

CHAPTER 2

An Introduction to Land and Agrarian Reform in Zimbabwe

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Over the past decade, land has stormed onto the southern African regional agenda, thanks largely to developments in Zimbabwean land reform. The media in particular (regionally, as well as internationally) have latched onto these developments, overwhelmingly with a negative sentiment. This negative publicity has largely clouded the real situation and obscured important and valid grievances—primarily, the unresolved land issue that underpins much of the structural inequality characteristic of the country, and, in fact, the broader region.

This short chapter sets out to provide a broad sketch of the land question in Zimbabwe. It starts with a short introduction to the history of colonization, before focusing in greater detail on processes of land reform during the post-independence period (i.e., post-1980). It then outlines and describes approaches to land reform undertaken since independence, with some analysis and consideration of the problems associated with market-assisted reforms that have been implemented over the past two decades. The chapter does not enter into a discussion of whether the politicization of the land issue by the Zimbabwe African National Union–Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) is being carried out altruistically, or is simply being done in the pursuit of self-preservation. Finally, this chapter is by no means exhaustive, and it contains many omissions and gaps as it only scratches the surface of this very complex issue. Nonetheless, the discussion will highlight the key aspects of land and agrarian reform in Zimbabwe.

Background to the Land Question in Zimbabwe

Colonization: The British South Africa Company

Although there are many similarities between the history of the land question in South Africa and in Zimbabwe, the underlying conditions are different. Unlike in South Africa, colonization in Zimbabwe began only in the 1890s, when the “pioneer column” of John Cecil Rhodes crossed north over the Limpopo. This movement north of European settlers was spurred by massive gold discoveries on the Rand (now Johannesburg) in South Africa in the 1870s. Gold hunger led mining capital to explore for further rich gold fields. These explorations penetrated as far inland as the Zimbabwe highlands, where gold was indeed discovered.

The British South Africa Company (BSA), a commercial venture, had obtained concessions from the British Crown to further the exploitation of minerals in the region. The company sponsored the settlement of Europeans at what was then Fort Salisbury (now Harare), where land was parceled out as farms. It should be noted that the BSA did not set out to govern or rule the territory; its sole objective was to seek and generate profit from the natural resources discovered there. Unfortunately, profits were not to be had there, since the gold discovered in Zimbabwe was not concentrated in reefs (as in South Africa), but rather was scattered and almost impossible to extract profitably. In fact, after three decades the company had still not generated any profit.

Unable to profit from gold exploitation, the BSA encouraged white settlement for farming purposes. This was seen as an alternative means of generating income for the company. This policy, however, necessitated the further dispossession of indigenous peoples of more of their land, and it coercively forced them into labor on settler farms.

Within the first decade of European settlement in Zimbabwe, African people rebelled against the forced alienation of their lands. The first Chimurenga¹ erupted in 1896 as locals attempted, through armed struggle, to drive the settlers out and to reclaim their territory. This rebellion lasted until 1897, ultimately failing, as the Africans were defeated by European weaponry.

Much like the highlands in South Africa, the Zimbabwean highlands are not particularly fertile. Farming, therefore, was not an easy or profitable enterprise, and white settler farmers struggled continuously through the early decades of the twentieth century.

Settler Consolidation: The Emergence of a British Colony Proper

By 1923 the BSA company wanted to leave the territory, profits having remained elusive throughout its tenure. An election/referendum was held, for white settlers only, to determine the future of the territory. Settlers were required to vote for one of three choices: to become a part of the Union of South Africa; to become a full British colony; or to choose self-governance (an autonomous British colony). The settlers opted for self-governance.

A few years after the election/referendum the Morris-Carter Commission of 1925 was established to lay out a framework for ensuring the emergence of Rhodesia—the colonial incarnation of what later became Zimbabwe—as a self-sustaining British (white) colony. The commission proposed landholding patterns to put the settler economy on a sound footing. The subsequent Land Appointment Act of 1930 separated land along racial lines, both qualitatively and quantitatively. This land structure has largely carried through into the post-independence period.

Under the Act, race groups (i.e., blacks and whites) were not allowed to acquire land in areas designated for other races. The Act reserved 50.8 percent of the land for white settlers, with the bulk of it in the arable central highlands. The indigenous African population (the majority of the population) was allocated 30 percent of the land, largely on the plateau sloping down into the Zambezi Valley and in the mountainous escarpment regions. This land was designated as African Reserve Areas (now known as communal areas). The remaining 20 percent of the land was owned either by commercial companies or the colonial government (Crown land), or it was reserved as conservation areas. A further, very small area (0.05 percent), called the Native Purchase Areas, was set aside for the acquisition of land, through freehold or leasehold, by richer Africans or by small groups of African people.

Between 1930 and 1980, the amount of land available to indigenous Africans was expanded. By Zimbabwean independence in 1980, the racial split in landownership and/or land access was approximately 40 percent for each group (i.e., white holdings had been reduced from 51 to 40 percent, between 1930 and 1980, and African land expanded from 30 to 40 percent). Population densities in white and African areas, however, were vastly different, with far greater numbers of people living on African land, a situation that still prevails. Further, not only did white settlers have the pick of land in the best agroecological regions of the country, they were also supported by massive state intervention in the development of the farming economy. Thus, the colonial state

provided extensive communication and marketing infrastructure in commercial farming areas and made subsidies and loans available to white farmers.

Up through independence, differing levels of capital development in southern Africa created a wage hierarchy in the subregion. Wages for migrant laborers were highest in South Africa, followed by Zimbabwe and Malawi. Labor migration in the subregion, therefore, had a southward tendency. This posed problems in terms of labor supply for the emerging white colony in Zimbabwe, where, as the white economy grew, the need to “keep” local African labor became more urgent. Various measures were put in place and a labor supply commission was formed; access to Zimbabwean workers by South African recruitment companies was limited, as was the use of migrant labor from Malawi; and a limit was set on the number of Zimbabweans allowed to leave the colony.

Increasing population densities in the communal areas, and social and economic dislocation associated with labor migration from these areas, resulted in substantial environmental degradation and a growing production crisis by the post–World War II period. The situation was compounded by a massive eviction of African labor off white farms due to the increased mechanization of commercial agriculture. In 1951 the Native Land Husbandry Act was passed in an effort to address these problems. Central to this legislation (and in common with the actions of many other British colonies in Africa at the time) was the limiting of livestock numbers and the introduction of soil and water conservation methods and technology (terracing, for example). Improvement schemes undertaken in South Africa’s reserves from the 1930s onward were implemented in response to a similar environmental and production crisis.

It is therefore not surprising to find that the iniquities and inequalities of land allocation that began prior to Zimbabwean independence, and the associated state support to white agriculture, were ongoing areas of conflict and contention; as was noted earlier, the first rebellion by indigenous peoples was fueled by these very grievances. In the mid-1960s, a second Chimurenga began, led by ZANU and the Zimbabwe African People’s Union (ZAPU). Both of these liberation movements were committed to implementing radical land reform once in power. The dispossession of Africans was still very much a living memory for many of the elders in Zimbabwe who had lived through the first uprising. Though not officially in power, the ZANU/ZAPU Patriotic Front posed a significant challenge to any minority-led government that did not invoke policies in the interest of the indigenous African population. In this way, ZANU and ZAPU elicited much peasant support for the second

Chimurenga. Trade unions and civil organizations were not involved the second time; rather, it was guerrilla fighters and peasants who battled against a modern army of the white regime, largely in rural areas. It was a struggle for land on the land.

This civil war lasted for nearly two decades, before negotiations for a settlement were initiated in the late 1970s. The inequalities in Zimbabwe at that time were very stark. Population densities in the communal areas were three times that of the commercial farming areas. Most importantly, there was still a highly visible racial division of land, with 6,000 white farmers owning approximately 42 percent of the country.

Independence: The Lancaster House Agreement

In terms of seeking a resolution to the crisis in Zimbabwe at the time, the land reform experience of Kenya was influential. Kenya had had a comparable land problem, and guerrilla war fueled by land grievances made a clear case for intervention in pre-independence Zimbabwe. In Kenya the British sought to defuse the situation by buying out white farmers and making UK£500 million available for land acquisition and settlement support. A similar solution was now sought for Zimbabwe. Thus, during secret negotiations in the mid-1970s, an Anglo-American development fund for Zimbabwe was promoted. This fund, to which the British agreed to contribute UK£75 million, would be used to buy out white-owned farms. The endowment received broad support, including backing from what was then the ZANU/ZAPU Patriotic Front. At the time, the United States hinted it would contribute an extra US\$200 million to the fund. However, as we will see in the following pages, this fund failed to materialize.

The Lancaster House negotiations began in 1979. The Lancaster House Agreement, named for the mansion in London at which it was negotiated, was the truce that paved the way for an independent, and majority-ruled (black), Zimbabwe. Colonial Rhodesia had unilaterally declared independence from the United Kingdom in 1964 and was governed by white minority rule. The Lancaster Agreement brought, together with a ceasefire agreement from the armed wings of ZANU and ZAPU, a means for “orderly transition” from white-minority to black-majority rule. By the time these negotiations got underway, a change in government had taken place in the United Kingdom. The development fund, which had been mooted in previous discussions during Lancaster, was used as “bait” to bring the liberation movements to an agreement with Rhodesian authorities; in the end however, the offer of the fund was

withdrawn, and, instead, the UK government offered a compromise solution: In exchange for guaranteeing existing property rights in the new Zimbabwe, the United Kingdom would underwrite half of the cost of resettlement. The Zimbabwe government would have to match that funding to make up the full cost of the program. In 1980, the United Kingdom pledged an initial amount of UK£20 million.

Land would thus change hands through a willing buyer–willing seller mechanism; white farmers who wanted to continue farming would be free to do so. There would be no mass expropriation of land by the new postcolonial state. The state did retain the right to expropriate land for public and resettlement purposes, but in such cases compensation would have to be paid out in foreign currency. In the end, following pressure from the neighboring states and from the United Kingdom, ZANU/ZAPU conceded and accepted the settlement. The Lancaster House agreement was to remain in place for ten years, and its restrictions remained a constant theme in Zimbabwean land reform in the decades following independence.

This “crucial capitulation” (Palmer 1990, 166) by the newly independent Zimbabwean government effectively tied its hands in relation to agrarian transformation, and any significant redistribution of land was ruled out. Compounding these restrictions was the fact that following the war there was an urgent need for reconstruction and for measures to address mass displacement and the collapse of peasant production. Moreover, as a result of the collapse of peasant agriculture, 90 percent of the country’s marketed food requirements was produced by white farmers. Ironically, this placed white farmers in a strong position, both economically and politically, at the end of the war.

Land and Agrarian Reform in Zimbabwe

The Zimbabwean government’s Land Reform and Resettlement Program (LRRP) can be seen as comprising two phases: the first from 1980 to 1996; and the second, commencing with a public listing of 1,471 farms for compulsory acquisition, in 1997. The purpose of land reform in postindependence Zimbabwe was to redress past land alienation by creating equal access to land for the majority of the population. The LRRP’s goals were to create political stability and an acceptable property rights regime; to promote economic growth through wider equity and efficiency gains from land redistribution; and to foster national food security, self-sufficiency, and agricultural development through labor-intensive small-farm production, optimal land productivity, and returns

to invested capital. The land reform program particularly targeted four groups: the landless, war veterans, the poor, and commercial farm workers.

The number of households to be resettled on land acquired by the state changed a number of times in the first two years of independence. In 1980 the stated goal was 18,000 households over a five-year period. This figure was increased, in 1981, to 54,000 households; in 1982, it was fixed at 162,000 households, to be resettled by 1984 if possible. This final figure has remained unchanged since then and has proved to be a millstone around the government's neck.

Land acquisition was aimed at reducing by approximately 50 percent the 16 million hectares of agricultural land held by white farmers at independence. The target set for land acquisition and transfer to black small landholders was thus approximately 8 million hectares. The remaining white commercial farming areas would also be desegregated through the promotion of black entry into this sector.

State-Centered Market-Based Land Reform, 1980 to 1996

The dominant approach to land acquisition in the 1981–1996 period can be characterized as a state-centered market-based approach to land redistribution. Land was purchased by the state from willing sellers (as per Lancaster) and redistributed to beneficiaries. The private sector influenced the identification of land and controlled the supply available for resettlement, while the government played the role of buyer. The government, in turn, made land available to people selected mainly by its district officials under the direct supervision of central government officials. Consequently, land reform in Zimbabwe during the 1980s and 1990s was unable to redistribute land on any significant scale. Instead, reform has been confined to the planned and orderly settlement of beneficiaries (families and cooperatives) on land acquired by the state.

Acquisition of land through the willing buyer–willing seller setup moved forward with little resistance during the 1981 to 1983 period, drawing on a substantial supply of farms abandoned during the war and farms coming on to the market as white settlers left the country after independence. However, this supply of land eventually dried up. This turn of events may well have been the motivation behind the Land Acquisition Act of 1986, which provided the state with first option to purchase farms coming onto the market. The act also provided for compulsory acquisition of land deemed underutilized or derelict, although this approach was never successfully pursued during the first phase of land reform in Zimbabwe.

The settlement of beneficiaries on land took place through one of four models, although the bulk of reform made use of only one of these. The models were as follows:

1. *Intensive Settlement on an Individual Family Basis (Model A)* In this model, which was used to facilitate more than 80 percent of the land reform in the 1980s and 1990s, beneficiaries receive cropping land (10 to 65 hectares) as well as access to communal grazing land (55 hectares or the equivalent, depending on the agroecological region). Land was acquired by the state (usually in the form of large commercial estates), and then divided in to smaller plots that were then redistributed to beneficiaries. Tenure (on the part of beneficiaries) was in the form of three annual permits—one for settlement, one for cultivation, and one for grazing. A final contingency of this model was that black settlers (beneficiaries) who received land had to give up their rights to land in the communal areas they came from.
2. *Village Settlement with Cooperative Farming (Model B)* Model B was designed to take over existing large commercial farms and cooperatively organize farm production, in which decision making would occur through committee. Credit would be accessed by the cooperative, and income allocated either to individual families or allocated for farm development. Approximately fifty such cooperative schemes were set up, although many subsequently folded.
3. *State Farms with Out-Growers (Model C)* This model, which was not extensively implemented, involved the intensive resettlement of beneficiaries around a core estate. The estate provided settlers with certain services, and settlers, in turn, provided labor for the estate. Cropping land within this scheme was allocated on an individual basis, with settlers also gaining access to grazing land, which is managed communally. A professional farm manager managed the core estate.
4. *Commercial Grazing for Communal Areas (Model D)* Under Model D, which was implemented in the arid south of Zimbabwe, commercial ranches were purchased next to communal land. Livestock was then purchased for these neighboring lands and allowed to fatten on the ranch before being sold. The idea was that this would enable communal farmers to reduce grazing pressure on communal lands. This model, as well, was not extensively implemented.

On the whole, land allocations through the LRRP program were quite generous, compared with those of other African countries, such as Kenya. This

was partly due to the fact that the program was modeled on the extensive land-use patterns characteristic of the (white) commercial sector. The downside of this approach to allocation was that fewer people were able to benefit from land redistribution (i.e., the number of potential beneficiaries is reduced). By June 1989, approximately 52,000 households (416,000 people) had been resettled, on approximately 2.8 million hectares of land acquired by the state for resettlement. This represented approximately 16 percent of the commercial farmland at independence. By 2000, the amount of redistributed land had increased to approximately 3.5 million hectares, and the number of beneficiaries to approximately 75,000 households. A further 400,000 hectares of state land had been leased out to 400 African commercial farmers, and 350 more farms had been purchased by Africans on the open market. The acquisition of land was, however, not evenly spread out over time. The process was extremely uneven, as is illustrated in table 2.1.

From the data, it is clear that, in addition to uneven progress, a general slowdown in the progress of the LRRP has occurred over time as well. A number of factors have contributed to the imbalance observed in the program and in the general slowdown over time in land redistribution:

1. Between 1980 and 1983 there was a massive spurt of redistribution made up largely of farms abandoned either during the war or shortly before or after independence.
2. After 1983, few farms in their entirety came onto the market, which made advance planning on the part of the government difficult. Moreover, farmers held onto their core productive land and sold off marginal holdings. This was especially the case as land prices began to rise due largely to postwar political stability.
3. White farmers wanting to sell land were legally obliged to offer it to the state first. If the state did not want the land, it would issue a "no present interest" certificate (valid for one year), which then enabled the seller to dispose of the land on the private market. According to Palmer (1990), throughout the 1980s at least there was a consistent oversupply of land available to the state. Many of the new black elite and senior members of the government were able to acquire farms through taking advantage of the state's "no present interest." Again according to Palmer (1990), farmland totaling over a million hectares transferred hands in this way.
4. The role of the Commercial Farmers Union (CFU) cannot be overlooked in examining the pace of land reform. The CFU has been a prominent player

TABLE 2.1 Land purchased by the state for resettlement, 1980–1989

<i>Financial year</i>	<i>Land (hectares)</i>	<i>Financial year</i>	<i>Land (hectares)</i>
1980/1981	223,196	1985/1986	85,167
1981/1982	900,196	1986/1987	133,515
1982/1983	939,925	1987/1988	20,319
1983/1984	159,866	total 1988	2,538,262
1984/1985	75,058	total 1989	2,713,725

Source: Palmer, 1990. Modified by author.

in relation to the land issue in Zimbabwe and has consistently argued that rapid land reform would undermine white confidence and threaten export earnings and employment. The inclusion of at least ten government ministers and over five hundred black members in 1989 (Palmer 1990) no doubt bolstered their position. The union was largely responsible for ensuring that the position of commercial farmers remained secure (at least up to the 1990s), through courting the government over a range of issues. Having the ear of the Ministry of Land and Agriculture (as well as influence in the seven other ministries involved in resettlement) the CFU was able to successfully slow the pace of resettlement.

5. Already by 1983, the domestic budget of Zimbabwe was strained. The Zimbabwean government came under increasing pressure from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), as well as from Western donor governments, to undertake belt-tightening. The government complied by cutting back on resettlement (but continued funding newly established schools and clinics).
6. In the mid-1980s, severe drought in the subregion hit Zimbabwe particularly hard. Some new settlers returned to communal areas in search of better conditions, and the government of Zimbabwe used extensive resources on relief efforts.

People-Driven Land Reform

Although land reform during the period of 1980–1996 was characterized as state centered and market based, people-driven acquisitions (what Moyo [2001, 24] refers to as a “community land occupation approach”) occurred as well. This was especially so during the first four years of this period, in which action by the people was closely linked to the government program, in the

form of the “accelerated resettlement program.” In this approach, in which communities initiated land identification through the occupation of abandoned and underutilized lands, prompting the government to respond by purchasing the occupied land at market price. Most of the land acquired in this manner was in the liberation war zone of the eastern highlands. By 1986, however, the government had moved to end this practice. Such occupations were deemed illegal, and both police and farmers evicted occupiers. Occupations, and land redistribution in general, slowed dramatically after 1986, although occupations never disappeared entirely, and they would reemerge strongly again around 1996.

The experience of market-based land acquisition over the 1980s and 1990s highlights three key trends that have become synonymous with World Bank–driven land reform models:

1. The amount, quality, location, and cost of land are driven by landholders (and their own interests).
2. By moving only select parcels of privately held land into the market, neither the government nor beneficiaries drive the process of distributing land with regard to need and the access to natural resources for subsistence.
3. The state as the key buyer of land distorts the land market by setting the parameters in terms of pricing and location, as determined by the government’s broader settlement planning framework.

As a consequence of this poorly designed strategy for land redistribution, over 70 percent of land acquired for resettlement through the market has been agroecologically marginal and located mainly in the drier, more climatically erratic, southern regions of the country. The bulk of prime land in the three Mashonaland provinces (covering the central highlands) has largely been untouched. The land offered to the state has been geographically scattered, causing settlers to move in small groups from communal areas to isolated farms in disparate areas. This process has been both expensive and logistically inefficient.

The Role of Multilateral Agencies and International Donors

As noted earlier, the conditionalities imposed by Lancaster have been a central issue of contention in Zimbabwe, and have been especially significant in shaping the relationship between Zimbabwe and the United Kingdom. This section

explores this issue in more detail by examining the role of multilateral agencies in shaping the scope and of the Lancaster Act and the subsequent LRRP.

During the 1980s, conflict between the governments of Zimbabwe and the United Kingdom were rooted in the conditionalities imposed by the United Kingdom (and, later, by other multilateral agencies) on its financial support of Zimbabwe's land reform program. The United Kingdom had laid down strict conditions about the Zimbabwe program, including requirements for detailed planning and surveying of land before settlement (in addition to the broader constraints of the willing buyer–willing seller approach). These restrictions were imposed in a particularly severe manner in relation to the Model B cooperative-ownership schemes.

The Zimbabwean government was not happy with this situation. Under the conditions set, the land being acquired was of a marginal quality and of a high price, which diminished the returns on the matching funding provided by the Zimbabwean state. In addition, by the late 1980s, as its fiscal deficits expanded the Zimbabwean government was at times unable to make matching contributions to UK government funds, a fact the UK government seized upon. Finally, Zimbabwe did not have the human capacity and other resources to meet the conditions regarding planning and surveying. As well, the overall costs of the program were also rising due to the increase in land prices since independence.

The United Kingdom, for its part, alleged that farms being acquired were not being willingly sold due to the land occupations. It was also alleged that certain monies were being used, not for land reform, but for state farming instead (state farms such as these were later handed over to black elites). The United Kingdom also consistently argued that the Zimbabwean government was always slow to match the finances provided by the United Kingdom.

In the midst of these disagreements in 1988, the United Kingdom's Office of Development Assistance (ODA) released its evaluation of Model A schemes. Although the evaluators at the outset had never viewed redistribution in itself as a means of development, they concluded that the scale of the resettlement was an impressive achievement. The program had made great progress in achieving its key objective, and in that sense the ODA saw the enterprise as successful. Most settlers had benefited from increased income generation and access to schools and clinics, and overall returns on government and donor investments were an impressive 21 percent. The resettlement program was found to be a worthwhile investment in terms of contributing toward the broader national economy as well. Later evaluations (for a good example see Kinsey 2000) support these findings.

Despite the positive assessment of the ODA, the relationship between the United Kingdom and Zimbabwe has continued to deteriorate. The key issue remains the overall market-based framework imposed by the United Kingdom.

Expiration of the Lancaster House Agreement

From 1989 to 1992, the growing disagreement between the Zimbabwean and UK governments focused, in particular, on the funding of land acquisition and securing of appropriate land through market mechanisms—the market had proved biased toward scattered, low-quality land. These differences came to a head when the Zimbabwean government introduced its policy of compulsory land acquisition (with compensation) in 1990.

During the negotiations, it had seemed that the UK government had wanted to perpetuate the Lancaster framework beyond 1990. From the point of view of Zimbabwe, however, this was not tenable. The situation in the country had altered considerably since the early 1980s, and the government felt there was sufficient stability to introduce other land acquisition mechanisms alongside the willing buyer–willing seller arrangement. The government wanted to buy specific blocks of land in favorable agroecological regions by means of compulsory acquisition, if sales could not be negotiated, and it put forward 10 million Zimbabwean dollars (Z\$) to this end. It was hoped the United Kingdom would in turn put forward a further Z\$15 million.

The United Kingdom, however, insisted that its continued cofinancing of the program depended on the use of the willing buyer–willing seller framework. Moreover, following intensive lobbying by the CFU, the United Kingdom wanted to largely restrict resettlement to less arable agroecological regions, and areas adjacent to existing communal areas.

Palmer's observation is pertinent in this regard: "As for the British government, which has taken such an intimate interest in the land question and whose financial support for the resettlement program is crucial . . . it appears determined that, by perpetuating the spirit of Lancaster House, it will ensure that the feeble flame of socialism still flickering in Zimbabwe in 1990 will be snuffed out. So it seems likely that peasants will wait much longer for land reform. South Africa is next on the agenda" (1990, 181).

The Impasse Continues

As the impasse between Zimbabwe and the United Kingdom over the market approach worsened up through the 1990s and into 2000, three additional key points of disagreement became apparent: (1) the extent to which redistribution

should include small and medium black capitalist farmers to the exclusion of poor and landless peasants; (2) the United Kingdom's insistence that land redistribution be gradual, releasing 50,000 hectares per year to fewer than 3,000 households; and (3) the conditionality of UK support on demand-driven acquisition, and on decentralized and civil society–engaged institutional approaches, which, from the Zimbabwean perspective, limit the role of the central government.

A further factor in the dispute was the change of government in the United Kingdom in 1997 (with Labour replacing the Conservative Party). The new Labour government stated from the outset that it had no historical responsibility for Zimbabwean land expropriation, based on the ludicrous grounds that the Labour Party was not of landowning or settler stock.

It was, however, not only with the United Kingdom where relations were strained; relationships with other donors have been equally problematic. In the 1980s, for example, the World Bank also insisted on a market-based land reform in Zimbabwe, yet during the Economic Structural Adjustment Program (ESAP) period from 1991 to 1995, the Bank failed to mobilize the resources necessary to support this approach. The ESAP period thus failed to integrate land reform into the other economic reforms that took place, thereby aggravating market failures in land acquisition, and compounding existing land conflicts and generating new ones. For example, structural adjustment of the agricultural and finance sectors had the effect of entrenching colonial landholding patterns since most commercial farmers benefited from the new export orientation. This created an increased demand for land and fueled conflicts between black and white agricultural elites who were competing for the same scarce resources—while obviously also marginalizing the poor. ESAP also served to internationalize interests in Zimbabwe's land, as reflected in shareholder landownership arrangements, introducing further conflict.

Compulsory State-Led Land Acquisition, 1996 to the Present

A state-led approach to land acquisition has been in place since 1980 and has changed in scope and pace since that time (see table 2.2), in response to failures of the land market to make adequate and appropriate land available. Initial thinking was particularly concerned with the quality and location of land available to the state through the market. The key objective on the part of the state was to target blocks of suitably located land for resettlement (table 2.1 provides a quick snapshot of those efforts). In proposals of that time, land

TABLE 2.2 State-centered market-based land acquisition, 1980–2000

<i>Period</i>	<i>Land acquired (Ha)</i>	<i>Annual average</i>
Constitutional Constraints 1980–1984	2,147,855	429,571
Land Acquisition Act 1985 1985–1990	447,791	74,632
Land Acquisition Act 1992 1992–1997	789,645	157,929
1998–2000	228,839	76,279
TOTAL (20 years)	3,614,130	190,217

Source: Moyo 2001.

acquired compulsorily by the state would still be fully compensated. However, in the face of both internal and external resistance to alternatives to the willing buyer–willing seller approach, the position of the Zimbabwean government began to harden. From the mid-1990s onward the state began to adopt a more radical posture in relation to land acquisition; full-market compensation began to fall away at this time, and, as well, an obligation for historical redress was placed on the United Kingdom. Developments since the mid-1990s suggest a growing alliance between the state and certain local social forces against the longstanding international conditionalities imposed on land redistribution in defense of narrow racial interests. The following section of the paper will briefly review the emergence and implementation of compulsory land acquisition in Zimbabwe.

Scale and Pattern of Compulsory Acquisition

The scale and pace of compulsory acquisition (either with market-based compensation for land and improvements, or compensation for improvements only) has been mixed. Attempts at compulsory acquisition by the state, however, were fairly widespread throughout the 1990s. In the 1993–1995 period, only twenty-six farms had been acquired in this way, amounting to 43,622 hectares of land. In these cases the state paid market-related compensation for both land and improvements. In 1997, 1,471 farms were designated for acquisition; of those, 109 were offered for purchase and were acquired by the state. The remaining farms were delisted following successful legal appeals. After the 2000 constitutional amendment, a further 2,159 farms were announced

TABLE 2.3 Compulsory land acquisition, 1993–1997

<i>Period</i>	<i>Acquisition</i>		
	<i>Farms identified</i>	<i>orders served</i>	<i>Farms acquired</i>
1993	30	10	10
1995	100	100	16
1997	1,471	841	109
TOTAL	1,601	951	135

Source: Moyo 2001. Recalculated by author.

for acquisition. The success of these attempts was, however, minimal and often met by legal maneuverings and litigation on the part of large landholders (see table 2.3).

Since 1992–1993, approximately 7,000 hectares per year have been acquired in this way, as opposed to the approximately 100,000 hectares annually through the willing buyer–willing seller model during the 1990s.

Conclusion

Given that land reform has the potential to strike at the heart of societal structures, which often perpetuate colonial-class formations, it is not surprising that such reform processes are so strongly contested. By the late 1990s, as land distribution in Zimbabwe effectively ground to a halt (and as government failed to institutionalize its compulsory acquisition model), there was a strong resurgence of people's action. In August of 1997, land occupations started to take place across the country. These occupations came in waves, with just a few in 1997, but escalating until they reached well over a thousand by 2000. The explicit aim of these actions was to redistribute land from white farmers to the landless black population. Contestation of these acts were undertaken by local, white settler farmers as well as by the international community (including donors and bilateral agencies). On the whole, this push back was successful, and land reform in Zimbabwe has, as a result, been hamstrung. This end was accomplished first by the negotiated settlement as encompassed in the

Lancaster agreement and later by the postindependent government's dependency on foreign funding.

Zimbabwe represents a land reform experiment in which, for almost two decades, the market has been used as the sole mechanism for land redistribution. The situation in Zimbabwe can be contrasted with those in other parts of the world where market-assisted reforms have been attempted (see part II this volume). The recent shift in Zimbabwe toward a more compulsory land acquisition framework is in response to the failures and weaknesses of the market mechanism.

A great deal of the conflict between the Zimbabwean state and local and international stakeholders has been in relation to the state attempting to address these restrictions, and the stakeholders resisting such change (to ensure the preservation of their own interests, i.e., the *status quo*). The turning point in this conflict, however, occurred only with the emergence of a clearer alliance between the state and local rural social formations; the degree to which the state actively pursued such an alliance, or was forced into it, is, of course, debatable. Whether this alliance can succeed in implementing radical reform, and whether these reforms can be sustained and successfully create and support rural livelihoods, is still to be seen, as is the cost to the Zimbabwean state (and society) of the resulting increase in international isolation.