The Politics of Land Distribution and Race Relations in Southern Africa

Sam Moyo

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Acronyms

AIAS	African Institute for Agrarian Studies
CBNRM	community-based natural resources management
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
GDP	gross domestic product
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LSCF	Large-scale commercial farm
NGO	non-governmental organization
NR	Natural Region
RENAMO	Resistencia Nacional Moçambicana *(Mozambique National Resistance)*
SADC	Southern African Development Community
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
WTO	World Trade Organization
WVA	War Veterans Association

Summary/Résumé/Resumen

Summary

This paper discusses the politics of land distribution and race relations in southern Africa, with a particular focus on the experiences of the former colonial states of Zimbabwe, South Africa and Namibia. It examines how inequitable land relations have contributed to intensified race-based conflicts.

Recent land reform debates in southern Africa have rekindled discourses on unequal race relations within the region. Land policy formation continues to be shaped by racial patterns, ownership of land and natural resources, and social justice concerns arising from historic grievances. The indigenous black population remains marginalized in national and global politics and in terms of economic benefits derived from land and natural resources, and the black majority in most southern African countries remains landless and excluded from development, despite the fact that, technically, it has political and economic sovereignty.

Colonial land policies institutionalized racial inequity with regard to land in southern Africa, and recent attempts to confront the consequences of historical land expropriation, and to redress contemporary land-based inequities, discriminatory legislation and institutions, have generated renewed racial conflict in the subregion.

The greatest threat to security in southern Africa lies in the unequal land ownership patterns in countries where poor people's livelihoods depend on farming. There are too many blacks who remain unemployed, landless, homeless and shut out of the agricultural economic base of the region. This is due, in part, to the political independence agreements within the subregion that failed to address the core racial problem of inequitable land and natural resource ownership, and the commensurate dearth of economic opportunities. Moreover, continuing land conflicts along racial lines suggest the fallibility of efforts for reconciliation that fail to humanely and fairly address economic, political and social justice concerns. Simply put, a major problem in addressing land conflict is the racially based ideological distortion that shrouds social, political and economic debates about land and agriculture in southern Africa.

This paper argues that land redistribution through redressing historical problems and social justice is a crucial ingredient of reconciliation and development in the subregion. Since political independence agreements failed to consider compensating victims for past losses of lives, land, livestock, wildlife resources and homes, land redistribution can be seen as a form of reparation for the land and resources expropriated during the colonial period. The international community's failure to mobilize finance for land reform has fuelled the perceptions of indigenous people that white landowners are being protected by the donor community. Many donor countries have supported land reform as an economic development initiative, while neglecting the enduring political and social justice issues that underlie it.

Hence, the land question in southern Africa is increasingly viewed as an internationalized form of racist privileging of white minorities in the face of demands for land redistribution by victims of past land expropriation. Moreover, non-governmental organizations appear to be predominantly interested in sustainable environment issues, which, while certainly important, seem to consistently militate against the needs and interests of the poor and landless of the region.

This paper develops a conceptual framework, reviews the structure and relationships regarding race and land distribution, and discusses demands for land redistribution. It provides a review of land policies and detailed case-study evidence from the subregion. It utilizes a historical and political-economic framework to examine the evolution of racial inequalities, conflicts and struggles over land and land policies in order to address these issues directly. The preferred framework integrates conflict analysis and structuralist and materialist perspectives to elucidate the evolution of conflictual race relations.

It also provides a framework for analysing the social basis for land demand, struggles and policy making. Data and indices relating to inequality, scarcity and landlessness are presented and discussed. It further offers a broad scan of land policies and administration systems, many of which have perpetuated, deepened and institutionalized social and economic inequities derived from unequal agrarian structures.

Different approaches to land redistribution are also explored, examining the politics and policies of land reform with particular reference to the Zimbabwe experience and its implications for South Africa and Namibia. Details of the political process, violence and conflict are reviewed, together with the manner in which international relations and aid have affected land reform in postcolonial Zimbabwe.

Race relations in southern Africa can improve, normalize and benefit the entire region through appropriate land reform policies if the historical and social justice issues, together with contemporary problems of equity, poverty reduction and economic growth, are acknowledged and redressed directly, rather than subsumed by development parameters and aid preconditions. Attempts to reduce complex racial, political and identity-based conflicts into simplistic components of economic reform based upon inadequately developed market processes will only further polarize socially charged southern African societies.

Social justice based upon more equitable race relations and land distribution is integral to longer-term political reform and economic development. Ultimately, resolving racial land conflicts requires realistic and meaningful notions of reconciliation, which entail exposing the wider historic truths of past and present race relations in this region, and exploring avenues for redistribution of critical resources such as land.

Sam Moyo is the Executive Director of the African Institute for Agrarian Studies (AIAS) based in Harare, Zimbabwe.

Résumé

Cette étude traite de la répartition des terres et des relations raciales comme enjeux politiques en Afrique australe et s'intéresse plus particulièrement aux expériences des anciens Etats coloniaux du Zimbabwe, de l'Afrique du Sud et de la Namibie. L'auteur examine dans quelle mesure la répartition injuste des terres a contribué à intensifier les conflits raciaux.

La réforme agraire, qui a fait récemment l'objet de débats en Afrique australe, a relancé le discours sur l'inégalité des relations raciales dans la région. La politique foncière est toujours déterminée par les structures raciales, l'organisation de la propriété des terres et des ressources naturelles, et inspirée par un souci de justice sociale qui s'explique par les injustices de l'histoire. La population noire autochtone reste marginalisée dans la politique nationale et mondiale et n'a guère part à la manne économique que rapportent les terres et les ressources naturelles. Dans la plupart des pays d'Afrique australe, la majorité noire reste privée de terres et exclue du développement, bien que, techniquement, elle ait la souveraineté politique et économique.

Les politiques foncières de la période coloniale ont institutionnalisé l'inégalité des races dans l'accès à la terre en Afrique australe, et les tentatives récentes qui ont été faites pour affronter les conséquences de l'expropriation historique des terres et pour corriger les inégalités actuelles dans ce domaine, ainsi que les lois et institutions discriminatoires, ont rallumé le conflit racial dans la région.

La plus grande menace à la sécurité en Afrique australe vient de l'inégalité des structures de la propriété foncière dans des pays où les pauvres vivent de l'agriculture. Les noirs chômeurs, sans terre, sans abri et exclus de l'économie agricole sont trop nombreux dans la région. Cette situation est due en partie au fait que, lors de l'accession à l'indépendance politique, les accords, dans cette sous-région, ne sont pas attaqués au problème central, celui de l'inégalité des races dans l'accès à

la propriété des terres et des ressources naturelles, avec les conséquences qui en résultent en aval sur les chances économiques. De plus, le fait que les conflits fonciers continuent à suivre les lignes de fracture raciales est un indice de la faillibilité des efforts de réconciliation qui n'ont pas su trouver des solutions humaines et équitables aux problèmes de justice économique, politique et sociale. Pour dire les choses simplement, le problème majeur auquel on se heurte lorsqu'on veut régler le conflit foncier tient au préjugé racial qui fausse le débat social, politique et économique sur les terres et l'agriculture en Afrique australe et le teinte d'idéologie.

Sam Moyo estime que la réconciliation et le développement de la sous-région passent par une redistribution des terres qui corrige les problèmes et l'injustice sociale hérités du passé. Puisque les accords conclus lors de l'accession à l'indépendance politique n'ont pas envisagé d'indemniser les victimes pour les vies sacrifiées, la perte de leurs terres, de leur bétail, des ressources de la faune et de la flore et de leurs foyers, la redistribution des terres peut être considérée comme une forme de réparation pour la terre et les ressources dont elles ont été expropriées pendant la période coloniale. L'incapacité de la communauté internationale à réunir des fonds pour la réforme agraire a confirmé les populations autochtones dans leur croyance que les propriétaires fonciers blancs étaient protégés par les donateurs internationaux. De nombreux pays donateurs ont soutenu la réforme agraire comme initiative de développement économique mais ont négligé les problèmes sous-jacents et tenaces de justice politique et sociale.

Ainsi, la question foncière en Afrique australe est considérée de plus en plus comme une forme de racisme internationalisé, les minorités blanches étant perçues comme privilégiées par rapport à ceux qui ont été expropriés dans le passé et qui demandent une redistribution des terres. De plus, les organisations non gouvernementales semblent s'intéresser surtout aux questions du développement durable qui, bien qu'importantes, paraissent se liguer contre les besoins et les intérêts des pauvres et des sans-terre de la région.

L'auteur élabore un cadre conceptuel, examine la structure raciale de la répartition des terres et les relations qui vont de pair avec elle, ainsi que les revendications en matière de redistribution des terres. Il dresse un catalogue des politiques foncières et apporte un dossier bien fourni d'études de cas menées dans la sous-région. Il étudie l'évolution des inégalités, des luttes et des conflits raciaux ayant pour objet la terre et les politiques foncières selon une grille historique et politico-économique afin d'éclairer directement ces questions. Son cadre préféré intègre l'analyse des conflits et les perspectives structuralistes et matérialistes afin de faire la lumière sur l'évolution de relations raciales plutôt conflictuelles.

Il offre aussi une grille d'analyse pour étudier la base sociale des revendications de terres, des luttes et de l'élaboration des politiques. Il présente des données et des indicateurs relatifs à l'inégalité, à la rareté et à la privation de terres et les commente. Il donne aussi un vaste aperçu des politiques foncières et des systèmes d'administration, dont beaucoup ont perpétué, approfondi et institutionnalisé des inégalités sociales et économiques nées de l'inégalité des structures agraires.

Il explore aussi diverses façons d'aborder la redistribution des terres, examinant les politiques de réforme agraire et leurs enjeux politiques à la lumière de l'expérience du Zimbabwe, en particulier, et des conséquences à en tirer pour l'Afrique du Sud et la Namibie. Il s'attarde sur des aspects du processus politique, des moments de violence et de conflit, ainsi que sur l'influence des relations internationales et de l'aide sur la réforme agraire dans le Zimbabwe postcolonial.

Des politiques appropriées de réforme agraire peuvent améliorer et normaliser les relations raciales en Afrique australe, ce qui aurait des retombées bénéfiques sur toute la région. Encore faut-il que les questions de justice sociale et historique soient dûment reconnues et les injustices redressées directement plutôt qu'incluses dans les paramètres de développement et les conditions préalables à l'aide. Tenter de réduire la complexité des conflits raciaux, politiques et identitaires à des éléments simplistes de réforme économique en invoquant un fonctionnement du marché encore insuffisant, ne fera qu'accentuer encore la division dans les sociétés d'Afrique australe.

A long terme, la réforme politique et le développement économique passent par une justice sociale fondée sur des relations raciales et une répartition des terres plus équitables. En dernière analyse, les conflits fonciers entre les races ne pourront se régler sans une conception réaliste et positive de la réconciliation, qui amène à ne plus dissimuler les grandes vérités historiques, celles des relations raciales passées et présentes dans cette région, et à rechercher les moyens de redistribuer les terres, qui font partie des ressources vitales.

Sam Moyo est directeur exécutif de l'Institut Africain des études agraires (AIAS, sigle anglais), basé à Harare, Zimbabwe.

Resumen

En estas páginas se examina la política de distribución de la tierra y las relaciones raciales en África meridional, prestando particular atención a las experiencias de los antiguos Estados coloniales de Zimbabwe, Sudáfrica y Namibia. Se analiza el modo en que las relaciones no equitativas respecto de la tierra han contribuido a intensificar los conflictos raciales.

Los recientes debates sobre la reforma agraria en África meridional han reavivado los discursos sobre la desigualdad de las relaciones raciales en la región. La política agraria sigue forjándose sobre la base de patrones raciales, de la tenencia de la tierra y los recursos naturales, y de cuestiones de justicia social derivadas de agravios históricos. La población negra indígena sigue estando marginada en la política nacional y mundial, así como en lo que respecta a los beneficios económicos dimanantes de la tierra y los recursos naturales; y la mayoría negra en la mayor parte de los países de África meridional sigue sin tener tierras y sin poder beneficiarse del desarrollo, a pesar de que, técnicamente, disfrutan de soberanía política y económica.

Las políticas agrarias coloniales institucionalizaron la falta de equidad racial con respecto a la tenencia de la tierra en África meridional, y los esfuerzos desplegados recientemente para afrontar las consecuencias de la expropiación de la tierra histórica, así como para corregir la falta de equidad territorial actual y las instituciones y legislación discriminatorias, han provocado un renovado conflicto racial en la subregión.

La mayor amenaza para la seguridad en África meridional es la desigualdad con respecto a la tenencia de la tierra en los países en que el sustento de los pobres depende de la agricultura. Demasiados negros están desempleados, sin tierra, sin hogar y excluidos de la economía agrícola de la región. Esto es debido, en parte, a que los acuerdos de independencia política en la subregión fracasaron en el intento de abordar el problema racial fundamental que representaba la falta de equidad respecto de la tenencia de la tierra y los recursos naturales, y las grandes oportunidades económicas que éstos conllevarían. Además, los continuos conflictos territoriales de carácter racial ponen de relieve la falibilidad de los esfuerzos de reconciliación que no logran hacer frente de un modo humano y justo a los problemas económicos, políticos y de justicia social. En otras palabras, un problema fundamental al hacer frente al conflicto territorial es la distorsión ideológica basada en lo racial que predomina en los debates sociales, políticos y económicos sobre la tierra y la agricultura en África meridional.

En este documento se sostiene que la redistribución de la tierra a través de la solución de los problemas históricos y de la justicia social son componentes fundamentales de la reconciliación y el desarrollo en la subregión. Dado que los acuerdos de independencia política no contemplaron compensar a las víctimas por la pérdida de vidas, tierra, ganado, y recursos naturales y hogares sufrida en el pasado, la redistribución de la tierra puede considerarse una forma de reparar la expropiación de las tierras y recursos que tuvo lugar durante el período colonial. El hecho de que la comunidad internacional no haya movilizado fondos destinados a la reforma agraria, ha reavivado la percepción de los indígenas de que los terratenientes blancos están protegidos por la comunidad donante. Muchos países donantes han apoyado la reforma agraria como iniciativas de desarrollo económico, si bien han desatendido las cuestiones políticas y de justicia social perdurables subyacentes a dicha reforma.

Así pues, la cuestión agraria en África meridional se considera cada vez más una forma internacionalizada de racismo, que privilegia a las minorías blancas ante las reivindicaciones relativas a la redistribución de la tierra de las víctimas de la expropiación de la tierra en el pasado. Además, las organizaciones no gubernamentales dan la impresión de estar fundamentalmente interesadas en cuestiones de medio ambiente sostenible, que si bien son importantes, parecen ir sistemáticamente en contra de las necesidades e intereses de las personas pobres y sin tierra de la región.

El autor elabora un marco conceptual, examina la estructura y las relaciones con respecto a la raza y la distribución de la tierra, y aborda las reivindicaciones relativas a la redistribución de la tierra. Analiza las políticas agrarias y las pruebas detalladas de estudios de casos de la subregión. Utiliza un marco histórico y político-económico para estudiar la evolución de las desigualdades raciales, los conflictos y la lucha por la tierra y en torno a las políticas agrarias, para poder abordar directamente estas cuestiones. El marco preferente integra el análisis del conflicto, y perspectivas estructuralistas y materialistas, para dilucidar la evolución de las conflictivas relaciones raciales.

También se proporciona un marco para analizar el fundamento social de la reivindicación de la tierra, los conflictos y la elaboración de políticas. Se facilitan y estudian los datos e índices relativos a la desigualdad, la escasez y carencia de tierras. Asimismo, se examinan ampliamente las políticas agrarias y los sistemas administrativos, muchos de los cuales han perpetuado, intensificado e institucionalizado la falta de equidad económica y social provocada por estructuras agrarias desiguales.

Se estudia igualmente la redistribución de la tierra desde diferentes enfoques, y se examinan los principios políticos y las políticas de la reforma agraria, haciendo particular hincapié en la experiencia de Zimbabwe y sus consecuencias en Sudáfrica y Namibia. Se analizan los detalles del proceso político, la violencia y el conflicto, así como los efectos que han tenido la ayuda y las relaciones internacionales en la reforma agraria llevada a cabo en la Zimbabwe postcolonial.

Las relaciones raciales en África meridional pueden mejorar, normalizarse y beneficiar a toda la región a través de políticas apropiadas de reforma agraria, si se reconocen y afrontan directamente los problemas históricos y sociales, y los problemas actuales de la equidad, la reducción de la pobreza y el crecimiento económico, en lugar de subsumirlos en parámetros de desarrollo y condiciones previas para la ayuda. Cualquier intento de reducir los complejos conflictos raciales, políticos y de identidad a componentes simplistas de una reforma económica basada en procesos inadecuadamente elaborados sólo conseguirá polarizar más aún las sociedades de África meridional con problemas sociales.

La justicia social basada en unas relaciones raciales y en una distribución de la tierra más equitativas es fundamental para la reforma política y el desarrollo económico a largo plazo. En última instancia, solucionar los conflictos territoriales de carácter racial exige nociones de reconciliación realistas y significativas, que conllevan sacar a la luz las verdades históricas de las relaciones raciales pasadas y presentes en la región, y explorar caminos para la distribución de recursos tan importantes como la tierra.

Sam Moyo es Director Ejecutivo del Instituto Africano de Estudios Agrarios (AIAS, por sus siglas en inglés), establecido en Harare, Zimbabwe.

Introduction

This paper discusses the politics of land distribution and race relations in southern Africa, with a particular focus on the experiences of the former settler colonial states of Zimbabwe, South Africa and Namibia. It examines how inequitable land relations have contributed to intensified race-based conflicts in the southern African region and shaped specific demands for land redistribution and land reform policies. The paper relies on detailed evidence from case studies from Zimbabwe, as well as South Africa and Namibia, and assesses their implications for the entire southern African region.

Recent land reform debates in southern Africa, predicated on the Zimbabwe land conflict, have rekindled the discourse on unequal race relations within the region. Land policy formation is increasingly shaped by racial patterns, land and natural resource ownership, and social justice concerns arising from historic grievances. The indigenous black population continues to be marginalized in national and global politics, and in terms of economic benefits derived from land and natural resources. Although liberation struggles have represented real attempts to address racial land inequalities, the black majority in most southern African countries remains landless and excluded from development, although it has formal political and economic sovereignty. Strategies to reclaim land and natural resources have refocused the need to address the race question in the subregion and re-examine sovereignty, independence, development aid and reparations as these issues relate to the land question.

Colonial land policies institutionalized racial inequity with regard to land in southern Africa. Recent attempts to confront the consequences of historical land expropriation, as well as to redress contemporary land-based inequities and discriminatory legislation and institutions, have generated renewed racial conflict in the subregion. Land-related conflicts today arise increasingly from initiatives to forcibly repossess rights to land and its natural resources. The greatest threat to security in southern Africa lies in unequal land ownership patterns in countries where poor people's livelihoods depend on farming. Formal employment is unable to absorb the numerous unemployed, land-short, landless and homeless (Tevera and Moyo 2000). Land conflicts along racial lines in Zimbabwe suggest that reconciliation without justice and social integration of whites is fragile at best.

The legacy of racially unequal land control confronts mainly the former settler colonies of Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa, as well as Malawi, Swaziland and Botswana, which experienced low-intensity settlerism. Independence agreements in these states sought to protect white capital, including large-scale white commercial farmers' control of prime lands. The independence constitutions guaranteed the protection of private property by sanctifying willing-seller–willing-buyer approaches to the disposal of freehold land for its redistribution.

A major problem in addressing the land conflict is the racially based ideological distortion that shrouds social, political and economic debates about land in southern Africa. The key land reform myths of interest here are that:

- the land rights held by white minorities over the land they expropriated historically are not only legally valid but also socially and politically legitimate;

- the freehold landholding system—which, in the case of Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa is white dominated—and private land markets are efficient and superior to customary (so-called "communal") tenure, thus justifying their preservation in the hands of minority white landowners. In general, the so-called "communal" land tenure is therefore considered a constraint to productivity and commercial farming;

- the postcolonial land-reform policies are irrational and undermine food security and confidence in the economy because they place the short-term political problem of redressing historical and racial imbalances ahead of economic stability;

- smallholders misuse their land ecologically, while white farmers utilize their land efficiently in terms of the scale of area used and yields per unit of land; and

- white farmers are generically superior technologically, and are efficient producers, while blacks farmers are subsistence farmers who contribute little to the economy.

These myths reflect an ahistoric understanding of the origins and development of the white-controlled large-scale farm sector, ignorance of the important role played by black smallholder farming in the region and the deep-rooted racism used to justify inaction on land reform.

Conceptual Issues

A historical, political and economic framework is necessary to understand the evolution of racial inequalities, conflicts and struggles over land, and policies to address them. Such analyses need to be contextualized within the rubric of popular demand for social justice and equity rather than being subsumed by neoliberal notions of governance and rule of law, which propose trickle-down and welfarist poverty reduction approaches to a problem that requires major structural change.

Institutionalized racism and economic control through land monopolies

Settler colonialism and land expropriation are at the root of the land and race problem. Conflict today results from past violence over access to land and natural resources during pre-colonial conquests that continued in the colonial period, during which there was polarization along racial lines due to the ill treatment of blacks by whites in farms, mines and towns. While the primary motive was land expropriation, proletarianization was instituted as a means of turning blacks into a cheap labour force on farms and in mines (Arrighi 1973). In order to develop a manufacturing base for white consumption, the white settler regime had to expropriate land as the key means of production, followed by exploitation of cheap black labour (Arrighi 1973). Greater national control by whites in colonial legislatures found expression in an institutional framework strongly biased in favour of the interests of monopoly control over land by whites (Claassens 1989). By owning the most—and best—of the land, whites gained control over black farmers in the hinterlands by forcing the farmers to work for terms set by the whites (Tevera and Moyo 2000).

White farmers have always been able to rely on the police, the judiciary, white parliaments and white technical experts to protect their absolute control over land. They have often acted as though they had absolute power and control over the lives of the black farm workers and other people who lived on their land. "Assault and murder are commonplace and very few of the whites were prosecuted even when charges were laid" (Claassens 1989:15). In the guise of protecting landed property, the colonial state created administrative systems for the white settlers and excluded the indigenous blacks.[1] For instance, "all institutions in the Transvaal platteland are fundamentally racist: the shops, the police, the post offices and the courts. This can be related to the way in which race is functional to the balance of power in the areas" (Claassens 1989:15).

Beyond race, there are other land conflicts precipitated by ethnicity with numerous minority groups being denied access to land. In Botswana, the land of the so-called "bushmen" was expropriated by large mining concerns for diamond mining, with piecemeal compensation to the tribes. In Zimbabwe, while the ethnic dimension is currently clouded, there are tendencies to question the land rights of minorities and long-standing migrants. The Herero in Namibia and the Maasai in Tanzania, both minority ethnic groups, have suffered the same fate, as land

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[1] The term "indigenous people" used here generally refers to black Africans born in countries of southern Africa. It is not associated with the generic use of the term, such as with regard to aborigines (referring to aboriginal or indigenous people such as Khoisan—also called "bushmen"). Whites born in Zimbabwe tend to be excluded from the category designated "indigenous", as they are regarded as descendants of illegal settlers who gained their land through conquest.

expropriated from the white landowners has tended to be transferred to the majority ethnic groups (Shivji 1998). As a result, the original claimants have suffered from lack of land rights.

The root of destruction of black cultures can be traced to the turn of the nineteenth century when missionaries (such as Robert Moffat), explorers (such as David Livingstone) and imperial capitalists (such as C.J. Rhodes) promoted the idea and perception of the civilization of the Africans as "pagan". Black traditional leaders were therefore evicted from places of honour within their traditional rituals as the white missionaries took over control of the land. White land administrators formed an alliance with such missionaries in efforts to sanctify the conquest of land. The mission educational system, for instance, segregated blacks from whites and condoned white supremacist ideologies. Long-standing ethnic diversity was recast into relationships with deep hostilities and segregation by the white missionary administrators and landowners. Subjugation of traditional leaders (such as chiefs and spirit mediums) and promotion of Christianity led to divide-and-rule tactics in controlling land and minerals such as diamonds and gold.

The white commercial farm economy

It has become an almost indelible southern Africa perspective that commercial farming is large scale and practised by white landowners, while subsistence farming is practised by the black peasantry. Although in a few instances there are piecemeal efforts to "buy out" black elites into large-scale farming through affirmative action programmes, large-scale commercial farming remains dominated by whites in terms of land ownership, value of production and the "social status" associated with it.

Competition for land from black elites tends to have been contained through restrictions on land sales in the communal areas and, on racial grounds, on freehold zones during the colonial and postcolonial periods. Thus, a few rural elites have been able to use land as a basis for attracting credit, while whites dominate agricultural financial loans. Moreover, blacks could not, by law, consolidate their communal area land for commercial production, as this was seen to lead to stiff competition against white farmers (Arrighi 1973). Protection of the white farming economy was also found within export agriculture, through marketing policy and infrastructure, as well as in production. Increasingly, domestic food markets and labour-intensive commodities for export markets, such as cotton, are dominated by black smallholders. However, due to the location of communal areas far away from main lines of transport, their returns are relatively marginal.

State subsidies have historically been used to support white farmers because they are considered key in exports, while the food security concept was used to augment subsidies to the large-scale commercial farming sector.[2] Colonial and postcolonial regimes have supported research stations located in white farming areas, and have focused the development of infrastructure (public dams, roads and communications, and power networks) among white farmers to the exclusion of blacks. This has widened the differential productivity of white agriculture compared to that of the black peasantry.

To date, the racially blind land policy in southern Africa does not accept international mainstream agricultural economics debates, which argue that smaller-sized farms tend to use their land more productively in terms of higher unit yields and use of labour. The trend, based on self-exploitation of domestic labour in peasant households, particularly of female and child labour, which has led to impressive small farm performance in Malawi and Zimbabwe, has not adequately changed beliefs about black smallholder efficiency (Weiner et al. 1985; Moyo 1987). The belief in the greater efficiency of large farms has also been a key constraint to progressive land policy in non-settler states before and after independence. Various governments, including

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[2] The large-scale farmers, who have substantial tracts of land, are regarded as critical for food security. It is for this reason that numerous subsidies go into large-scale commercial farming, to the exclusion of smallholders, who have to perpetually depend upon food subsidies because the land they have cannot sustain commercial production.

those of Malawi, Swaziland and Botswana, have developed their agricultural and land policies since the late 1960s on the basis of promoting large estates because of the need for economies of scale and the presumed superiority of large farms.

In the 1980s, land policies in southern Africa promoted individual indigenous capitalist farmers who were drawn from the ranks of senior politicians, civil servants, retirees and other formerly non-agrarian indigenous business people.[3] Once again, macroeconomic and agricultural policy regimes ensured that various resources, such as credit, foreign currency and infrastructure, were mainly allocated to both white and indigenous large capitalist farmers. The effects of such preferential resource allocations were wrongly taken to imply that large-scale farming was more effective than smallholder farming in southern Africa.[4] This had the effect of legitimizing the expansion of large-scale land holdings and discouraging land reform in those countries where growing land ownership imbalances were exacerbating land shortages, land degradation and rural poverty.

Environmentalism and white control of tourism

Similarly, southern African environmental discourses tend to regard land husbandry by blacks as intrinsically poor, implying that the environment will collapse if land is redistributed. The perception is that only whites value and nurture the environment, while agronomic practices of blacks, such as intercropping, are thought to destroy the soil. Thus the "conventional" settler-introduced system of agriculture—planting crops in straight lines, and using advanced technology and chemicals, which again, the blacks are thought to be incapable of using—are considered superior systems. However, recent research has disproved these notions.

Yet, indigenous technical knowledge promoted by liberal environmental non-governmental organizations (NGOs) seems to suffer from a lack of real agronomic alternatives that can take blacks in communal areas beyond current community-based natural resource projects that do not improve the standards of living of the majority. The common middle-class perception is that the poor degrade land while the white large-scale commercial sector uses land efficiently. This belief underlies the excessive focus of NGO schemes on "protecting" land and "educating" the peasantry on sustainable land use, rather than on advocacy for land redistribution.

Generally, NGOs have been and remain a reactionary force on land reform, rather than an agenda-setting movement. NGOs can be conceived of as a new mechanism for promoting the so-called indirect rule system, in which they increasingly substitute for local state and traditional authority in organizing communities in the co-management of state and donor-initiated development projects. This tendency begs further questions in the debate on the nature of NGOs, and on their ability to champion the rights of indigenous people with regard to their land and with regard to improving standards of living (Mamdani 1996).

NGOs are at the root of the further alienation (transfer) of natural resources and monopolistic control of tourism by white minority companies in alliance with regional and multinational corporations (Moyo 2000). In countries such as Mozambique, Namibia and South Africa, white individuals, companies and regional mega-tourism ventures have expropriated land in the coastal zones. In the past, racial discrimination meant that blacks could not have access to holiday resorts. More importantly, the cost of coastal prime land for tourism development was made artificially high to deny access to blacks. Fighting for access to beaches and fishing rights on oceans was therefore central to the liberation struggles in those countries that were not landlocked.

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[3] Elite indigenous farmers tend to seek large farms, thus promoting the emergence of temporary alliances between themselves and the large-scale white farmers, and thereby further derailing state efforts to acquire and redistribute land.

[4] In Mozambique, massive land reoccupation after the civil war, managed through customary systems, occurred without outside assistance. Despite the lack of basic social services and other infrastructure, and the widespread presence of landmines, the peasants contributed massively to the 18 per cent rise in gross domestic product (GDP) through agricultural production within three years after the end of the civil war.

The project of subjugating blacks is underpinned by the discourses on environmental aestheticism (ecoculture, ecotourism), which now claim to preserve primordial black cultures as part of the image of the African wilderness. Thus, ecotourism allocates monies to trickle into landless black communities, while the bulk of the benefits of land control rest with external financiers and safari operators. Furthermore, through the so-called transboundary "peace parks"[5] involving two or more countries, global capital has found an avenue for land expropriation in the context of foreign direct investment. In Namibia, Zimbabwe and South Africa, many of the black, white and foreign elites tend to allocate to themselves large tracts of land for commercial farming or tourism and, in addition, lobby the state for favourable tourism policies (Moyo 2000). The marginalization of the majority of the people tends to create political conflicts with those minority groups who seek to control such benefits. The political and economic consequences of these problems in the region are broadly the same: poverty, enforced high population density in customary lands, land degradation, lack of resources to invest in adequate land management and political uncertainty.

Postcolonial aspects of the land problem and its global dimensions

The current wave of neoliberal interpretations of the land question, which emphasizes liberal political and market rights of existing landowners—rather than social justice, popular social rights and the redistribution of resources—is fundamental to the structural adjustment prescriptions facing most African countries. These economic and political reforms in southern Africa promote the interests of white business, black middle classes and global capital, rather than the survival and economic needs of the rural poor and working classes. The present focus on democratization and the rule of law in the land reform discourse not only protects minority land rights over those of indigenous people, but also polarizes society along a continuum of artificially defined value differences (table 1).

Table 1: Polarized values: Land redistribution versus democratization

Land redistribution	Democratization
Equity	Democracy
Social rights	Liberal political rights
Need/poverty and reparations	Efficiency
Historical social justice	Contemporary governance problems
Majority/indigenization property rights	White minority property rights
Reinvention of law (legal property rights regimes, popular interest)	"Western" rule of law
Customary law or indigenous/historic and legitimate policies	Existing universalized system of law and property rights

There is a perception that national and global coalitions of industrial and agricultural capital aim to protect the property rights and benefits of a few white minorities, while paying lip service to land reform and poverty reduction. Increasingly, global conventions such as those of the World Trade Organization (WTO), United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) and the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), place countries in the South under pressure to strike a balance between sustainable development and land reform. The NGOs, largely led by the middle class and following

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5 Since the late 1990s, environmental NGOs and private firms have promoted "transboundary" natural resource conservancies involving large tracts of land (10 million hectares) within the borders of Zimbabwe, Mozambique and South Africa to enhance large-scale tourism focusing on the freely roaming large mammals. This entails excising lands from local communities and state parks for private exploitation. Because most rebel movements (for example, the Resistencia Nacional Moçambicana/Renamo in Mozambique) had used the woodlands for armed incursions during the 1980s and 1990s, these new woodland conservancies were dubbed peace parks, and a foundation with that name was formed.

neoliberal development agendas, emphasize the "community-based natural resources management" (CBNRM) discourses rather than land reforms that challenge resource ownership patterns as a basis for addressing environmental problems.

Negotiated and market-assisted land reforms are now being promoted by global institutions such as the World Bank[6] as a method of conflict resolution through the provision of funding, although for the last two decades their emphasis has been on market-based reform. However, market-assisted land reforms tend to protect and empower white landowners who have greater leverage in land transactions, leading to the transfer of unsuitable land for popular resettlement requirements (Moyo 2001). Yet the same global institutions also call for export incentives and the protection of private investment through national laws and global conventions such as the WTO, which do not favour the mainly black smallholders. The most destructive of these contradictory global market-based policies is the European Union's Common Agricultural Policy, whose subsidies have increased smallholder poverty, without supporting land reform.

Landholding Patterns in the Region

Background to landholding patterns

The existing structure and patterns of race relations that underlie land inequalities in southern Africa are based on a relatively unique distribution of demographic features, including population, wealth, income and employment, which define economic control and management. Even political party and civil society participation and social relations are heavily polarized racially in these societies. This racial framework defines the social basis for land demand and the struggles that shape policy making.

Whites, as individuals, and multinational companies, have been predominant in the control of the economy, including agriculture, manufacturing, tourism and commerce.[7] In South Africa, the land problem is complex mainly because of its deep-seated manifestations in both massive urban slums and marginal rural areas under extreme population pressure. The long political struggles against apartheid and land expropriation over many centuries have been resisted by a numerically large and organized white minority population.[8] The other countries of southern Africa have low white populations and fewer white farmers, and yet they control a large part of the land and the few existing industries.

Income distribution patterns in the region show that whites have high incomes in the midst of a sea of massive rural and urban poverty in black communities. Most blacks have no access to a sustainable income base outside of agriculture, and the high unemployment levels exacerbate the demand for land. In the former white settler colonies, land ownership patterns in urban areas physically segregated the residences of blacks and whites, and whites developed their own social enclaves, including separate schools, hospitals and country clubs. This segregation tends to underlie some of the black-on-white violent conflicts on the farms in South Africa and Zimbabwe, although violent criminal activities have capitalized on contested land and economic conditions. The root of much racial animosity in the region is the fact that whites are considered to have "conquered" the indigenous groups, leading to the dislocation of the latter and creation of a pseudo-feudal system.

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[6]   Deininger 1998; Binswanger and Deininger 1993; Binswanger 1996.

[7]   The majority of the labour force in the industry and manufacturing sectors is black, with whites predominating in managerial positions and the proprietorship of companies. Even though the number of commercial farmers in the large-scale commercial farming area is very low, they do employ a large percentage of the black labour force. Many studies have shown that countries such as South Africa and Zimbabwe have a "foreign" legion of black farm labour whose living conditions are unconscionable.

[8]   South Africa, Namibia and Zimbabwe have a "well-organized" farming community led by unions, in conformity with their long presence in the farming sector.

Land expropriation was rampant in southern Africa. In 1958, only Botswana had no white settlers, and therefore no land alienation. On the other hand, Angola, Lesotho and Zambia had lower percentages of land alienation (table 2). In terms of settler population, Namibia seems to have had a significant white settler population (19.4 per cent), mainly composed of Afrikaners, Germans and Austrians, in 1960. The greatest white settler land alienation occurred in South Africa, with 89 per cent in 1958, with the Dutch and English jostling for control of land since the eighteenth century.

Table 2: Settler alienation of land in southern Africa

Country	Land alienated by settlers (per cent)		White settlers (per cent of population)	
	1958	2000	1960	2000
Angola	6.0	5.4	1.0	0.2
Botswana	0.0	5.0	0.3	0.5
Lesotho	5.0	5.0	0.3	0.8
Malawi	43.0	4.3	8.0	0.4
Namibia	43.0	44.0	19.4	11.1
South Africa	89.0	83.0	2.8	13.7
Swaziland	49.0	40.0	0.2	—
Zambia	3.0	3.1	3.0	0.1
Zimbabwe	49.0	41.0	7.1	0.8

Source: Hendricks 2000 (figures for 1958 and 1960); CIA 2001 (figures for 2000).

In the 1960s, Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland and Angola had a small white settler population. Significantly, during the wars of conquest, traditional leaders in Botswana sought protectorate status from the United Kingdom. Namibia had the unfortunate experience of being declared a South African protectorate under the League of Nations, after having been a colony of Germany. This administrative arrangement denied independence to the indigenous people and sanctioned the racist laws that protected the interests of white farmers in the form of freehold title to land.

The white population tends to be grossly overrepresented in land ownership in terms of population structure. Namibia, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Zambia and South Africa had the largest numbers of whites in 1960. Yet by 2000, while Zimbabwe had a white population of 0.8 per cent, Malawi of 0.4 per cent and Zambia of 0.1 per cent, South Africa and Namibia had much larger white populations, at 13.7 per cent and 11.1 per cent respectively, suggesting that the racial land question could be more volatile in these two countries. In Zimbabwe, the 100,000 whites commanded a significant influence on the economy through the control of land, industry, commerce and manufacturing, in a largely agrarian economy where racial conflicts directly confronted land relations.

Present regional landholding patterns

Countries such as South Africa, Namibia and Zimbabwe are still confronted with unequal land holdings, with titled land in the hands of a few white commercial farmers. The skewed pattern of land holding is excessive in South Africa, where 60,000 white South African farmers, who make up only 5 per cent of the white population, own almost 87 per cent (85.5 million hectares) of the land. Only 20,000 white commercial farmers produce 80 per cent of the gross agricultural product. A further 40,000, including some 2,000 black farmers, produce 15 per cent, while 500,000 families living in the former homelands produce an estimated 5 per cent. At least 12 million blacks inhabit 17.1 million hectares of land and no more than 15 per cent (or 2.6 million hectares) of this land is potentially arable (Wildschut and Hulbert 1998). Thus whites own six times more land, in terms of the quantity of land available as well as its quality.

However, although Namibia had the highest number of white settlers—making up 19.4 per cent of the total population by 1960—this had declined to 11.1 per cent by 2000. Commercial land under freehold—comprising 6,300 farms measuring about 36.2 million hectares—belong to 4,128 mostly white male farmers of German, Austrian and South African origin, as well as to companies closely linked to the former colonial interests. Freehold land covers 44 per cent of available land and 70 per cent of the most productive agricultural land, covering 36.2 million hectares. Only 2.2 million hectares of the commercial farmland belong to black farmers. By contrast, communal lands comprise 138,000 households with an area of 33.5 million hectares, which is only 41 per cent of the land available.

Table 3: Land and population in southern Africa

Country	Land area (in thousands of hectares)	Arable land area (in thousands of hectares)	Population density (persons per thousand hectares)	Total population	Minorities[a] (per cent of total population)
Angola	124,670	3,005	88	10,978,552	Mestico (2); European (1)
Botswana	58,537	381	27	1,561,973	Basarwa (3); white (3, estimated figure); other, including Kgalagadi and white (7)
Democratic Rep. of Congo	226,760	6,712	257	58,317,930	—
Lesotho	3,036	330	614	1,865,040	European, Asian and other (0.3)
Malawi	9,408	2,200	1,266	11,906,855	Asian and European [b]
Mauritius	203	100	6,012	1,220,481	Sino-Mauritian (3); Franco-Mauritian (2)
Mozambique	78,409	3,999	240	18,811,731	European (0.06); Euro-African (0.2); Indian (0.08)
Namibia	82,542	817	24	1,954,033	Herero (7); Damara (7); Nama (5); Caprivian (4); Bushmen (3); Baster (2); Tswana (0.5)
South Africa	121,991	14,737	350	42,718,530	white (13.6); coloured (8.6); Indian (2.6)
Swaziland	1,720	178	680	1,169,241	European (3)
Seychelles	46	1	1,757	80,832	—
Tanzania	88,604	4,005	413	36,588,225	Asian, European and Arab (1)
Zambia	74,072	5,244	141	10,462,436	European (1.1); other (0.2)
Zimbabwe	38,667	3,217	328	12,671,860	mixed and Asian (1); white (under 1)
Totals	**908,665**	**44,926**		**210,307,719**	

[a] The terms "European" and "white", and other designations for minorities, are used here as they are in the source. [b] Percentages not available. **Source:** CIA 2004.

Table 4: Land tenure in southern Africa
(approximate percentage of national territory)

Country	Freehold / leasehold	Communal / tribal / customary	Conservation / minerals / water / catchments / reserves and other state land
Angola [a]	6.0	51.0	43.0
Botswana [b]	5.0	71.0	25.0
Democratic Republic of Congo [a]	8.9	28.0	63.1
Lesotho	—	95.0	5.0
Malawi	8.0	72.0	20.0
Mauritius	77.4	9.8	12.8
Mozambique [b]	3.0	80.0	14.0
Namibia	44.0	43.0	13.0
Seychelles	22.0	69.0	9.0
South Africa	72.0	14.0	14.0
Swaziland	40.0	60.0	—
Tanzania	6.6	47.4	46.0
Zambia	3.0	81.0	16.0
Zimbabwe [b]	41.0	42.0	16.0

[a] Current statistical figures could not be found for Angola and the Democratic Republic of Congo for areas of land under leases and customary tenure; estimates are projections from 1993 figures. [b] Not all rows add up to 100 per cent, due to rounding. **Source:** UNECA 2003; Cheyo 2001 (figures for Tanzania); Economist Intelligence Unit 2001 (figures for Seychelles).

Swaziland and Lesotho have high population densities around largely mountainous areas, and scarce arable land. Customary land tenure (which entails undocumented land allocation and regulatory rules managed through ethnic lineages and chiefdoms based on usufruct, not "ownership", rights) is predominant, while these countries struggle for equitable land ownership in the context of traditional leaders' control over land allocation (Mashinini 2000). Increased privatization of state lands as part of the foreign investment drive has pushed the majority of the people onto the worst lands.

In Mozambique, although all land is constitutionally state land, privatization of land began in 1984 as part of the implementation of structural adjustment programmes of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). This has created grounds for racial animosity as foreigners and white South Africans tend to dominate these investment regimes. Confrontation over land in Zimbabwe has seen the emigration of white Zimbabweans to Mozambique (*Daily News*, 20 July 2001). Thus Mozambican officials have called for greater social integration of incoming white farmers to avoid the creation of "white islands" of development. Prospective farmers negotiate with the state and local communities for access to land in order to pre-empt future land conflicts. While half of Mozambique's land is suitable for farming (cropping and livestock), only about four million hectares has been developed as arable land, with an average of 2.5 million hectares actually cropped. This uncultivated land is viewed as the largest pool of available arable land in southern Africa.

In Zimbabwe, most of the freehold lands are in the hands of whites and are located in the most fertile parts of the country, with the most favourable climatic conditions and water resources.[9] Approximately 4,500 white commercial farmers (0.03 per cent of the population) control 31 per cent of the country's land under freehold tenure, or about 42 per cent of the agricultural land, while 1.2 million black families in Zimbabwe subsist on 41 per cent of the country's area of 39,007,600 hectares.

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9   Water resources (such as dams) are found mainly in white-owned highvelds. Land reform programmes that redistribute prime land will also broaden access to water for irrigation.

Contested settler notions of land size

In the former settler colonies, per capita arable land ownership has been declining due to an increase in population in the communal areas. The small gains made by piecemeal land resettlement have been severely eroded due to population increases. However, the greatest remaining security threat lies in the fact that a few white farmers own most of the best arable land in oversized farms, while poverty among the majority has been increasing. While poor black smallholders and the landless call for increased land redistribution, rural elites call for access to larger plots on the commercial farms. Zimbabwean bureaucrats have recently prescribed land size ceilings in all of the natural regions, based on rather outdated notions of what farm sizes are required for "viable" commercial farming.

Farm sizes in the region reflect the trends in land ownership. In Namibia the average size of a white large-scale commercial farm (LSCF) is 5,700 hectares. In Zimbabwe the average is 2,500 hectares, with variation from Natural Region (NR) II to V.[10] In the communal areas, the average farm size is roughly two hectares, and in resettlement areas it is five hectares. In South Africa, 28.5 per cent of the farms are larger than 1,000 hectares (Wildschut and Hulbert 1998). The resettlement programmes in the region are proceeding on the basis of small-sized farms for blacks averaging less than 10 hectares of arable land in areas such as NR II in Zimbabwe. Land reform based on controlling farm sizes through ceilings has not been pursued in most countries.

This leaves a few landowners holding outrageously large tracts of land. Using the cut-off point of over 10,000 hectares owned either through company or individual title and as single or multiple farms, about 66 landowners (with 158 farms) occupy over two million hectares of Zimbabwe's land. Most of these farms are multiple-owned company farms. Eight individuals, for instance, together owned 13 farms occupying 158,531 hectares, of which 29 per cent of the area was owned as multiple farms. Multiple farm ownership, whether by companies or individuals, is, thus, a decided feature of Zimbabwe's landed gentry.

The criteria used to determine viable farm sizes are based upon a legacy of white settler notions of "small-scale" farms as subsistence oriented, while the large-scale white farms are considered "commercial". Although this categorization is posited as a function of different resource levels, there is still a clear class or racial (social) element to it. Large land sizes are said to be necessary for mechanized agriculture, such as the use of combine harvesters, which blacks are said to be unable to acquire. The large-sized lands are said to provide leverage for multiple land uses on a single farm, including leaving some of the land lying fallow for some of the time.

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[10] Zimbabwe is divided into five natural regions ("agro-ecological zones"), based upon the combination of rainfall total and incidence. NR I receives the highest rainfall (above 1,000 millimetres); NR II receives an average of 700–1,000 millimetres; NR III receives between 650–800 millimetres; NR IV receives 450–650 millimetres and NR V receives the least (below 400 millimetres).

**Table 5: Per capita arable land in the Southern Africa
Development Community (SADC) region** *(land area in hectares)*

Country	1965	1980	1987	1990	2000
Angola	0.53	0.41	0.34	0.31	0.25
Botswana	0.73	0.44	0.35	0.33	0.22
Democratic Rep. of Congo	0.36	0.25	0.20	0.18	0.14
Lesotho	0.37	0.22	0.20	0.18	0.16
Malawi	0.28	0.20	0.20	0.18	0.18
Mauritius	0.12	0.10	0.10	0.09	0.08
Mozambique	0.30	0.24	0.21	0.20	0.17
Namibia	0.92	0.64	0.53	0.49	0.47
Seychelles	0.02	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.01
South Africa	0.62	0.45	0.38	0.38	0.28
Swaziland	0.38	0.33	0.23	0.23	0.18
Tanzania	0.17	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12
Zambia	1.34	0.89	0.73	0.67	0.55
Zimbabwe	0.46	0.35	0.30	0.28	0.24
SADC region	**0.47**	**0.33**	**0.28**	**0.26**	**0.22**

Source: Cleaver 1993; CIA 2001 (figures for country arable land areas for 2000); US Census Bureau 2001 (population figures for 2000; www.census.gov, accessed in July 2001).

In order to conceal the underutilization and speculative uses of land, white commercial farmers and multinational companies have tended to convert their land to wildlife ranching. Nonetheless, investing in game ranching or tourism in the form of conservancies requires expropriation of large-sized lands, which, in some countries, is achieved through land consolidation. Such lands are held in various shareholding structures that remain dominated by small groups of white landowners and exclude the majority blacks, who, in turn, contest such arrangements through the illegal "occupation" of lands. The tourism sector has excluded blacks because it is believed that marketing tourism products is too technical for black smallholders, who, it is argued, should concentrate on less technical efforts, for example, raising crops such as maize and sunflower, rather than horticulture (World Bank 1995a, 1991).

This racist notion is buttressed by the belief that blacks require land only for home consumption and residence and not for commercial use. However, the output performance of smallholders, including resettled black farmers and those who have invested in peri-urban areas, demonstrates that with adequate access to land, blacks can contribute substantially to domestic and export markets. Unfortunately, white farmers and some donor circles continue to pursue the misplaced notion that when blacks obtain large-sized land through state support, it is only a reflection of unproductive cronyism. However, since historically whites have obtained large-sized lands through the same procedures, which were aimed at commercializing farming, such notions are unfounded.

Politics and Demand for Land Redistribution

The demand for land redistribution, in terms of redressing the historical and racially grounded inequities and of meeting the growing needs of both the black poor (rural and urban) and black elites, has been a consistent feature of southern African politics and policy making. Recently, most of the countries in the region have been formulating land policies in response to public pressure for redistribution. These efforts are dominated by official perspectives that tend to

emphasize the conversion of customary tenure systems to private freehold land tenure systems. Most official analyses of the land question have, however, tended to underestimate the nature and scale of demand for land redistribution, and to ignore the racial tensions that have persisted as a result of the unfinished land reform agenda.

The demand for land reform takes various forms and arises from various sources. These include formal and informal demands; legal and underground, or illegal, forms of demand for land redistribution; demands that may be based upon the restitution of historic rights; and contemporary demands based upon different needs. The various sociopolitical organizations that mediate such demands include civil society organizations, farmers' unions, political parties, war veterans' associations, business representatives' associations, community-based organizations and traditional structures. Such structures are central in the evolution of the demand for land redistribution. The social content of these structures, however, is decidedly racially polarized in southern Africa, while the class composition of the "visible" policy actors has been elitist.

Since the decolonization of Zimbabwe, South Africa and Namibia starting in the 1980s, the debate on land reform has been mainly focused on market instruments of land transfer, although these have failed to redress the legacy of racially inequitable land ownership. Despite broad consensus among governments, the landless, landowners and the international community on the need for land reform in the subregion, the land reform debate has remained shallow. This is mainly because the predominantly urban-led civil society has not formally embraced the land reform agenda due to the enduring, class-based orientation of its leadership, especially in the NGO movement. This has relegated rural social movements on land reform to informal politics, while giving prominence to more organized, middle-class civic groups and policy organizations that typically advocate market-based methods of land reform and liberal rights issues.

The onset of structural adjustment programmes, as well as multiparty "democratization" regimes, have reinforced the liberal dimension of the land debate, which "opposition" movements have adopted. In the process of transition to a liberal economy, however, informal rural politics, and land occupation in particular, have remained the primary sources of advocacy for radical land reform and, indeed, have succeeded in keeping land reform on the agenda. Over time, the salient land demands of the black middle classes and elites within civil society organizations, and both the ruling and opposition parties, were made within a liberal electoral and human rights framework, which avoided the fundamental issues of economic restructuring and redistribution of resources.

The race issue emerges in debates about land reform because the land to be acquired is expected to come from largely white-owned land, and the beneficiaries are black. The reality is that the state has had to respond to agitation by black social movements, traditional leaders, rural community leaders and black affirmative action pressure groups to facilitate land reform as a basis for healing the wounds of past grievances. Attempts to address the land question tend to be construed as racism on the part of those demanding land from the state, although land shortages and needs are real.

Historically, southern Africa, in general, has not had an organized civil society that has made radical demands for land reform or land redistribution. Under colonial rule, the land cause was led by liberation movements, and in the 1970s, was pursued by means of armed struggle (Chitiyo 2000). In the postcolonial period, the civil society groupings that have existed have been predominantly middle class, with strong international aid linkages that have militated against radical land reform, while formal grassroots organizations have tended to be appendages of middle-class-driven intermediary civil society organizations (Moyo 1998). The rural operations of civil society within a neoliberal framework have been characterized by demands for funds for small "development" projects aimed at a few selected beneficiaries (Moyo et al. 2000). This state of affairs has left a political and social vacuum in the leadership of the land reform agenda.

The indigenization lobby seems to have transformed the meaning of land reform and the "return of lost lands" by appealing for the de-racialization or "blackening" of the ownership base of commercial farmland. Some of its proposals appear to be a racial substitution formula for capitalist farming. The emerging indigenous capitalists, large white farmer organizations, black technocrats and many NGOs, have, however, tended to support the shift of eligibility criteria for access to land from the "landless" and "insecure"[11] to the "capable",[12] "productive" and "efficient", within the terms of the neoliberal global development paradigm.[13] These changing terms of the land reform debate were buttressed by optimistic expectations of foreign investment, which was expected to subsume land reform through other socioeconomic developments, including employment creation. In this context, land reform came to be perceived as almost unnecessary.

The re-emergence of land reform on the developing world agenda (such as in Brazil and Colombia) in the mid-1990s, and the relaunching of the resettlement programme in Zimbabwe, mark the current phase of a dialectic among peasants, government and global institutions. After the failure of structural adjustment to live up to its rural development promise, the land question has resurfaced as a legitimate item on the poverty reduction agenda of the World Bank while, at the national level, the same failure has placed demands on the ruling party to resuscitate its liberation promise.

Given Zimbabwe's colonial legacy, the long-standing conflicts over the land question translate into intense electoral political competition, which, in turn, is marked by polarization between land reform radicalism and conservative land transfer strategies. Indeed, the land question cannot be dislodged from the electoral debate. Opposition parties in Zimbabwe, South Africa and Namibia have sought to depoliticize the land issue on technical grounds for the same reasons advanced by the external funding institutions. The ruling party in Zimbabwe argued that the opposition intended to reverse land reform and had "sold out" to the former colonial masters, given their alleged receipt of financial assistance from white farmers and businesses, and from civil society organizations linked to donor funding.

In the face of strong post-liberation war movements demanding access to land, the white farmers appear to have sought political solace through the opposition movements. The strongest white participation in politics defending their so-called land rights is found in South Africa, Namibia and Zimbabwe in keeping with the numerous white land holders in these countries and the apartheid structures that still exist there. However, in Zimbabwe an economic decline in the 1990s, coinciding with the threats of compulsory land acquisition, opened the scope for white farmers for the first time to take an open political path to protect their interests.

In Zimbabwe, white farmer participation in politics to protect their land rights took the form of support against the "yes" vote in the constitutional referendum in 2000. It was also alleged by the government that the farmers were responsible for financially supporting opposition political parties. Nevertheless, the Zimbabwe opposition movements have had narrow political interests. While they have pursued valid demands for democratization within a liberal electoral and human rights framework, they have limited social democratic demands, especially with regard to the redistribution of land resources or economic restructuring. In many cases, the opposition movements have presented land reform as a non-political issue to be determined by economic considerations alone.

However, the pressure for land reform must—of necessity, given Zimbabwe's history—build up as usual around elections, making it trite to say that the issue of land reform is being politicized. Rather, the point is that various political parties need to develop a perspective on land reform so that their social delivery agenda remains relevant to popular demands. Given the potential for

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[11] The "insecure" include those poor and marginalized people (including women, farm workers and immigrants) whose land rights are contested or not guaranteed.

[12] The "capable" tend to imply those small farmers who have track records of surplus production or the urban elites who have more money to invest in inputs.

[13] Ashworth 1990; World Bank 1995b; Rukuni and Eicher 1994.

land conflicts in South Africa and Namibia, there has been some tussling over the manner in which the Zimbabwe land problem should be handled in their respective parliaments. While the black legislators from the liberation movement backgrounds in Zimbabwe tend to expect such conflicts to spread into South Africa and Namibia if land reform is not pursued, their white counterparts from liberal political parties have tended to put pressure on their governments to condemn land occupations and to ensure that the situation in Zimbabwe will not occur in their countries.

Land Redistribution Policies and Balancing Racial Land Inequality

Little progress has been achieved in southern African land reform policies, especially in redressing racial land inequities, colonially based discriminatory land use regulations and land tenure systems. A generic set of land problems that requires policy attention (table 6) remains unaddressed in southern Africa.

Racially biased ownership of land tends to accompany discriminatory land use policies and practices, and land tenure laws. The redistribution of land could shift the underlying causes and effects of such biases. For instance, inefficient land use among large farmers, overutilization of overcrowded areas and the insecurity of tenure among the landless and land-short, could be changed by expanding the numbers of those benefiting from land redistribution. Instead, southern African land reform policies have focused on reforming the existing regulations relating to land use and environmental management practices among smallholders, and on the customary tenure system toward freehold land tenure and developing land markets among black communities, rather than on correcting distortions within LSCF landholding areas.

Table 6: Land policy issues and problems

Issue	Problems
Land distribution	- Inequitable and unjust distribution of land - Limited rights/access for majority - Costly and cumbersome transfers of land
Land utilization	- Discriminatory regulations against customary tenures - Speculative underutilization of freeholds - Unsustainable use in overcrowded areas - Coercive regulations in some tenures
Land tenure	- Insecurity of some tenures - Discriminatory protection system - Overcentralized regulations
Land administration	- Coercive and centralized approach - Dispersed institutions - Poor representation of majority - Weak transparency
Land adjudication	- Biased towards market and state sectors - No restitution/victim compensation - Merged powers of local courts/authorities - Inaccessible courts/mediation

Source: Shivji et al. 1998.

The small amount of land redistribution that has been attempted in the subregion has been constrained by unrealistic legal and constitutional frameworks, which lead to costly and slow processes of land acquisition and transfer of land rights to various beneficiaries. Land redistribution policies have been unduly influenced by market-oriented preconditions, which eventually militate

against the land needs of the poorest people and of those who are landless. The land redistribution experiences in the region have been based upon four broadly related approaches:

- *State-centred but market-based approach*
  The dominant approach used mainly in Zimbabwe and Namibia before the introduction of compulsory land acquisition strategies in the former, can be referred to as a "state-centred but market-based" approach. Land was purchased by the state for redistribution following willing-seller–willing-buyer procedures. The private-sector-led approach to land identification and supply through the market meant that the central government was a reactive buyer, restricted to land offered. Governments provided land to beneficiaries selected mainly by land authorities under the direct supervision of the central government. The land restitution approach followed in South Africa is essentially a state initiative in which the government pays mostly market prices for land claims of individuals and communities in a limited land rights and time-bound framework.

- *State compulsory acquisition of land at market prices*
  Since the early 1990s, land redistribution, using compulsory methods of land acquisition by the state, which pays market prices for either the land and its developments or for developments only, has been pursued in Zimbabwe and is being debated in other countries. In this approach, the government also controls the resettlement process, although settler selection is more locally controlled. In Zimbabwe, up to 3,000 different farms were gazetted for acquisition between 1992 and 2001. However, cumbersome litigation has been a key constraint. In South Africa, few cases of compulsory acquisition have recently evolved out of its land restitution programme, given the resistance of landowners to part cheaply with their land. Even where the aim is limited redress of the injustices of forced removals of blacks by white settlers and the historical denial of access to land to the majority of the South African population, compulsory land acquisitions have received little public support from civil society organizations.[14]

- *Market-led land redistribution assisted by the state*
  A third approach to land redistribution that has been attempted in South Africa, which was discussed at the International Donors' Conference on Land Reform and Resettlement in Zimbabwe in 1998 in the context of testing "alternative" approaches, is the so-called market-assisted land reform approach. In the 1990s, multilateral institutions responded to widespread radical land seizures in Brazil by promoting the market-assisted land reform approach on the grounds that it was more cost-effective, transparent, rapid and fair. By this method, the entire land reform process has to be led by the private sector, communities and NGOs within a market framework. This framework of land acquisition seems to favour the large landowners' compensation requirements. However, most black communities resist paying for land they feel was stolen. This approach has been implemented rather slowly in South Africa, and has yet to be implemented in Zimbabwe and Namibia. Only a few NGOs and farmers believe in the efficacy of this methodology.

  This approach tends to be populist in that it expects land reform to be community driven but legally grounded. Communities are expected to develop local land reform plans, identifying demand, potential supplies and pricing, and to negotiate land transfers that are fair to both landowners and the impoverished and marginalized rural populations. Given that social movements and NGOs in southern Africa have yet to drive radical land reform, this approach masks the dominance of conservative technocratic consultants and NGOs, as evidence from the South African experience has begun to reveal.

- *Community land occupation and the state-facilitated approach*
  Finally, there is the community-led land occupation strategy, which is either state facilitated or formalized. This approach, as a formal strategy for land redistribution, has not been implemented on a grand scale in most of the countries discussed. In Zimbabwe it was implemented during the first four years after independence. Land identification was led by communities through "squatting", and the govern-

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14   Commission on Restitution of Land Rights 1997; National Land Committee 1997; Department of Land Affairs 1997.

ment purchased the land at market prices in what was officially called the
"Accelerated Resettlement Programme". Local "squatter" communities self-
selected as beneficiaries occupied mainly abandoned and underutilized lands,
most of which were in the frontier zones of the liberation war. Subsequently, the
government used forced evictions to restrain this approach until land occupations
re-emerged during 1998 on farms that the government had identified for compul-
sory acquisition. More recently, this form of land occupation, albeit led centrally by
the War Veterans Association (WVA), has dominated land reform policy, leading
to the current fast-track programme. In South Africa, numerous peri-urban "infor-
mal settlements" that began in the late 1980s are a product of this approach, in
which illegal occupations of land were tacitly condoned. In later years, occupiers
were recognized by the state, which ultimately conferred rights to these lands.

These various approaches to land redistribution increasingly tend to be used in combination, al-
though the market-based approach remains dominant. Recent donor support for government
land reform programmes tends to favour the untested market approach in order to avoid efforts
for compulsory acquisition of land on a large scale. Until recently, these land redistribution pro-
grammes have aimed to rehabilitate and politically stabilize countries torn by armed struggles
through the following generic objectives to:

- decongest overpopulated areas;

- increase the base of productive agriculture;

- rehabilitate people displaced by war;

- resettle squatters, the destitute and the landless;

- promote equitable distribution of agricultural land; and

- deracialize commercial agriculture.

Increasingly, land reform programme objectives are being designed to address the need for pov-
erty reduction, in keeping with the new strategic processes of development grounded in pov-
erty reduction.

Since 1998, the internationalization of Zimbabwe's land problem through the International
Donors' Conference on Land Reform and Resettlement in Zimbabwe and other initiatives has
placed greater pressures on the subregion's land reform policy actors to focus on addressing
poverty reduction. Given that this approach is not grounded in redressing historical grievances
or restoring land rights per se, it underemphasizes the importance of balancing the racial com-
position of farming and confronting racial imbalances in land control.

Most of the southern African countries facing demands for land reform may require strong state
intervention in the land markets, given the inherited uneven racial distribution of social capital
and control of markets. Adoption of the policy of reconciliation, which began in Zimbabwe and
has spread to the governments of South Africa and Namibia, has meant that many governments
in the region have treated radical land reform as racially sensitive and unnecessary. This per-
spective has changed as threats of massive land repossession suggest the need for extensive and
speedier approaches to land reform.

The scale and social composition of those benefiting from land redistribution have been narrow,
given the limited transfers witnessed so far. In Namibia, only about 35,000 blacks have been re-
settled on white commercial farmland since independence from South Africa in 1990 (*Financial
Gazette*, 5 July 2001). In South Africa, 12,094 claims had been settled as of 2001, representing
some 164,661 beneficiaries (Department of Land Affairs 2003). The land restitution programme
deals with justice in a material, tangible sense through acknowledging the injustice of the past
and addressing it through concrete action.

By 1998, the resettlement programme in Zimbabwe saw 3.6 million hectares of land being redistributed to 70,000 families from mainly large-scale, white-owned land. The government indicates that 3.5 million hectares and 118,000 families have been settled under the fast-track programme (as of 2001), although much of the land is being contested by owners and some land is under illegal occupation (*Daily News*, 9 August 2001). Most of the resettlement took place during the first five years of independence, while the rural black population continued to increase without a concomitant increase in land holdings to reflect these demographic changes. Moreover, the usual government policy has been to provide infrastructure and resource back-up to the resettled families. However, the lack of resources in the context of massive land transfer programmes has meant that the state has now had to resettle people on the basis of minimal support.

Deracialization of commercial farming has been gaining importance in current land redistribution programmes at the expense of the landless. In Zimbabwe, the land reform policy of 1990 emphasized support for promoting emergent black large-scale farmers in what appeared less as a resettlement than a land reallocation programme intended to redress racial imbalances. South African and Namibian policies also sought to empower black commercial farmers as an integral aspect of land reform. In this context, special groups, such as war veterans, have received particular attention. In Zimbabwe, for instance, the government reserved a 20 per cent quota of resettlement land for war veterans in 1995, while master farmers[15] and agricultural graduates were to benefit from the land allocations of medium-to-large-scale farms under the newly established tenant farmer scheme.[16]

Different forms of deracialization have emerged in the form of affirmative action and indigenization in Zimbabwe and South Africa respectively, given their stated objectives of creating a black agrarian bourgeoisie. The existing land controlled by the state is being used to facilitate access to land by blacks who have the resources to invest in agriculture.[17]

In Zimbabwe, for instance, about 400 blacks have gained 420,000 hectares through this method. Another 1,000 blacks have used their own resources to acquire about 760,000 hectares on the open market. However, it is argued that the prime land still remains in the hands of white farmers who are not prepared to dispose of it (Moyo 1995).

Land reform policies of occupation in southern Africa seem to evolve through the interaction of market and compulsory approaches to land acquisition for redistribution to both the landless and to an emerging black agrarian bourgeoisie. Official land reform policies seem to respond to increasing land demands and land occupation pressures. The Zimbabwe government, for example, co-opted land occupations, using the ruling party and the WVA in a formalized land acquisition strategy, in response to the changing political and economic context and pressures of the times. A persistent feature of the land reform experience is that racial imbalance and historic grievances over land expropriation are the binding forces underlying social mobilization for land reform, which black middle classes lead or co-opt. This tendency for elites to co-opt the land demands of the poor, in turn, reflects the slow pace of official land redistribution programmes in spite of the legacy of white monopolistic control of land and the agrarian-related sectors.

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[15]   These are communal and smallholder farmers who have undergone intensive training in crop (maize, cotton and groundnuts) and livestock (cattle and poultry) production. The training is conducted by agricultural extension staff employed by the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture and Rural Resettlement.

[16]   This is an agricultural extension method that involves a new farmer being attached to an experienced mentor (farmer) with an adjacent farm. The mentor supervises all operations, makes guarantees and also takes financial risks, therefore using his experience and passing it on to the new farmer.

[17]   It has been noted that blacks who have gone into the open market to acquire land using their own resources have tended to perform badly due to high debts and incapacity to capitalize, as all of their resources are put into the acquisition of land.

Conclusion

Independence and reconciliation policies in Zimbabwe and Namibia and the demise of apartheid in South Africa persuaded many to believe that racial conflicts would disappear. Regional integration and the "peace dividend" were expected to lead to economic growth throughout the region and obviate the need for major structural changes. There are important lessons to be learned from political independence settlements within the subregion that failed to address the core racial problem of inequitable land and natural resources ownership, as well as the downstream economic opportunities ensuing from such control.

This paper has argued that social justice and land redistribution through redressing historical problems are crucial ingredients of reconciliation and development in southern Africa because of the broad-based demand for such reforms. Since political independence settlements did not consider compensating victims for past losses of land, lives, livestock, wildlife resources and homes, land redistribution can be seen as a form of reparation. It is within this context that countries such as Zimbabwe view the former colonial masters as having an obligation to pay for the land that was expropriated during the colonial period. The failure to mobilize finance for land reform by the international community, for various reasons, has tended to fuel the perceptions of indigenous people that the white landowners are being protected by the donor community because white landowners are their "kith and kin". In this way, the land question in southern Africa is increasingly viewed as an internationalized form of racist privileging of white minorities in the face of demands for land redistribution by victims of past land expropriation.

A related vexing question is the extent to which land can be treated as a development project managed through normal donor funding procedures. Many donor countries have supported land reform as an economic development project, while neglecting the enduring political and social justice issues that underlie it. This perspective contradicts demands that former colonial masters should be responsible for paying for land transfers, which individual white farmers are expected to facilitate. Instead, landowners have found it more expedient to focus on market principles of compensation for their land transfers.

Race relations in southern Africa can be improved through land reform policies if historical and social justice, and contemporary problems of equity, poverty reduction and broader economic growth are acknowledged and redressed directly rather than subsumed by development parameters and aid preconditions. Attempts to reduce complex racial and political conflicts to simplistic components of economic reform, premised upon distorted and inadequately developed market processes and narrowly founded approaches to good governance and the "rule of law", can only serve to further polarize socially charged southern African societies. Social justice based upon more equitable race relations and land distribution is integral to longer-term political reform and economic development. Interestingly, the land occupation experience of Zimbabwe and similar threats in South Africa and Namibia have at least forced policy makers, among others, to confront past and present race grievances and force dialogue between whites and blacks over race relations in general and land reform in particular. Resolving racial land conflicts requires new notions of reconciliation, which entail exposing the wider historic truths of past and present race relations, as well as the redistribution of critical resources such as land.

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