

I | Understanding Fast Track Land Reforms in Zimbabwe

Introduction

The Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) has been inscribed on Zimbabwe's political and socio-economic map since 2000. In the early years of the reforms, the programme captured international attention and imagination, while in Zimbabwe itself it radically altered people's lives and livelihoods, and at the same time reawakened people's memories of the past. Therefore, the land reform programme was not simply about land, but also about people, especially the farmers and the communities in which they lived, originated from and settled in. It was also about the institutions they interacted with on multiple levels, and with whom they intersected at different times as the programme was speedily implemented. The programme radically transformed society, with former landowners being pushed aside, farmworkers having their livelihoods 'withdrawn', and new beneficiaries walking into new commercial land, without structured or sustained support. Yet the majority of people saw the FTLRP as the final embodiment of empowerment following Zimbabwe's independence in 1980. The FTLRP, therefore, comprises a complex mix of ingredients that have attracted the attention of both the domestic and the international community, in terms of what land reform means and how it should be delivered, but more importantly of what model works best to deliver land to the people, without tinkering with broader livelihoods. But perhaps the most difficult question is whether the reforms represent the final resolution of the colonial question or not (Okoth-Ogendo, 2007).

The title of this book is shaped by the history of land reform in Zimbabwe, which has been a constant societal feature for over a century. Such a history shows that radical land transformations have been a dominant feature of the country since the late eighteenth century, played out against a racial background characterised by whites dispossessing blacks. Yet, 2000 saw the beginning of a radical repossession, when blacks took over land from white farmers, amending policies and laws to effect the repossession. Given the time that has passed since 2000, when this massive land repossession occurred, critical questions now have to be asked: what is the significance of the reforms? Will the reforms retain their hold into the future? Is the FTLRP so flawed and unjust that it should be reversed? Or, despite it being unjust, does it provide the

basis for finally resolving the colonial question with regard to the land? What are the promises that provide a sense of optimism? During implementation of the programme, President Mugabe seemed inclined to confirm that, for his leadership, the land issue was a 'done deal'. President Mugabe indicated that land reform was the key issue preventing him from relinquishing office. He said, in a radio interview on Independence Day, 18 April 2003: 'We are getting to a stage where we shall say fine, we settled this matter [land redistribution] and people can retire.'¹ Following speculative reports sparked by this statement, he further fuelled that speculation by, on 29 May 2003, calling for an open debate on his succession within the ruling ZANU-PF. Two years later, on 9 August 2005, President Mugabe declared:

Without doubt, our heroes are happy that a crucial part of this new phase of our struggle has been completed. The land has been freed and today all our heroes lie on the soil that is declaration. Their spirits are unbound, free to roam the land they left shackled, thanks again to the Third Chimurenga. (Quoted in Derman, 2006: 2)

This book takes a cue from the fact that there is little knowledge about Fast Track Farms (FTFs) in Zimbabwe. Yet the impact of land reforms on people, in a country such as Zimbabwe where agricultural production almost collapsed, has become a contested subject. There are difficult questions with no easy answers, but questions still have to be asked: how can we build more and better bridges between knowledge and practice? How can the desired changes be encouraged and enhanced, changes that reflect the strength of individuals managing the land as an economic asset? A major issue covered in this book is an unpacking of the meaning of the FTLRP as seen from a local perspective, to try to answer some of the critical questions relating to the long-term influence of this radical programme. The best approach to judging whether the FTLRP will endure is to understand the situation as it now exists on the ground, through analysing the shifts that have happened with respect to the agrarian base. A key argument regarding the significance of the transformation brought about by the programme should be based on the situation that has unfolded, and continues to unfold, on the FTFs. While broader political statements matter, ultimately practices and people's responses on the ground are what define the character of the reforms and their future. In this book, the aim is to show what has happened on the ground and what this means for the land question as a contested colonial issue.

Understanding the context from a local perspective

The implementation of the FTLRP has dominated Zimbabwe's socio-economic and political landscape over the last decade. Some four years after 2000, I led a research team (see the Acknowledgements) that started to gather

information about how the national discourse on land was translating into practice on the large-scale commercial farms (LSCFs), which were the focus of transformation. As independent, concerned scientists, in 2003/04 the research team decided to find out how the programme had evolved and how it was affecting the people entering and leaving large-scale commercial farming areas. At the same time, the government, through its institutions, was planning revolutionary changes to the large-scale commercial farming sector, mainly through the process of land downsizing, thus effectively creating a new model of small- to medium-sized farms on land that for over 100 years had been characterised by LSCFs.

Since 2000, the radical land reform programme had become a theatre of contests, policy attention and government interests, especially in the farming areas themselves. The research team sought to establish the nature of the land reform process in places far away from Harare (the centre of policy-making) and on an international border (with South Africa and Botswana): Mangwe District in Matabeleland South (see the map on page xvii for the location of the case study sites). The research team also selected places closer to Harare (Mazowe and Shamva) in order to establish whether there were any discernible differences in terms of how the programme had evolved. Research in the case study locations showed that land reform is diverse and complex, and therefore further site-specific studies were needed to capture social, political and institutional issues. The FTLRP included several processes that required better understanding, such as: the shifting relationships among farmers, as well as between farmers and the state; the transformation of the chain of production and the links between the producers themselves and mixed production outcomes; the evolution of new farming systems; the social and cultural processes that enabled individuals or groups to benefit from land reform, or prevented them from doing so, thus exacerbating rural differentiation; the local politics of land access, control and management; the governance practices that emerged from controlling not only people but also the resources necessary for farming; the stated and unstated rules that were used to resolve and manage conflicts; the rights, duties and responsibilities that a community put in place to manage land in convoluted policy spaces; and the formal and informal administrative practices that were emerging in the new resettlement areas.

Ruzivo Trust's exploratory study (2004–09) traced Zimbabwe's land question historically and analytically, to understand further how history had shaped the evolution of the FTFs; the study started from the history of land and agrarian issues as a basis for explaining the period of the FTLRP. Ruzivo's research concerns were to examine the ways in which the FTLRP was expanding at a local level, by tracking the objectives, goals and context of the programme against its implementation and outcomes. At the same time, the team analysed the

broad statements made regarding the FTLRP in the media (nationally and internationally) as well as in academic circles, its broader political context, and the positioning that developed over time (either for or against the programme). These issues informed the manner in which the FTF data were interpreted.

Fast track land reform radicalism and speeding up of the reforms

The research was concerned with the fact that land reform policies were made centrally, with little direct local input or perspective. Political statements and action were pitched very high in order to hide certain local tendencies (some of the action relating to the land takeovers was permeated by violence), which made it difficult to discern what was happening on the ground. At the same time, land-related policy-making seemed to have been reacting indirectly to how people responded to the government taking over 'white'-owned farms. In fact, the government's aim was first and foremost to generate significant widespread support for its land takeover actions in Zimbabwe. In order to control policy, the government re-centralised decision-making relating to land matters, ostensibly because it perceived itself as fighting against external forces bent on reversing the gains of the programme. For this reason, local officials were simply told to implement policy as it stood. However, the cases documented demonstrate that local officials came up with ingenious ways of getting on with their work despite overwhelming challenges.

Starting in 2000, farmers began a journey that was to transform their lives for ever. This journey took the new land beneficiaries through a minefield of institutions, both formal and informal, new spaces and new people with unfamiliar systems and cultures, which determined whether one succeeded or failed. The beneficiaries' stories link policy-making to practice through an analysis of the way in which the resettlement programme dealt with local decision-making. The research alternates between accounts of action on the ground and analytical reflections. This approach differs from traditional research in that it does not test data against a chosen set of hypotheses according to a model, but instead it engages directly with people and practitioners on their terms, accepting their perspectives in their environment.

To have a fuller understanding of the FTLRP, it was essential to examine the traditional concepts of political economy; these have largely focused on top-down, macro-level approaches and on institutions and their rules. This institutional analysis is based on the belief that good political and economic institutions are central to the promotion of sound economic development and the welfare of society. More recently, institutional economics and other political economy methodologies have emphasised the need for a bottom-up, micro-level, 'game theory' approach that looks at individual interactions and individual incentives to follow (or not follow) institutional rules – in order to understand why and how institutions persist and change (Leftwich, 2008).

A major element of the research was an analysis of the interaction of people and institutions and how this shaped the progress of the reforms.

The context described above was influenced by the very nature of the FTLRP. A multiplicity of institutions emerged as the FTLRP was being implemented, chiefly with the formation of District Land Committees, and as situations changed rapidly during the first two to three years; old habits were discarded, ineffective mechanisms were set aside, and the different sets of rules were changed constantly. This often happened in a contradictory manner, creating chaos in the process; however, the programme proved to be unstoppable. I was, therefore, concerned with understanding how people co-existed in the FTF territories, which were geographically fixed communities. By looking at the situation in specific locations, the research was able to decipher the significant shifts on the FTFs and how they were shaped by people's movement and stability. Institutional engineering also had an effect on the FTF communities, and made it easier to understand local processes better.

Decision-making in the turbulent times of the fast track

The land reform programme created complexities in the everyday lives of ordinary people seeking land and better economic opportunities. A collective of people, most of whom did not necessarily know each other, rallied to achieve the common goal of reclaiming land, based on the opportunities opened up by the War Veterans and government. For instance, Kriger (1992: 6) powerfully argued that 'what people say and do matters', and the responses from officials working in different institutions, as well as those from farmers, provided the key to understanding people within the FTF spaces. Human agency, or what Röling (1997) called the 'soft side of land', was adopted as a reflective, process-based way in which local officials and other actors could deal with and manipulate certain constraining and enabling elements during the FTLRP. At the local level, while some actors organised communities to meet political ends, others acted as a counterbalance and were able to check one another during the implementation of the programme. This implies that there was an ongoing debate and negotiation over meanings, values and intentions. A mixture of social, technical and political actors at the local level created situations in which individuals could engage with, distance themselves from, or adopt an ambiguous stance towards certain rules and agreed frameworks; this was the hallmark of the FTLRP.

Over the years of the FTLRP, there has been an intensification of debate within resettled and non-resettled communities about who has benefited and why. Some patterns have been noted of beneficiaries leaving the land when they should be consolidating their position, but the causes of this are unclear, or have sometimes been ascribed to political reasons.² It also seems that there has been state paralysis following the formation in 2009 of an Inclusive Government

with no clear policy positions on different categories of land or on the legal standing of either the beneficiaries or certain elements of the programme. The main worry is the future direction of the programme, given the absence of policy and disagreement over the formulation of the national constitution, which will have a bearing on matters relating to land and property rights. It is even more confusing when some large commercial farms, which had been subdivided into smaller landholdings by the FTLRP, are now re-emerging and promoting biofuels and agro-investments that apparently include foreigners (Matondi et al., 2011). These unfolding and deepening contradictions necessitate a clear understanding of national processes in relation to emerging practices on the FTFs. The narratives in this book reveal the various experiences of the people in Mangwe, Mazowe and Shamva over the past eight to ten years of land reform. They constitute a collection of conflicting ideas about the meanings and experiences of land and agrarian change. Research into the FTFs over a long time period provided a lever for understanding the knowledge of 'locals' who faced daily decisions and made sense of lives that were shaped by how they settled on the land and by the context in which they existed as the land reform programme unfolded.

Officials in government ministries came from a background that emphasised orderliness and adherence to laws and procedures. Yet the new settlers and interest groups emphasised the opposite, because to them 'order' meant 'doing nothing'. Existing laws and 'standards' were meant to preserve the status quo and therefore did not facilitate their entry into commercial farms; they were seen as part of the colonial mentality that accepted that large farms make better economic sense than small farms (Weiner et al., 1986; Van Zyl et al., 1996; World Bank, 1991), and 'procedures' were regarded as 'technical bureaucracy' to delay the resettlement programme. Both officials and farmers had to endure what seemed to be insecurity, because they were not certain how the former landowners would react.³ The technical officials had to endure incidents of being physically threatened by former landowners, and at the same time being hounded by the new beneficiaries impatient over the delays in getting on to their farms. To survive this, officials sometimes had to make on-the-spot decisions based on scanty information; at times their decisions resolved conflict situations, but at other times they exacerbated the problems. Given that the pace of the FTLRP was accelerated, they lacked the time and resources to be thorough, and were always on the lookout for cues and extrapolated conclusions based on the information available, which at times was not necessarily accurate. For instance, while policy did not allow for an individual to have more than one farm, some officials ignored this, while others allowed the taking over of farms under international bilateral agreements: the officials seemed to have legitimised illegality, at least according to their own policy pronouncements.

Zimbabwe's Fast Track Land Reform Programme as viewed in international discourse

The FTLRP has gained widespread international attention since 2000, with the world divided between those who supported the 'forceful' commercial land takeover actions of the Government of Zimbabwe (GoZ) and those opposed to the actions for a variety of reasons. However, while the international politics of Zimbabwe's land reform gained a high profile, there was very little attention paid to understanding the complexities of the programme, especially at the point of implementation, specifically at a local level and on the farms themselves.

The international image of the FTLRP – chaos, violence, underuse of land, food insecurity, pariah state – seems in a contradictory way to have been its key driver. This image is historical (Moyo, 1995a; Selby, 2006; Sadomba, 2008; Cliffe et al., 2011) and has a specific context of race, which unfortunately the leadership of the white farmers failed to read (or denied the reality of) in political terms. As early as 1991, the Commercial Farmers' Union (CFU) claimed a position of superiority in production that they related to their 'culture' of doing things, as opposed to black farmers. Time and time again, the white farmers sought to prove their high productivity while caricaturing black agriculture as economically unviable and environmentally destructive:

It is unfortunate that with few notable exceptions, the majority of resettlement schemes to date have led to a serious loss of productivity, denudation of resources, insufficient income and even food aid being required for settlers. (CFU, 1991: 1)

Evidence from a longitudinal household survey on Old Resettlement Areas found that many households who settled on commercial land developed their farms and invested strongly in building assets and social relationships (Barr, 2001). For instance, in good rainfall seasons the settlers were able to grow enough food to feed themselves, and most also grew some cash crops (Dekker and Kinsey, 2011). The CFU was also of the opinion that:

the situation is not sustainable. The pressure on the communal lands from too many people and too many animals and the mismanagement of resources has led to widespread and sometimes irreversible degradation. The communal nature of land ownership and traditional agricultural methods, together with the traditional role of livestock, has aggravated the situation. (CFU, 1991: 2)

Through these seemingly technical statements on land use, they reinforced the politics of apportioning blame to the largely majority blacks. The effect of this was to re-create the dualism of 'them' (black farmers) mismanaging the land, with 'we' (white farmers) being better in modern agricultural practices. The defence of the property distribution that then existed between blacks

and whites was, therefore, based on the white landowners' belief that they had better organisational and productive capabilities, were more innovative technically and made a greater economic contribution, as well as employing thousands of farmworkers. In this context, a culture of production was mapped on to race (and consequently on to the politics that came to haunt the white farmers from 2000); the white farmers created a positive identity for themselves while invalidating blacks, and showcased this internationally as their line of defence when the land occupations and FTLRP commenced.

The media image of the FTLRP was one of extensive displacement of white commercial farmers and farmworkers, mostly through violence. This attracted prominent international narratives, with scholars (Scoones et al., 2010) providing new contested paradigms of the myths and successes of the programme. The factual realities of land underutilisation and low levels of production, especially on the FTFs, have been explained in a kaleidoscope of ways, many of the explanations justifying the outcomes. However, studies have largely focused on the displaced either as white landowners or farmworkers (Hammar, 2008; Hammar, 2010; Hammar et al., 2010; Magaramombe, 2010) rather than on the replacement of people, agricultural production systems and processes, which has received hardly any attention. The creation of a new breed of farmers, known in the Zimbabwean lexicon as 'new' farmers,⁴ has also received negative publicity, in terms of their capabilities (or lack of capability) to move agriculture and the economy forward. The construction and performance of the FTLRP are under scrutiny, especially with respect to how new farmers are seen in the context of development and international discourses, and how this affects their material conditions, survival and struggles in a new dispensation.

The changed and expanded agrarian base

By 2009, the GoZ had acquired some 10.8 million hectares (ha) of land for the resettlement programme out of a total of 12.3 million ha of commercial land (MLRR, 2009). The farms were classified as either A1 or A2 models, with the classifications based on what seems to have been a rational arrangement relating to equity and growth (Prosterman and Riedinger, 1987; World Bank, 1995; Moyo, 1995a); black agricultural commercialisation could be added to these criteria as well. Earlier scholarship had shown the advantages and efficiencies of small family farms in modern agriculture (Weiner et al., 1986; Roth, 1990; World Bank, 1991; Tiffen, 1996). In general, the government sought to reduce the large-scale commercial farms from an average of 2,200 ha to 500 ha or less, thereby increasing the number of commercial farmers from 3,950 (Taylor, 2002) to over 300,000 (split into small and large farms); these numbers included both the A1 and A2 classifications.

In the construction of the farming models, the A1 farms were supposed to be small farms⁵ of between 12 and 30 ha in agro-ecological regions (AER) I to

TABLE 1.1 Agricultural land inventory as of 2011

Farming sectors	Area (ha)	Number of plots/ beneficiaries
A1	5,759,153.89	145,775
A2	2,978,334.08	16,386
Communal areas	16,000,000.00	1,200,000
Old Resettlement Areas (Phase 1 and 2)	3,667,708.00	75,569
Large-scale commercial farms (unacquired) ¹	648,041.27	1,154
Small-scale commercial farms ²	1,400,000.00	8,000
Conservancies	792,009.00	–
Institutional farms ³	145,693.42	113
Unsettled gazetted land ⁴	757,577.51	517
Total	32,148,517.17	1,447,523

Notes: 1. Land that was not legally gazetted for acquisition and remains in the hands of its 'original' owners holding their title deeds. 2. These farms are owned under a Deed of Grant, and were known as the Native Purchase Areas before independence. Blacks were allowed to trade in land in these areas, which were a buffer between the large-scale commercial farms and the communal areas. They became the small-scale commercial farming areas after independence in 1980. 3. Land owned by parastatals, churches, schools, colleges, universities and mines. 4. Excluding conservancies. A commonly held view is that 300 white farmers remain on the land, but this is difficult to verify.

Source: Calculated from various GoZ sources (2009) and FAO/WFP (2010).

III, with farmers living in villagised areas; there would be an increase in size in AERs III to V (based on climate and other physical conditions suitable for different types of agriculture).⁶ The main purpose of the A1 scheme was to decrease land pressure in the communal areas as well as to provide assets to the poor (GoZ, 2001). By 2011, there were 145,775 beneficiaries on 5.8 million ha (see Table 1.1).

While the tenure arrangements in the A1 areas are construed in social terms to follow the customary system of land allocation, adjudication and administration, the areas largely remain under state administration. The offer letter given to the A1 settlers explicitly states that the offer can be withdrawn at any time and that the government has no obligation to compensate for any improvements that the settler might have made. This provision has made the A1 settlement very insecure for the new farmers from an investment angle. However, the mass character of the model in terms of the potential number of people who support the government reclamation of land provides them with some semblance of political security.

Beginning in 2000, the government equally prioritised the elite and resource-driven A2 model, ostensibly to de-racialise the large-scale commercial farming

areas (GoZ, 2001). The starting point for the A2 model was the decision in Phase II of the Land and Resettlement Programme in 1998 that recommended the selection of agricultural graduates as well as those blacks involved in agriculture to be the primary beneficiaries of any public resettlement scheme. This objective was broadened through specific public support of the development of a middle and upper class of blacks in agriculture as a basis for economic empowerment, and therefore broad economic growth.

The A2 farms are composed of individual plots of land that are classified as small-, medium- and large-scale commercial schemes.⁷ By 2009, some 16,386 beneficiaries had received access to 2.9 million ha of land. The defining feature of the A2 farms was clarified with the enactment of the 99-year and 25-year lease arrangements. A major departure of the 99-year lease is that it also provides for the purchase of existing improvements on the farms by the farmers; these improvements can be used as collateral for borrowing from financial institutions. In terms of security, a long lease of 99 years is regarded as secure as a freehold tenure (MLRR, 2009). The essence of leasehold tenure is that land belonging to one person, either the state or an individual, is leased to another person via a contractual agreement. In Zimbabwe, leases are registered according to section 65 of the Deeds Registries Act. This model was instituted to increase the number of black commercial farmers.

Across the three districts of research, the dominance of small- and medium-scale farms is key. In Mazowe, more farms were allocated to A2, which reflected a tendency on the part of bureaucrats towards reserving more land for potentially well-resourced beneficiaries. In Shamva and Mangwe, A1 dominated, demonstrating a planning frame that aimed to appease the 'the poor' in non-strategic pieces of land. The expectation was that the A2 beneficiaries would take leadership in commercial production to meet the state objectives of high output production to meet food security, employment creation and foreign currency generation (Masanganise and Kambanje, 2008). On the other hand, A1 was about meeting the social objectives of addressing poverty, allowing the development of farmers who would go on to A2, and in essence decongesting communal areas.

Shifts in agricultural production As the government forcefully implemented the FTLRP, there were high expectations that new beneficiaries would perform at the same level as the former white commercial farmers (Hammar et al., 2003). However, the result was that the programme was heavily criticised for having impoverished farmworkers due to the land invasions, and of having been exclusionary and dominated by multiple land grabbing. One argument was that production and even full utilisation would not have been possible given the level of conflict and invasions that tended to affect farmers on the ground – and also discouraged a range of stakeholders, including financial

institutions and other private sector supporting organisations. There is some truth in this, because, by and large, international development agencies indicated in private meetings that they would not assist resettled farmers as they were on 'contested lands'.

In any case, a radical shift in production patterns and outcomes was to be expected as new beneficiaries settled on the land, as attested by the government in the founding FTLRP document (GoZ, 2001). It is certain that new beneficiaries did not follow the former large-scale farmers in terms of the kind of agricultural enterprises they adopted. In Mazowe, Shamva and Mangwe there were certain continuities, for example in terms of livestock and crops (tobacco, maize, wheat, cotton and horticulture), but not wholesale imitation. This book shows that there was an increase in the land area under production, but a significant reduction in output. Further, there were discontinuities in some forms of agriculture (e.g. horticulture in Mazowe dropped to 2 per cent of its potential).

As agrarian communities in Mazowe evolved over time, they showed modest improvements in agricultural output, yet the people who had settled there indicated that their lives had been transformed for the better. While certain social fissures exist, adequate post-settlement stability, with its resultant benefits for people, will not be possible in a short time frame (Kinsey, 2004; Matondi, 2011a). In a context in which resources for settlement were limited, there were difficulties in the early years. The resources provided by government were affected by the broader macro-economic challenges. However, history has shown that welfare levels tend to be universally lower in the first years of settlement (Kinsey, 2004). In any case, post-settlement adjustments demonstrated several areas of stress, as new beneficiaries struggled to get access to basic services (schools, health facilities, etc.). However, as experience accumulates and collaborative efforts begin, benefits start to accrue. This is evidenced by modest collective action in the mobilisation of resources and asset building for farming outside government subsidies in districts such as Mazowe.

New agrarian relations An important aspect discussed in this book relates to the new agrarian relations forming on the FTFs. The previous communities of a few white owners living with black farmworkers have given way to multifarious communities dominated by people of different classes, backgrounds, professions, technical abilities and ethnicities. According to an Agricultural, Technical and Extension Services (Agritex) officer in Mazowe, the new farmers with different competences (engineers, market specialists, civil servants, ordinary people, some farmworkers, etc.) provide an opportunity for social and economic innovation and a new beginning. However, for the full utilisation of the commercial land, there is a need to harness these and future resources through focused capacity-building and skills development. For this to happen,

the local people argue that the skills of former landowners should be acknowledged. At this stage, there is a lack of knowledge and analysis of the former, white, large-scale farmers' skills, how these were acquired over time, and how relevant they could be for a new agrarian model. This means that there is a need to examine the learning platforms that offer, for example, education and mentoring, farming skills development, agricultural extension and information in terms of how these were developed in the past and can be re-established.

Clear differences have emerged between A1 and A2 farmers, shaped by various factors. It is, however, at the production level that these differences have a telling effect across the three districts. Both sets of farmers recognise the broader forces that have shaped them, centred on the key objectives of the FTLRP and the circumstances in which they ended up as beneficiaries of plots of land. The A2 farmers are clearly aware of the desire for accumulation. In the new resettled areas, the ties to the benefactor – seen as the government and the former ruling party – mean that subordination no longer refers to village-level links on the chain of production. This also reflects the cosmopolitan nature of the people and communities that are emerging. New settlers are forging new forms of relationships, while also smuggling in a dominant patriarchal hierarchy against a policy context where officials pretend to balance gender interests. This is particularly the case in A1, rather than in A2. The A1 settlers are subjected to a series of social controls that A2 settlers tend to resist because they regard these social controls as a threat to commercial production.

On the FTFs the new settlers are exploring new forms of relationships. In the process, they are also breaking cultural barriers, although there is severe resistance by men who seek to impose norms adopted from traditional systems. The A2 beneficiaries also deviate from what was characterised as ordinary business people and civil servants. The dominant trend among this group of farmers is that they try to mimic the former white landowners. This is influenced by the design of the model and the message that both politicians and technical bureaucrats sent out to say that the A2 was a 'commercial model'. This message implied that the A1 was 'non-commercial' (although, in fact, this was not the case) and had the effect of softening the rigorous requirements for production auditing. However, the A2 farmers were placed on a higher pedestal, which led to their comparison with the previous commercial farmers. At times this comparison was unjust, but the overall expectation was that these beneficiaries would take a business approach to farming and, in particular, be the fulcrum of employment creation and foreign currency earning. In the three districts, the research established that the A2 is a new agrarian class that has steadily shed its ties with social and cultural networks, but which acts largely in accordance with new ideological norms constructed around the FTLRP.

‘Chaos theory’ in relation to the Fast Track Land Reform Programme

The FTLRP in its entirety, but especially the land allocation process, is characterised as having been ‘chaotic’ and lacking orderliness, being permeated by violence and self-serving interests through self-allocation of land by the well-to-do (Alexander, 2003; Alexander, 2006; Alexander and McGregor, 2005; Marongwe, 2003; Hammar et al., 2003; Derman, 2006; Zamchiya, 2011). Evidence derived from the press and selected case studies obscures the actual patterns and the stated outcomes. This is because overarching statements of failure are proclaimed about the FTLRP, but these have been based on short-term studies and derived largely from a partisan and agenda-setting press (both for and against the FTLRP). In fact, on the ground there was generally a certain level of orderliness amid the mayhem. Without condoning the violent aspects of action taken within the programme, there is a need to locate the disorderliness in terms of the context that influenced it, because this will need to be corrected. The following are keys to unlocking the factors at play:

- *Timing of the land reforms:* Zimbabwe’s economy was already in a downward spiral from around 1997 due to high and unsustainable debts and the poor budgetary decisions of the government.
- *Speed of the reforms:* The reforms were deemed ‘fast track’ without there being a sound economic or political reason why they had to be ‘fast’ as opposed to being carried out at a normal rate.⁸ This affected the broad planning framework to some extent.
- *Breadth and capacity to implement:* Capacity varied from district to district and province to province, so that the assumption that the government would be able to implement the programme wholesale and simultaneously may have been an overestimation of its own capacity.
- *Mechanisms for self-correction:* There was simply no time to learn from and correct mistakes that were identified even by the government’s own audits, such as the Buka land audit (2002), the Utete land committee (2003), and the Ministry of Lands and Rural Resettlement (MLRR) and the Scientific and Industrial Research and Development Centre (SIRDC) land audit of 2006.

Measured against these benchmarks, the government may seem to have failed to put in place appropriate mechanisms for controlling the ‘chaos’. Yet, at district level, one could identify some semblance of institutional order, even as the government struggled with various aspects of implementation. Of course, in the context of the mayhem, individuals took advantage to self-allocate or benefit their ‘friends’ with high political connections. At the same time, could 145,775 beneficiaries in the A1 model and 16,386 in the A2 model have all benefited through some form of corruption or nepotism? Such a very large number of friendships would be unprecedented in the history of

state development programmes. This means that there is a need for thorough empirical evidence to establish local actualities and nuances. Perhaps the programme was the victim of its own high-pitched political intentions.

Evolving central government and micro-relations following the Fast Track Land Reform Programme

The FTLRP was premised on speed to conclude the programme, and was defined by the government as ‘... kick-starting the Phase II Resettlement with an accelerated pace, code named “Fast Track”. This “Fast Track” is an accelerated phase where activities, which can be done quickly, shall be done in an accelerated manner’ (GoZ, 2001: 6). On the ground, an official in Mangwe (interviews, October 2007) summarised it as a process of ‘a fast track mode, where the emphasis was, do and ask later’. The research sought to establish how people and the state changed the way in which resources are accessed and used based on the premise of ‘do and ask later’ policy directives. In adopting such an approach to the reforms, government set itself a major undertaking unprecedented in history. Therefore, key governance and institutional weaknesses were apparent, because, at some level, the government’s own institutions on the ground were not adequately prepared to undertake the programme speedily. Therefore, matters of technical or administrative deficiency could not intelligently or sensibly be eliminated from the policy processes, which established and sustained them.

On the FTFs, socio-political relations between the state and the people were being transformed by land in complex ways. As a result of this observation, a key concern of the research was to identify the causal processes and how they flow, to appreciate the economic change brought about by land reforms and the related politics. The study narrowly focused on observing people’s day-to-day lives and livelihoods, and their coping strategies in rapidly changing situations brought about by the FTLRP. However, it is very difficult to attribute social and economic shifts to particular interventions without appreciating the wider context of change within which the land reform programme was implemented. It is likely that interventions aimed at increasing economic opportunities through the land reforms have played a larger role in catalysing social change. Therefore, it was important to incorporate interdisciplinary analysis in the understanding of political processes and systems – examining how economic, social and cultural systems interact with the political system and how their interactions affect people’s lives on the ground.

In the end, this was about analysing people and institutions as shaped by the FTLRP, and the character of the places and spaces where people live and survive. Yet, there are unique differences of a geographical nature and in regional politics and culture that have resulted in specific differences in the outcomes of the FTLRP in the different parts of the country. Certainly,

compared with other provinces, the Mashonaland Provinces differed in the way in which the reforms were carried out and in their outcomes. This book demonstrates some of these differences as well as common outcomes of the reforms.

Accumulation tendencies from above In Zimbabwe, the state could be described as having been ‘betwixt and between’ (Bryceson, 1999; 2000), in the sense that an uncertainty developed over what resettlement model should be promoted as a priority. In the FTLRP, both public and private elites emerged as key actors shaping the development of the FTLRP, as the commercial model (A2) seemed to take prominence, yet peasants and the poor managed to use political leverage to get concessions through the poverty reduction model (A1). Elites, especially those in associations such as the Affirmative Action Group, members of the now defunct Indigenous Business Development Centre, and the low-profile Indigenous Business Women’s Organisation, seemed to have been subservient to rural forces led by the War Veterans, only to reawaken ten years down the road to start clamouring for broader economic empowerment. New forces with political connections, such as *Upfumi Kuvadiki*, have also emerged strongly in the indigenisation dialogue.

The urban-based social (and political) organisations seem to mirror the precedent set by the land reform programme; they are now trying to use the land experience to target other economic sectors (mining, businesses, etc.) for takeover, but in a modified version of ‘buying shares’ or appeasing the majority in specific localities through ‘community share schemes’. The elites are caught between a rock and a hard place, because they seek personal accumulation of wealth, while worrying about the views of the poor, whose scope for accessing such wealth may be just a mirage. Nonetheless, the elites seem to be trying to sanitise such takeovers through reforming the laws first, rather than the other way round of taking and then reforming the laws later.

However, behind the scenes the elites have also been germane to the land movement, as they have used a variety of powers and tactics to put pressure on the government to encourage the de-racialisation of commercial agriculture. In this case, the politics of scaling – framing action and decision-making at a particular level – turned out to be an important elite strategy, which in the end tended to characterise the programme as having been led by the elite and having benefited that same elite, as pointed out in a 2011 parting shot by the past president of the CFU.⁹ Yet, without denying such benefits (the extent of which still requires verification), little regard or attention has been given to what the land reforms mean personally to peasants and the poor, who benefited in greater numbers (and also more perhaps in qualitative terms) than the so-called elites and politicians.

The FTLRP transformed state–society relations – both the way in which

broader interests were represented and the ways and means by which the state supported 'the people' in their action to take over key economic resources from a small elite, in this case mostly the white minority group. Nevertheless, as the short history shows, the mass benefits of the FTLRP also facilitated a few elite black groups in becoming the backbone of the local actors championing access to land for emancipation and economic empowerment. In the process, the FTLRP became an example of a programme that divided society and created conflicts between those whose land was taken, and those who justifiably were claiming the same land as having been historically expropriated. Yet, the process had the sum effect of subordinating local institutions to the whims of political elites, who were connected to a wide range of influential groups in the private sector, leadership, social circles, ethnic elites and so on (Munyuki-Hungwe, 2011). However, a key argument in this book is that, although there were elements of self-serving and skewed benefits that occurred as part of the haphazard programme, in general the majority profited. Illustrating this required much in-depth research on the ground to get to the bottom of what was going on and an assessment of the initial outcomes of the FTLRP.

Chapter overview

The following chapters elaborate on the key findings from the surveys and on an analysis of the issues and context of the last eight years based on the close reading of the evolution of the FTLRP. The research approach underpinning this book is based on an interactive analysis of macro- and micro-level forces, as well as of the ongoing context (national and international) that has shaped the nature, pace and emerging directions of the FTLRP. Based on a variety of information sources centred on original field data and secondary literature, the book exposes the emerging agrarian pattern on FTFs and uses this as a basis for defining whether this new agrarian landscape is the beginning of the end of the historical and colonial issue that has moulded the land question in Zimbabwe. It would seem that the demand side (majority blacks) of the land question has been addressed through processes that many would regard as 'the way not to do a land reform', yet the reality is that many people have now been on the land for some ten years. What does that bode for the future of the land question in Zimbabwe and elsewhere?

The land occupations discussed in the next chapter ignited the serious process of compulsory land acquisition (which differed from previous attempts), and saw an equally rapid process of putting people on the land (Chapter 3). The result is that land administrators, the judiciary and a range of stakeholders were all muscled into the programme without an iota of a chance of stopping or reversing the process. The result was that many aspects expected of a land reform programme, such as tenure security (Chapter 4), were put aside to ensure that first and foremost 'people were on the land', with the remaining

problems to be addressed later. Clearly, production began to decline (Chapter 5), with a variety of reasons given to account for this. Nonetheless, the new settlers started to invest in their properties, but not optimally (Chapter 6); services have not been optimal, and improved only after the formation of the Inclusive Government. Also, women with high expectations of gaining access to land often did not have these expectations met (Chapter 7). Over time, however, new communities have been emerging (Chapter 8), with beneficiaries holding on despite an ambivalent government unsure what form of security should be provided to them.