

The Miracle that Never Was: Reconsidering Agrarian Reform in Zimbabwe, 1980 -2000¹

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Abstract

Zimbabwe recorded an increase in communal farmers' contribution to the marketed maize crop after independence. Many observers considered this increase 'phenomenal', attributed it to a direct result of the government's effort to increase agricultural production by the small farmer and described the increase a 'success story' or 'agrarian miracle'. According to the proponents of this miracle thesis, the institutional support which gave rise to it includes land reform, a favourable pricing policy, enhanced extension, training and research, improved access to credit and input supplies, strategic geographical spread of marketing depots and collection centres, improvement in communications network and positive support for farmer organisations in the hither-to neglected communal areas. The subsequent lapse in productivity experienced in the late 1980s and 1990s was blamed on the structural adjustment programme for curtailing the capacity of government to continue its role as key playmaker in the sector. While acknowledging an increase in total African marketed produce after 1980, this paper argues that, this was primarily a 'natural' response to the prevailing climate of peace, the enthusiasm of independence and increase in

¹ This paper attempts to highlight the research objectives, the process and the key findings of a research effort towards the writing of a Doctoral thesis. The purpose of the paper therefore is to invite comments and suggestions on how to carry on from this point after three years of gathering information on the subject of agrarian transformation focusing on African agriculture in Zimbabwe since independence. This paper should be regarded only as an attempt to put the ideas and thoughts about the issues researched together in some way and as the beginning of a journey towards building a logical and comprehensive argument. It is aimed at soliciting for contributions in the form of suggestions for further reading, theoretical and philosophical questions as well as the organization of the material. This research would not have been possible without the funding made possible through the involvement and assistance of many people. My supervisor, Professor Freund, facilitated access to funds through the NRF whilst also providing money through his own discretionary facilities to make the research possible. The W. Kellogg Foundation provided a once off grant for field-work for the initial year, 2001. Professor Jeff Guy and Dr Shirley Brookes facilitated a trip to Norway where I raised some funds for a follow up trip to the field in 2002. The Graduate School also provide two research grants (2003 and 2004) making further research possible. Dr David Moore generously cushioned me whenever I things got tough. To the above and everyone else who gave me support, I am most grateful. Dr D. Moore and Dr Raj Patel, commented on the first drafts at very short notice, however the inadequacies herewith are my own.

land under cultivation after a decade of war, insecurity and upheaval in the rural economy. The alleged institutional support regime was at best minimal, underfunded, crisis-averse, ad hoc and poorly co-ordinated, lacking the support of a concrete policy base. While punting to the ideology of Marxist-Leninism, the new government's faith in the irreplaceable role of the Large Scale Commercial Farming (LSCF) sector in the economy continued unabated. This attitude was matched by a lack of confidence in the capacity of the African sector to play the same role in the economy. The argument put forward here is that the new regime only looked to the African sector primarily for political patronage and where possible to top-up the food provision gap created by the shift in the LSCF necessitated by the removal of pricing advantages the sector had enjoyed before 1980. As a result, the same problems that characterised African agriculture at independence are still deeply seated in the sector. Careful analysis of post-independence policy on African agriculture shows that the transformation from subsistence production to market oriented production received lip service only. The "growth with equity" rhetoric and the choice of Marxist-Leninism as the leading ideology of the ruling party in its effort to transform the economy was simply resulted in keeping hopes for far-reaching changes. In the final analysis, the lack of transformation in African agriculture resulted from a combination of the lack of political will and contradictions of attempting to transform in a post-colonial economy still dominated by bourgeoisie and imperial forces on one hand and the lack of capacity to lobby in the African sector on the other.

Introduction

Following independence, African nationalists acknowledged the primacy of agriculture as the linchpin for post-colonial economic development, but in reality this commitment to the development of African agriculture remained rhetorical with marginal budgetary support. According to Vilakazi (2001) this is because African countries sought to pursue industrial development and ignored the potential of the rural sector in spearheading development. Capitalist development in Africa did not trace the same route as in Europe where it followed a socio-economic revolution which uprooted traditional rural economic relations and transformed land tenure (Luxemburg, 1970: 241). Instead capitalism in Africa came through colonization and (deliberately not transforming the whole society) operated as a narrow enclave in a largely traditional society. Mahmood Mamdani (1996) demonstrates how the links between a traditional society, existing alongside a narrow enclave of semi-developed capitalist sector, created 'citizens and subjects' in the African continent. In fact, the capitalist sector in Africa operating (then) at the level of primitive accumulation was heavily subsidized by the traditional sector in many ways (Palmer, 1989).

Many African governments faced the contradictions of transforming the economy while having to maintain the relations of production in which multi-national

corporations continued the dominance of the local economy by the metropole. More importantly, it was the eagerness and anxiety to modernize, develop and industrialize the economy led leaders to ignore the fact that the industrial revolution of the West was preceded by an agricultural revolution (Eicher and Staatz, 1988). Africa needs to transform traditional rural institutions and the rural or traditional mode of production and improve the capacity of the rural economy to contribute to the urban sector (Ellis, 1992). There is ample evidence from all over the world that redistributive land and agrarian reform helps reduce poverty, increase efficiency, and establish the basis for sustained growth (Kinsey, 1988). It is only unfortunate that following independence, African leaders preferred development strategies that neglected agriculture and rural development, in favor of unrealistic industrial projects (Vilakazi, 2001: 35).

The inception of Zimbabwe's resettlement strategy which aimed to establish an egalitarian production system, reduce rural destitution and settle ex-combatants of the liberation struggle, coincided with the release of the 1981 World Bank report on rural development in Africa. The report was entitled *Accelerated Development in Sub-Saharan Africa: Agenda for Action*, also referred to as the "Berg Report" after its principal author, Elliot Berg. Notwithstanding the report's explicit rejection of the notion that improved agricultural productivity can be achieved through the diffusion of practices and techniques developed on large-scale, capital intensive government farms, it proposed an extension model of the 'project approach' type. While the Berg Report described the African smallholder class as the "essential basis for any workable strategy of agricultural recovery", it called for minimal state involvement in the process. However, after ignoring the Berg anti-statist suggestion in the 1980s, Zimbabwe's policy on agriculture in the 1990s fully embraced the Berg recommendations.

In the transition from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe, the land question dominated debate on the post-independence transition. According to T. O. Ranger (1985) historical processes of uneven agricultural development, and desire to regain control over 'lost lands', had fuelled the flames of the liberation struggle. The inherited economic structure was characterised by a grossly unequal distribution of land (Weiner, 1988: 63). Upon taking power, the ZANU PF government of Robert Mugabe promised to reverse the historical inequalities in agricultural and general rural development. Following the Lancaster House Agreement and the Zimbabwe Conference on

Reconstruction and Development (ZIMCORD), pledges were made towards supporting a land reform and resettlement programme. At the 1981 ZIMCORD conference, some Z\$800 million out of a total development budget of Z\$1.2 billion was pledged to agricultural development and land redistribution (Blackie, 1982: 151). Various resettlement models were designed through which the landless, poor and displaced people as well as returning refugees, veterans and collaborators of the war of independence would be resettled. While the objective of resettling 15 000 households per year was never realized, Zimbabwe's land transfer after independence remained very impressive in comparison to such processes elsewhere in Africa (Kinsey, 1988), the first five years of independence witnessed the highest land transfers to these categories of settlers (see table 3). By 1985 the government had settled 40 000 households on 2.2m ha of land, but by 1990 only an extra 8 000 had been settled, and in 1997 the total amount was 71 000 on 3.5 million ha of land (Cliffe, 2000: 37).² However, the bulk of this land was in more arid regions (see table 1 below).

Table 1: Land Acquisition Distribution by Natural Region

Natural Region	Distribution of Acquired Land	Distribution of Commercial Land
I	1 %	3 %
II	18 %	27 %
III	38 %	21 %
IV	25 %	26 %
V	19 %	23 %

Source: Cusworth, 1990.

There are a number of reasons for the failure to meet land resettlement targets despite the continued rhetorical commitment to land redistribution. According to Goebel (1998: 27) for example:

While government primarily blames lack of funds for land purchase an infrastructural development, other factors stalling the establishment of schemes to meet demand include the centrality of commercial agriculture to the Zimbabwean economy, pressure from multilateral institutions ... to protect commercial farming, government corruption through which acquired land is given to ministers and other government friends, and flagging commitment on the part of the black elite housed in government to the welfare of the poor masses.

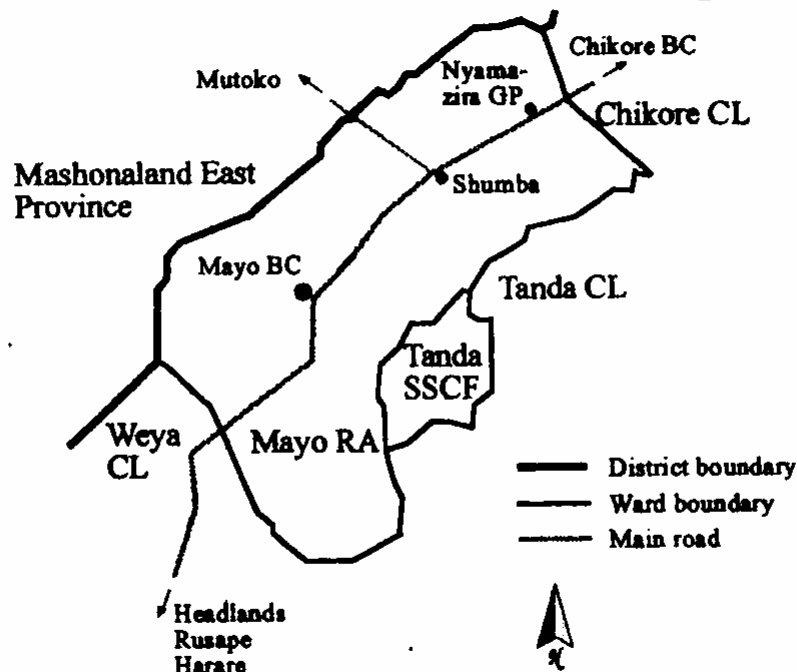
² A number of studies have followed the story of land transfer in Zimbabwe. For further reading on the subject see Moyo (Moyo, 1986, 1995), Kinsey (1983a, 198b, 1999), Mumbengegwi (1986).

In the initial resettlement programmes of the early 1980s, the resettlement of the rural poor took precedence under the auspices of the ‘growth with equity’ development objectives of the government (GoZ, 1981).

Brief Historical Background of the Case Study

The arguments and observations raised in this paper come from fieldwork carried out in Mayo Resettlement Scheme, in Makoni³ district, in the north-western part of the Eastern Province (Manicaland) east of Zimbabwe (see Maps 1 and 2). Mayo Resettlement (hereafter Mayo) was established in 1981 from the Mayo Ranch which was abandoned due to the intensity of the war in 1979 (Intensive, Agritex Officer, 2001). From an initial population of 670 in 42 villages, by 1992 Mayo had grown to a population of 1, 979 households living in 69 villages (CSO, Population Census 1992), rising modestly to 2 400 households in 80 villages in 2002 (estimates of the Makoni Rural District Council, 2003). Mayo was established on primarily natural regions III and IV, with a very small portion lying on NR IIb. Mayo shares borders with Chikore Communal Land in the North and with Weya Communal Land in the South. The

Mayo RA: Situation, main roads and important villages



Source: Base Line Survey Makoni District, 1997.

³ The Makoni district was subject to Terrence Ranger’s (1985) research on peasant consciousness, while to the north of Mayo is the Mutoko district which was subject of Norma Kriger’s (1987) research on peasants and the Zimbabwe guerilla war. Thus the focus on Mayo allows this study to benefit from and develop on issues raised in the work of these seasoned researchers and writers.

eastern part of Mayo adjoins Tanda Communal Land and Tanda Small Scale Commercial Farming Area (formerly Tanda Native Purchase Area) (see Map 1 above). Mayo is surrounded by three land use systems, namely; large-scale commercial agriculture (during the time of the study this sector was under the pressure of the fast track land reform programme), communal lands and small-scale commercial agriculture.

Four models were designed to provide land for different land needs in conjunction with the agro-ecological dictates of the country. As indicated on Map 2, (see appendix) Zimbabwe is divided into five major agro-ecological regions determined by climatic conditions. Natural Region (NR) I and II are characterized by high rainfall and good soils, region III by average rainfall, while IV and V are very arid, low lying land and hardly arable. The first and most widespread model was the Model A scheme which was self-contained with households settled on 12 acres of land. A typical Model A scheme consisted of:

500 families in 15 villages linked by maintained roads, with three or four schools, six dip-tanks, a service centre, housing a Representative Officer and staff, Agricultural Extension workers, a Co-op worker, Animal Health Assistant, clinic and staff. Within the scheme two or three units are reserved for Model B co-operatives groups (GoZ, 1983: 11).

The Model B schemes were based on the co-operative principle, and within the socialist transformation objectives of the time were a darling of the government's African agriculture policy (Tshuma, 1997: 72). Model B schemes involved the resettlement of people in groups of between 50 and 1000 members under communal living and co-operative farming. The co-operative group was to be registered as a legal entity in accordance with the law. Model B type resettlement schemes were run on the basis that the government provided co-operators with vital agricultural implements such as tractors, irrigation equipment and other agricultural inputs during the first two years. However, notwithstanding this sector being at the heart of government's socialist transformation agenda, it was still affected by lack of resources. The British government expressed reservations about the co-operative type Model B schemes citing low technical and managerial skills. To accommodate the British misgivings on this category, the Zimbabwe government made the joining of the cooperative schemes (Ranger, 1985).

The other Models are C and D, which were not widespread being secondary models for the drier regions NR. IV and V. Model C comprises as intensive individual settlement and arable land centered around a state-owned core estate. The model has three variants which are determined by the role of the core estate either as a producer as well, or as a provider of agricultural services to the settlers, or a processor of settlement products (GoZ, 1983). There are no model C schemes located in Makoni District as a whole. Model D, on the other hand was conceived to make more efficient use of land in the drier parts of Zimbabwe. It involves the use of former commercial ranches for grazing purposes by farmers from adjacent communal areas. Each community has access to the ranch once every three or four years during which time their own grazing land within the communal area can recover (GoZ, 1983). As this scheme is designed for the drier agro-ecological regions only, NR IV and V, there are none located in Makoni District.

This study is concerned with Model A schemes under which most of the land transferred was administered. Of the more than 71 000 households resettled by 1996, as much as 93 percent were resettled on Model A schemes (GoZ, 1996). Out of the 80 villages in Mayo, only three were Model B schemes and the rest were Model A. The fact that this scheme was established as early as 1980 will allow for an analysis covering the twenty years of post-independence transformation, which as Kinsey (1998) argues allows for mature judgment of impact and benefit to the poor.⁴ The twenty-year time frame, 1980 – 2000 allows for the analysis of resettlement agriculture in the context of the changing local, regional and international macro-economic environment within which the government and producer. In the final analysis the research effort could contribute to current debates of the future of the Zimbabwean agriculture industry following the massive land invasions between 2000 and 2002 (Masiiwa, 2004).

It provides an opportunity for comparison with these systems as well as interrogating the relationships between them. While the greater part of Mayo was Model A (single units of arable land and communal grazing), it also had Model B (co-operative type

⁴ Kinsey and Binswanger, (1996) have argued that the benefits of programmes involving large-scale human resettlement are unlikely to be apparent in less than a generation. A factor emphasized by Kinsey (2000) that “full economic maturity of even the earliest phase of Zimbabwe’s won programme will not be attained until the year 2000” acknowledging that the sweeping judgments on the programme which began to appear within few years of its inception have thus all been premature.

resettlement). By the time this study was undertaken, Model B schemes had finally capitulated to Model A, and the former Model B villages were being re-settled because they had proved difficult to sustain and also from increasing pressure from the modernization objectives of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) adopted by the government in 1990.⁵

Mayo is geographically located in the Mutoko war zone where the war had been intense and more protracted than in much of the country (Kriger, 1992: 33). Thus Mayo allows a study of peasant involvement in development processes and development discourse in the post-war era. Through the Mayo scheme, the study follows the war-involvement discourse renewed by veterans of the independence struggle in Zimbabwe's recent land struggles. The fact that some of the households resettled in Mayo came from areas outside the Makoni district has tended to limit their ability to articulate their concerns and organise using participation in the war to legitimate their demands. According to Ranger (1985) and Kriger (1992:3) mobilization and organisation in districts that experienced intense war involvement was expected to be more intense, based on the arguments of the radicalisation thesis.

Table 2: Model A Intensive Resettlement Schemes Completed by March 1982

Scheme	District	Total area (ha)	Number of Settlers			Average holding size (ha)
			Planned	Allocated	Settled	
Sengeseni	Wedza	8,420	289	289	289	29
Soti Source	Gutu	33,608	528	528	528	64
Umfurudzi	Shamva	34,515	563	549	537	64
Mukorsi	Umshandige	44,326	657	657	657	67
Tokwe	Selukwe	65,503	1,041	990	767	85
Mayo	Makoni	73,650	1,257	1,057	954	77
Mpudzi	Mutare South	14,700	225	225	215	68
Nyagundi	Odzi	7,829	165	165	165	47
Nyajesi	Nyanga	11,939	191	191	157	76
Inyamsizi	Mtoko	27,537	481	461	461	60
Vimvi	Gutu	5,157	93	93	85	61
Umguza	Nyamandhlovu	36,010	253	225	255	141
Totals		363,194	5,743	5,460	5,070	
Average per scheme		30,266	479	455	423	
Mean holding size (ha)			63	67	72	72

Source: Government of Zimbabwe, 1982a 'Intensive Resettlement Programme March 1982', Salisbury: Department of Agriculture Technical Services and Extension (mimeo) and *The Herald* 19 March 1982.

When compared with support given to white farmers during colonial rule, the support for African settlers was marginal and inconsequential. The colonial state played a

⁵ Discussion on the reasons for the failure of this specific Model to take root is given in Skaines (1989).

crucial role in facilitating the take off and continued sustenance of the white agriculture sector (Phimister, 1972) which is not comparable to the negligible theoretical and practical support given to the beneficiaries of land reform in Zimbabwe after 1980. White agriculture in the colonial era was not built on a pool of agricultural experts from colleges, neither was it built on a class of people who had been farmers in Europe, but on institutional support from the state and involvement of the private sector.

African Agriculture after Independence and the Basis for Miracle

Resettlement schemes were high on the agrarian transformation agenda with for instance more than 70% of British development aid earmarked for rural advancement in the first five years of independence being channeled into resettlement schemes (Hansard 31/1/85). The resettlement placement proved to be very expensive as it insisted on basic infrastructure being put in place before settlement (see tables 3 and 4 below).

Table 3: Annual Expenditure on Infrastructure, 1989 Constant Z\$'000

	Financial Year								
	80/81	81/82	82/83	83/84	84/85	85/86	86/87	87/88	Total
Schools 51	519	5,031	7,535	2,247	4,724	2,294	11,387	33,788	
Clinics	0	0	311	525	223	1,209	153	754	3,175
Other Infrastructure	955	3,492	8,941	9,921	5,322	16,126	1,661	17,110	63,528
Land Purchase	9,257	34,461	42,461	7,833	4,882	4,935	491	3,322	107,642
Total	10,263	38,472	56,744	25,814	12,674	26,994	4,599	32,573	208,133

Source: Cusworth, 1990.

Table 4: The Pace of Settle Emplacement by Year and Model 21/

Year	Model				Total Settlers
	A (1)	A Acc.	B (2)	C	
1980-81	1,881	90	1,971		
1982	10,199	60	560	10,819	
1983	21,740	420	2,678	160	24,998
1984	27,277	974	3,879	827	32,957
1985	30,214	1,017	4,558	827	36,616
1986	34,696	1,017	4,792	827	41,332
1987	37,816	1,417	2,842	507	42,582
1988	40,666	1,115	6,116	827	48,724
July 89	42,948	1,042	6,594	827	51,410

Note: 1) Families, 2) Cooperative members.

Source: Cusworth, 1990.

From the mid-1980s into the mid-1990s Zimbabwe's agricultural sector was being hailed as a 'success' story. Thompson (1991) argues that Zimbabwe was being singled out in the region as exemplary in transforming agriculture and also assigned a food and agricultural produce role in the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC). The success was considered to have been more in the 'removal of structural constraints that inhibited the continued expansion of agricultural production' than in the actual redistribution of land – an issue which is still very contentious. However, the so-called 'success' was simply in the increase in the amount of marketed crop by Africans while the dual structure of agriculture remained largely unaffected. According to Amin (1999: 6), despite its limitations, agricultural and rural development policy in the 1980s helped to bring about some prosperity within the peasantry, a fact more evident when that experience is judged against progress achieved in the 1990s. Be that as it may, the levels of focused investment for African agricultural and rural development after independence have remained very low, resulting in the poor showing of the settler sector. According to Rukuni (1992: 6)

In spite of the major successes scored after independence, small-scale farming areas still face severe development problems. These areas are in arid and environmentally fragile natural regions. The level of soil erosion, deforestation and land degradation is approaching crisis proportions and this needs priority attention. Physical and institutional infrastructure is poor and all these factors severely limit the possibility for further agriculture development.

Independent Zimbabwe retained an economy characterised by a white dominated urban sector and market oriented agriculture on one hand, and an underdeveloped rural sector and subsistence oriented farming sector, on the other. The newly elected government promised major transformation of the rural economy under Leninist-Marxist ideology (Astrow, 1983). Government policy emphasised resettlement as a significant cornerstone in fulfilling the promises of land made during the liberation struggle. Plans for an Accelerated Redistribution Programme were made and economic resources were earmarked for the resettlement (ZIMCORD, 1982). There was great international interest in the newly independent Zimbabwe, contributing to international economic support in the form of grants and loans (Rukuni and Jensen, 2003: 248). Notwithstanding the Leninist-Marxist rhetoric, Britain the former colonial

power and the USA, and not the USSR, China or other communist aligned states, were the major donors.

Unfortunately as was the case with African agriculture in the Native Purchase Areas under colonial rule (Cheater, 1984: 4), resettlement agriculture became a means to meet political objectives of stability in rural areas rather than for rural development. Secondly, post-independence support and transformation of the agricultural sector by promoting resettlement schemes was not accompanied by a shift in terms of agricultural policy and therefore failed to address the dualism in the sector (Mumbengegwi, 1986). The Chavunduka Commission (1982: 4) pointed out the fact that the LSCF sector was referred to as 'commercial agriculture' while African agriculture was considered 'communal agriculture' betrayed assumptions that white agriculture was seen as market oriented, and African agriculture as communal and subsistence oriented.

The Zimbabwe government failed to transform the rural sector as well as to assign a major role for rural people or the peasantry⁶, notwithstanding the fact that the small white bourgeoisie state had been replaced by a black peasant movement (Stoneman, 1988: 3). This failure can be seen on two broad levels. Firstly, the new state

⁶ To avoid this generalisation of 'rural' to mean peasant, this study prefers not to use the term peasant for those rural families surviving on land, for land holders in both Resettlement Schemes and Communal Lands. Instead, the terms settler farmers for those in resettlement schemes and communal producers for those in Communal Lands will be preferred. Where cited sources use the term peasant, the term will be properly referenced to them. The term peasant has been used to describe small-scale producers in the Third World countries. Some define peasants by their main economic activity and their mode of production. The anthropologist, Eric Wolf (in U. Johnson *et al* 1991.), described peasants as having three major characteristics. Firstly, they control their means of production in the sense that they have direct access to their land, tools and labour. Secondly, peasant production is mainly aimed at subsistence as they produce to meet their own consumption needs and the needs of continuing production (paying debts, buying seeds, tools). While they may produce a surplus that they ultimately sell, it is not a motivating force for their production. Finally that peasants transfer their surplus to a 'dominant group of rulers' or to a dominant class (Johnson, 1991: 123). Kriger (1992: 52) noted that researchers on Zimbabwe, for instance, Manungo, Yudelman, Ranger and Weinrich, have tended to include all people in the Tribal Trust Lands (TTLs) (now Communal Lands) and Purchase Area (now small-scale producers) as peasants. According to Kriger (1992: 252) the use of the term peasants has been loose and often interchanged with terms such as 'producers' and the 'traditional agricultural sector' to refer to African producers in both the TTLs and the Purchase Areas. Yudelman's categorisation tends to be underlined by the analysis that Europeans are 'modern' producers who are market-oriented, while Africans are 'traditional' producers who have a distrust for the market giving primacy to social kin obligations. Notwithstanding this summation, he recognises that not all Africans share the same traditional attitudes and that some are more like 'modern' producers (Yudelman, 1964: 18). Weinrich (1977) retains the term peasant for farmers of the various sectors dominated by Africans while making slight distinctions for them. She refers to TTL producers as 'peasant cultivators', Purchase Area producers as 'peasant farmers' and those on irrigation schemes as plot holders (Weinrich, 1977: 66). In Weinrich (1977)'s classification, even those that Kriger (1992) categorise as members of the 'African rural elite' – teachers and civil servants, are included as peasants.

demonstrated hesitancy in transforming or restructuring the LSCF sector which was viewed as ‘the goose laying the golden egg’. This means that agricultural transformation for the African sector was conceived in total isolation of the LSCF sector. Colin Stoneman (1988: 3) proposes that:

... because of the circumstances of transfer of power at Lancaster House with Britain as mediator, a daunting range of constraints bound the new government: one of Lenin’s main precepts – the need for a victorious revolution to smash the state apparatus of the old regime – was therefore violated from the start.

Rural communities were not assigned any decision-making processes aimed at the reconstruction of the new Zimbabwe despite their involvement in the liberation struggle. The need for land and better rural life was the basis upon which the nationalist-peasantry alliances were forged (Ranger, 1985).

The architects of liberation had mobilized rural support in the war in line with Maoism. Rural cell groups and rallies became education centers to inform people about the war and to enlist or force their support of the war effort (Kriger, 1987). Peasant involvement in the war of independence created a reasonable amount of political consciousness and expectations from an independent Zimbabwe as trade off for their involvement in the war (Ranger, 1992). The ruling party has often relied on the rural constituency for support. However, beneficiaries of resettlement see that their production role in the economy is not different from their previous roles in the Communal Areas, where subsistence was paramount. Government officials have blamed these settlers for failing to transform the way they approached farming, blaming ‘peasant ineptitude and lack of ability to transform’ (Beaumont, 1981: 121).

Resettlement agriculture was also pursued outside a holistic rural development policy that also attended to the problems in the broader African sector (including communal lands that occupied more than 43% of total land – see table 5 below). The Chavunduka Commission warned that:

Regardless of land redistribution measures, the year 2000 will still see at least seven million people living in the existing communal areas, or nearly double the number living there at present. Unless urgent and

effective action is taken to rehabilitate the communal areas, ... there will be no hope of achieving the large increase in productivity necessary to enable these areas to support their inhabitants and to make a net contribution to the economy (Chavunduka, 1982: 4).

In response to this warning and suggestions made by the Chavunduka Commission piecemeal measures were taken towards rural re-organisation – programme that was faced with resistance and abandoned by 1990 (GoZ, 1990). The major problem in this thinking is that it brought back the state control measures of the reminiscent of the Native Land Husbandry Act of 1951 (similar to the Betterment regimes in the former Homelands in apartheid South Africa) (see Potts and Mutambirwa, 1997).

Table 5: Population Growth and Resettlement

	Year								
	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988
Total Population	4,054	4,183	4,317	4,451	4,589	4,731	4,878	5,029	5,185
Resettled	0	17	94	222	294	327	368	398	428
Communal Areas	4,054	4,165	4,223	4,229	4,295	4,404	4,510	4,631	4,757
	Communal Areas Populated Densities (People / km ²)								
Without Resettlement	25	26	26	27	28	29	30	31	32
Actual	25	25	26	26	26	27	28	28	29

Source: Cusworth, 1990.

The levels of differentiation among settled farmers still reflect the initial differentiation in resources and ability to pool together resources by each individual household. The situation in Mayo shows a complex picture of differing standards of living for different settler households reflecting their initial circumstances. The institutional support for these settlers has not been adequate to meaningfully affect their conditions of living as poverty persists unabated. There is a direct link between the ability of settlers to transform in response to external assistance (or the lack of it) and their background prior to resettlement. For this reason, the role and extent of state involvement in resettlement agriculture, in facilitating productivity and environmentally sustainable land use practices cannot be over-emphasised. Access to resources and the levels of investment in resettlement agriculture in Mayo indicates that African farmers who received land under the resettlement programme were set up for failure. The celebrated increase in African contribution to the national food basket

in the 1980s can only be seen as a phase in response to the end of war and removal of colonial prohibitive legislation rather than resulting from a properly calculated investment policy of government. Commenting with hindsight, M. Adams (2002: 12) could argue that on the whole:

... resettlement agriculture was an expression of government desire, but a fettered and foiled attempt to transform the social relations of production in the African agriculture sector. More directly, it was a compromise and desperation to modernise African agriculture at very low cost.

Colonial economic policy made direct policies to benefit white settlers while making it difficult for Africans to enter into commercial production in agriculture (Phimister, 1974: 218). The post-independence regime's response to the agrarian question was to increase the number of blacks involved in agriculture by redistributing land and hoping that the removal of colonial legislation plus the provision of support services would change the structure of African agriculture.

In the 1990s the acclaimed gains of the 1980s were heavily eroded by the implementation of World Bank and IMF supported adjustment policies, which effectively reintroduced the effect of 'structural constraints' that colonial legislation had placed on rural production. The United Nations' Human Development Report acknowledged that:

In the 1980s, there had been a phenomenal growth of extension services and credit to communal areas. These were drastically curtailed during the 1990s ... the nineties also saw a substantial reduction in the subsidies on farm inputs. The centralised crop purchasing system of the early eighties was gradually abandoned, and the farmers were left to locate their own markets (Tandom, 1999: 27).

Structural adjustment implied the privatisation of service institutions and marketing facilities which directly led to fall in productivity as small-farmers could not afford inputs. The number of land under cultivation developed drastically to below half of the mid 1980s level. The World Bank and the Zimbabwe government continued to introduce structural adjustment programmes despite overwhelming evidence on their negative effects. For instance a World Bank evaluation on the implications of

adjustment programmes on the economy and society in general, had acknowledged that:

These policies aimed at restructuring production aggravated the plight of some vulnerable groups in the short-run and did not help alleviate the poverty of some groups in the long run (Heller, 1988: 33).

Policy on land resettlement and agriculture development tended to respond more to the evolving classes and class interests of the ruling elite rather than in line with the demands and interests of resettlement farmers. The role of public policy has been a key determinant of the economic performance of the agricultural sector in Zimbabwe and particularly that of the small-holder sector. The research will highlight the specific mix of historical, political and policy factors that were in operation, and which in turn influenced the specific government policy on African agriculture. The key objectives for agrarian reform were “largely to redress the imbalances in resource allocation and improve the livelihoods of the Africans” (GoZ, 1982).

To highlight the role of the state in developing (or further under-developing) African agriculture in post-independence Zimbabwe, four main areas of public policy (planning and implementation) are examined. These include: (a) the settler selection and modeling; (b) service provision (DDF and Agritex); (c) pricing and marketing; and (d) rural credit. Stephen Peterson’s (1986) study of these issues in Kenya’s agricultural sector revealed that instead of leading to economic growth and development, the policy had accentuated sharply a trend toward social differentiation. Nick Amin (1999) also reported differentiation within Zimbabwe’s resettlement schemes. Instead of regulating the prices, policy effort should be directed towards strengthening the supply response of these producers by giving them a real chance to take advantage of the economic opportunities opened up a comprehensive reform process. The potential of the resettlement schemes and other rural commodity producers to provide a way out of poverty through sustainable accumulation depends largely on the extent to which rural structural problems are removed. Structural problems which create paralysis for the rural sector include poor transport networks, weak market institutions, lack of a focused and co-ordinated rural development policy and most importantly, lack of political will among implementing agents and lack of capacity for the rural people to participate in policy-making or political processes.

The resettled farmers remain marginal to the political decision making process. The majority of these families are remote from the centres of power and lack the experience, confidence and opportunity to voice their development needs (Blackie, 1981). Compounding this is the lack of consistence in government policy on rural administration, as it moves back and forth between the use of elected leaders and the preference for traditional authorities in the resettlement schemes. Mayo settlers have found themselves caught in the power struggle between their elected village heads and the traditional authorities from the neighbouring Weya, Tanda and Chendambuya (see map) villages resulting from this lack of consistence on the part of government.

Agricultural extension services to the African farmers is a very important area for analysis as it is not only the human hours spent with settler farmers that is important but also the assumptions upon which such services are made available. The extension officer became the new high priest in an agriculture-based rural development programme. The role of the agricultural extension officer was to lead the revolution from subsistence producer hooked on traditional farming methods to a new commercial producer using modern and scientific methods. This role has been highly unattainable in the context of Zimbabwe where extension officers are faced with innumerable problems such as lack of resources and lack of institutional support from the government, which normally transforms into lack of motivation. According to Lofchie (1986: 13):

The operative idea underlying this strategy was that once peasant farmers had been made aware of the benefits to be derived from agricultural innovation, their traditional resistance to change would be overcome, and sweeping improvements in the process of increased agricultural productivity would take place.

Many of the approaches to extension rest upon highly questionable assumptions about the needs and nature of resettlement farmers; namely that peasant cultural conservatism was the principal obstacle to agrarian innovation. However, the Kinsey surveys mentioned earlier confirm the observation by Lofchie (1986) that African peasants are not bound by cultural constraints; that they respond with alacrity to economic opportunity; and that when financial incentives are present, their production for the market place increases accordingly. The Chavunduka Commission (1982) lamented the huge gap between the number of extension workers on the ground and the number required if standards of crop and animal husbandry were to be improved

within a reasonable period of time. Instead of an ideal one extension worker for every 200 to 300 farmers, each extension worker serviced 800 or more farmers. Mayo has always had to do with a single full time extension worker, meaning that one extension officer had the whole 80 villages to attend to.

The resettlement sector also suffered huge financial problems (Bond, 1998; Amin, 1999). The allocation of loans and budgetary allocation to the resettlement sector remained very negligible in comparison to allocations to the LSCF sector (see table below). To begin with the government did not create a new institution as a vehicle for addressing the loan and credit requirements of the new sector. The Agriculture Finance Corporation (AFC) was charged with the task of extending its service to cater for this new sector with very negative results. The relationship between the AFC and the resettlement farmers remained characterized by suspicion and accusations. African farmers were seen as a risky sector because of the high levels of defaults, while the AFC was accused of being insensitive to the conditions of these farmers.

Conclusion

The failure to sustain the gains by African growers in increased crop production and share of the market and transform from subsistence to market oriented agriculture in Zimbabwe after independence, should be laid squarely at the doorstep of government ineptitude, lack of political will despite the rhetoric. Suggesting that Zimbabwe experienced an agrarian miracle consistent with an agricultural revolution in the 1980s is an exaggeration and is based on comparisons of the wrong sector. Resettlement agriculture was theoretically meant to produce commercial producers, thus comparing production figures with Communal Area productivity is misleading as a basis to gauge improvement or lack of it. The so-called miracle was indeed nothing more than an expectable and equally unsurprising increase in production as rural people responded to the end of a protracted war fought largely in rural areas. The increase in figures was also largely from the Communal Areas rather than from the Resettlement Areas, without any change in the way people carried on the farming business. As discussed by Amin (1999: 11), the rural communities of Zimbabwe under colonial rule were still very much part and parcel of the food production factor. The continued participation of Africans in food production was not entirely a product of peasant resilience but also the work of deliberate colonial state machination. It was opportune for the colonial state to allow a window of opportunity for African

producers, so as to allow the reproduction of rural economy for the benefit of the urban economy.

The resettlement schemes were for independent Zimbabwe a political and welfare strategy rather than an economic programme for agricultural development and sustainable development. Thus resettlement became more of a land reform exercise rather than agricultural transformation. Agricultural planning within the schemes came in as *ad hoc* plans on a scheme to scheme basis. The original planning was dominated by politicians, with minimal inputs from agricultural specialists. The largest preoccupations were with the physical planning and scheme layout, to which productivity and economic sustainability played second fiddle. This explains why many of the studies evaluating or seeking to, the success or otherwise of the scheme do so on the basis of the land transferred and the number of families resettled.

Those who attempt to demonstrate the ‘success story’ thesis from the point of view of productivity however, supplement the figures from the resettlement schemes with those of communal area production, lumped together with those of the former Native Purchase Area schemes. The success in productivity was heavily undermined by multiple reasons including: (i) the lack of focus and planning towards productivity, and agricultural transformation; (ii) the lack of commitment to the importance and possible role of small scale producers as opposed to large scale producers; (iii) the continued interference of bureaucrats and politicians in the running of the affairs of the department responsible for agricultural development in the sector; (iv) the lack of commitment to providing conditions for productivity levels acceptable in individual schemes and, (v) the lack of the financial resources and human capacity necessary for such productivity to take place.

Resettlement agriculture failed to compete with the LSCF sector as the mainstay for Zimbabwean agriculture towards the political goal of ‘growth with equity.’ Besides it did not only fail to rise to a point where it could compete for space and recognition, but completely failed to address the dualistic nature of Zimbabwean agriculture. As Kinsey (1999: 174) argues:

Despite evidence that small-scale farming can be a powerful source of growth in Zimbabwe, support to the sub-sector dwindled in the late

1980s and throughout the 1990s. (which he alleges to) a growing myth in political thinking, promoted by vigorous lobbying, that the beneficiaries of the land reform programme were the least productive farmers in the country and thus undeserving of the land they had been given.

The main problems with the resettlement sector therefore can be understood in the context of the hesitancy within the political and bureaucratic circles towards disbanding LSCF and enhancing the role and place of resettlement agriculture.

Proposed Thesis Outline/ Chapter Organisation

The focus is both historical and contemporary, covering post-independence policy development and implementation of agriculture transformation strategies over two decades, 1980 to 2000.

Introduction - provides the background to the study, conditions under which research was carried out, research methodology applied, limitations of the research effort as well as providing a history of the area under study.

Chapter one, **history of the land: African agriculture under colonial rule, 1945 - 1980**

Chapter two, **settling the land** – discusses the theory behind resettlement agriculture, its formulation and proposed implementation

Chapter three, **developing the land: 1980 -1990** – using the case study of Mayo, this chapter will focus on the implementation of the transformation strategies focussing on structural issues such as; research and extension, irrigation and transport, market and pricing issues as well as producers' political involvement. In terms of institutional development of the resettlement schemes the issue of administration was also subject to numerous inconsistencies on the part of government. The control of resettlement areas changed hands, back and forth, between department officials, elected local heads and traditional leaders. This inconsistency led to a lack of direction and

frustration on the part of resettlement farmers and became a source of conflict as well as disincentive to growth and transformation. This meddling with rural politics undermined the ability of the resettlement farmers to establish a strong voice through which they could articulate their interests. Tenure security became an issue once resettlement areas were handed over to traditional leaders who dominate communal lands politics. According to Rukuni and Jensen (2003: 243):

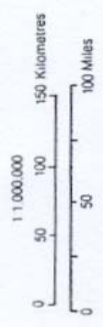
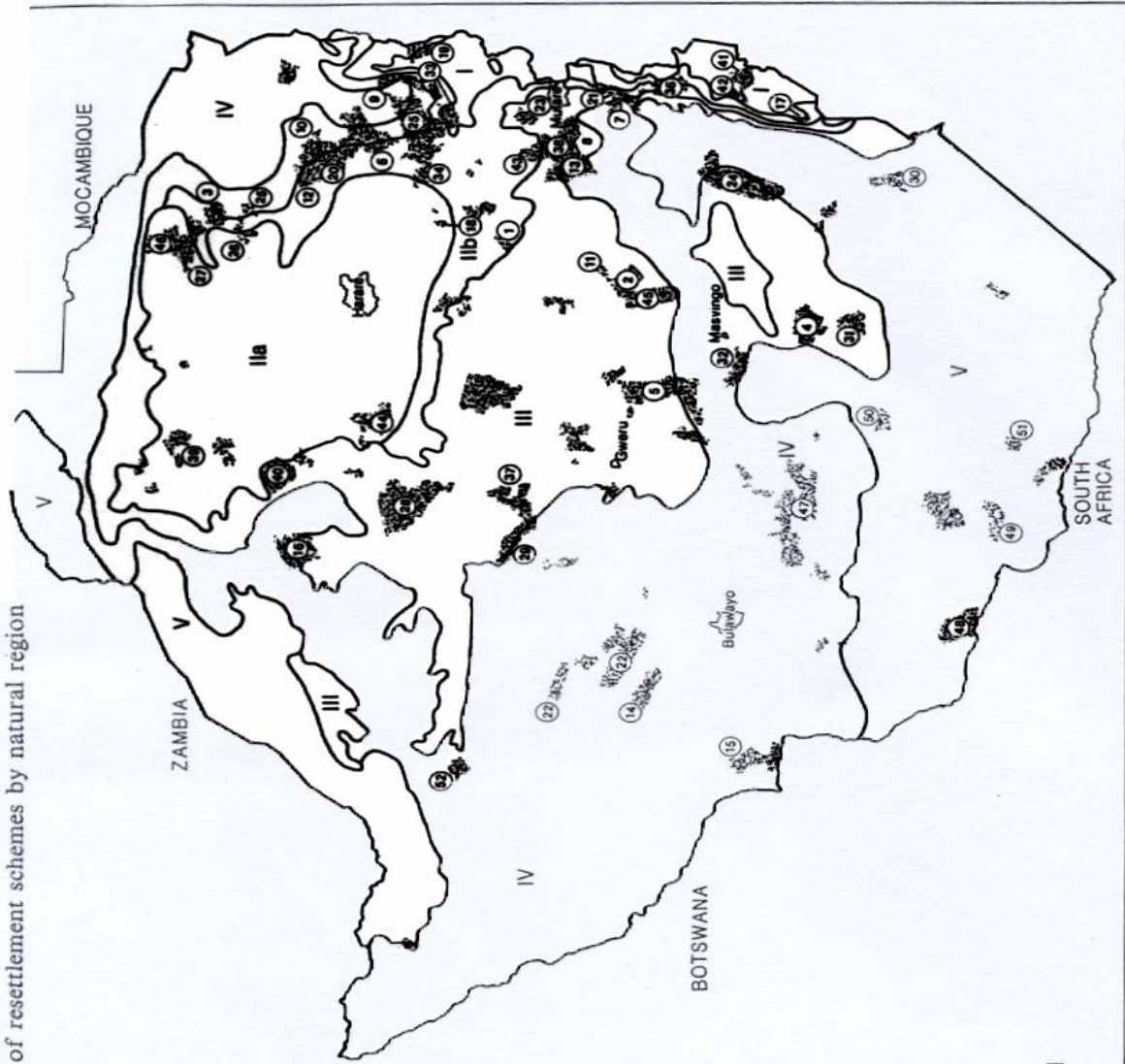
The lack of power of rural land owners [or lack of democracy] is translated into insecure tenure rights. Tenure security, in terms of exclusive land rights of groups and individuals, is the very basis of political and social power and status. When such rights are overly subordinated to the state, it follows that the political and economic rights of rural people are diminished, and that democratic process and institutions are undermined.

Chapter four, **mortgaging the land, Resettlement and Structural adjustment: 1990 - 2000** – Still using the Case Study and evidence from other schemes, this chapter will focus on the implication of structural adjustment on resettlement agriculture, the role and impact of agribusiness involvement in resettlement agriculture.

Chapter five, **re-dividing the land: land invasions and the future of agriculture in Zimbabwe** – focuses on the prospects for agriculture after the land invasions of the 1999 to 2001. This chapter links the 1980 phase of the resettlement programme with that of the 1999 – 2001, demonstrating the lack of consistence in approach to African agriculture as well as the fact that it was political considerations as opposed to economic factors that influenced government policy on agriculture.

Chapter six, **summary of findings and conclusion** – argues for a more concerted and co-ordinated effort towards the transformation of rural and especially resettlement agriculture. Suggests that this process must be a product of a properly thought out and designed rural development policy.

Zimbabwe: Distribution of resettlement schemes by natural region

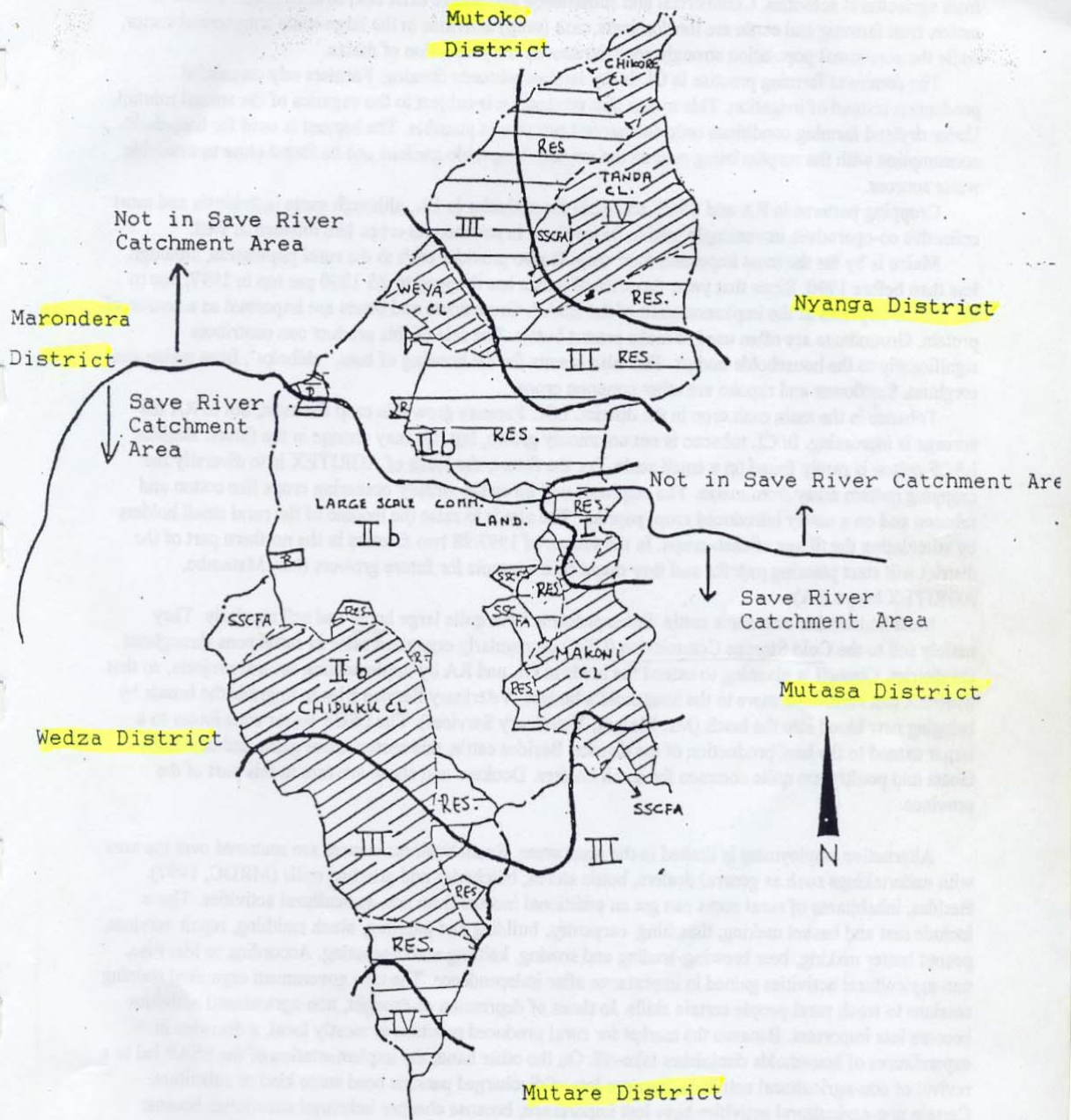


Index to Intensive Resettlement Schemes

- 1 SENGEZI
- 2 SOTE SOURCE
- 3 UMFURUDZI
- 4 MUKOSI
- 5 TUGWI
- 6 MAYO
- 7 MUPUDZI
- 8 NYAGUNDI
- 9 MUOZI
- 10 NYAMUZIZI
- 11 MVIMVI
- 12 NYADHIRI
- 13 MUTANDA
- 14 UMGUSA
- 15 DOMBODEMA
- 16 COPPER QUEEN
- 17 NYAGADZA
- 18 SENGEZI STAGE 2 (MODEL B)
- 19 GAERESI (MODEL B)
- 20 HOYUYU
- 21 MURARE
- 22 BEMBEZI
- 23 CHECHERA
- 24 DEVULI
- 25 CHINYIKA
- 26 UMFURUDZI
- 27 PFURA
- 28 MUZVEZE
- 29 KOTANAI
- 30 CHIZVIRIZVI
- 31 NYAHOMBE
- 32 MUSHANDIKE
- 33 INYANGA SOUTH
- 34 MUFUSIRE
- 35 TOKWE GAMWE
- 36 SHINJA
- 37 KGTANAI II
- 38 MUTANDA
- 39 NYAMA
- 40 POTE
- 41 RUSITU
- 42 GWENZI
- 43 NYAMAZURA
- 44 MESENGEZI
- 45 GUTU SOUTH
- 46 PFURA 11
- 47 WANEZI
- 48 MATOPOS SOUTH
- 49 SHOBI BLOCK
- 50 WEDZA BLOCK
- 51 LOT 6 OF JOMPENBI
- 52 KARNA BLOCK

Source: Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rural Development, June, 1983.

Map 2 Makoni District: Natural Regions and land use



- I Intensive agriculture; Annual rainfall 1200 mm
- IIb Semi-intensive agriculture; Annual rainfall 800 - 900 mm
- III Extensive farming; Annual rainfall 650 - 750 mm
- IV Marginal agriculture; Annual rainfall 450 - 650 mm

Source: MRDC.

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