⁵ Interview with Kudakwashe Kunaka a new farmer 16 June 2017 in Kwekwe.

sales after deduction of input costs. The other objective was to boost food security and the support provided under this scheme included inputs and cultivation support. The targeted beneficiaries included A2 and A1 farmers.¹⁶ The ZFU and its affiliates welcomed the intervention of the defence forces in agriculture and described their role as crucial in promoting food security.¹⁷

A further intervention was The Champion Farmer scheme launched between 2008 and 2009. Its objective was to boost food security through identifying capable farmers. The support provided focused on inputs subsidy and the target beneficiaries were A2 farmers. The other objective of the scheme was to target the cropping of at least 500 000 hectares by putting the little available inputs to best use for maximum productivity. One respondent in describing the initiative added that,

the government saw it fit to give awards to outstanding farmers and even within the CFU, farmer awards were there to acknowledge outstanding farmers and the ZFU also values outstanding farmers. The prime target is to encourage more production from A2 farmers.¹⁸

The farm mechanisation scheme launched in 2003 and up to 2008, was earmarked to address labour shortages and expand the cropped area. Thus, the support provided in the scheme included supply of machinery and also reduced credit facilities and again the targeted beneficiaries were A2 farmers. The seed supply recovery scheme was launched in 2002 to 2008 with the major objective being to increase area and the number of seed producers. The support provided under the scheme focused on cheap subsidised foreign currency output contracts and the targeted beneficiaries were the new farmers.

¹⁶ Government of Zimbabwe, National Economic Revival Programme: Measures to address the current challenges, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, February 2003.

¹⁷ Sunday Mail, 'ZFU praises defence forces Intervention in Agriculture' 10 May 2005.

¹⁸ Interview with Mr Peter Mandava member of the ZFU 14 June 2018 in Gweru.

In addition, the irrigation rehabilitation and development scheme running from 2004 to 2011 was introduced with a focus on resuscitating and expanding irrigation. To support the expansion of irrigation under the scheme, the intervention included offering cheap credit for equipment, subsidised water and electricity and the targeted beneficiaries included A2 farmers and state farms. From 2003 to 2006, the focus of the government was also to revive the Agricultural Rural Development Association (ARDA) and the key objective of this initiative was to increase ARDA cropped areas and offer cheap credit and seasonal land leases.¹⁹ In describing the initiative, a ZFU board member highlighted that,

farm mechanisation is crucial to the new farmers as it allows the new farmers to have access to seeds and other farming inputs. Most of the new farmers do not have money to buy inputs and as such government's intervention was necessary.²⁰

However, this intervention by government has also witnessed abuse of inputs by senior government officials and traditional leaders and in most cases ZANU PF linked members have become the sole beneficiaries:

Farm mechanisation has not helped the intended beneficiaries in Marondera. The process was riddled with a lot of favouritism and even the list compiled by ZFU was not considered at all. Senior party officials had their list packed with those that are close to them and some of these were not known.²¹

Other forms of credit access to A2 farmers included salary-based credit cattle mortgaging, but this could not wholly address the desperate need for credit due to overall illiquidity in the market. The national budget for 2016 also indicated that the total requirements for the 2016 agricultural season was USD 1.7 billion yet only USD 944 558 297 had been secured through an RBZ and Bankers Association co-ordinated plan; this represented 56 % of the total requirements for that agricultural season. This money was

¹⁹ I. Matshe, "The overall Macro-economic Environment and Agrarian Reforms", *African Institute for Agrarian Studies, Mimeo*, Harare, 2004.

²⁰ Interview with Mr Mauta of the ZFU on 10 February 2017 in Masvingo.

²¹ Interview with a member of Mashonaland East ZANU PF executive on 24 February 2017.

spread among the following commodities: tobacco, amounting to US\$598 million, 8,5% went to maize production amounting to 80,5 million, 2.6 % to soya beans which amounted to US\$ 25 million , 3.6% to cotton at US\$ 34.5 million and 6.4 % to livestock and poultry representing US\$ 60.1 million. At least 38.4% of the credit was distributed under contract farming arrangements.²²

The constraints in private credit led to the rise of other forms of agricultural financing. For example, in 2010 up to US\$380 million, over 65% of private bank lending was advanced through private contractors by way of contract farming. This reversed the dominance of the Large-Scale Commercial Farms since the funded agro-industries and agricultural merchants who acted as intermediaries supported inputs for a broad base of producers. To achieve full productivity in the agriculture sector, the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe focused on transforming agriculture. This was also achieved through providing a risk facility for banks involved in direct lending to farmers. To further reduce risk, a government guarantee was put in place and there was training of bankers to enhance their understanding of small-holder farming operations. The government went further in ensuring that there are tailor made products for the small-holder farming sector, with the establishment of the Credit Reference Bureau and Collateral Register for all farmers in the country so as to get rid of corruption during accessing of government funded inputs, and the development of diaspora bonds to securitize remittances.²³

In addition, the Central Bank also proposed the operationalisation of the Warehouse Receipt System and the Zimbabwe Agriculture Commodity Exchange. This was to facilitate the competitive and efficient trade of agricultural produce, finalise the contract farming legislative agenda to assist crop and livestock production, and to also facilitate the formation

²² The Fiscal Review, Presented to Parliament by Minister of Finance P Chinamasa 2016.

²³ Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe, Monetary Statement, 2010.

of producer organisations that facilitate the development and promotion of purchase agreements with farmers as well as receipt of financing from investors.²⁴

In its agenda, the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe also proposed the implementation of the Value Chain Finance (VCF) through the commodification of contracts and relationships by joining segments of the commodity value chain with the use of guaranteed purchase agreements as collateral for cheap finance. Scoones emphasises that agricultural production was driven by government economic policy framework and also the deteriorating economic conditions in the country from 2000. However, low production remained a problem for the new black farmers. This was attributed to lack of foreign currency to import raw materials, frequent plant and machinery breakdowns, power cuts and the reduced transportation capacity of the National Railways of Zimbabwe, leading to increased costs of moving raw materials from mines and ports by road.²⁵

The introduction of price controls in the face of higher inflation levels resulted in fertilizer companies experiencing heavy losses. As a result, there was a rapid decline in the use of fertilizer by farmers. The government was overwhelmed by the economic crisis and limited fiscal resources. The decline in public funding for agriculture resulted in tremendous decline of rural infrastructural development, with low investment in transport, water, electricity, irrigation and dams. The public financing of agriculture in 1992 was at 9% and declined rapidly to as low as 1% in 2000.²⁶

In response to the mounting challenges, the government transferred key elements of agriculture policy to the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe, which, in the face of declining bank

²⁴ Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe, Monetary Statement, 2010.

²⁵ I. Scoones and B. Cousins, 'Contested paradigms of viability in redistributive land reform: Perspectives from Southern Africa'.

²⁶ Confederation of Zimbabwe Industry Report, on the State of Economy, 2000.

credit, sought to provide low cost finance facilities to the productive sectors. The Reserve Bank went on to introduce a raft of measures to stimulate agricultural finance. The result was the Agricultural Sector Productive Enhancement Facility (ASPEF) which was premised on the need for price stability, inflation reduction and cheap financing of farmers growing non-traditional commodities that did not access contract farming. It targeted mainly A2 farmers.²⁷

According to Moyo, the key objective of the facility was to provide low-cost production finance to primary producers in the agricultural sector for enhancement of capacity utilisation, infrastructure development, food security and import substitution, and to generate foreign currency. In September 2005, Operation Maguta, a military led agricultural production enhancement programme, which targeted the growing of maize and some small grains was launched and by February 2008, it had disbursed a total of ZW\$3.038 trillion (US\$40.5 million) dollars for winter and summer crops. Moyo adds that, there was need for more robust transformation of the economy to ensure that connections among the critical sectors are maintained, including improving input supply, credit support, access to markets, as well as the establishment of adequate physical infrastructure to support the new farming landscape.²⁸

Importantly to note is that from mid 2008, Zimbabwe entered into a third agricultural policy approach which was centred on liberalisation of the economy, including allowing permits to be given to firms to transact directly in a multi-currency regime. This made it also possible to liberalise imports, abort the price controls and also end the monopoly of the Grain Marketing Board. The Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe also reduced the level of foreign currency earnings submitted by exporters, partially removed controls on capital accounts, and created

²⁷ Confederation of Zimbabwe Industry report, on the state of the Economy, 2000.

²⁸ S. Moyo and P. Yeros, Zimbabwe Ten years on: Results and Prospects accessed at www.pambazuka.org on 20 Feb 2017.

foreign accounts which made it easier for agricultural merchants to transact agricultural produce.²⁹

Moyo further argues that, in terms of productivity, yields for many agricultural commodities remained below historically realised averages and up to 2010-2011, most expansion of the output was based on the expansion of the number of producers and the cropped area. The droughts experienced from 2001 to 2005 and the state of macro-economic conditions negatively impacted productivity as some agro-industrial linkages developed over years in the input and output markets were curtailed. The A2 Land Audit of 2006, where 79% of the allocated A2 farms were surveyed showed that more than 50% of the farms were productive and 4% were highly productive despite the late uptake of farms and lack of the availability of finance.³⁰

Another survey carried out concluded that some districts took as much as 3-5 years to allocate land. Thus, the level of farm establishment and commencement tended to be affected by the year in which land was allocated. The government also embarked on a variety of support initiatives which were intended to help black farmers with inputs. Some of these initiatives were managed under the Grain Marketing Board, Agribank and Tobacco Industry and Marketing Board (TIMB). The main aim of the government under these agricultural support initiatives was to reinforce the importance of subsidies towards new black farmers. Subsidy support focused on agriculture inputs, extension services and market linkages. As for the households impacted by the subsidy programme, in 2005-2006 it totalled 541 000 and in 2009 -2010 it amounted to 944 000. Government's limited capacity led to the reduction of

²⁹ Reserve Bank Monetary Statement Report, 2008.

³⁰ Ibid.

subsidy support. The scale and nature of distribution of subsidies was related to the economic and agricultural policy regimes.³¹

In 2005 contract farming was now the cornerstone of agricultural support by the government through the Ministry of Agriculture and the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe. Key focus on contract farming was to stimulate production of tobacco and soya beans among new farmers. As a result of this initiative, a new crop of black agriculture merchants emerged. The coming in of the Look East Policy proved handy in diversifying sources of foreign loans and markets at a time when western agricultural markets had retreated. The Asian markets availed some concessional loans which were also supported by agricultural machinery.³²

The government also appealed to the new farmers for patriotism and to focus their efforts on enhancing food security to ensure self-sufficiency. A clause in the A2 land lease was inserted requiring the A2 farmers to dedicate 20% of their land to food grains and beef depending on their agro-ecological location. Pertaining to contract farming, farming unions had this to say about the government's priority:

Contract farming was important to our members with regards to cotton production. In Gokwe, as a result of contract farming, cotton producers could increase production and enjoyed substantial subsidies offered by the government.³³

The state also focused its attention on large agricultural estates justifying their retention on the grounds of their superior scale economies, productivity, technological advantage and the need to preserve the bulk investments. The state also realised that subdividing the estates and their infrastructure was considered retrogressive and a source of disputes among new farmers. More so, land tenure insecurity on estates apparently

³¹ Ministry of Agriculture, Mechanisation and Irrigation Development, Agricultural Statistical Bulletin, Government Printers, 2010.

³² The International Monetary Fund, 'Selected Issues and Statistical Appendix', IMF Country Report, Washington, 2005.

³³ Interview with Mr Makwende member of the ZFU on 17 June 2017 in Harare.

discouraged investment. Hence the government sought to encourage production on the large agricultural estates and also focus on enhancing food and agro-fuel production. This was achieved through allowing them to retain their land and requiring them to incorporate more black out growers into their enterprises.³⁴

Moyana posits that the vision of the government of Zimbabwe in implementing the fast track land process was to empower and economically uplift the indigenous farming community. By empowering this community, it would also mean that there was going to be the development of a competitive and commercially oriented domestic agriculture, a viable food sector which would ensure food security and a sustainable national agro-based economic growth founded upon formalised linear production and marketing systems.³⁵

The government went on to introduce controls for maize and wheat under a statutory instrument of July 2001, which stated that maize meal, wheat and wheat flour shall be controlled products within Zimbabwe. By this statutory instrument, the government of Zimbabwe re-controlled maize and wheat production and criminalized any selling of maize by farmers to any market player other than the Grain Marketing Board. The grain marketing board was the certified buyer and seller of maize and wheat and it became a criminal offence for independent players to participate in the marketing of the specified products. These controls led to the proliferation of parallel markets.³⁶

Moyo shows that in the context of a weak economic environment, the government interventions in agricultural input and output as well as foreign exchange markets had negative implications on farm profitability in both small and large-scale farm sectors. The government of Zimbabwe intervened in agricultural input and markets through product price

³⁴ Food and Agriculture Organisation Special Report on Crop and Food Security in Zimbabwe, 22 June 2009.

³⁵ H.V. Moyana, *The Political Economy of Land in Zimbabwe*, Gweru Mambo Press, 2002.

³⁶ Government of Zimbabwe, Statutory Instrument of 16th July 2001, Grain Marketing controlled Products declaration (Chapter 18:14).

control, fixed the exchange rate at highly overvalued levels and imposed export restrictions. Resultantly, domestic prices of almost all major agricultural products became significantly lower than their imports and export prices. By paying farmers commodity prices that are lower than the price they ought to receive on the basis of the opportunity cost highlights that government meddling in markets would make it hard to import and would pile more pressure on government's debt.³⁷

In 2008 the economic environment was characterised by hyper-inflation, the macro-economic conditions prevailing in this period discouraged production and promoted speculative tendencies at all levels of economic activity. However, these tendencies were treated as attempts by enemies of the state to sabotage the land reform programme. The government then attempted, with not much success, to compensate for the market distortions by controlling the prices of inputs which included seeds, fertilizers, fuel and also providing input grants as well as access to low interest credits. Since 2000, the government has shifted to the practice of setting maximum selling price for fuel, seed and fertilizers. This kind of action by the government made it difficult for the state to cover production costs and even its capacity to repair agricultural machinery. For the new farmers it would also mean more delays in accessing inputs and uncertainty over payments of produce delivered to the grain marketing board.³⁸

Shortages emerged as the state moved into control prices of agricultural produce. As the shortages persisted, there was low production which led to the emergence of the parallel market associated with highly priced markets for inputs. This raised the cost of production for the new farmers. According to Matshe, in addition to a legislated monopoly in grain markets,

³⁷ S. Moyo and W.Chambati, "The Political Economy of Farm Workers in New Resettlement Areas", *AIAS Monograph Series*, African Institute for Agrarian Studies, Harare ,2009.

³⁸ B. Cousins and I. Scoones, 'Contested paradigms of viability in redistributive land reform: Perspectives from Southern Africa'.

government actions in the transport sector also negatively impacted on the movement of input and outputs leading to significant negative impacts especially on farmers. The undercapitalisation of the National Railways of Zimbabwe negatively affected raw materials movement, especially the movements of inputs: namely fertilizers, stock feeds and seeds and this in turn created shortages and uncertainty for new farmers, in the end it lowered the net output prices for farmers.³⁹

Fuel shortages, a result of the problems at the National Oil Company of Zimbabwe (NOCZIM) and foreign currency shortages, also affected the output returns of the new farmers. Even the attempt by the government to supply the new farmers with subsidised fuel suffered a major setback due to corruption. Some of the scheme beneficiaries diverted the subsidised fuel to the parallel market as it economically made more sense for them to sell fuel on the parallel market than to use it for agricultural operations. This kind of behaviour created delays in the land preparations and a sizeable reduction in the cropped area.⁴⁰

The marketing of agriculture commodities and production of inputs has been characterised by partial and full government involvement. Input markets have also witnessed shortages as demand overlaps supply due to take-over of most seed producing large-scale farms during the period of the fast track land reform process. In addition, the shortage of foreign currency affected capacity utilisation in agro-industries that depended on imported raw materials, in particular the fertilizer industry. This occurred on the backdrop of economic meltdown.⁴¹

³⁹ I. Matshe, "The Overall Macro-economic Environment and Agrarian Reforms," *African Institute for Agrarian Studies*, Mimeo, Harare, 2004.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ S. Moyo, 'The Land and Agrarian Question in Zimbabwe', paper presented to The Agrarian Constraint and Poverty Reduction: Macroeconomic Lessons for Africa Conference, Addis Ababa, 17-18 December, 2004.

Outputs markets also witnessed unattractive produce pricing system which emanated from state controls and the hyper-inflationary environment that prevailed. The new farmers had to resort to other informal marketing channels in order to access inputs and obtain better returns from their produce. This resulted in reduced produce marketing through formal markets and increased dependency on informal markets which were associated by complex commodity chains and multiple actors.⁴²

Before the shifts in the agrarian economy, farmers used to access their agriculture inputs using their own means; they dealt directly with agro-dealers and retail outlets. Government input assistance programmes only emerged in times of crop failure as a result of droughts and they were mainly targeting vulnerable rural households. The government's presence on inputs delivery became more pronounced during the implementation of the fast track land reform process upon the realisation of the immense need to support the expanded farming household base. Most of these lacked adequate resources to undertake farm production.

According to the Reserve Bank, government intervened through a number of programmes which were aimed at filling the gap created by the exodus of donors, NGOs and the private sector. The deterioration in performance of various economic sectors piled pressure on the government of Zimbabwe to intervene with various sector specific financial packages. Despite the presence of the state on the inputs centre stage, the programme was criticised of failing to reach the intended beneficiaries.⁴³

Private sector involvement in the primary production of agricultural commodities through input packages, finance and technical support was motivated by the need to secure

⁴² I. Matshe 'The Overall Macro-Economic Environment and Agrarian Reforms.'

⁴³ Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe, Monetary Statement, 2008.

adequate raw materials for agro-industrial operations. Agribusiness realised the need to enter into contracts with and support farmers to grow certain hectares or produce agreed tonnages of particular crop commodities in order for them to have guaranteed supplies of their raw material requirements.

The practice gained more traction during the fast track land reform process as commodity shortages increased due to declining production across all major crops. The levels of support rendered to the farmer differed in accordance with the specifications of contract and type of crop supported, with both partial and full support packages being provided. However, private sector support to the newly resettled farmers has been very limited due to the politics of property rights and tenure security issues. The key crops supported by the private sector through contract farming included cash crops such as tobacco, cotton, soya-beans, barley, wheat and maize.⁴⁴

The Non-governmental organisations and the donor community support programme intensified as a result of the increase in the number of vulnerable households caused by economic hardships and droughts. The intervention programmes of the NGOs and donors were rendered as emergency relief aid which mainly supported the production of staple food crops such as maize and small grains. The programmes by these NGOs did take a development paradigm which saw inputs support being rendered through conducting trials for advancing certain agricultural technologies.⁴⁵ However, the NGO or donor involvement has to some extent discriminated against the newly resettled farmers. In some cases, the target group has become former farm workers, the justification being that they have experience.

⁴⁴ Food and Agriculture Organisation Report on the Crop and Food Security Situation in Zimbabwe 2008.

⁴⁵ Special Report by Food and Agriculture Organisation and the World Food Programme on the Crop and Food Security Situation in Zimbabwe, 2009.

This has left the new farmers lacking in terms of specialist knowledge. More interventions by the state were to follow, Command Agriculture being the latest.

Command Agriculture

In Zimbabwe command agriculture is a scheme instituted to ensure food self-sufficiency. It was introduced at the start of the 2016-2017 farming season following the drought of the previous season. The scheme was introduced as Zimbabwe struggled with economic problems. It targeted farmers near water bodies who could put a minimum of 200 hectares of maize per individual. Zimbabwe has previously carried out subsidy programmes, the adoption of command agriculture represents a massive agriculture subsidy programme. The ascendancy of white commercial agriculture in the country was also determined by the state subsidies, hence the scheme prioritised the A2 farmers who lacked financing and who have been behind with regards to agricultural production. It was therefore deemed necessary to create a scheme which would help the new farmers to quickly find their feet and put them at the core of agricultural production.

It was estimated that at the start of the scheme close to 2000 new farmers could benefit from the scheme and each farmer was required to commit 1000 tonnes of maize. Every farmer was also mandated to commit close to 5 tonnes per hectare towards repayment of advanced loans in the form of irrigation equipment, inputs, mechanised equipment, electricity, chemicals and water charges. Farmers would retain the surplus produced in the excess of 1000 tonnes. An additional estimation provided that the programme would cost around USD\$500 million and every farmer was earmarked to receive at least USD\$250 000. With regards to funding, Sakunda Holdings invested close to 199 million into the scheme.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ E. Chandiposha et al: The Command Agriculture expose in full, *The Standard* July 2, 2017.

In the region, Malawi had a period of intensive investment in mostly maize production through a fertilizer input subsidy programme. This produced significant growth in production, with Malawi becoming a regional exporter of maize. The same also occurred in Zambia and these subsidy programmes had a huge effect on the national fiscus. Government has reiterated the need for new farmers under the scheme to repay their obligations so as to ensure the continuity of the programme and increase productivity on the farms. This is mainly because the programme received financial support from the private sector and government made an undertaking to repay the loans. The former Vice-President, now President, Emmerson Mnangagwa remarked that, “a distinct advantage of the project is that it is self-financing with each farmer being required to commit five tonnes per hectare towards repayment of the government facility”.⁴⁷

The programme was built on the need to balance foreign savings and government spending and it remains the aim of the government to ensure that the programme is profitable. The government also intends to command other crops such as wheat, soya beans rice and livestock to cut the country’s trade deficit to sustainable levels.

According to the statistics from the Lands, Agriculture and Rural Resettlement Ministry, command maize has used close to US\$ 334 million while command livestock, wildlife and fisheries are expected to use close to US\$ 300 million. Soya beans requires 200 million while horticulture requires US\$ 120 million and rice needs US\$ 100 million. It is believed that in 2018 the country used US\$ 600 million on processed food only. The Command Agriculture programme will help to save close to a billion on imported food commodities.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ P. Nyati, Command Agriculture Success Story, *Chronicle*, 20 July 2017.

⁴⁸ E. Chandiposha, The Command Agriculture expose in full, *The Standard* July 2 2017.

The former Minister of Agriculture Joseph Made indicated that,

If Zimbabwe carefully undertakes the command programme, the country will save up to over 1 billion of foreign exchange thereby cutting trade deficit to around 900 million from 1.8 billion.⁴⁹

The minister also emphasised that increased local production could improve food security, save foreign currency, cut trade deficit and increase capacity utilisation of the manufacturing industry as well as increase exports.⁵⁰

The programme became the core to an increased centralised approach to agriculture planning and development in Zimbabwe. There are now command approaches mooted for livestock, fisheries, wildlife and more. These are to follow the model of the Chinese central planning executed with military logistics and support. With regards to the logistics and audit of the beneficiaries, a team was set up which included officials from the Ministries of Agriculture, Finance, Sakunda and the military was involved in the delivery of fertiliser along with seed and fuel to farmers in the higher potential areas.

With regards to its success, the former and late President Mugabe described it as ‘beautiful’ and the current President as a ‘remarkable success’. On the farmers’ front government was forced to pay over US\$ 100 million to funders as farmers only paid 60% of the loan and treasury had to pay the balance in order to maintain good relations with the companies which supported the programme.⁵¹ The 60% recovery rate is better compared to other years where companies could not recover anything. Command agriculture consists of command agriculture revolving fund and command inputs loans. Of these, farmers, according

⁴⁹ ‘Command Agriculture to boost the economy,’ *The Herald*, 22 June 2017.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ ‘Government channels funding to Command Agriculture’ accessed at www.newzimbabwe.com on 22 May 2017.

to the government, have paid over 60% and from the total of over US\$ 200 million lent to farmers, over US\$ 120 million has been paid back.⁵²

Out of 50 000 new farmers contracted to produce maize under Command Agriculture, 33% are fully paid up with their loan obligations. Additionally, 22% have partially paid their obligations and recoveries from others are being made as they deliver to the Grain Marketing Board.⁵³ Government has instituted measures to ensure recoveries from the farmers with monitoring teams already deployed to follow up on those who were being made to acknowledge their debts for repayment in the next season. To encourage farmers to continue paying back their debt obligations, all fully paid up farmers were being prioritised in accessing inputs under the 2018/19 Command Agriculture programme.

At its inception, the programme managed to avail the much-needed inputs to the poor farmers in an effort to boost food crop productivity. It was also advantageous to the farmer because the special seasonal loan facility attracted minimal interest rates since the repayment was in the form of produce. The new arrangement where repayment was in the form of part yield, precisely three tonnes from the average target yield of 5 tonnes per every hectare funded, in some cases enabled farmers to have surplus for family consumption and market for income.⁵⁴

The programme was also viewed as being crucial in nurturing and promoting the goals of the Fast Track Land Reform. According to Muchara the adoption of command farming was aimed at reducing donor syndrome among citizens especially through realising enough staple food crops for consumption. It was also meant to revive the country's status as the breadbasket of Africa. Thus, the success of the scheme was viewed as a measure that

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ G. Chisoko and H. Zharare, De-mystifying Command Agriculture, *The Herald*, Jan 5, 2017.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

could promote the revitalisation of the agro-based industries that can avail job opportunities to the unemployed segment of the productive population.⁵⁵

With regards to farmer organisations, the ZFU described the initiative as successful in empowering black farmers with resources,

Command agriculture has seen a lot of changes for our members. Production has increased immensely because our members are being provided with inputs from the government. We welcome command agriculture, yes there are challenges with regards to abuse of fuel and we believe the law enforcement agencies and the Anti-corruption Commission will get hold of these culprits.⁵⁶

Despite its praises, the programme has also received its fair share of criticism. At one point in time, the programme became the epicentre of ZANU (PF) factional battles towards the demise of the late President Robert Mugabe. There were two factions positioning themselves to take over from Mugabe. The factions were the G40 which included Savior Kasukuwere, Jonathan Moyo, Patrick Zhuwao and first lady Grace Mugabe and the Lacoste faction led by the current President Emmerson Mnangagwa and supported by top echelons of the military.

The ‘lacoste’ faction fronted the programme as their model on how agricultural planning should be implemented and hence the success of the programme would also mean the faction was well positioned to lead the country. Notably, the ‘G40’ faction also claimed ownership of the programme and the former first lady Grace Mugabe even claimed that it was her brainchild and that the ‘lacoste’ faction had hijacked the programme to attain factional glory. As a result of these factional battles, some kind of discord occurred with regards to the extent of government support and involvement. Government officials faced a

⁵⁵ G. Muchara, “Implications of Fast Track Land Reform Programme on Markets and Market Relationship for livestock, cotton and Maize Products in Mwenezi District of Zimbabwe, Working Paper 12 of the Livelihoods after Land Reform research programme accessed at www.larl.org.za on 16 May 2018.

⁵⁶ Interview with Mr Mauta member of ZFU, 17 February 2017 in Masvingo.

torrid time regarding their participation fearing backlash if they associated with a wrong faction.⁵⁷

Monitoring and evaluation of the mechanism has remained very shaky despite claims that concrete audit teams have been set up. Compilation of the beneficiaries has proved to be a torrid task. This is because the programme is often politicised, and senior government officials have in some instances grabbed command inputs and follow ups on them are not carried out. In other instances, audit process is not vigorous, and some farmers have claimed that they have not seen the audit team in their areas. Commitment by farmers to honour the debts to the scheme is also a challenge. Some farmers have failed to repay arguing that droughts and pests have ruined their produce. This has the potential of creating a rift between the government and the private sector which funded the scheme.⁵⁸ The late Lands and Resettlement Minister Perrance Shiri remarked that, “If us as farmers don’t pay up loans we are letting ourselves down as the private sector which gives us money will withdraw its support.”⁵⁹

The programme was done for farmers who were failing to access money from banks and other financial institutions and also to ensure that the new farmers enhance productivity on farms to boost food security and save on foreign currency. As one ministry official said on the impact of the programme in relation to agricultural produce, “there is no reliable data that details how much of the 2.15 million tonnes of maize produced in the 2016-2017 is attributable to command agriculture.”⁶⁰

⁵⁷ P Ruhanya ‘Command Agriculture takes a factional turn’, *Daily News* 17 August 2017.

⁵⁸ G Pfukwa, Command Agriculture offers Fresh Challenges accessed at www.pindula.co.zw on 18 May 2018.

⁵⁹ ‘Minister encourages farmers to clear up their debts’, *The Herald*, 14 October 2017.

⁶⁰ Interview with an official from the Ministry of Agriculture, 18 December 2017 in Harare.

Notably, the Grain Marketing Board set the buying price of maize per tonne at US\$ 390 in 2018, way above world market prices. This has been interpreted as a ploy by the parastatal to boost agricultural delivery of maize to the board, which further paints a positive picture on the success of command agriculture. However, some of the new farmers have questioned the sustainability of the mechanism and economists have been quick to jump to the conclusion that such measures further contribute to the skyrocketing of national debt, which could spur inflation in future.

Reports on the abuse of inputs are widespread. Such reports included that of three suspects from Mashonaland West who were charged for fraud after they allegedly sold 33.6 metric tonnes of fertilizers meant for 51 farmers in Makonde district. In Rusape, an individual was convicted and sentenced to seven years in prison for abusing inputs worth over US\$ 2000 which were meant for the government's command agriculture.⁶¹ Such kinds of abuses are part of the vast array of instances whereby command inputs have been misused and some cases have involved high profile politicians and no action has been taken.

An interesting case is that of Israel Pasipanodya Mushore who inherited Rasper Farm in Mashonaland Central. His farm is in disarray and what used to be a swimming pool is now a fishpond. Weeds have choked the maize crop and his major showpiece is a herd of 70 plus cattle. The launch of the command agriculture scheme brought hope to farmers such as Israel Pasipanodya with the promise of the availability of inputs, seeds, fertilisers and insecticides which could be paid back on harvesting. Mushore admits "equipment and inputs are our biggest challenge, we have no draught power, inputs were not timely disbursed to farmers, or just didn't get to them."⁶² Mushore's case also shows the corruption behind command

⁶¹ G Chandiposha, The Command Agriculture expose in full, *The Standard* July 2, 2017.

⁶² AFP, Two decades on, Zimbabwe takes stock of Mugabe land reform legacy, accessed on www.sowetan.co.za on 31 May 2020.

agriculture as some of the inputs earmarked for farmers such as Mushore benefited those that were politically connected. The delay in disbursement of inputs as shown by Mushore illustrates instances of lack of organisation associated with command agriculture.

Funding remains one of the biggest challenges and in terms of the law all land belongs to the state; farms operate on 99-year leases. Financial institutions refuse to lend in the absence of collateral. Paul Zakariya, director at ZFU points out that, “The 99-year lease on its own has not inspired confidence to the financiers.” Ben Gilpin CFU director also agrees with this statement, “If the farmers were on the land with title or some bankable entity that is truly tradable and can be honoured by banks, government wouldn’t have to fulfil the role”.⁶³

It is important to note that subsidies are always political. There are ways of directing political power and patronage to a particular group or groups who are desperately needed by those in power, especially their support. In the 1980s, it was the communal areas that had backed the liberation struggle with the political pact being that rural people and their votes needed securing. In the 2000s, it was the new resettlement farmers, notably A1 small-holders who required support since they were the base that ZANU PF had to rely on in a succession of contested elections. As with subsidy support, it is highly politicised and the beneficiaries are drawn from the party driving the process and as the case with command agriculture, senior party members became the major beneficiaries showing the exclusionary element with the process.⁶⁴ Politicisation of the scheme would also lead to severe leakages which would make it easier for acts of corruption to be committed.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ A. Obi and F. T. Chisango, “Performance of Small-holder Agriculture under limited mechanisation and the Fast Track Land Reform Programme in Zimbabwe,” *International Food and Agribusiness Management Review*, Vol 14 , Issue 4, 2011, pp. 6-17.

In a bid to transform agriculture through supporting the new farmers, the government also secured US\$242 million from the European Union (EU) and Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) to support agriculture in 2017/18 farming season. According to the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), out of the above figure \$140 million was committed by the EU while \$102 million was being funded by the FAO. The funding also supported priority areas such as increased production through improved natural resource management, international and domestic market development, and food and nutrition security. Support was also extended to sustainable land and water management, value chain development, trade capacity and business development, resilience and climate change, food and nutrition security and quick response and early warning systems. The government is convinced that any successful agriculture model is premised on a solid funding base. As such, the participation FAO and EU will assist in resource mobilisation.⁶⁵

In a bid to assist the new farmers the Food and Agriculture Organisation has closely worked with the state to increase farmer awareness and the need to embrace conservation agriculture, which relates to the process not tilling the land so as to protect the fields and prevent soil erosion. This mechanism help to increase the yields, soil quality and reduce the devastating effects of a drought on production. In the beginning, conservation agriculture is more demanding in terms of labour than conventional methods. In light of this, FAO embarked on labour saving mechanical planters and also engaged on trainings and demonstrations in order programme to win farmers.

As a result, Zimbabwe also witnessed “spontaneous” adoption, this meant that farmers would see the benefits on their neighbours and come to a conclusion on adopting conservation agriculture. Close to 300 000 Zimbabwean farmers are using this strategy and

⁶⁵ P. Nyati, ‘Command Agriculture receives a major boost in Funding’, *The Chronicle* 18 June 2017.

have also managed to increase their production. When conservation agriculture was implemented in Zimbabwe, rural areas became associated with what onlookers described as ‘NGO plots’. These were parcels of land where farmers practised conservation agriculture. These plots were however surrounded by other fields where farmers remained practising conventional methods.⁶⁶

Initially, FAO and other development groups supplied farmers with enough seed and fertilizer to plant half a hectare under conservation agriculture, which was enough to get them started. However, the fact that they did not expand these plots made it obvious that, while farmers welcomed inputs, they were not convinced to convert all their land to conservation farming. The practice of conservation farming thrives on three major principles which are minimum soil disturbance, permanent soil cover and crop rotation. However, from the new farmers’ and small-holder farmers’ point of view, each of these principles had its own problems. This forced the FAO to change its strategy by narrowing its focus to the small core group of farmers who were seriously convinced of the benefits. It also established demonstration fields where farmers could observe increased yields of conservation agriculture compared with other farming techniques.⁶⁷

The Food and Agriculture Organisation also identified, tested and introduced new mechanised technology that reduces the amount of labour involved in conservation agriculture without compromising on its core principles. The organisation provided extensionists, agricultural colleges, and NGO groups with sample devices so that they could demonstrate them to the farmers and students. With these machines, farmers no longer need

⁶⁶ Food and Agriculture Organisation Report: Conservation Agriculture to boost Agriculture Production in Zimbabwe, 2017.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

to hand dig planting basins. They can plant up to two hectares a day from a standing position using levers to release the seed and measure the micro doses of fertilizer.⁶⁸

The government has also adopted conservation farming as a way to mitigate the adverse effects of climate change and in conserving soil fertility and water resources. The Ministry of Agriculture through the Department of Mechanisation and Irrigation co-chairs the National Conservation Agriculture task force with FAO and meets regularly with farmers to discuss, re-fine and advance research on conservation agriculture. An estimated 300 000 new farmers in Zimbabwe have embraced conservation agriculture.

State interventions and support in agriculture have also faced numerous other challenges. Opponents of the Command Agriculture model argue that the failure by the resettled farmers to produce adequate yields to match the food requirements of the ever-growing population and the escalating demands for imports to quench the existing food deficits in the country, did not warrant the government to adopt a command agrarian system. The critics further illustrate that there is need for farmers to have the liberty to acquire agriculture inputs from suppliers of their own choice without strings attached and market their produce in liberalised open markets where super profits are realised.⁶⁹

At its inception, Zimbabwe's command farming was praised for registering success as yields realised in the first season surpassed the targeted 2 million metric tonnes of cereal or maize, which was perceived as adequate to meet the country's annual food requirements. However, the progression of the programme later received strong criticism from the larger section of the population due to unorthodox implementation strategies employed by the government of Zimbabwe since state machinery or the military was used in the mobilisation

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

and distribution of resources to farmers. According to Shoko and Zharare, this agitated fear among the farming communities who became sceptical about the scheme, which they have viewed as a political gimmick.⁷⁰

The conditions of the scheme stipulating that farmers had to surrender a greater part of their yields of about 3 tonnes per hectare to the Grain Marketing Board, a government parastatal, as way of servicing their loans was considered a stumbling block. To the majority of farmers, this has been nightmare because the average yield for most of the new farmers is 1.5 tonnes. The problem is further compounded by the monopolistic nature in the marketing of the produce where the parastatal (GMB) has the autonomous power to set producer price; in most cases this does not tally with production costs and this has disastrous repercussions to the farmer and agricultural production.⁷¹

Chishamba and Mangudhla point out that it is important that robust policy measures would need to be formulated and implemented rather than employing the services of state machinery that is synonymous with the use coercive power; the military normally give commands and directives to farmers. The scholars also add that, proper planning, policy consistency and a robust supportive framework in terms of funding and incentivising participating farmers is paramount in stimulating production to achieve the desired yields level. It is thus critical for the government to stick to the principles of a free-market economy and refrain from interfering with market based economic systems as command approaches have failed in other instances.⁷²

⁷⁰ G. Chisoko and H. Zharare, 'Demystifying Command Agriculture', *Herald*, Jan 5, 2017.

⁷¹ G. Pfukwa: Command Agriculture offers fresh challenges, accessed at www.pindula.co.zw accessed 18 May 2018.

⁷² T. Chisamba and B. Mangudhla: The Zimbabwe Commercial Farmers Union, *The Standard* July 2, 2017.

Zimbabwe's mandate in the SADC was to ensure adequate nutrition and food security by citizens in all member states in the region. Though it is assumed that the government of Zimbabwe has for long been devoted to the expansion of agricultural productivity through measures such as the farm mechanisation programme. Obi and Chisango point out that the period after the brutal invasion of commercial farms marked the genesis of the collapse of the country's agricultural sector. The sudden collapse of the agricultural sector led to the introduction of command agriculture.

The initiative was therefore intended to embrace and galvanise some clusters as enshrined in the country's Development Master Plan which saw the implementation of the ZimAsset economic blueprint where irrigation infrastructural development was meant to augment command agriculture in enhancing food security and nutrition through mitigating the drastic impact of climate change. The combination of erratic rainfall and extreme temperatures as a result of climate variability impacted negatively on the production of strategic food crops by both commercial and small-holder farming sectors hence exposing the country to critical food shortage.⁷³

A wider section of the population views the scheme as an undertaking only meant for the elite government officials who corruptly amassed inputs and other resources once availed at designated collection points. The notion resulted in the generality of the population attaching less value to the scheme since they perceive the critical role of the government as that of setting policy and overseeing that policy is being adhered to and create an environment that is conducive for the private sector and real technocrats to implement and monitor programmes.

⁷³ A. Obi and F. T. Chisango, "Performance of Smallholder Agriculture under Limited Mechanisation and the Fast Track Land Reform Programme in Zimbabwe," *International Food and Agri-business Management Review*, Vol 4, Issue 4, 2011, pp. 6-17.

It has also been alluded that when politics is given precedence to dictate pace and compete with the private sector, important programmes meant to benefit the generality of the marginalised rural communities will consequently be skewed in the wrong direction as they tend to benefit just a handful of corrupt elements in society. This leads to failure. Furthermore, it is generally noted that crop farming in Zimbabwe has become synonymous with viability challenges, which compel farmers to sell much of their produce at farm gates to unscrupulous buyers at give-away prices owing to unfavourable prices offered by the GMB thus depriving farmers of meaningful benefits from their cropping ventures⁷⁴.

Lack of information on the availability of viable markets from the government departments such as Agricultural Marketing Authority (AMA) has rendered crop production, particularly grain production, a risk not worth taking. It is however important that if command programme is to register significant success, the integration of the private sector and agro dealers is of paramount importance in the realisation of the desired outcomes of the programme. In order for the Zimbabwean government to fix its agriculture, economy and advance rural development, there is need for robust integration of all stakeholders and resource poor farmers at grassroots in decision making structures. Constant engagement of all stakeholders and other relevant players in grain production and its diverse value chain systems is very important in solving problems which may undermine continuity and sustenance of the production of cereals to meet the county's food requirements and advance livelihoods.

Strong determination by the state to ensure that black farmers succeed was a strategy to win them over and would ensure that state hegemony on land is intact. Moreover, it was also the aim of the state to send a strong message to the CFU that white commercial farming

⁷⁴ G. Chandiposha, The Command Agriculture expose in full, *The Standard*, July 2, 2017.

was no-longer the priority of the state. It was also the aim of the state to prove that black farmers are capable and replace the long-held view that success of agricultural production in Zimbabwe is deeply embedded in white commercial farming. By putting the black farmers in the driving seat of land ownership and utilisation, the strategy was to win their consent and ensure complete hegemony on land.

It is also critical that farmer organisations in Zimbabwe embolden their capacity in substantive issues of agriculture and engage the government effectively on policy matters. Policy issues on the supply chain of inputs and outputs pricing needs to be agreed upon by farmers, government and the private buyers. Effective representation of all farmers in markets and government policy usually help in boosting production particularly among small-scale farmers.⁷⁵

In applying the lenses of de-coloniality, it is important to note that the determination of the state was to ensure that black farmers succeed in commercial and small-scale farming. White farmers also benefited from colonial government support and as a result they were able to promote agricultural production. Supporting black farmers was also meant to change the mentality which negatively viewed black farmers as under-resourced and unproductive when it comes to commercial agriculture. State support towards black farmers was also meant to ensure that black commercial farmers were viewed in a positive light, which is that black commercial farmers are successful as they can produce abundantly and can withstand any challenges with regards to commercial farming. The administration in power has also focused its attention on paying compensation for improvements made by evicted white farmers.

⁷⁵ C. Mutumhi, "Small-holder Agricultural Production in Zimbabwe A survey", *Sustainable Development*, Vol 14, 3,2015, pp. 140-157.

Conclusion

The chapter has managed to unearth how the government has offered support to the new farmers. The support coming from the government ranged from inputs provisions to subsidy support; this support was intended to ensure that the new farmers would be able to fill the gap left by the white farmers in terms of viable and comprehensive agricultural production. However, government support or intervention to rescue the black farmers has faced various challenges. In most cases, government support has been regarded as political and top down, which undermines inclusivity in the interventions. The chapter has also managed to expose that the state, in a bid to cushion the new farmers, also sought help from multilateral institutions. Support from these institutions included technical advice and financial support. The chapter has also managed to articulate the challenges associated with the state interventions. In the next chapter the study examines the politics and essence of white farmer compensation.

CHAPTER 6

THE POLITICS AND ESSENCE OF WHITE FARMER COMPENSATION

Resolving the compensation issue following the land reform remains one of the most pressing and emotive issues pertaining to land matters in Zimbabwe today. Delays in resolving the issue have caused uncertainty and limited potential agricultural investment. More so, failure to address the issue has also undermined trust and efforts on international re-engagement. Resolving the compensation issue is vital for seeking the way forward pertaining to the land reform process in Zimbabwe. It also signifies closure on a very emotive issue and answers the question on who is to be compensated, in what manner and based on what criteria? The compensation issue is very complex and complicated and as such the state has to ensure that it handles the matter sensitively and in a fair as well as transparent manner. The chapter explores the background to the compensation issue, the legal interpretation of compensation, who should be compensated and their reaction, the difficulties in the compensation process and lastly provide the way forward on how to handle the complicated process.

Compensation in this context will be regarded as commitment and payment of money to cover for a loss.¹ This is in line with what is currently occurring whereby the government has made a commitment to pay evicted white farmers money for the improvements or developments made on land they used to farm.

Under the Lancaster House Agreement, Mugabe's government could only acquire land on a 'willing-seller-willing-buyer, fair market basis' for the first ten years of independence. This tremendously reduced the pace of land reform. Despite the fact that after independence every Zimbabwean was given the right to purchase agricultural land in any

¹ Cambridge Advanced Learners Dictionary, Cambridge University Press, 1995.

region with exception of communal land and resettlement areas, only about five thousand households were settled in the first decade of independence. In a bid to accelerate the pace of land compensation, the Mugabe government embarked on a far-reaching land reform and the government undertook compulsory acquisition of land owned by white farmers without compensation.

As a result, the system of freehold titles for agricultural land was largely abandoned and became increasingly restricted to non-agricultural land, while most agricultural land became state land. The expropriated land was subdivided and classified as either A1 farms for the resettlement of small-scale farmers and local communities or A2 farms for medium and large-scale commercial farming. The government invited all interested and qualified Zimbabweans to apply for resettlement and issued temporary offer letters for occupation of designated A1 or A2 farms. The A1 settlers or groups could obtain indefinite settlement permits for occupation and usage from the Ministry of Lands and Rural Resettlement. In addition, the government introduced regulated 99-year leaseholds for A2 farmers using allocated state land for commercial agriculture on a large scale.²

With regards to payment of financial compensation to evicted white farmers, an important step was taken when the country approved a new constitution in 2013 under the inclusive government. It marked a shift from the hard-line position taken by the former President Robert Mugabe that any form of payment towards compensation was the responsibility of Britain. Within the new constitution, provisions were made for compensation to be paid to evicted farmers for the developments made on land and not on land itself. During the year 2016, then Finance Minister Patrick Chinamasa made an

² F. Gonese, N. Marongwe, C. Mukora and B. Kinsey, "Land Reform and Resettlement Implementation in Zimbabwe - An overview of the Programme against Selected International Experiences", *Mimeo*, Vol 1, 3 2002, pp. 1-37.

announced that USD42.7 million had been paid out as compensation covering 43 farms. In July 2017, Minister Chinamasa in parliament indicated that the state had paid US\$ 134 million as compensation to white farmers.³ The Minister also indicated that in 2016 evaluations had been carried out for about 1400 farms and these farms had been acquired. The former minister also indicated that they was preparation for a comprehensive pay out plan. On the defending government position on compensation, the Minister made this statement with regards to compensation: “compensation is under our constitution, this is an obligation under our constitution as far as I am concerned.”⁴

Commitment to compensation coincided with attempts to re-engage the West and also to seek debt relief, which placed the issue of compensation at the centre of these efforts. It had to be resolved, “I want to settle any issues or disputes arising from our resolution of our land question”.⁵

In May 2016 the Zimbabwean government pledged to compensate farmers in a letter to the IMF,

In collaboration with European Union and the United Nations Development Programme, we started mapping and evaluating farms and devising modalities for compensation.⁶

There was strong hope by the government that lines of credit will be opened by the international financial institutions if commitment was made on compensation. In response these organisations demanded more action on the part of the government to match its commitment for the lines of credit to be opened. With regards to the process of compensation during this period, the CFU response through its director Ben Gilpin was that,

there were signs of movement on the part of the government in respect of compensation. However, the process of negotiations was riddled with problems.

³ D. Muleya, ‘Government Pays White Farmers’, *The Independent* 20 May 2016.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ M. Chivasa, ‘We are ready to pay Compensation’, *The Financial Gazette* 20 May 2016.

Some of the white farmers were negotiating privately with the government and received payments. CFU was not on the fore-front as with the current process and moreover we are not sure how many farmers were paid and the evaluation criteria was not transparent, I blame us as white farmers on one hand and the government as well for the mess during that time.⁷

When President Mnangagwa took over from former President Mugabe, he promised to uphold constitutional provisions which respected compensation. In pursuit of this promise, the government set aside money for compensation and when he was re-elected in 2018 the President also made commitment to compensate evicted farmers. Compensation coincided with the government mantra of ‘Zimbabwe is Open for Business’, which is an attempt to woo back foreign investors and open lines of credit.

The government’s commitment to respect international rules was tested in the case of Border Timbers, a company involved in forestry business and operates in Manicaland. It is owned by a German Benard Von Pezold and his family. This company used to process about 35 million logs per year at its sawmills and it was protected from seizure by a 1995 BIPPA with German and Switzerland. However, it was taken over in 2005 and in 2015 Pezold won a case against the Zimbabwean government at the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes, an international appeals court backed by the World Bank. It was ordered that Border Timbers be given the property back or be paid US\$ 195 million in damages.⁸ In 2018 government lost an appeal against the ruling at the High Court. Von Pezolds’ lawyers warned that the case tested President Mnangagwa’s open for business slogan and they warned that, “foreign investors will not return to Zimbabwe if it does not honour its international obligations”.⁹

⁷ Interview with CFU Director Ben Gilpin on 20 November 2018 in Harare.

⁸ P. Ruhanya, ‘Border Timbers Wins case at the International Appeals Court’, *Daily News*, 15 March 2015.

⁹ Interview Responses of Von Pezolds lawyers captured on Voice of America accessed at www.voanews.com on 14 January 2019.

There is hope within government that by payment of compensation to former white farmers, credit lines will be opened, and the international community will endorse the current regime. Douglas Mahiya, a close ally of the President made this remark on compensation,

but we are saying that we compensate them for their sweat and when that happens the international community must accept Zimbabwe in the global family again economically and politically.¹⁰

The government has also made it clear that it was committed to payment of compensation for improvements only and not for the land. Government spokesman Nick Mangwana, speaking to the BBC news made this remark,

the issue compensation is a settled matter and we are not relooking at it, we have our constitution and it obliges Britain as the former colonial power to support the compensation of land.¹¹

The government is well aware of how polarising the issue is among its support base and in an effort to unite its base, government officials have also repeated that compensation is not payment for land, but only for improvements made in line with the country's constitution and also to respect international law. Nick Mangwana also provides a statement which is directed to the antagonised supporters of the ruling party: "if we say we are paying for land which we are not going to do, no government will stay in power because the people do not want to pay for colonialism".¹²

Ian Scoones is of the opinion that the government has no option but to commit to compensation so as to attract the donor community, which is desperately needed by the country,

¹⁰ Interview responses of Douglas Mahiya on Voice of America, accessed at www.voazimbabwe.com on 17 January 2020.

¹¹ Interview responses of Nick Mangwana (Secretary for Information) to Farai Nyoka of the BBC News accessed at www.bbcnews.com on 20 January 2020.

¹² Interview responses of Nick Mangwana (Secretary for Information) to Farai Nyoka of BBC News, accessed at www.bbcnews.com on 20 January 2020.

Mnangagwa has no option, but to tackle land reform if he is serious about getting the Zimbabwe economy back on track. This is because agriculture continues to play a significant role, the long-running issue of outstanding compensation payments has meant that international donors and financiers have not engaged with land reform areas, missing out on supporting major development opportunities.¹³

This signifies that the government had to face the issue of compensation of evicted white farmers head on. The failure to quickly resolve it would jeopardise any attempts by the government to seek international support.

Unpacking Compensation

Ian Scoones lays out the compensation process and its complexities in Zimbabwe's land reform, highlighting several key issues. With any compulsory acquisition, whether through land reform, or through expropriation for mining or urban development, in communal areas or from freehold land, comes the responsibility to pay compensation and the associated liability is taken on by the state. This is formally acknowledged in Zimbabwe's new constitution, but the practice of compensation in Zimbabwe is found wanting.¹⁴

The constitution that was agreed across all political parties, specifies the obligation of the state to pay for improvements. This is reiterated in the Zimbabwe Land Commission Bill. However, given the delays in implementing the approach, there are many disputes about how such improvements are valued, and what improvements constitute compensation and who is responsible for them. This results in wildly variant estimates of the total liability with ranges of USD 2-10 billion being presented. However, there are fairly standard approaches to valuation available and international exposure for dealing with different types of valuation and depreciation including in volatile currency environments. Key remaining issues relate to how responsibilities for compensation would be allocated in line with the improvements

¹³ I. Scoones, *Compensating following Land Reform, Four Big Challenges* accessed at www.zimbabweland.worldpress.com on 24 February 2019.

¹⁴ Ibid.

made. For example, a dam maybe both a public and private asset with water owned by ZINWA, the dam infrastructure by the farmer and the use of water spread amongst a variety of users in a catchment.

The second crucial issue is the capacity of the state to handle the complex issue of valuation. On this issue, there remain wide disputes about appropriate methods to be used in arriving at valuations. Another obstacle is that the scope and comprehensiveness of existing valuations as well as the capacity to conduct and validate them, while maintaining a reliable asset data-base. The pace of official valuations is a real problem and parallel valuations have emerged. Currently, the government response on valuations has been piecemeal and slow despite record breaking success by the authorities. In areas such as Mashonaland East, the process is still yet to start, and at the current pace it may take 20 years for all farms in the country to be valued to allow compensation to be paid. There is limited staff in the Ministry of Lands for valuation purposes and equipment is limited and outdated. Mechanisms for self-financed surveying were proposed by the Minister of Finance in 2014, but private surveyors must work closely with government for such surveys to be accepted. With valuations it is a different scenario; there are major capacity constraints in implementing the process that needs urgent attention. Formally transferring tenure, paying compensation and formalising new uses through leases or permits has to happen at the same time since new investments and funding flows are often conditional on all aspects being addressed.¹⁵

Third is the process of dispute resolution, which requires clarification of the administrative process and the rights to recourse. Notice and gazetting are required, followed by a process of valuation and the option of arbitration in an administrative court. However, while the procedure is specified, the capacity to implement this in a way that all parties trust

¹⁵ Ibid.

remains open to question. Given the importance of speeding up the process and the likelihood of increasing the number of disputes needing speedy resolution, there is a clear need for a time de-limited administrative solution to deal with the process. The establishment of a specialist tribunal under the Land Commission may alleviate capacity limits and improve the process, transparency and legitimacy. Current provisions of dispute resolution are very inadequate.¹⁶

Fourth is the funding process. In the context of the on-going fiscal constraints of the government of Zimbabwe, there is limited capacity to pay for compensation even if there is willingness to do so. There is therefore need to disaggregate the liability and define a series of mechanisms for paying it off. Improvements may include private goods acquired by individual farmers such as farm machinery, buildings, irrigation equipment, public productive goods such as wider infrastructure including roads, dip tanks, dams and public social goods including those buildings now converted to schools, clinics, government offices and accommodation, and trading centres. This is particularly the case on A2 land; it may also relate to public housing for farm workers on A2 land as compounds are converted.¹⁷

Legal interpretation of Compensation

The Compensation Committee is established in terms of the Land Acquisition Act. As stated in the Act, the compensation committee should comprise of the secretary to minister responsible for lands, secretary for the minister of finance, director agricultural and extension service in the ministry responsible for lands, chief lands officer, chief government valuation officer and not more than five members appointed by the Minister of lands. This committee must state the challenges it has in concluding the compensation task.¹⁸

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ The Land Acquisition Act, 2002.

Section 29c 4 (a) of the Land Acquisition Act states that compensation can be in cash or in bonds or other securities issued by the government. In a similar manner that government is currently relying on treasury bills to finance its operations, it can pay its compensation debt through a long-term compensation bond of twenty years, for example. A mixture of short-dated treasury bills and long-dated paper bonds is desirable to encourage uptake. The challenge that is there is that the committee is yet to quantify the compensation. The longer it delays, the more arrears will accumulate.¹⁹

The law as it stands does not allow the committee to use independent valuations as the definition of '*fair compensation*' is defined by the Land Acquisition Act as the one arrived at by the Compensation Committee. The committee valuation has been tested in the court when the Administrative Court ruled in favour of agricultural concern Interfresh's US\$ 27 million compensation claim for the improvements on its seven acquired farms against the committee's valuation of US\$ 5.2 million. This suggests that the committee may need beefing up in terms of expertise.²⁰

In addition, until our national budget sets aside a substantial amount dedicated to national farm valuation projects, the compensation debt will keep rising. The committee is in a fix in that it is unlikely to have the database of non-land assets on each acquired farm. The Land Acquisition Act must be amended to allow private valuers who have data to work with the compensation committee.²¹ There have been encouraging statements recently from the Finance Minister Mthuli Ncube with regards to financing the valuation process,

We have made progress in compensating the white farmers and the farmers themselves have also managed to come up with a figure on what they want to be

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ B. Chulu, 'Zimbabwe's Law allow for Compensation', *The Zimbabwe Independent*, 26 February 2019.

²¹ Ibid.

compensated. On our side as the government, we have done our evaluations using white farmers' methodology for nine provinces as the value of improvements.²²

He also said that, 70% of the process was now complete as he went on to put a March 2019 deadline for the completion of the exercise.

Section 29 of the Land Acquisition Act enumerates the following as constituting: improvements, buildings, dams, dips, spray machines, fencing, canals, irrigation equipment embedded in the ground, perennial or plantation crops, tobacco curing facilities, cost of installing mains electricity supplies and electricity connection points. In addition, any immovable assets that enhance agricultural production such as irrigation equipment not embedded on the ground, tractors, combined harvesters, pumps not permanently attached to the land, sprinkles and movable storage facilities can be compensated with the agreement of the government. This means that movables left on acquired farms and subsequently used by new farmers are eligible for compensation. A compensation committee that took shape six years after the land acquisition began may not have data on farm improvement.²³

Farm evaluation experts have placed the value of acquired land plus compensation at US\$ 10 billion. What is also clear is that in Matabeleland, about 10% of the total farm value constitutes improvements. Working with that conservative figure as the lower bound, compensation nationally for improvements is at least US\$ 1 billion. Given that the Land Acquisition Act makes a provision for paying interest, the current value of the compensation lower bound is much higher than US\$1 billion.²⁴ With regards to interest calculation, the Land Acquisition Act states,

Interest shall be paid by an acquiring authority at a rate, being not less than the current rate of interest prescribed in terms of the Prescribed Rate of Interest Act

²² 'The Government willing to compensate white farmers', *The Herald* 12 December 2018.

²³ The Land Acquisition Act (Section 29).

²⁴ B. Chulu, 'Zimbabwe Law allows for Compensation'.

(Chap 8:09) on compensation awarded to a claimant in terms of this Part for the period extending from the date on which the land was acquired in terms of this Act to the date the money is paid to the claimant or paid to the Master of the High Court in terms of sub-section (1) of section 28.²⁵

Given that the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe since 2009 has been unable to prescribe lending rates due to its inability to control money supply, calculating interest due on compensation remains a formidable challenge. In addition, the interest rates at the time the Zimbabwe dollar was in circulation are practically too unrealistic to be applied in retrospect. Section 29 B of the Land Act requires the Compensation Committee to make a preliminary estimate of compensation payable and give a written notification to affected parties, inviting them to challenge the compensation estimate if need be. The Act enjoins the committee to do this within an undefined time period called, “as soon as possible”.²⁶

It is more than 16 years since land acquisitions began and to the public knowledge, the committee has not made any preliminary assessments of compensation estimates. If it has done so, there is no public record that evicted farmers have been invited to make their submissions as required by the law. It is not in the national interest for the committee to further delay quantifying compensation for farm improvements as stipulated by section 29B of the Land Acquisition Act. By acting now, it can lead to the establishment of the Land Compensation Board and Land Compensation Bills.²⁷ It becomes necessary to act now on compensation so that future generations will not have to pay for costs that they would not even understand.

Who is to be compensated and how?

In applying the theory of corporatism on the payment of compensation to white farmers, one can argue that the state is also seeking to find a working relationship with white

²⁵ The Land Acquisition Act (Chapter 8:09) Section 28.

²⁶ B. Chulu, ‘Zimbabwe Law allows for Compensation.’

²⁷ Ibid.

farmers. As corporatist scholars suggest, a corporatist arrangement is determined by the state after realising that it needs to closely work with a dominant interest group so that it can govern well. Payment of compensation to white farmers is important to the administration in power so that the remaining white farmers can also play a role in agriculture and also that the current efforts of re-engagement with the West are fruitful. As a result of the commitment to pay for the improvements made to evicted white farmers, the government has also been able to work closely with the CFU, which has handled the farm evaluations used to determine how much should be paid to each individual farmer.

Around 4 000 white farmers lost land in the fast track land reform programme launched 18 years ago and currently close to 350-400 white farmers have remained. On the thorny issue of compensation, in an interview, Commercial Farmers Union director Ben Giplin said that, “only 300 out of an estimated 6000 white farmers have accepted the payments.”²⁸

The total bill payable to the ex-farmers is debatable as it ranges from US\$ 1 billion to US\$ 9 billion and even goes up to US\$ 30 billion depending on which of the several groups of farmers one talks to. The CFU director, Ben Gilpin, said that some farmers bought the seized farms and would therefore want that to be factored into overall compensation. He also stressed that from individual farm valuations done by the valuation consortium they expect compensation of not less than US\$ 9 billion.

We are not looking for consequential payment which make the bill much higher, but I guess US\$ 9.5 billion is what the composite figure for land and improvement has been done by professional evaluators on our side.²⁹

²⁸ Interview with CFU director Ben Gilpin on 24 November 2018 in Harare.

²⁹ Ibid.

In terms of how much is owed to white farmers, the total figure has various estimates depending on the interests of the quantifier. Justice for Agriculture and Agric Africa have a total figure within the range of US\$ 30 billion calculated using various components. Included in this figure are the consequential costs. These are indirect costs incurred which contribute to loss of income for white farmers. Such a figure is too huge for an impoverished nation like Zimbabwe and it will be an added burden to the taxpayers.

The late Minister of Lands, Agriculture and Rural resettlement Perrance Shiri said that,

the country regrets injustices made during the chaotic-land reform program and now we are taking corrective measures to address past mistakes and also compensate white farmers.³⁰

Addressing the 75th anniversary of the country's Commercial Farmers Union, a grouping of largely white commercial farmers who lost their land, the late Minister Perence Shiri highlighted that members of the Commercial Farmers Union had a legitimate right to seek redress. He said the government also wants to work with white farmers so that they can help Zimbabwe's agriculture sector grow. His remarks showed a change in tone by the government on issues surrounding compensation,

Of the challenges the farming community faces, there is one which is a matter of particular anxiety to many of your members which is the land reform.

He continued the remarks by indicating that,

Our government is firmly committed to a process of the need for corrective measures to deal with consequences of past injustices.³¹

This kind of tone is meant to reach out to the white farming community deeply affected by the fast track land reform. Of importance to the white farming community was also that the

³⁰ CFU, 'Government willing to compensate white farmers' accessed at www.cfu.org.zw on 28 February 2019.

³¹ Ibid.

government acknowledges its mistakes and commits fully to addressing the past injustices with regards to land.

The minister also added that,

Our policy acknowledges the property rights of existing landowners. It also recognises the legitimate demand for justice from those who have been dispossessed or excluded. But it is important new injustices are not created or production capacity disrupted.³²

This message resonates with the wishes of white farmers on the issue of compensation. Importantly, the state has also focused on creating a conducive environment in dealing with this issue of compensation through the creation of partnership with the white farming community,

such partnerships should bring restructuring of the agriculture industry, improved protection, an opening of farming opportunities for those who have been hitherto excluded, and measures to correct the past injustices. It should include co-operation in working out measures that will lead to farmers enjoying the same rights and security as workers in our industries.³³

In response, the Commercial Farmers Union was very much encouraged especially on the commitment by the government to resolve the issue of compensation. The current CFU president Peter Van Zyl remarked that,

With regards to compensation issue we are greatly encouraged by President Mnangagwa's statement made at Davos and we as a union, are willing to do all in our power to facilitate the process as envisaged in his statement, we are convinced that the settling of this issue will be one of the major keys that unlock the door to the international assistance we so desperately need to help our economy recover.³⁴

For those farmers willing to accept compensation in terms of cash payment in the recent budget, Minister of Finance Mthuli Ncube allocated RTG\$ 53 million as stop gap measure to begin the process of compensation while the total amount to be paid to evicted

³² Ibid.

³³ P Nyati 'Government and CFU to form partnerships', *The Chronicle* 22 February 2019.

³⁴ The CFU, *Government willing to pay white farmers*, accessed at www.cfu.co.org on 28 February 2019.

farmers is still being worked out. On the importance of compensation, the minister remarked that,

The state respects the constitution as a constitutional democracy, the government is simply adhering to the constitution, which mandates payment to compensate for the improvements and investments made on the land by evicted farmers. In our thinking this is fair and this will be done going forward.³⁵

The government has also reiterated that consultations on sustainable options for mobilising the requisite compensation resources are being explored in conjunction with the international financial institutions and other stakeholders. The RTGS\$ 53 million government has set aside according to Minister Ncube is only a show of commitment. At meeting in March 2018, the government and about 500 white farmers agreed that this money will be spread evenly among the most distressed farmers. The government has no intention of picking the full bill and is looking elsewhere together with the farmers. The CFU is intending to approach foreign lenders for compensation. One option being discussed is the use of financeable ground leases to float US\$ 6.5 billion international 25 year bond with a 2% interest.

According to the Commercial Farmers Union, it is estimated that about 300 of an estimated 6000 white farmers have accepted the cash payments. Commercial Farmers Union director Ben Giplin said that,

Since the start of the process the government has made small budgetary provisions towards compensation. Probably less than 300 farmers have accepted offers or been paid anything. Most of those were paid out before 2009 under severe hyperinflation.³⁶

The Commercial Farmers Union director also added that,

³⁵ P. Ruhanya, 'Government to pay white farmers', *Daily News* on 28 February 2019.

³⁶ Interview Responses by Ben Gilpin with Voice of America accessed at www.voanews.com accessed on 24 November 2019.

For those who accepted payment, most do so under duress because either poverty or illness drives them to accept the discounted amounts offered that exclude payment for land. The provision in this budget may well be focused at settling payments to Dutch nationals or other Bilateral Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement holders as a necessary move to restore international relationships. Around forty Dutch farmers under such agreements have been trying for long to get around US\$ 25million from the government.³⁷

Generally the white farming community through the Commercial Farmers Union, welcomed the RTGS\$ 53 million payment announced in the 2019 budget with some reservations. Ben Gilpin the director at the Commercial Farmers Union highlighted that,

Generally, the amounts that people get are a fraction of what their properties are worth, and the amounts are spread payments that take up a number of years to complete. But it is a start and it is acknowledgement; the budget also acknowledges that there is a bigger problem and the government needs to work to try and find a way around that.³⁸

However, it is still unclear how best the government is going to pay for this compensation. In a pronouncement the late Lands and Agriculture Minister Perrance Shiri told the National Assembly that the new farmers who are mostly black farmers had to contribute towards the cost of improvements on the farms and ultimately that money is used for compensation. In response, Binga North representative responded by asking the rationale behind the decision, as the land was expropriated by the government and the constitution stipulates that the state was the one to pay compensation.

In a further response, the Minister said that,

There were improvements done on the farms and the new farmer is expropriating those improvements and quite a number of them now have 99-year leases and all new farmers are looking forward to that. It makes common sense that the persons that directly benefitted from the improvements compensate farmers.³⁹

Another representative Innocent Gonese of Mutare Central then questioned why the government in the new dispensation made a commitment to pay compensation but was now

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ P. Ruhanya, 'New Farmers to pay evicted white farmers', *Daily News* 22 September 2018.

renewing. More so, the land tenure systems prevailing in the country are a source of conflict. The A2 beneficiaries are provided with long lease contracts while A1 beneficiaries get vague permits. The former are expected to pay lease rental fees and the latter get land free of charge. The state has however not yet collected lease fees from A2 beneficiaries despite the fact they gained access to larger plots of land and some of them gained more capital intense enabling infrastructures.

Indeed, some A2 beneficiaries resist this charge claiming that it is not affordable and that they oppose the principle of paying for repossessed land. Again, the inherited improvements in the form of movables such as machinery, generators and pumps are a source tensions as the new farmers have refused to pay for inherited improvements arguing that making such payments defeats the whole process of land reform, which was to ensure equitable distribution of land to the indigenous people.⁴⁰

Some of the evicted white farmers linked to JAG have not hidden their disregard of the government's latest move of offering cash payments as compensation. Their stance is that these white farmers are in no mood to be bought off by what they regard as derisory payments which are meant to serve the interests of the ruling party, particularly in its efforts of western re-engagements. They also questioned the capacity of the government to raise the required cash which translates to billions of dollars.

Why now? when in 2001 we urged the government to pay us first before evicting us, we are in no mood to be bought off, it's a cosmetic approach to a complex situation and as JAG members we have done our on calculation which translates to US\$ 30 billion only if the government pays that amount then we can talk about compensation.⁴¹

⁴⁰ S. Moyo, "Locating the Position of Peasants under the New Dispensation - A Focus on Land Tenure issues", *African Institute for Agrarian Studies*, Harare, 2018, pp. 1-10.

⁴¹ Interview with anonymous white farmer affiliated to JAG, 20 November 2018 in Harare.

However, despite these sentiments the International Monetary Fund has apparently given the proposal its support with the head of its recent mission to Harare, Domenico Farnizza claiming that, “it is not a question of government not affording compensation. Creditors are not after the money, but the principle.”⁴²

White farmers reaction to compensation

With regards to reaction by white farmers to the compensation process it is important to analyse their responses as well. Dave Wakenfield of Chaddesley Estate, which used to be his 2000-hectare property, bought it in 1980 after the government of the newly independent Zimbabwe relocated him from another piece of land, which his family had farmed for generations. He purchased Chaddesley with compensation money and a bank loan. He was forced out of the estate in 2001 in light of the government policy to give land to the majority black population. From the interim pay-out, Mr Wakenfield will receive about RTGS 20 000 of the RTGS 2million he believes he is owed; he welcomes it as better than nothing,

So yes, it's a step in the right direction and it will help pay for my medicals and food in the interim, we lost pensions and are more unemployable, we are living from hand to mouth, so it is interim help and I am grateful.

Mr Wakefield is now 72 and has been forced to re-build his career from scratch and he is currently leasing a small farm from a black owner and is currently cultivating potatoes and maize, a far cry from the vast operation he used to run.⁴³ Mr Wakefield's testimony raises pertinent issues about compensation. Most evicted white farmers are in poverty and in dire need of help hence there is need for urgency on the issue of compensation. White farmers are not in agreement over the figure to be paid for compensation and that despite being old some white farmers are willing to continue the business of farming.

⁴² Statement of the IMF head of Delegation in Zimbabwe on the current compensation process, on *Voice of America News* at www.voanews.com on 16 October 2019.

⁴³ Interview between former white farmer Mr Wakenfield and a journalist Farai Nyoka of BBC accessed at www.bbc.news.com on 22 August 2019.

Ben Giplin, CFU director also emphasised that there are some farmers still willing to farm despite age,

If you look at the age of farmers when they lost land, they were 55 some older, most of the elderly are not interested, though some still have the zeal to continue but parts of the younger generations are just looking for opportunities to farm, it has happened in other parts of the world and this might be one way of dealing with it, it's a win-win and if it can be done why can't it be one of the options.⁴⁴

There is a growing trend among new farmers with regards to leasing their land to former white farmers, which can be interpreted as an admission that financially they are incapacitated to provide resources for commercial agriculture. In addition, some of these new farmers do not have the zeal and time to commit to farming.

A second case study is that of Mandy and Peter Johnson who used to own a 3000-hectare farm in Mvurwi Mashonaland Central; the farm was used for tobacco production. The Johnsons were evicted in 2001 and the husband died in 2015. She has received RTGS\$ 25 000 and estimates the full compensation to be RTGS\$ 3.5 million. She outlines the following issues about compensation:

I have been living from hand to mouth solely depending on my daughter from Australia, it's been a rough journey and with God's grace I am here now almost 65, the money already is wiped off by inflation which means most of my debts will consume the money. I am not sure of how this figure was arrived at; I tried to engage the CFU and I could not understand the complex manner in calculations, and I am not sure if the government will provide what is left. Politicians are good at not keeping promises, also the emotional and physical trauma of the invasions is still vivid will they consider that?⁴⁵

Mandy Johnson raises the indirect costs issue and the CFU has emphasised that this will not be considered at the moment but will be factored in the total bill for the full compensation. Commitment by the government to fully implement the exercise is also of great concern among former white farmers. Some of the white farmers like Mandy do not understand how

⁴⁴ Interview with Ben Gilpin CFU director on 22 November 2019 in Harare.

⁴⁵ Interview with Mrs Johnson on 17 January 2020, in Harare.

the calculations were arrived at. The CFU however emphasises that all farmers were advised and the consortium handling the valuations was led by John Laurie, former president of the CFU and trusted elder of the community.

The third case study is that of Peter Smith, the son of Debbie and Alan Smith, a family which used to own a 2000-hectare farm in Norton. The farm was taken over in 2002 by a close relative of the former President Mugabe. Both of his parents are now late and accessing the interim payments is proving to be a nightmare,

Am now tired of back and forth over the issue. It's been almost a year of moving from one government office after the other processing the papers, I have been told that my case is problematic because the farm was only in my father's name and my father had put his first and divorced wife as the immediate beneficiary and nothing was changed to accommodate my mother once they got married and to add to the complexity my half-brother has also approached the CFU over the issue claiming compensation.⁴⁶

Mr Peter Smith's case demonstrates the complexity of compensation, especially the identification of beneficiaries in the event that the owners would have passed on. Despite the CFU making it easier for spouses to claim on behalf of the other deceased partner, it is proving to be extremely difficult for children to access the money especially in situations similar to the Smith's case.

The fourth case is that of Allan Prinston Cloete of Brankshire Estate in Chinhoyi area. He also lost his farm in 2001 and had this to say about compensation,

Well it's a step in the right direction and it is an acknowledgement of the wrongs made in the past. It marks the beginning of steps to try to find one another that is the government and white farmers on the other hand and if there is a possibility they could off-set this debt by giving me land I still want to farm.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Interview with Peter Smith 23 January 2020 in Harare.

⁴⁷ Interview with Mr Allan Prinston Cloete on 24 January 2020 in Chinhoyi.

Mr Cloete raises an interesting dimension which even CFU director Ben Gilpin confirmed as well; that there are some farmers who would be willing to get some land back in lieu of compensation. The director confirmed that,

I think there is great opportunity for government to embrace Zimbabwean citizens of competence on a non-discriminatory basis and say, if you are a farmer and we owe money let us offset this by giving you access to the land⁴⁸.

The director also added that,

Certainly there is a lot of underutilized land in the country and would make a lot of sense if there is an aim of getting back, functional and getting the economy going; that those that are interested, regardless of race have got the skills and should be able to get access to land and use it productively.⁴⁹

The fifth case is that of Isabel Simons and her late husband who lost their 728-hectare farm in Glendale at the height of farm invasions. She echoed that, “It was my home for 47 years and I am a country girl at heart”. This kind of sentiment from Isabel Simons illustrates the strong attachment by former white farmers to land and farming. This attachment also signified dependence on land for survival and how the shift in land ownership is negatively affecting them. Isabel Simons’ home is now a tiny one-bedroom cottage in a retirement home in the capital Harare, where she spends most of her time cross-stitching and reading. Isabel Simons is critical towards lack of pro-activeness by white farmers towards land reform, she argues that, “white farmers deluded themselves into thinking that they were untouchable and indispensable royal game because agriculture was key to the economy”. On white farmers receiving compensation for improvements made Isabel responded, “It’s better than nothing it won’t change much, though I am now happy here considering my age.”⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Interview responses of Ben Gilpin with Voice of America accessed at www.voazimbabwe.com on 15 January 2020.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Interview responses of Isabel Simons with a journalist from AFP accessed at www.sowetan.co.za on 31 May 2020.

Apart from accepting compensation in terms of cash, some of the evicted white farmers are hopeful that they can be given back their land. Farmers like Ben Freeth would like to return to their former lands. Freeth's family was forcefully removed from their Mount Carmel farm in Chegutu by the government in 2008. The farm has been reduced to a nearly wild forest. Freeth said that could change,

Although they have taken away the main structure, the foundations are still there and I think the foundations are still here as well, the dams on the river are still there, the main pipelines I think are still there. The open lands although there has been re-growth of trees and things, they are essentially still there. It would not take much to get this farm back to productivity once again.⁵¹

This kind of hope for the return of white farmers is also sincere in some of the farm workers who worked with these farmers and one worker at Mount Carmel farm said that,

These new farmers are struggling with farming, white farmers are not supposed to be paid, but brought back to their land. If they were still around, I would not be working herding cattle in a bush but in paddocks.⁵²

White farmers have also handled the issue of land by embarking on different strategies. For instance, after the 2002 presidential elections, many white farmers became very hopeless and it became clear to them that the ZANU PF regime would remain in power by all means and that the opposition chances of getting into power were next to none. Many white farmers decided to compromise mostly through embracing what were known as subdivision proposals or co-existence agreements. This meant asking the new owners for a piece of land so that they could farm side by side. In some places these were arranged on an individual basis, and in some, areas they were negotiated collectively. In Manicaland the then Provincial

⁵¹ Al-Jazeera, White farmers to be paid compensation Interview with Ben Freeth, accessed at www.aljazeera.com on 02 February 2019.

⁵² Interview with Jonasi Samson, 15 February 2019 in Chegutu.

Governor Opah Muchinguri welcomed these proposals and by the beginning of 2003 about 400 farmers were still operating on downsized farms in Manicaland.⁵³

Across the country farmers trying to negotiate sub-division proposals were encouraged by relevant officials also to withdraw their court cases, refrain from speaking to the press and to submit their title deeds. Co-existence became the guiding principle, which witnessed complex negotiations between farmers, policemen, government officials and land occupiers. For many white farmers it was temporary strategy intended to buy time to make alternative arrangements and to remove assets from farms. For those that are occupying the land, it was an opportunity to get a foot in the door, see how farms operated and, in many cases to share their first crop. Negotiated compromises often resulted in crop sharing in which the farmers would prepare and plant a crop on the understanding that they would continue operating and that their new partners would contribute a share of the input costs and assume a share of the profit.⁵⁴ In many instances farmers who had entered such arrangements were then evicted directly before and during harvest.

In the Midlands and Manicaland provinces, by 2002 many sub-divisions proposals were accepted and by 2004 these provinces accounted for two-thirds of the remaining white farmers. Some ranchers in Matabeleland South also reached downsizing compromises. Remote enclaves of farmers have survived in other areas. Approximately twenty tobacco farmers were still operating in Guruve-Centenary by end of 2005. Dairy farms were generally left alone. For example, in Beatrice because of their strategic importance, many dairy farms survived invasions. Farms in the Export Processing Zones (EPZs) were also exempt initially because they generated foreign currency. Fresh produce and flower growers within Export Processing Zones were once spared from take-over. However, with time, even these

⁵³A. Selby, 'Commercial Farmers and the State: Interest Group Politics and Land Reform in Zimbabwe.'

⁵⁴Ibid.

assurances were ignored as seen in takeovers at Howick, Mountain Home, Balley Carney and Montgomery Farms by 2005.⁵⁵

As time passed, a diminishing number of remaining farmers became forced sources of help for new settlers on surrounding farms. In Tsatsi, Bert Keightley of Wengi Farm and Pip Fussell on Willsbridge operated throughout 2003 and 2004 in this manner. Settler demands included help with seed, fertilizer, cultivation and expertise. Individual arrangements were usually negotiated in an environment of uncertainty and unpredictability. Bargaining positions were increasingly stacked against white farmers. For most farmers it was not a question of if, but when and how they would have to leave and what possessions and equipment they will be able to salvage.⁵⁶

Individuals such as John Bredenkamp have established complex political links within ZANU PF. He moved back in Zimbabwe from the United Kingdom after being included in the United Nations (2001) report into the exploitation of resources in the Democratic Republic Congo. He has focused also on property and massive land holdings in Zimbabwe. Bredenkamp maintains that close links with ruling party elites are purely for business purposes. Surprisingly, all his landholdings have not been invaded or even earmarked for takeovers.

Attention has not been given to the corporate farming sector, consisting of very large landowners and multinationals that own the lion's share of un-seized land and have become successors to the Rhodesian land companies. These companies keep a very low profile and lobby directly and independently. Powerful individuals have emerged from these companies who have intricate political links, Nicholas Van Hoogstraten, the British property tycoon is

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ R. Pilosoff, "The Land Question (Un)Resolved: An Essay Review", *Historia*, 53, 2, 2008, pp.270-279.

now Zimbabwe's largest private landowner and an overt ZANU PF supporter. In 1998 at the time of the Land Donors Conference, he purchased Willoughbys Consolidated from Lonhro for about USD10 million. The investment included about 250 000 hectares on Central Estates, Essexvale and Eastdale Ranches and five smaller properties. The army has been used to remove any invaders on these farms.⁵⁷

The Oppenheimer family has significant land holdings in private ownerships as well through De Beers and Anglo-America. Debshan Ranch exceeds 130 000 hectares and together with Anglo American holdings, the Oppenheimers are connected to more than 240 000 hectares of land. In September 2000, the Oppenheimers offered the Zimbabwean government 34 000 hectares of Debshan Ranch and US\$ \$2 million trust fund for new settlers on condition that their properties were left alone. A year later the government asked for 65 000 hectares. These properties remain operationally intact on the whole, which observers attribute to Oppenheimer's influence on key commodity and resource markets in the region.⁵⁸

Forester Estates in Mvurwi district, owned by the Von Pezoldts, an Austrian family, amounts to about 10 000 hectares. The estate experienced significant disruptions before 2002 but was protected under a country to country agreement and continues to operate. The family owns a controlling stake in Border Timbers Limited, the Harare listed forestry concern, that owns 50 000 hectares of land on five estates in Eastern Highlands. Farming operations on these estates have experienced varying degrees of disruptions by local communities. However, the estates remain operational.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ P. V. Blackenburg, *Large Commercial Farmers and Land Reform in Africa: The Case of Zimbabwe*, Ashgate, London, 2000.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

The majority of agro-industrial estates are owned by transnational firms of South African origin. For example, Tongaat Hullet Limited is involved in sugar production. These are followed by those owned by conglomerates involving mainly white Zimbabwean and British capital such as Tanganda Tea Company and Ariston Holdings limited which is involved in coffee. Despite disruptions as a result of invasions, the estates have remained in operation and invaders were chased away as the estates are protected by Bilateral Promotion and Protection Agreements.⁶⁰

The theory of de-coloniality can be applied to understanding the current efforts of paying compensation. Ndlovu-Gatsheni argues that coloniality should be removed and resisted. He adds that the ex-colonised peoples of the world should start perceiving themselves and the world in a different dimension.⁶¹ Payment of compensation to white farmers ignites the debate on colonialism and de-coloniality. The majority of black farmers are of the strong opinion that compensation to white farmers should not be paid as this is tantamount to payment for colonialism. White imperialism has failed to pay for colonial exploitation of indigenous people and also skewed land ownership patterns which promoted white interests only. In compensating white farmers, the state would be ignoring these colonial actions which led to the untold suffering of the colonised.

Black farmers' reaction to compensation

Black farmers reaction to compensation highlights how divisive the issue is among the black farming community. The ZFU statement endorsed the policy by the government; Mr Paul Zakariya, a senior member had this to say about compensation,

⁶⁰ C. Sukume and S. Moyo, *Farm Sizes, Decongestion and Land Use, Implications of the Fast Track Land Redistribution in Zimbabwe*, Harare Weaver Press, 2003.

⁶¹ S. J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, "Coloniality of Power in post-colonial Africa, Myths of De-colonisation", *Council for Development of Social Science Research in Africa*, Dakar, 2013.

Compensating the evicted white farmers will be the proper way of taking over farms, there were developments on these farms which should ordinarily have been paid for and of course there is clear understanding that compensation does not also refer to compensating the land itself and it is for development.

He also added that,

Those in power they have looked at this issue from a strategic point of view where worldwide there is also need to be sending a proper message that they did not pick these farms for free as others would want to believe.⁶²

Also, in solidarity with the government's drive is the ZCFU, formerly the Indigenous Commercial Farmers Union (ICFU). Mr Makombe, the current president provided this statement,

As the ZCFU we support this stance by the government and believe that it is the correct way of dealing with the wrongs of the past and following the constitution is the best remedy to handle land issues, the process must be handled in transparent manner to ensure that the matter is brought to finality. I believe the government will also focus on ensuring that the new indigenous commercial farmers focus their attention on productivity and that there won't be any disturbances to farming.⁶³

Despite overall endorsement of the current compensation format from black unions, some black farmers have raised some concerns over payment of compensation to white farmers.

Baldwin Mazango whose family was allocated 90 hectares of an 800-hectare farm in 2001 in Mazowe noted the following,

My forefathers will also need to be compensated because they were removed from where they gained livelihoods. Some of the settlers paid \$1 or \$2 a hectare in today's money; it was just a token payment. It was not real value of the land. How can they ask for compensation? Because I will say my forefathers will also need to be compensated because they were removed from where they gained their livelihoods.⁶⁴

⁶² Interview responses of ZFU senior member Mr Paul Zakariya to Voice of America, accessed at www.voanews.com on 16 December 2018.

⁶³ Interview with Mr Makombe ZCFU President on 15 January 2020 in Harare.

⁶⁴ Interview responses of a new farmer Baldwin Mazango with Farai Nyoka a journalist of the BBC news accessed at www.bbcnews.com on 18 December 2019.

Baldwin's sentiments raise the colonial legacy issue and bring forward the dominant view that white farmers should not be paid because they directly benefited from a colonial system that deprived the blacks of their right to own land. Paying for improvements is tantamount to endorsing colonial injustices to land segregation.

Furthermore, Baldwin's sentiments are also confirmed by Godfrey Tsenengamu, former ZANU PF youth leader and a new farmer who points out that,

These former colonisers robbed our parents, looted our cattle, displaced our parents, and exploited our minerals and over-used fertile lands from 1890 to 2000. Whatever developments they now claim it's because they exploited our parents through forced labour, they forced our parents to pay hut, dogs, cattle and other taxes. We are victims and must be the ones to be compensated instead of directing scarce resources towards looters and enslavers.⁶⁵

Chikowero an academic also adds his anti-colonial stance by this statement,

What improvements on stolen property? The thieves proceeded extensively to exploit for over 120 years utilising *chibharo* (forced labour) to grow commercial crops using destructive pesticides and fertilisers that have polluted underground and overland water sources vegetation, animal life and denuded the soil.⁶⁶

These sentiments against colonial injustices also resonates with anti-white feeling which perpetuated inequality with the white race being superior and the black race becoming inferior.

Another beneficiary of the land reform exercise and staunch supporter of the former President Mugabe added that,

I was part of the *Third Chimurenga* and I was nicknamed comrade *Bvondo* meaning that I would quickly organise a *jambanja* scene that is violent take-over of a farm if a white farmer refuses and all this was in support of former President Mugabe's idea of black empowerment. I really have difficulty in understanding this payment of whites. What does it mean to the cause of black empowerment and already some of the white farmers are returning armed with political

⁶⁵ Interview with Godfrey Tsenengamu 18 December 2018 in Harare.

⁶⁶ Interview responses of Professor Chikowero with Voice of America accessed at www.voanews.com on 10 January 2018.

protection and chasing away black farmers? This is betrayal of Mugabe's values and the *Chimurenga* spirit.⁶⁷

The sentiments of this respondent focus on the violent take-over of the land from the whites which made former President Mugabe a hero and idol to some when it comes to pan-Africanism. The current discourse of compensation is seen by some as diverting from this discourse championed by the former President Mugabe.

In Glendale, Bernard Chinyemba took over an 80-hectare farm in 2002 offered to him by the government as part of the land re-distribution to blacks. The ex-engineer has a thriving farm growing maize and soya beans while rearing goats, sheep, fish and chickens. Chinyemba strongly believes that the government was right in repossessing land from white farmers, but they deserve compensation, if only for improvements.⁶⁸ He echoed this in the following statement:

I don't feel any remorse at all, the land belongs to the indigenous people. If whites want to farm, they should do so on our own terms. Black people were killed when their land was taken from them, but in all fairness, whites should get compensation for improvements."⁶⁹

The statement signifies that there are some new farmers who acknowledge and respect the provisions of the constitution in terms of payment for improvements made.

A senior member of the opposition MDC alliance added that,

The regime is desperate for recognition by the international community and trying to buy the support of white farmers and using this support to try and convince the international community that the regime respects human rights. You will be a fool to buy in this idea. We have been clear in our land reform policy; full compensation is going to be paid to former white farmers using the United States dollar to ensure that the compensation is fair, and the compensation would be done promptly as soon as the MDC is in government.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Interviews with Comrade Bvondo not his real name on 15 August 2018 in Chinhoyi.

⁶⁸ Interview responses of Bernard Chinyemba with a journalist from AFP accessed at www.sowetan.co.za on 31 May 2020.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Interview with Blessing Chebundo a senior member in the MDC alliance 14 June 2019 in Kwekwe.

A senior member of the politburo of the ruling party and a land beneficiary however disputes the statement of the opposition figure with regards to the compensation debate,

This is a new dispensation doing things differently. We want Zimbabwe to rise again. We are not politicking, and we are serious on constitutionalism. Paying white farmers is the right step in finding closure to the land reform. Those that would attack the regime with colonial and democracy rhetoric are not pragmatic politicians and should be given light on how to govern.⁷¹

Civil society and social movements have also added their voices in interrogating the compensation issue. Farai Maguwu of the Centre for Natural Resource Governance said,

The idea of paying compensation appears just, but in reality it would only burden ordinary citizens who have never benefited from the land programme, the land reform issue only benefited ZANU-PF officials and their supporters, to take money from the treasury and to pay for a ZANU PF project is a great travesty of justice.⁷²

Gilbert Bwende Secretary General of Tajamuka, a militant pressure group, gave a warning to the government in its pursuit of compensation,

The government has no money, yet it wants to compensate white farmers, hospitals and medical practitioners are under equipped, yet the government chooses to spend money on a group of white commercial farmers most of whom are harboured within the comfort of their native countries.⁷³

These sentiments from civil society are motivated by prevailing political, economic and social challenges facing the country.

It also becomes important to take note of the following issues affecting new farmers. According to Sam Moyo between 1980 and 2009 over 13 of 15 million hectares of land, which in 1980 were controlled mostly by 6 000 white farmers, had been transferred to over 240 000 families of largely rural origin, but in a relatively differentiated manner. The fast track land reform phase benefited more than 168 671 families comprising mainly the rural

⁷¹ Interview with Lewis Matutu youth leader and a member of the politburo on 27 January 2020 in Zvishavane.

⁷² Interview responses of Farai Maguwu with Voice of America assessed at www.voanews.com on 19 January 2020.

⁷³ Interview responses of Gilbert Bwende Secretary General of Tajamuka with Voice of America accessed at www.voanews.com on 20 January 2020.

poor and their urban counterparts across 9.2 million hectares of land. These families acquired an average of 20 hectares of land and hold 70 % of the transferred land through the A1 schemes. By 2010 over 22 000 new small, medium and large-scale capitalists also benefited, getting relatively larger plots averaging about 100 hectares under the A2 scheme.⁷⁴

Beyond the official figures, many more families including relatives of the official beneficiaries, informally gained access to sub-plots of land allocated to them by beneficiaries. As a result of land re-distribution, 13% percent of Zimbabwean agriculture land is now held by a range of middle-scale farmers on A2 large scale commercial farms and small-scale commercial farms, while 70% of the land is held by small farm producers in communal areas, in A1 areas and in informal settlements and only 11% is held by large farms and estates. This stands in stark contrast to the pre-1980 and pre-1999 situations when agriculture lands were pre-dominantly held by large-scale estates. There has been a net transfer of wealth and power from a racial minority of landed persons to mostly landless and land poor classes and a substantial number of low-income earning workers. Transfer of land in this manner signifies how compensation unfolded focusing on changing land ownership.⁷⁵

New black farmers also say that land reform helped to achieve what the liberation struggle was meant to bring; that means the scope of sovereignty and self-determination with regards to attainment of territorial autonomy. Accompanying the transfer of land as an object is also transmission of a range of intrinsic social values, such as symbolic and spiritual value attached to land in Zimbabwe, which the colonial land grab had undermined. New farmers also claim that the land re-distribution restored their identity in relation to ancestral graves

⁷⁴ S. Moyo, *Locating the Position of Peasants under the new dispensation – A Focus on Land Tenure issues*, African Institute of Agrarian Studies, Harare, 2018.

⁷⁵ F. Gonese, N. Marongwe, C. Mukora and B. Kinsey, “Land Reform and Resettlement Implementation in Zimbabwe - An Overview of the Programme against Selected International Experiences,” Mimeo, Harare, 2002.

and re-established their belonging within the given territories. This kind of historic attachment was restored through compensation with regards to changing land ownership.⁷⁶

To new black farmers, land compensation can also be explained through inheritance of what are known as improvements or immovables. It includes items such as farmhouses, barns, boreholes, workshops, sheds and irrigation piping and off-farm infrastructures such as dams, roads and electricity lines; these were left on the farms. Such assets have become critical to the beneficiaries in ensuring that the process of farming continues without obstacles. One third of the beneficiaries of A2 farms or plots gained some of the infrastructure on an individual basis, with the rest getting under-developed parts of the farms or plain land. In A1 areas most of this infrastructure is shared among beneficiaries including it being used as social amenities and other public service facilities. There were also some movables such as machinery, generators, and pumps which were left by evicted white farmers. Such inherited assets have made it easy for the new farmers to fit in easily in the farming business. However, these inherited improvements are a focus of controversial contests over compensation by former white farmers.⁷⁷

To new black farmers, land compensation resonate with security of tenure. Notably, in the process of land re-distribution government adopted two models namely A2 and A1 models. A2 beneficiaries are provided with long lease contracts while A1 beneficiaries get vague permits. The former are expected to pay lease rental fees and the latter get land free of charge. The state has however not yet collected lease fees from A2 beneficiaries, despite the fact that they gained access to larger plots of land and some of them inherited more capital intensity enabling infrastructures. Indeed, some A2 beneficiaries resist this charge, claiming

⁷⁶ S. Moyo, "Three Decades of Agrarian Reform in Zimbabwe", *Peasant Studies*, Vol 38, No 3, pp. 493-531, 2011.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

that it is not affordable and that they oppose the principle of paying for repossessed land.⁷⁸ Farmers within this category have been recently facing evictions as well in Midlands. Recently in Mberengwa farmers have complained on the recent evictions of such farmers to pave way for those that are politically connected and former white framers.

The current arrangement of using leases gives enormous power to the minister who can cancel the lease at any point in time. The leases provide few advantages to the leasees and substantial advantages to political authorities. Moreover, with the constitutional amendment that does not permit individuals to challenge any land acquisition by the state, the 99-year leases will continue to be a way in which the ruling party uses cancellation of a lease to punish disloyalty in the party. Some of the new farmers doubt the security of their current forms of land tenure; they deemed their current tenure to be either too vague or tenuous because of the absence of formal land permits and the 99-year leases. Some of these black new farmers define their land-holding right as an occupation, licence and as care takers. These landholders did not have any formal land offer in the form of a letter or verbal allocation.⁷⁹ This also means uncertainty and failure to access financial resources because they do not have adequate land tenure documents.

Important to black farmers is also the issue of communal land, this is state land vested in the President of Zimbabwe. Local communities, regardless of their historical claims and how long they would have occupied the land, have no ownership but are permitted to occupy and use communal land by the President.⁸⁰ The Communal Land Act provides that,

If any person is dispossessed of or suffers any diminution of his right to occupy or use any land, they shall be given the right to occupy or use alternative land and an agreement as to compensation shall be reached.

⁷⁸ N. Kriger, "Liberation from Constitutional Constraints: Land Reform in Zimbabwe", *SAIS Review*, Vol 27, No 2, 2007, pp 17-30.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Communal Land Act (Chapter 20:04), Section 4 and 7.

If no alternative land is available and no agreement has been reached, Sections 4 and 8 of the Land Acquisition Act shall apply.⁸¹ The following relevant issues in terms of compensation are left open and at the discretion of the responsible authorities that is: ensuring that alternative land is equivalent and is adequate for the intended occupation and use as the previously occupied land; improvements and disturbance to be considered for agreements on compensation and ensuring that communities have equivalent access to social infrastructure, developments and resources on alternative land.

According to the Manual for the Management of Urban Land, authorities intending to expand urban land into communal land have to reach an agreement on compensation with the affected communities. The agreement has to be submitted as an addendum to the application for excision of communal land and needs to be approved by the Ministry of Local Government.⁸² However, neither the Communal Land Act nor the manual provide details on how such an agreement shall be reached and which areas of concern it is supposed to cover as a minimum requirement.

Although the occupants of communal land are already disadvantaged due to collective and limited rights to the land, there are no provisions to ensure sufficient public notice, consultations, assessments or negotiations based on equal bargaining powers, which according to the Food and Agriculture Organisation are critical aspects for reaching agreements on compensation.⁸³ Since the responsible authorities usually have an interest to keep compensation costs as low as possible, there is thus a considerable risk that “agreements” may be imposed on local communities.

⁸¹ Communal Land Act (Chapter 20:04), Section 12.

⁸² Manual for the Management of Urban Land, Ministry of Local Government and Public Works 2006.

⁸³ Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations: Compulsory Acquisition of Land and Compensation, Rome, 2008, Pg .24.

Resettlement areas usually comprise smallholder beneficiaries of the land reform programme. After independence, a villagized Model A was used which derived its design from communal lands. Model A was later modified into villagized Model A1, which provides a 0.5-hectare residential plot, 5 hectares individual arable land holding and 25 to 60 hectares communal grazing land depending on the size of the community. In addition, self-contained Model A1 with 25 to 50 hectares was introduced. This was supposed to cater for all residential, arable and grazing requirements of each household instead of reliance on communal allocation and provision of resources.⁸⁴ As is the case with communal land tenure, occupants do not own land in resettlement areas. In terms of Statutory Instrument 53 of 2014, which regulates settlement permits, the land is retained by the state and settlers are to be issued with indefinite settlement permits. The land is retained by the state and settlers are to be issued with indefinite permits to reside on the land, cultivate it and graze livestock. However, the government has the authority to terminate or cancel the permit at its sole discretion after giving three months written notice.⁸⁵

Although Statutory Instrument 53 of 2014 gives a right to claim compensation for improvements and crops growing on the allocated land, the following areas are of concern in terms of compensation: no obligation to provide alternative land or otherwise compensate for loss of land as main source of livelihood, no guidance on how, when and by whom assessments of improvements and crops are supposed to be carried out, compensation is explicitly restricted to improvements and crops only, which leaves no flexibility for consideration of any other losses incurred and settlers may be dispossessed before receiving any compensation. According to Statutory Instrument 53 of 2014, compensation agreed upon or determined must be paid within at least 180 days from the date when the government

⁸⁴ F. Gonese, N. Marongwe, C. Mukora, B. Kinsey, 'Land Reform and Resettlement Implementation in Zimbabwe- An overview of the Programme against Selected International Experiences.'

⁸⁵ Agricultural Land Settlement (Permit Terms and Conditions) Regulations, 2014(SI 2014/53), Section 20.

resume control of the land that was issued subject to the permit, while the government has the prerogative to resume possession within 90 days of the written notice.⁸⁶

Although in default of agreements, compensation shall be determined by arbitration, this does not only leave room for severe disruptions of livelihoods, but also enables removal of settlers based on wrong promises, since there is no provision to ensure compensation values have been determined and approved before repossession of the land. In practice, the situation is further complicated, because there is a backlog in issuing settlement permits and occupants often only have offer letters and are not registered at all. In general, beneficiaries of resettlement schemes are more vulnerable than the occupants of communal lands. This is because they feel indebted to benevolence of the government, which availed them the ownership of the land as part of its resettlement policy, while occupants of communal land often feel some sense of ownership or entitlement to the land and its surroundings owing to generations of occupation. As a result, occupants of communal land are more likely to oppose displacement and to claim bargaining power than occupants of land in resettlement areas when faced with displacement.

Kruger also adds that the proliferation of legislation relating to land, occurring as the government attempts to legalize actions previously undertaken illegally, illustrates the inherent insecurity for settlers living on state owned land. In November 2006, the government revoked the Rural Land Occupiers Act of 2001 which was amended in 2002 and put in place the Land Consequential Provisions Act. The current process for land acquisition is that the people with offer letters given by the ministry with the mandate for land reform are entitled to farmland. Any individual occupying land after it was designated commits a crime. The Rural Land Occupiers Protection from Eviction Act was put in place to deter white farmers whose

⁸⁶ Ibid.

land had been occupied from chasing away the invaders. Currently ‘new farmers’ that have been allocated land by the government and that have received offer letters can evict those that initially occupied the same piece of land.⁸⁷

This has been a source of chaos in many farms in Masvingo. Recently about 1000 villagers who were evicted by the government from the land they had occupied since 2000 have vowed to contest the move. Their lawyers said that the government did not follow the law in ejecting the families from land near Sikato area in Masvingo west. The villagers were given seven-day notices to vacate the land or face arrest or prosecution. The families from seven villages *Muza, Chikutuva, Manunure, Makasva, Banga, Sithole* and *Marikutura* have been living at *Mzaro* farm that belonged to a white farmer before it was acquired and re-distributed villagers. No alternative place for resettlement or compensation has been offered by the government. One of the evicted farmers said,

We do not have anywhere to go, and we feel we have been unfairly treated. We are not folding our arms; we are heading to a legal showdown with the government and in the long term we will engage with the presidium.⁸⁸

Conflicts over land are very significant and the nature of conflicts differ from farm to farm. These range from disputes over boundaries and land rights, the extraction of natural resources and inherited access to infrastructure, to tensions emerging from the interventions linked to the government’s land reform re-planning programme. Boundary disputes remain the major source of land conflicts, while ownership is more contested in the peri-urban and higher potential agro-ecological districts of Goromonzi and Zvimba. The beneficiaries have cited local authorities and former landowners as key sources of conflict.

⁸⁷ N. Kriger, “Liberation from Constitutional Constraints: Land Reform in Zimbabwe,” *SAIS Review*, Vol 27, No 2, 2007, pp. 17-30

⁸⁸ Interview with anonymous evicted farmer on 20 February 2019 in Masvingo.

Farm evictions within provinces remain the order of the day. In the Midlands province, the Minister of State for Provincial Affairs and Devolution Larry Mavhima said that, the government had tasked the Land Commission to assess farms that exceed the recommended sizes and those that are being underutilised. In the Midlands province, the standard farm size is 500 hectares. Midlands provincial Lands Committee recommended the downsizing of over 50 farms for resettlement from owners who have failed to utilise them. Most of the underutilised farmland belonged to senior party members and it will be very difficult to repossess land from such. Another problem in the Midlands is that illegal settlers according to the Land Committee have settled for close to 20 years on some of the occupied farms. How these illegal settlers have emerged is a problem as most of them believe they are justified landowners who were allocated land by chiefs and also politicians and hence the current evictions are driven by political greed.⁸⁹

Land re-distribution among black farmers is associated with wide-spread corruption. The key beneficiaries of the A2 scheme, the commercial farms, have been the political elite, ruling party officials, and war veteran leaders, members of the military, police officials and leading civil servants. Indeed, among the judiciary most judges have farms, and most top politicians have multiple farms in violation of the ‘one man, one farm principle.’ In addition, the majority of A2 beneficiaries are connected to the members of the ruling regime.

In Matabeleland, land allocation among key ruling party and security chiefs was also strategically decided. For example, many are along the course of the proposed Zambezi pipeline projects. The spoils of the fast track programme have gone disproportionately to members and supporters of the regime. Virtually every senior member of the security forces namely army, police and the intelligence has secured a farm. It is more difficult to know who

⁸⁹ CFU, Land Audit in the Midlands accessed at www.cfu.org.zw on 23 February 2019.

the beneficiaries of the A1 scheme have been though the 2002 United Nations Development Programme report draws attention to low numbers of farm workers and female households.⁹⁰ Some of the A2 land beneficiaries are reported to be corruptly using some of the acquired, but unallocated, lands for opportunistic or temporary enterprises and some illegally grabbed movable properties of the former farmers.

The application process was also riddled with ethno-regional issues. Some of the elites during the 2000 to 2002 period sought land near more ethnically cosmopolitan towns where they live, particularly Harare and Bulawayo, while others sought land near their communal areas 'home' (kumusha/ekhaya) districts. Most of the applicants eventually resorted to bidding for land in districts and areas they belong to. Some of the local elites advocated for the exclusion of strangers and during the height of land bidding from 2000 to 2003, there were many evictions or unfair rejections of applications based on ethno-regional grounds. Eventually access to land, particularly in the A2 scheme, tended to be partly shaped by ethno-regional affinities throughout all the provinces although the policy was that the A2 scheme was a national agenda⁹¹.

A number of black large-scale or A2 farmers have hired white farm managers who were either former landowners or farm managers, and they are paid salaries or shares of the farm produce. This occurs mostly in high value enterprises, for example tobacco, dairy, export beef, horticulture, bananas and many more that require large financial commitments on specialised imported inputs and established export markets. There is also evidence which point to a number of former white farmers who are in control of A2 farms through the sub-letting system in which black owners are fronts. This is difficult to verify though.

⁹⁰ S. Moyo, 'Three decades of agrarian reforms in Zimbabwe.'

⁹¹ S. Moyo, 'Locating the Position of Peasants under the New Dispensation - A Focus on Land Tenure' issues.'

Interestingly former white farmers have moved up or downstream in the commercial value chain by acting as contract financiers and marketers and even supervisors of the farming operations of the new farmers, and as such have retained financial interest and influence in areas such as poultry, tobacco, export beef and horticulture. Of particular interest is the broadening of the black rural middle class through the creation of new capitalist farmers. Once constituted into an agrarian capitalist class, some of the middle farmers and large-scale black farmers forge alliances with white farmers, agro-industry and financial institutions, and frequently demand the re-introduction of private property in the agricultural lands within a neo-liberal economic and agriculture policy framework.⁹²

It is also important to emphasise that as the process of distributing land was occurring, some groups were totally left out in the process. The plight of farm workers is a classic case of exclusion; most of these farm workers were found in large scale farms. It is estimated that around 45 000 former farm workers are known to have been physically displaced and living as squatters. Many former farm workers who have remained are informally allocated small subsistence plots of about one acre per family, especially in A1 areas. This represents on one hand a relative exclusion in an intra-working-class contest between landless or land-short peasants and agriculture workers, which the farm workers lost on the grounds of poor political connections. On the other hand, it represents an inter-class confrontation between new small and medium sized capitalist farmers and farm workers over control of labour supplies and wages. The current process of intensive labour exploitation, based on an existing manipulative labour recruitment system, is largely associated with insecure labour tenancy among farm workers allowed to live in the inherited or newly built farm compounds rather than be provided with their own land, at least for housing. Some of those who did not get land

⁹² Ibid.

or return to communal areas still live within the re-distributed farming areas and provide casual and permanent labour to A2 and A1 farmers. Some new farmers tended to treat farm workers as thieves given high levels of stock theft or as foreigners.⁹³ Thus, farm workers' residential land rights and access to small food security continues, as before 2000, to be informal and tied to their provision of specific labour services to landowners.

State farms have remained central to the Zimbabwean agrarian structure since the 1960s and 10 farms were in place by 1980. Most of the state land was alienated by the colonial state from indigenous populations. Some of the agricultural lands and forests were converted into freehold titles owned by the state, while some of the communal lands were converted into leasehold properties managed or owned by the state. Before the fast track land reform, the state's Agricultural Rural Development Agency (ARDA) farmed on 20 large-scale estates as a wholly state-owned private corporation.

The ARDA estates were intended to promote agricultural development. However, they have tended to be run on a commercial basis. Most of them were highly capitalised, especially with irrigation resources and were mandated to produce strategic commodities, including those which were being imported. By 2006, ARDA had increased its farms to 24 covering over 115 601 hectares. Underfunding and mismanagement have become the norm in ARDA, rendering its farms to be underutilised and its machinery to simply wear out. In a bid to revive itself, ARDA has been negotiating with white capitalists and white farmers to lease out around 50 000 hectares of its land on 20-year build, operate and transfer agreements to grow wheat, maize, soya beans and sugar cane⁹⁴.

⁹³ S. Moyo, 'Three decades of Agrarian Reform in Zimbabwe.'

⁹⁴ P. V. Blackenburg, *Large Commercial Farmers and Land Reform in Africa: The Case of Zimbabwe*, Ashgate, London, 2000.

Statutory Instrument 62 of 2020 and the Compensation Debate

The gazetted SI 62 of 2020 shows the intention of the government to give back farms to all farmers who lost land during the land reform programme. The SI triggered an outcry, with some accusations that the government is trying to reverse the land reform. The late Minister of Lands, Agriculture, Water and Rural Resettlement Perrance Shiri emphasised that the government had already started the process of giving back farms and restitution deeds to affected farmers, but denied government was reversing the land reform programme. The minister also indicated that the government would also repossess land to compensate white former commercial farmers affected by the 2000 land reform programme.⁹⁵

The minister remarked that,

You need to go through the constitution, there is no intention whatsoever to reverse land reform. The ruling party's policy was that no land belonging to indigenous farmers was supposed to be acquired. Even government had the same policy but somewhere along the way, 440 farms owned by indigenous farmers were acquired.⁹⁶

Regarding farms affected by bilateral agreements, the Minister highlighted that the government was in the process of giving back acquired BIPPA farms in honour of its agreement with other governments. The Minister also emphasised that it was important for the government to guarantee property rights as this would create a positive picture to the international community. Thus, farms acquired under BIPPA should be restored to their owners and according to the Minister,

the same principle applies to BIPPA farms. Government had a government to government agreement with other countries. We are living in a global village and we are expected to be predictable as a government. If we are in the habit of changing goal posts, no nation, no government will want to do business with us.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ L. Muromo, '350 farmers to get back lost land', *Newsday*, 24 March 2020.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

The SADC Tribunal Rights Watch also poured water on the government's move, accusing it of trying to hoodwink the international community out of love for donor funds. The watchdog was also critical of the statutory instrument that renewed hope of the white farmers who lost their land during the land reform exercise, describing it as an act of giving false hope to the farmers. Ben Freeth is of the opinion that,

the reality is that the new rules only apply to indigenous farmers who lost their land during the fast track land reform programme or to foreign owned farms that were theoretically protected under BIPPA and bilateral investment treaties.⁹⁸

The watchdog also emphasised that,

while the regulations do not define the meaning of the term 'indigenous' the government has consistently referred to 'black' Zimbabweans exclusively as indigenous people.⁹⁹

The tribunal rights watchdog also emphasised that a sizeable number of the evicted white farmers their birth place is in Zimbabwe and many were second, third or even fourth generation white Zimbabweans who knew no other home. Ben Freeth adds that,

regrettably, this piece of misleading legislation is another attempt to window dressing to make it appear that the Zimbabwe government is going to return farms to their owners and re-establish property rights, but this is not the case.¹⁰⁰

Ben Freeth, the spokesperson of the rights group, highlighted that the Zimbabwean laws were largely discriminatory, which will hinder Zimbabwe from securing investments from other countries. The CFU, through its director Ben Gilpin, described SI 62 2020 thus,

The SI is an attempt by the government to settle claims by BIPPA protected farms and those classified as indigenous through the offer of full or partial restitution of acquired land. It makes no provision for losses on the land or as a consequence of the acquisition.¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ Remarks by Ben Freeth Spokesperson of the *SADC Tribunal Rights Watch* in the *Newsday* of 24 March 2020.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ Remarks by Ben Gilpin Director CFU in the *Newsday* of 24 March 2020.

The SI has created discord among the black farming community. The former Indigenous Farm Owners Association interim chairperson, Fred Mutanda, in responding to the Zimbabwe Independent newspaper on the issue of compensation, highlighted that,

We are at the mercy of the government, the SI was created for government to wash its hands from the fast track land reform as far as the indigenous farmers are concerned, they are running away from compensation, the right to compensation of indigenous farmers is given in the constitution and cannot be taken away by the SI.¹⁰²

Two law firms engaged by indigenous farmers made the following observations regarding the SI. The instrument creates an imperial minister in Section 7(5); the SI gives the minister powers to make the final decision on an application for land. The lawyers say it infringes on the rights to appeal or review in contravention of Section 68 of the constitution, which provides fair administrative conduct that is lawful, impartial and procedurally fair.¹⁰³

According to Section 9(1) of the instrument, the minister is the final arbiter. The lawyers argue that such a right is specifically meant for parliament and in any event, the above provisions purport to give the minister power or a right where such right is specifically meant for parliament. In terms of Section 134(a) of the constitution, parliament's primary law-making power cannot be delegated.¹⁰⁴

The legal opinion also notes that Section 9(2) stipulates that the alienation of the acquired agricultural land comprising only part of a farm to qualifying applicant, in terms of these regulations, shall be a final settlement of any claims for compensation to the extent that the application is successful. The lawyer's response was that,

This on the face of it exempts the state from paying compensation for the confiscated land which is precept of international law which is supposed to form

¹⁰² Interview remarks of Fred Mutanda with journalist Nyasha Chingono in the *Zimbabwe Independent*, March 20 2020.

¹⁰³ Legal opinion on Statutory Instrument (SI) 62 of 2020 in the *Zimbabwe Independent* March 20 2020.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

part of our law. It is submitted that Section 9(2) must be struck out as it offends basic principles of fairness and equity.¹⁰⁵

The lawyers also queried why the government was perpetuating discrimination against commercial farmers and why it was silent on the definition of an indigenous farmer.

The lawyers argue that,

these regulations reveal a continued policy by our government to perpetuate a policy of disproportionate discrimination and unequal treatment of the law for a certain class of Zimbabweans viz so-called white farmers, one would legitimately expect that forty years after independence that Section 56 of the constitution concerning equality and non-discrimination would apply in full force.¹⁰⁶

The legal opinion is also of the view that the SI is a ploy to convince the international community that the government has reformed and is now recognising the Bilateral Investment Promotion and Protection Agreements (BIPPA), which it violated following the violent land grab.

Indigenous farmers are also of the view that the state is not capable of delivering on compensation. Mr Mutanda adds that,

the regulations reveal what we know anyway that is the government is bankrupt and so much so that they are demonstrably unable or unwilling to pay compensation for confiscated properties under the guise of land reform. They cannot even make payments to the watered-down compensation for improvements only.¹⁰⁷

Black new farmers are of the opinion that compensation should be awarded for improvements done on the land before the fast-track land reform was rolled out. This includes infrastructure on the farms at the time of seizure. Independent evaluators have since been assessing the value of the assets on the land. Mr Fred Mutanda is also of the opinion that it would be extremely difficult to remove the current farmland holders from properties. He hinted that,

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Interview remarks of Fred Mutanda Interim Chairperson of Indigenous Farm Owners Association with Journalist Nyasha Chingono of the *Zimbabwe Independent* 20 March 2020.

those A2 farmers have been there for the past 20 years and it is going to be difficult to remove them. Some even buried their loved ones there. Infrastructure was destroyed and even when you get back the farm it will be costly to replace infrastructure. As you know that the government does not have money, they will try not to pay compensation and you are not guaranteed that you will get it tomorrow.¹⁰⁸

The remarks point out to the complexity of the compensation debate; it also highlights how new black farmers no-longer trust the government in dealing with the compensation issue and in ensuring their security of tenure.

Regional Developments on Compensation

It became necessary to look beyond Zimbabwe's borders at South Africa and Namibia. These are countries faced with the compensation issue but responding to it in a different manner. Analysis of the scholarly works on compensation would reveal that scholars such as Akinola, Makhado, Jankielson and Duvenhage are of the view that there is need for caution in the implementation of land expropriation without compensation in South Africa. Scholars such as Kirsten and Sihlobo point out that there is need for clarity on payment of improvements on land. In Namibia, scholarly contributions by Odendaal, Melber and Schwikowski point to the urgency of land reform. After gaining independence in 1994 the ANC led government in South Africa adopted the willing-buyer-willing-seller principle to acquire land from white owners and distribute it among landless blacks; as with the Zimbabwean case, the principle slowed the pace of land reform. In June 2018 after a meeting of the ANC national executive, its President Cyril Ramaphosa announced that there will be 'land expropriation without compensation'. This was going to be implemented through amending the constitution that is section 25 of the South African constitution. The constitutional review committee recommended that,

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

section 25 of the constitution must be amended to make explicit that which is implicit in the constitution, with regards to expropriation of land without compensation, as a legitimate option for land reform, so as to address the historic wrongs caused by the arbitrary dispossession of land, and in so doing ensure equitable access to land and further empower the majority of South Africans to be productive participants in the ownership, food security and agriculture reform programme.¹⁰⁹

Currently, a new draft bill for public comments has been published by the parliamentary committee. The objective of the bill is to make amendments to Section 25 of the constitution that would allow for land expropriation without compensation.

The reaction by the farming community in South Africa to the Bill has also been mixed. The Agricultural Business Chamber (Agbiz) remarked that “for South Africa to grow and develop, property rights need to be protected and broadened not undermined or even rendered worthless.”¹¹⁰ There is growing fear among white farmers that the expropriation process will lead to lack of respect for property rights and follow the Zimbabwean style of violent take-overs. The Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), a surprise ally of the government on the issue of compensation, has not ruled out the forceful approach to land acquisition.

The Africa Agri-Initiative has also issued its statement associated with raising alarm and showing panic, “every white farmer in South runs the risks of losing a farm or two, but the banks can lose all farms that serve as a security for their product financing.”¹¹¹ Agri-SA an umbrella body which pursues issues of agriculture also warned the government that,

concerns for farming community, is not merely about lack of clarity with the policy but also how the policy will be implemented, this blanket custodial taking of land would destroy the capital base of the industry¹¹².

¹⁰⁹ ‘Constitutional Review Committee on Section 25 of the constitution’, *Mail and Guardian*, accessed at www.mg.co.za on 15 November 2019.

¹¹⁰ ‘Farming community reacts to Land Expropriation without Compensation’, *City Press*, accessed at www.citypress.co.za on 02 January 2020.

¹¹¹ ‘Farming Community reacts to Land Expropriation without Compensation’, *City Press*, accessed at www.citypress.co.za on 02 January 2020.

¹¹² ‘Agri-SA rejects Land Expropriation without Compensation’, *Mail and Guardian* at www.mg.co.zw on 13 January 2020.

AfriForum, a leading human rights civil society organisation, indicated that, “we are in favour of redress in cases where injustices had occurred, but that such process should entail examining the specific history of every piece of land and reform.”¹¹³

The black farming community has welcomed the proposed policy and has urged the government to speed up the process so that disadvantaged groups are given land. However, credit agencies such as Moddies have also warned of a credit downgrade for the country if the government goes ahead with the policy implementation. It remains to be seen how the ANC government will have to navigate the difficulties that lie ahead with regards to the implementation of land expropriation without compensation.

In Namibia, the ruling SWAPO party recently lost its majority in parliament and its presidential candidate won by a reduced percentage compared to previous elections. The land issue was central in the elections and a new party, the Landless People Movement, managed to acquire seats in parliament. With land being central to Namibian society, President Hage Geingob has recently advocated for an amendment to the country’s constitution to allow the government to expropriate land and re-distribute it to the majority black population. The president also mentioned that, “the willing-buyer-willing-seller principle has not delivered results, careful consideration should be given to expropriation.”¹¹⁴

In Namibia, 70% of the land is owned by white commercial farmers and most of them are reluctant to sell the land and those who were willing often inflated the prices, making it difficult for the government to acquire adequate land for resettlement purposes. Blacks only have a 16% ownership of land and in a policy proposal on land, the Namibian government

¹¹³ ‘Afri-Forum says no to Land Expropriation without Compensation’, *The Sunday Times* at www.sundaytimes.co.za on 17 January 2020.

¹¹⁴ ‘Namibia intends to deal with the land issue’, Al-Jazeera news accessed at www.aljazeera.com on 14 January 2020.

now wants to transfer 43% or 15 million hectares of its arable agricultural land to previously disadvantaged blacks by 2020.

The president also declared that,

we need to revisit constitutional provisions which allow for the expropriation of land with just compensation as opposed to fair compensation and look at foreign ownership of land especially absentee landowners.

The president is of the view that dealing with the issue of compensation will help to transform the country,

It is in all our interest, particularly the haves to ensure a drastic reduction in inequality, by supporting the re-distribution model required to alter our skewed economic structure, we should all be cognisant that this is an investment in peace.¹¹⁵

Way Forward on the Compensation issue for Zimbabwe

Compensation for improvements on land has been on offer for years and it was re-confirmed by the 2013 constitution, negotiated by all political parties. To date, around half of all farms acquired during the land reform have been valued by the government. In parallel, others have been valued by private surveyors and Valcon, an organisation backed by former large-scale farmers. So far, 250 compensation settlements have been reached, amounting to a payment of USD\$100 million. For farms where land was acquired under bilateral investment treaties, compensation for both land and improvements must be paid together with costs.

What has been missing has been the capacity to undertake valuations of the remaining farms and the funds to pay compensation, as well as political will to see it through. Under the new leadership, a commitment has been made to a process of auditing, valuing and paying compensation. This is also linked to the issuing of 99-year leases and permits to use land.

¹¹⁵ 'Namibia intends to deal with the land issue', *Al-Jazeera news* accessed at www.aljazeera.com on 14 January 2020.

The total compensation bill is likely to run into several billion dollars. A mix of payments across different liabilities will be required. There will be private components such as equipment that a new farmer is using, that will have to be paid off by large-scale farmers. This payment can be done over many years through mortgaging arrangements, with upfront payments by the state to former owners. For small holder farmers, the ‘improvements’ designed for large-scale farming have been less useful and their ability to pay is much less. Here the state or aid funding of compensation would be required. Other public assets such as a dam, a road, a building now used as a school or as extension workers house are more appropriately paid off by the state, or as part of a donor-financed or debt-rescheduling scheme.¹¹⁶

Nearly 18 years after the land reform, most evicted farmers want a quick and pragmatic solution. This has dragged for too long. Former white farmers are ageing and are in urgent need of pension support. Others have moved on to different businesses or left the country. This is about acknowledgement, reconciliation and justice. In a period when there have been currency changes, hyperinflation and dramatic shifts in the economy, valuation will always be an approximate science. While some will continue to contest the land reform in whatever court or tribunal that will hear them, most want resolution and that resolution should be soon.

Resolving the compensation issue is essential, not only to provide redress for those who lost their farms, but also to reduce uncertainty, encourage investment and unlock potential for growth and development. Commitment by the new government to compensate is a good sign, but it now needs to be seen through and urgently. Important in addressing the

¹¹⁶ I Scoones, ‘Resolving the compensation question is vital for seeking a way forward,’ *Newsday* at www.newsday.co.zw on 22 February 2019.

issue of compensation, is dealing with the issue of the land audit. Presenting its budgetary requirements for 2019, the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Lands said that the Zimbabwe Land Commission had set out the Land Audit as part of its key priorities in the next three years. The Committee thus recommended that the land audit should be adequately funded as part of the steps to bring closure to the land reform programme. In one of its findings the Committee noted,

A lot of government programmes aimed at supporting farmers are not taking place due to failure to bring the land reform exercise to completion. The issuance of 99-year leases is also preventing the ease at which farmers can unlock financing of farming activities. The committee is therefore recommending that resources for land audit programme be increased.¹¹⁷

In terms of audit target, the Land Commission is targeting at least 300 000 farms by 2021, which would imply that in 2019 about 100 000 farms would need to be audited. However, the Commission has set a target of 60 000 farms being audited in 2019, due to resource constraints. The Land Audit is expected to flush out multiple farm owners and unproductive farmers and re-distribute land to competent farmers. Addressing the ZANU PF annual conference, President Emmerson Mnangagwa said the land audit is almost through. The ZANU PF leader said that,

we are just left with about three provinces to complete the land audit. The ongoing land audit by the land commission should result in more land being availed for further re-distribution. There is greater need to mechanise our agriculture, introduce new adaptive seed varieties and new farming method.¹¹⁸

Land audit remains key in dealing with the compensation issue and as such, it urgently needs finalisation.

¹¹⁷ T. Mpofu, 'Land Audit key in resolving the land question in Zimbabwe' *The Zimbabwe Independent* accessed at www.theindependent.co.zw on 1 January 2019.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

The Compensation Committee which is established in terms of the Land Acquisition Act, should be given necessary resources such as manpower, transport and support so that committee is able to function effectively. As it is now, the Committee largely exists in name and has been overridden by political decisions. Allowing the Committee to do its work independently would mean speedy resolution of compensation matters.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the delicate issue of compensation, noting that compensation is very complex and difficult. With regards to the land issue in Zimbabwe, compensation has become a new battleground owing to the severe problems in dealing with the issue. Notably, every individual who is to be compensated has diverse interests in land matters thus making it difficult to find satisfactory ways that satisfy all. Legally, the framework is there but it has largely been weakened by politics. Encouraging statements and actions by the government in the new dispensation on the delicate issue of compensation is a welcome relief in the process of bringing finality to the compensation issue. The success of the process of compensation rests upon political will which should be shown by availing expertise and financial resources.

Conclusion of the Study

The study has focused on the relationship between the state and commercial farmers in Zimbabwe. The study examined land distribution politics in Zimbabwe, unpacking the response of farmer unions to changing land ownership structure. The study analysed the tensions and divergences among the commercial farming interest groups such as the white dominated Commercial Farmers Union (CFU), the black led Zimbabwe Farmers Union, the Indigenous Commercial Farmers Union and the reactionary Justice for Agriculture over modes of engaging the government on land ownership, its distribution and issues of advocacy. The study has also managed to reveal that the commercial farmers' organisations were heterogeneous and dynamic entities whose agendas and advocacy positions were shaped by race, personalities of their leaders and prevailing political and economic orientations.

Analysis of the relationship between the state and farmers unions also considered unfolding political and economic issues and their effect on the relationship between the state and farming unions. By focusing on the relationship between farmers unions and the state, the study has managed to open a new pathway, which is to bring to attention actors involved in land politics and how they have related to each other. The study also extended its focus to look at infighting within the white farming community and the birth of splinter groups over modes of engaging the state on land matters. The study added black farmers into the matrix and discovered that there are inherent tensions between the white led unions and black representation. The main catalyst to such tensions relates to monopoly over land, which links up with issues of race. The study also discovers that the nature of leaders within farming groups was also instrumental in shaping relations with the state. Commercial farmer organisations have often been treated as synonymous with exclusive white clubs or white elites groupings, hence studying such groups has offered insights on how the new black

government has interacted with such groups. In Zimbabwe, the study has unearthed dealings and complexities surrounding the relationship between farmers' organisations and the state.

The willing-seller-willing-buyer clause simply indicated that land had to be acquired from farmers who were willing to sell their land and the compensation had to be adequate and paid promptly in foreign currency. This clause placed severe restrictions on land reform in Zimbabwe; it resulted in the white farming community continuing to dominate land ownership in Zimbabwe. *The Third Chimurenga* phase symbolised a new radical and confrontational approach to land ownership. The phase was characterised by forceful acquisition of land which resulted in most white farmers losing their hold on prime land. This approach to acquiring land resulted in an antagonistic relationship between the state and the white farming community.

The study has managed to create a new pathway on the land question in Zimbabwe. By focusing on commercial farmers, the study unearthed how such unions were critical in advocacy and lobbying on land and agriculture matters. Therefore, the study offers new insights in the sense that it adds black farmer unions in the matrix of analysing state-commercial farmers' relations and also interrogates vividly the current dominant discourse of white farmer compensation and examines the reaction of both white and black farmers.

The study has also managed to explore the formations and mutations of farmers unions such as the CFU, JAG, ICFU, NAFZ, ZNFU and ZFU. With regards to theory the study deployed two theories that is corporatism on the CFU and De-coloniality on black farmers. A look into the 1980s provides the dimension that the state had a functional and also patronising relationship with the Commercial Farmers Union; the state acceded to most of the demands from the white commercial farmers and also it did not reshape the racially skewed land allocation regime. However, by 2000 the government had assumed a radically different

position of supporting black led agriculture, especially through increased ownership of land. In the *Third Chimurenga* era white dominated commercial farming was no-longer in the governments' purview. White led unions were now at the periphery in the calculus of state farmer relations. The current administration has committed to compensate former white farmers for the improvements made, such a strategy is meant to win over white farmers' support as a minority group.

With regards to black farmers and the state, the study discovers that the emergence of black commercial farmer-oriented organisations was driven by the determination to break white monopoly in commercial agriculture. However, the progression of these organisations was at the mercy of the state. The ICFU experienced an existential threat owing to the fact that the state refused to grant the organisation a union status at its formation. The leaders of the organisation in a bid to be recognised by the state opted to openly support the ruling party hoping to boost the profile of the organisation. This kind of strategy compromised the independence of the organisation. With regards to the ZFU, its birth heralded a new era in as far as fostering unity amongst indigenous farmers' organisations. However, this unity was dictated by the state and the state captured the organisation to advance its interests. The leadership of the union have also tied themselves to the state thereby compromising their independence.

In terms of gaps for future studies, I discovered that black farmer representation and their relationship with the state would also need further interrogation. This is because not much scholarly engagement is available on black farmer unions. The academic literature that is there only takes a narrow dimension of being critical of such unions or pointing out to their weaknesses. The current discourse of compensation would also need further interrogation especially looking at how it is changing and its effect on state-commercial farmer relations.

REFERENCES

- Alexander, J. 'Squatters, Veterans and the State in Zimbabwe,' in Hammar A, Raftopoulos B and Jensen S (eds.), *Zimbabwe's Unfinished Business: Rethinking Land, State and Nation in the Context of Crisis*, Harare, Weaver Press, 2003.
- Alexander, J. *The Unsettled Land: State-Making and the Politics of Land in Zimbabwe 1893-2003*, Oxford, James Currey, 2006.
- Alexander, J and McGregor J. "Elections, Land and the Politics of Opposition in Matabeleland", *Agrarian Change*, Vol 1, 4, 2001, pp.510-533.
- Barnett, T. "The Gezira Scheme: Production of Cotton and The Reproduction of Underdevelopment", in Oxaal, I (ed.), *Beyond the Sociology of Development*, London, Routledge, 1975.
- Blackenberg, P. *Large Commercial Farmers and Land Reform in Africa: The Case of Zimbabwe*, Ashgate, London, 2000.
- Blair, D. *Degrees in Violence: Robert Mugabe and the Struggle for Power in Zimbabwe*, London, Continuum, 2002.
- Bowyer, B and Stoneman C. *Land Reform in Zimbabwe: Constraints and Prospects*, Ashgate, London, 2010.
- Bratton, M. "The Comrades and the Countryside: The Politics of Agricultural Policy in Zimbabwe", *World Politics*, Vol 39, 2, 1987, pp. 174-202.
- Bratton, M. "Micro-Democracy? The Merger of Farmer Unions in Zimbabwe", *African Studies Review*, Vol 37, 1, 1994, pp. 9-37.

Bratton, M. "Farmer Organisations and Food Production in Zimbabwe", *World Development*, Vol 14, 3, 1986, pp. 367-384.

Buckle, C. *African Tears: The Zimbabwe Land Invasions*, Covos Day Books, Harare, 2001.

Burgess, S. "Small-holder Voices and Rural Transformation in Zimbabwe and Kenya compared", *Comparative Politics*, Vol 29, 2, 1997, pp.127-149.

Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe, *Breaking the Silence, Building True Peace: A Report on the Disturbances in Matabeleland and Midlands 1980 to 1988*, Harare, Legal Resource Foundation, 1997.

Chan, S. *Robert Mugabe: A Life of Power and Violence*, Tauris, London, 2003.

Chaumba, J, Scoones I and Wolmer W. "From Jambanja to Planning: The Reassertion for Technocracy in Land Reform in South-eastern Zimbabwe", *Modern African Studies*, Vol 41, 4, 2003, pp.533-554.

Chirot, D. "The Corporatist Model and Socialism", *Theory and Society*, Vol 9, 2, 1980, pp363-381.

Chisamba, T and Mangudhla B. 'The Zimbabwe Commercial Farmers Union', *The Standard*, 02 July 2017.

Chisoko, G and Zharare H. 'De-mystifying Command Agriculture', *Herald*, January 5 2017.

Chitiyo, T. 'Harvest of Tongues: Zimbabwe's *Third Chimurenga* and the Making of an Agrarian Revolution,' in Lee M and Colvard K.(eds.), *Unfinished business :The Land Crisis in South Africa*, Institute of South Africa, Pretoria, 2003.

Cohen, C and Marion D. *Social Science Research Methods*, Huxton, London, 1994.

Cooper, F. "Possibility and Constraint: African Independence in Historical Perspective", *African History*, Vol 49, 2, 2008, pp.167-196.

Cousins, B and Scoones I. "Contested Paradigms of Viability in Redistributive Land Reform, Perspectives from Southern Africa", *Peasant Studies*, Vol 37, 1, 2010, pp.31-66.

Dashwood, H. *Zimbabwe: The Political Economy of Transformation*, Toronto, 2000.

De Tocqueville, A. *Democracy in America*, New York, Harper and Row, 1966.

Fahri, E. *Being Political, Genealogies of citizenship*, Minneapolis, 2002.

Femia, A. *Gramsci's Political Thought, Hegemony, Consciousness and the Revolutionary Process*, Oxford, Claredon, 1981.

Fraser, A. "White Farmers' Dealings with the Land Reform in South Africa: Evidence from Limpopo Province", *Royal Dutch Geographic Society, KNAG*, Vol 1, 99, 2008, pp. 24-36.

Freeman, L. "South Africa's Zimbabwe Policy: Unraveling the Contradictions", *Contemporary African Studies*, Vol 32, 3, 2005, pp. 147-172.

Gatsheni-Ndlovu, S. J. "Beyond the Equator, There are no sins, Coloniality and Violence in Africa", *Developing Societies in Africa*, Vol 28, 4, 2012, pp. 419-440.

Gatsheni-Ndlovu, S. J. "Coloniality of Power in Development Studies and the Impact of Global Imperial Designs in Africa", Inaugural Lecture Delivered at the University of South Africa, Senate Hall, 16 October, 2012.

Gatsheni-Ndlovu, S. J. "Why De-Coloniality in the 21st century", *Thought Leaders*, Vol 48, 3, 2013, pp.10-15.

General Notice 45 7A of 2000, *Constitution of Zimbabwe*, Clemency Order No1 2000.

Giliomee, H. "Broedewtwis, Intra-Afrikaner conflicts in the Transition from Apartheid", *African Affairs*, Vol 91, 364, 1992, pp.339-364.

Gonese F, Marongwe N, Mukora C and Kinsey B. *Land Reform and Resettlement implementation in Zimbabwe, An Overview of the Programme against Selected International Experiences*, University of Zimbabwe, Harare, 2002.

Government of Zimbabwe Report: *People First Zimbabwe's Land Reform Programme*, Ministry of Lands, Agriculture and Resettlement and the Department of Information and Publicity, Harare, 2001.

Government of Zimbabwe, *Land Acquisition Act*, Government Printers, 1992.

Grosfoguel, R. "The Epistemic De-colonial Turn", *Cultural Studies*, Vol 21, 3, 2007, pp. 211-223.

Hill, G. *Battle for Zimbabwe: The Final Countdown*, Cape Town, Zebra, 2003.

Hills, D. *The Last Days of White Rhodesia*, London, Chatto and Windus, 1981.

Hodder-Williams, R. *White Farmers in Rhodesia 1980-1965: A History of the Marandellas District*, London, Macmillan, 1983.

Hussein, K. "Producer Organisations and Agricultural Technology in West Africa: Institutions that give farmers voice", *Development*, Vol 44, 1, 2001, pp.61-66.

Justice for Agriculture Trust and the General Agricultural and Plantations Workers' Union of Zimbabwe. *Destruction of Zimbabwe's Backbone Industry in Pursuit of Political Power: A Qualitative Report on Events in Zimbabwe's Commercial Farming Sector Since the Year 2000*, Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, Harare, 2008.

- Kelinger, R. *Qualitative Research Methodology*, Hutton and Moris, London, 1986.
- Kruger, N. "Liberation from Constitutional Constraints: Land Reform in Zimbabwe", *SAIS Review*, Vol 27, 3, 2001, pp.8-17.
- Kruger, N. *Zimbabwe's Guerrilla War: Peasant Voices*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1992 .
- Kruger, N. "Zimbabwe: Political Constructions of War Veterans", *Review of African Political Economy*, Vol 30, 96, 2003, pp. 323-338.
- Levy, J. *Rationalism, Pluralism and Freedom*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2015.
- Logan, I. "Land Reform, Ideology and Urban Food Security: Zimbabwe's *Third Chimurenga*", *Economic and Social Geography*, Vol 98, 2, 2007, pp.202-224.
- Maldonado-Torres, N. "On Coloniality of Being Contributions to the Development of a Concept", *Cultural Studies*, Vol 21, 3, 2007, pp.240-257.
- Mandaza, I. *Zimbabwe: The Political Economy of Transition, 1980-1986*, Dakar, Codesria, 1986.
- Marongwe, N. 'Farm Occupations and Occupiers in the New Politics of Land in Zimbabwe', in Hammar A, Raftopoulos B and Jensen S (eds.), *Zimbabwe's Unfinished Business: Rethinking Land, State and Nation in the Context of Crisis*, Harare, Weaver Press, 2003.
- Mckenzie, J. A. "Commercial Farmers in the Governmental System of Colonial Zimbabwe, 1963-1980," PhD thesis, University of Zimbabwe, 1989.

Magaramombe, G. "Rural Poverty: Commercial Farm Workers and Land Reform in Zimbabwe," Paper Presented at SARPN, Conference on Land Reform and Poverty alleviation in Southern Africa, 2001.

Matshe, I. *The Overall Macro-Economic Environment and Agrarian Reforms*, African Institute for Agrarian Studies, Mimeo, Harare, 2004.

Meridith, M. *Mugabe, Power, Plunder and the Struggle for Zimbabwe*, London, Simon and Schuster, 2007.

Miller, B. "Vuka Viewpoint," *The Farmer*, 28 March 1980.

Ministry of Agriculture Mechanisation and Irrigation Development, *Agricultural Statistical Bulletin*, Government Printers, 2010.

Ministry of Local Government, Public Works and National Housing, *Manual for the Management of Urban Land*, Harare, Government Printers, 2002.

Mlambo, A. "Land Grab or Taking Back Stolen Land: The Fast Track Land Reform Process in Zimbabwe in Historical Perspective", *History Compass*, Vol 3,1, 2005, pp.1-21 .

Mlambo, A. *White Immigration into Rhodesia: From Occupation to Federation*, Harare, University of Zimbabwe, 2002.

Moyana, H. *The Political Economy of Land in Zimbabwe*, Gweru, Mambo Press, 2002.

Moyo, S. *Overall Impacts of the Fast Track Land Reform Programme*, Harare, African Institute for Agrarian Studies, 2004.

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

Moyo, S and Chambati W. “The Political Economy of Farm Workers in New Resettlement Areas”, AIAS, Monograph Series, African Institute for Agrarian Studies, Harare, 2009.

Moyo, S and Nyoni P. *The Land Acquisition Process in Zimbabwe*, Harare, UNDP, 2010.

Moyo, S and Yeros P. ‘Land Occupations and Land Reform in Zimbabwe: Towards the National Democratic Revolution,’ in Moyo S and Yeros P (eds.), *Reclaiming the Land: The Resurgence of Rural Movements in Africa, Asia and Latin America*, Claremont, David Philip, 2005.

Moyo, S. *Land Reform and Redistribution in Zimbabwe Since 1980*, African Institute for Agrarian Studies, 2011.

Moyo, S. *Locating the Position of Peasants under the New Dispensation: A Focus on Land Tenure Issues*, Institute for Agrarian Studies, 2018.

Moyo, S. “The Political Economy of Land Acquisition and Redistribution in Zimbabwe, 1990-1999”, *Southern African Studies*, Vol 26, 1, 2000, pp.5-28.

Moyo, S. “The Land Occupation Movement in Zimbabwe: Contradictions of Neoliberalism”, *International Studies*, Vol 30, 3, 2001, pp.311-330.

Moyo S. *Land Reform under Structural Adjustment in Zimbabwe*, Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala, 2000.

Mutami, C. “Small-holder Agricultural Production in Zimbabwe A Survey”, *Sustainable Development*, Vol 14, 2, 2015, pp.140-157.

Muzondidya, J. ‘From Buoyancy to Crisis, 1980-1997,’ in Raftopoulos B and Mlambo A (eds.), *Becoming Zimbabwe*, Harare, Weaver Press, 2009.

Norman, A. *Robert Mugabe and the betrayal of Zimbabwe*, London, Jefferson, McFarland and Company, 2004.

Norman, D. *The Success of Peasant Agriculture in Zimbabwe 1980-1985*, Lancing, London, 1986.

Norman, D. *The Odd Man in Mugabe's White-hand Man*, Weaver Press, Harare, 2018.

Nyangoro, J and T Shaw. *Corporatism in Africa: Comparative Analysis and Practice*, Westview Special Studies on Africa, Boulder, 1989.

Nyawo-Shava, V. Z. and Barnard S. L. "The Trajectory of Land Reform in Zimbabwe: Post-Independent Era 1980- 2000", *Contemporary History*, Vol 35, 1, 2010, pp.62-80.

Palmer, R. *Land and Racial Domination in Rhodesia*, Heineman, London, 1977.

Palmer, R. "Land Reform in Zimbabwe, 1980-1990", *African Affairs*, Vol 89, 1990, pp.163-181.

Phimister, I. "The Making and Meaning of the Massacres in Matabeleland", *Development Dialogue*, Vol 50, 3, 2008, pp.199-218.

Phimister, I. "Rambai Makashinga (Continue to Endure): Zimbabwe's Unending Crisis", *Historical*, Vol 54, 4, 2005, pp.112-126.

Pilosof, R. "Remaining Apolitical in a Political Crisis: Exploring Interest Group Politics", *Developing Societies*, Vol 26, 1, 2010, pp.71-97.

Pilosof, R. *Unbearable Whiteness of Being: Farmers' Voices from Zimbabwe*, University of Cape Town Press, Cape Town, 2012.

Pilosof, R. "The Land Question (Un)Resolved: An essay Review", *Historia*, Vol 53, 2, 2008, pp. 270-279.

Pilosof, R. "The Unbearable Whiteness of Being: Land, Race and Belonging in the Memoirs of White Zimbabweans", *Historical*, Vol 61, 3, 2008, pp 621-638.

Raftopoulos, B. 'Current Politics in Zimbabwe: Confronting the Crisis,' in Harrod B. (ed.), *The Past is the Future*, Harare, Weaver Press, 2004.

Raftopoulos, B. 'The State in Crisis: Authoritarian Nationalism, Selective Citizenship and Distortion of Democracy in Zimbabwe,' in Hammar, A, Raftopoulos B and Jansen S (eds.) *Zimbabwe's Unfinished Business: Rethinking Land, State and Nation in the Context of Crisis*, Harare, Weaver Press, 2003.

Raftopoulos, B and Mlambo A. 'The Crisis in Zimbabwe,' in Raftopoulos B and Mlambo A (eds), *Becoming Zimbabwe*, Weaver Press, Harare, 2009.

Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe, Monetary Statement Report 2008.

Riddell, R. 'Zimbabwe's Land Problem: The Central Issue,' in Morris W. H. (ed.), *From Rhodesia to Zimbabwe Behind and Beyond Lancaster House*, Toronto, 1980.

Rukuni, M. *Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Appropriate Agricultural Land Tenure Systems*, Harare, Government of Zimbabwe, 1994.

Sachikonye, L. 'The Promised Land: From Expropriation to Reconciliation and *Jambanja*,' In Raftopoulos, B and Savage T. (eds.), *Zimbabwe: Injustice and Political Reconciliation*, Weaver Press, Harare, 2003.

Scoones, I. Marongwe, N. Mavedzenge, B. Murimbarimba, F. Mahenehene, J. Murimbarimba F and Sukume C. *Zimbabwe's Land Reform: Myths and Realities*, Oxford, James Currey Press, 2010.

Selby, A. "Commercial Farmers and the State: Interest Group Politics and Land Reform in Zimbabwe," PhD Thesis, University of Oxford, 2006.

Selby, A. "Radical Re-alignments: The Collapse of the Alliance between White Farmers and the State in Zimbabwe 1995-2000", *Queen Elizabeth Working Paper Series*, Working Paper No 144, 1995.

Selby, A. "From Open Season to Royal Game: The Strategic Repositioning of Commercial Farmers across the Independence Transition in Zimbabwe", *Centre for International Development*, Queen Elizabeth House, 2016, pp. 3-14.

Schmitter, P. "Still the Century of Corporatism", *Review of Politics*, Vol 36, 2, pp 85-131, 2000.

Smith, I. *Bitter Harvest: The Great Betrayal and the Dreadful Aftermath*, Blake, London, 2001.

Smith, I. *Bitter Harvest: Zimbabwe and the Aftermath of its Independence*, Blake, London, 2008.

Stiff, P. *Cry Zimbabwe: Independence-Twenty Years on*, Galapago, Alberton, 2000.

Stoneman, C. "Agriculture," in Stoneman C (ed), *Zimbabwe's Inheritance*, Macmillan, Hong Kong, 1981.

Stoneman, C and Lionel C. *Zimbabwe: Politics, Economics and Society*, Pinter, London, 1989.

Taylor, S. “Business and Politics in Zimbabwe’s Commercial Agriculture Sector”, *African Economic History*, Vol 27, 2, 1999, pp.177-215.

Twala, W and Khosa M. ‘Land and Sustainable Development in South Africa,’ in Amanor K and Moyo S. (eds.), *Land and Sustainable in Africa*, Zed Books, London, 2008.

Utete, C. *Report to the Presidential Land Review Committee into the implementation of the Fast-track Land Reform Program, 2000-2002*, Government of Zimbabwe, Harare, 2003.

Vambe, M. “Versions and Sub-versions: Trends in Chimurenga Musical Discourses of Post-Independence Zimbabwe”, *African Studies Monograph*, Vol 25, 4, 2004, pp.167-193.

Yeros, P. “Zimbabwe and the Dilemmas of the Left”, *Historical Materialism*, Vol 10, 2, pp 2002, pp.130-143.

Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum and The Justice for Agriculture Trust *Adding Insult to Injury: A Preliminary Report on Human Rights Violations on Commercial Farms, 2000-2005*, Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, Harare, 2007.

Internet

Commercial Farmers Union available at www.cfuzim.org or www.cfu.co.zw

Zimbabwe Farmers Union available at www.zfu.org.zw

Zimbabwe Commercial Farmers Union (ICFU) available at www.zcfu.org.zw

www.kubatana.net/html/archive/agric/020803jag.asp?orgcode=jus002&year=2002&range-start=1 For Justice for Agriculture Trust

Voice of America available at www.voanews.com

Agriculture South Africa available at www.agrisa.co.za

www.newzimbabwe.com

www.newsdezeimbabwe.co.uk

www.bbcnews.co.uk

www.cnn.com

www.aljazeera.com

Newspapers

The Zimbabwe Independent

The Daily News (Zimbabwe)

The Herald (Zimbabwe)

The Chronicle (Zimbabwe)

The Sowetan (South Africa)

Mail and Guardian (South Africa)

City Press (South Africa)

Sunday Times (South Africa)

The Standard (Zimbabwe)

Associated Free Press

The Sunday Mail (Zimbabwe)

Financial Gazette (Zimbabwe)

The Mirror (Zimbabwe)

The Horizon (Zimbabwe)

Reuters

The Times (United Kingdom)

Daily Telegraph (United Kingdom)

Magazines

The Farmer (Zimbabwe)

Cattle World (Zimbabwe)

Rhodesian Farmer (Zimbabwe)

Tobacco News (Zimbabwe)

ZFU fact sheets

ZFU newsletters

ZCFU newsletters

Minutes

Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting 29 September 1993

Hansard Record of Parliamentary Debate 17 March 1992

Minutes of CFU Council Meeting, 28 September 1994, Lands and Legislation Report

Minutes of CFU Council Meeting, 26 April 1995

Minutes of CFU President's Council Meeting 29 January 1997

Minutes of CFU Council Meeting, 27 March 1996

Minutes of CFU Presidents Council Meeting, 24 April, 1996

Minutes of the CFU Presidents Council Meeting 25 September 1996

Minutes of CFU Council Meeting 29 January 1997

Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting 25 January 1995

Minutes of the CFU Council MEETING 30 June 1993

Minutes of CFU Presidents Council Meeting, 25 February, 1998

Minutes of the CFU President's Council Meeting, 26 November, 1997

Minutes of CFU Presidents Council Meeting, 25 September, 1996

Minutes of CFU Council Meeting 28 September 1994

Interviews

Interview with Mr Mutizwa NFAZ member in Bindura 26 December 2015

Interview with Mr Kadare 12 August in Harare 2015

Interview with Mr Mukaka NFAZ member 2016 in Gweru

Interview Mr Makombe ICFU President in Gweru 2019

Interview with former minister of Information and Publicity Chen Chimutengwende in Harare 11 April 2019

Interview with anonymous CFU council member 18 May 2019 in Harare

Interview with an anonymous council member of the Zimbabwe Farmers Union, October 05, 2015 in Masvingo

Interview with Kudakwashe Kunaka 18 August 2019 in Kwekwe

Interview with Tim Henwood former CFU president in Harare 18 April 2018

Interview with former minister of Land and Water Development Douglas Mombeshora 17 October 2017

Interview with anonymous ICFU founder member 13 January 2020 in Bulawayo

Interview with Mr Jeremiah Bonda of ICFU on 14 January 2020 in Harare

Interview with Blessing Chebundo 14 January 2018 in Kwekwe

Interview with Murisi Zwizwai member of MDC Alliance 17 January 2018

Interview with anonymous member of JAG 16 July 2018 in Bulawayo

Interview with Lewis Matutu 18 March 2018 in Harare

Interview with Gabriel Musoka Ministry of Agriculture 18 Dec 2017

Interview with Mr Mutizwa NFAZ member 20 January 2017 in Bindura

Interview with Mrs Chinamasa Council member of ZFU and President of ZNFU in Rusape
16 August 2018

Interview with Mrs Johnson evicted farmer 17 January 2020 in Harare

Interview with Peter Smith 23 January 2020 in Harare

Interview with Allan Priston Cloete 24 January 2020

Interview with Ben Gilpin CFU director 17 August 2016 and 18 January 2019

Interview with Professor Chigora 17 January 2020 in Zvishavane

Interview with Dr Chikowore on 17 November 2019

Interview with Paul Mauta ZNFU member in Masvingo 16 December 2019

Interview with Mr Makwende member of ZFU in Mutare 20 January 2018

Interview with anonymous member Mashonaland East executive of ZANU PF 15 May 2017

CHRONICLE OF EVENTS

- 1897 Country renamed Southern Rhodesia
- 1923 Southern Rhodesia becomes a self-governing British colony
- 1930 Land Apportionment Act divides Rhodesia into African and European Areas
- 1943 The Rhodesian National Farmers Union was formed by merging Matabeleland Farmers Association and Rhodesia Agricultural Union.
- 1951 1951 Land Husbandry Act forces African Farmers to de-stock
- 1979 10 September Lancaster House Constitutional Conference begins.
October – An impasse over land reform emerges at Lancaster House.
The United States seeks to break the deadlock. 21 December – Lancaster House Conference ends with a constitution, including a sunset clause, that precludes any changes to the constitution for 10 years. Land resettlement set up on a willing-buyer-willing-seller-basis.
- 1980 4 March ZANU PF won elections and a new black government emerges
18 April – Zimbabwe Independence Day and Mugabe sworn in as Prime Minister.
- 1980 The Rhodesian National Farmers Union changes to Commercial Farmers Union
- 1981 Mugabe addresses the first CFU conference with a message of reconciliation.
- 1982 North Korean-trained Fifth Brigade deployed to crush the insurgency in the Midlands and Matabeleland provinces. Government forces are accused of killing thousands of civilians over next few years and white farmers in these regions were severely affected.
- 1985 Joint Presidential Committee for farmers was established despite failure to create a merger for all farming unions.
- 1985 Land Apportionment Act allows government to purchase land from white farmers to resettle blacks.
- 1991 The Zimbabwe Farmers Union established to advance black farmer interests.
- 1992 National Land Policy put in place to kick start the process of land acquisition and the expiry of the sunset clauses which prevented land acquisition.
- 1992 Land Acquisition Act put in place to acquire land.
- 1994 Rukuni Commission on land established to look into the issues of tenure and

agricultural structure

1997 Mass designation of farms issued

2000 Constitutional referendum No Vote victory spearheaded by white farmers.

2000 February sees beginning of farm invasions and collapse of engagement with the white farmers

2017 November removal of Mugabe and Mnangagwa sworn in as President

2017 Announcement of compensation of former white farmers.

