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EDITORIAL

The fast-track land reform and agrarian change in Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe's Fast Track Land Reform Program (FTLRP) formally began with the Land Acquisition Act of 2002. The Program, that effectively co-opted the farm occupations since 1998, redistributed land from white-owned farms and estates, as well as state lands, to more than 150,000 farmers under two models, A1 and A2. The A1 model allocated small plots for growing crops and grazing land to landless and poor farmers, while the A2 model allocated farms to new black commercial farmers who had the skills and resources to farm profitably, reinvest and raise agricultural productivity. The number of large capitalist farms, mainly white owned, fell by around 75%, while there was a 16% drop in the number of large foreign and domestically owned agro-estates (Moyo 2011a).

Until recently, the FTLRP generated heated debates that polarised opinion between those who were in favour of redressing the colonial racial distribution of land in favour of black farmers and those who were against this objective as well as the way it was done (Cliffe et al. 2013), the latter almost universally supported by media and governments of the global North and especially the former colonial power, the United Kingdom. However, there is now a relatively large body of literature that has addressed the views that dominated scholarship in the earlier period (Chaumba, Scoones and Wolmer 2003; Moyo et al. 2009; Scoones et al. 2010; Matondi 2012; Hanlon, Manjengwa and Smart 2012; and Mkodzongi 2013a, 2013b). This literature broadly argues that the land reform was redistributive although underpinned by class, gender and ethno-regionalism (Hammar, Raftopoulos and Jensen 2003; Moyo and Yeros 2005, 2007; Moyo et al. 2009; Scoones et al. 2010; Chambati 2011; Moyo 2011a, 2011b; Hanlon, Manjengwa and Smart 2012; Matondi 2012; Mkodzongi 2013a, 2013b).

More importantly, the major beneficiaries of the land reform were peasants who now have access to better-quality land and natural resources that were previously enclosed and enjoyed by a few whites under the bi-modal agrarian structure inherited from colonialism, that is, white commercial farmers and agro-industrial estates on the one hand and small-scale black commercial farmers and black peasant families on the other. As noted by Moyo,

> Fast track land redistribution undermined the underlying logic of settler-colonial agrarian relations founded on racial monopoly control over land that deprived peasants of land-based social reproduction and compelled cheap agrarian labour supplies. Redistribution reversed racial patterns of land ownership and broadened access to land across the ethnically diverse provinces, while replacing most private agricultural property rights with land user rights on public property. (Moyo 2011a, 944)

Land redistribution thus

> enlarged the peasantry and expanded the number of mid-sized farms, while downsizing the number, farm size and area of large-scale capitalist farms, as well as of the agro-industrial estates. (Moyo 2011a, 944)

While this process fundamentally changed the inherited agrarian structure, it created new problems, especially among farm labourers (Chiweshe and Chabata, this issue) and other vulnerable groups such as widowed women (Addison, this issue). The new agrarian structure,

while more democratic in terms of land ownership across farm and class categories, 'has created a platform for new agrarian class formation processes and struggles' (Moyo 2011a, 944) that are yet to be fully investigated. Because of its radical nature, the FTLRP triggered an imperial backlash, with the European Union (led by Britain) and the United States imposing so-called targeted sanctions on Zimbabwe. This led to its isolation from international financial markets and lack of foreign direct investments which forced the country to adopt a 'Look East' policy and a heterodox macro-economic policy in order to address the after-effects of spiralling inflation and economic stagnation. The so-called Zimbabwe crisis triggered by a change in agrarian structure, was partially resolved under the Government of National Unity (GNU) after a contested and violent election in 2008.[1] The co-option of a Western-sponsored Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) political party into the GNU loosened the imperial squeeze on Zimbabwe's fledgling economy leading to relative economy stability during the short lifespan of the GNU, only to be unravelled after the 2013 harmonised (simultaneous presidential, parliamentary, provincial and local council) elections which the opposition lost to the Zimbabwe African National Union–Patriotic Front (ZANU–PF) political party. This provided a backdrop to the current economic crisis, epitomised by international isolation, high levels of unemployment and inflation.

Most of the papers that constitute this special issue are based on empirical data gathered between 2015 and 2017 across Zimbabwe's diverse agro-ecological locations (see the map at Figure 1), providing a rich and much more nuanced analysis of the dynamics underpinning Zimbabwe's new agrarian structure. Moreover, there is an opportunity here to examine Zimbabwe's new agrarian structure and to take stock of the major issues that are negatively impacting the agrarian sector at a time when the country has a change of leadership. It raises questions about the future, among which are: how will issues of land tenure security and the negative consequences of the new land ownership structure (multiple farm ownership and biases against peasants in input allocation) be addressed to bring equity to the sector? What are the likely future agrarian scenarios, given a new leadership that seeks to encourage foreign capital and might undermine the process of re-peasantisation and accumulation from below triggered by the FTLRP? What lessons can be learned from the Zimbabwean experience by other countries such as neighbouring South Africa, itself currently considering land expropriation without compensation?

The abrupt removal of Robert Mugabe in November 2017 ushered in a new political era. During his inauguration speech, his successor, Emmerson Mnangagwa, indicated that he was pursuing a new relationship with the West, unlike his predecessor whose turbulent relationship led to sanctions and financial isolation. He was however quick to indicate that land reform was irreversible and that former white farmers would be compensated for the improvements on their former farms rather than for the land itself (*Chronicle 2017*). However, it remains to be seen how the new political dispensation intends to deal with the issues now facing the agrarian sector following the land reforms.

Given the tone of Mnangagwa's speech, it seems that the new administration is seeking to reconcile with global capital as a way to address the immediate economic challenges facing the country. The Mnangagwa government has welcomed foreign direct investment and this is likely to intensify a new wave of accumulation of capital across key sectors of the economy. Such a process was already under way (Moyo 2011a) and is deepening the exploitation of peasants through their reintegration, especially via contract farming, into global commodity markets under unfavourable terms (Moyo and Chambati 2013). While this might help to address some of the immediate economic challenges facing the country, it is likely to have a negative impact on the peasantry that until recently has enjoyed relative autonomy from global capital.

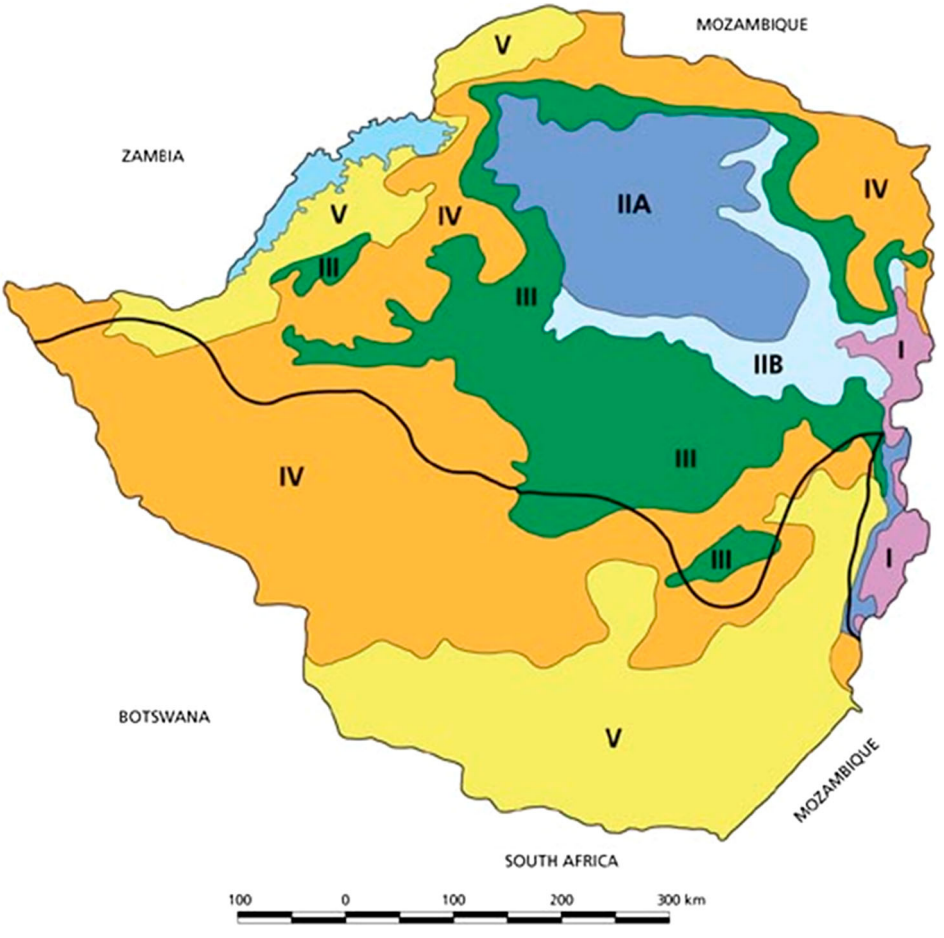

Figure 1. Zimbabwe's agro-ecological zones.

Note: Zimbabwe is divided into five agro-ecological regions, known as natural regions. The quality of the land resource declines from Natural Region (NR) I through to NR V (Moyo 2000). Source: FAO n.d.

Forms of accumulation and unresolved agrarian questions after the FTLRP

Although the fast-track land reforms transformed the agrarian structure, they did not address land and agrarian questions completely (Moyo 2011a, 2011b, 2011c). The reconciliation with global capital in 2008 under the GNU led to an upsurge in agrarian capital inflows especially in the tobacco sector, resulting in a dramatic increase in production by the peasantry under contract arrangements. The Tobacco Industry and Marketing Board (TIMB 2014, 2015) annual reports showed that peasants (in both A1 and communal areas) were the biggest suppliers of the crop compared with the pre-reform historical dominance of a few large-scale white farmers. This development has reduced rural poverty and helped Zimbabwe's economy at a time when key parts of the country's agrarian sector have faced viability challenges due to lack of state support (Moyo 2011c; Scoones et al. 2010). In some places, there is resulting social differentiation and accumulation from below as peasants produce surpluses and compete with the larger farmers. However, new questions have emerged in terms of the long-term sustainability of peasant tobacco production.

Empirical data shows that while tobacco contract farming arrangements have boosted productivity in the sector, they are also intensifying the exploitation of peasants through contract farming arrangements that have reinserted them into global commodity circuits (Shonhe, this issue, and Scoones et al. 2017). Surplus labour is extracted through a rigorous farm labour regime enforced by agricultural extension officers employed by the contracting companies. These 'enforcers' seek to increase the amount of time peasants spend working in tobacco fields in order to fulfil their contractual obligations. In some places, this has led to a decrease in the production of maize, the local staple. Peasants are also exploited through unfair pricing mechanisms of inputs and the manipulation of tobacco prices. Those who opt to grow tobacco outside contract arrangements are exploited by intermediary traders who collude with employees of tobacco merchants to manipulate grades and prices during auctions, paying very low prices to sell on at much higher ones.

Contract farming has thus transferred the risks of production, such as severe weather patterns and crop failure, to the peasants who end up in debt in the event of drought and crop failure. While it is too early to make broad generalisations about the long-term trajectory of the tobacco boom and new agrarian labour relations in the sector, a process of accumulation of capital is unfolding through the incorporation of peasants into the global value chain controlled by and benefiting the global corporates and a comprador bourgeoisie controlling the local tobacco markets. Moreover, the intensification of peasant tobacco production poses long-term ecological challenges as it requires large amounts of fuelwood for first stage processing. While the sector has been promoting reforestation programmes (TIMB 2014) and the use of more efficient barns, the long-term environmental and ecological consequences of tobacco production require further investigation.

The inflow of agrarian capital through contract farming has also intensified new forms of land grabbing. Disguised as joint ventures between the new farmers and remnants of former white commercial farmers and supported by the government, they have led to the gradual consolidation of farmland into large entities owned by syndicates. As Moyo noted, 'some former white farmers have moved up or downstream of the farming value chain by acting as contract financiers and marketers or supervisors of farming operations of contracted new farmers' (Moyo 2013, 51). Under these partnerships, there is an increasing demand 'for the reintroduction of private property in agricultural land' and a return to 'neo-liberal economic and agricultural policies' (*Ibid.*).

In some places these syndicates have totally displaced the new farmers who are receiving rent for the land transferred. These forms of disguised land grabbing undermine the deepening of the agrarian transformation after land reform. More recently, land grabbing and consolidation have been further exacerbated by the Zimbabwean government's adoption of a targeted command agriculture programme that favours capitalist agriculture, dominated by A2 farmers, at the expense of peasant farming. Under the command agriculture policy, black capitalist farmers have been given incentives, such as agricultural inputs and equipment, to grow maize in order to address the country's grain deficit. While this initiative has been extended to other sectors such as mining and wheat production, it has marginalised peasants struggling to access government support for inputs. This has hampered their attempts to increase agricultural productivity and investment (Muchetu, this issue). The collusion between the government and agrarian capital under the guise of the targeted command agriculture programme shows how agrarian capital has influenced government policy in favour of capitalist farmers to the detriment of peasants. This process shows the state has become the 'local institutional expression of capitalist society' (Moyo and Yeros 2012, 231), and has bowed under the pressure of global and local capital to return to neoliberal orthodoxy (Moyo and Yeros 2007, 2012). It is

likely that the new political administration, already committed to allowing capital a free rein in key sectors of the economy, will intensify these developments.

Since the ousting of Mugabe, there have been reports in the international and national media of many white farmers returning to 'reclaim their land', taking advantage of the reconciliatory tone of the new government, and signalling a dramatic shift from a 'radicalised state' (Moyo and Yeros 2007). The shift from a heterodox macro-economic framework to neoliberal orthodoxy is likely to lead to the subordination of the state to the supra-national imperial system that seeks to undermine 'sovereignty' in favour of 'empire' (Hardt and Negri 2000). This process is already being promoted by the black petty bourgeoisie within the state that has sought, through multiple farm ownership, to consolidate its control over agro-ecological rich lands and to commandeer state resources for its own accumulation processes through command farming. If this goes unchallenged, it will be likely to reverse the trajectory of re-peasantisation and accumulation from below that has characterised the new agrarian structure (Moyo and Yeros 2005 and 2012).

Labour, land and gender under agrarian transformation

The FTLRP allowed some farmworkers, displaced by the redistribution of the large farm and estate land on which they were employed but remaining resident in the accommodation provided on those estates and farms, to access land (Chambati 2011, 2013). More importantly, the land reform radicalised them but did not completely transform labour relations in their favour. The new accumulating A2 farmers have sought to reimpose an exploitative labour regime (Chambati 2011; Chiweshe and Chabata this issue). However, the new land tenure system uncoupled labour and residency rights at commercial farms, thus undermining the enforcement of such a regime and fostering conflicts between the new farmers and a more radicalised farmworker community that remained resident at former white-owned farms (Chambati 2013). The new farmers continue to expect those resident at their farms, but with unclear tenure rights, to supply them with labour, while the radicalised workers have resisted exploitation by engaging in other 'livelihood' activities beyond the farm. This has led to labour shortages across A2 farms. These 'unbonded' workers are resented by the new farmers, who accuse them of sabotaging their operations through theft, vandalism and unruly behaviour (ZiLAN workshop 2016).

As we mentioned above, one of the unresolved issues from the FTLRP's inception has been land concentration in the hands of those who acquired multiple A2 farms but are underutilising the land. Although the Land Commission recently set up in 2013 was tasked with addressing multiple farm ownership, and other issues such as land tenure rights and the imposition of a land tax, a lack of political will has hampered its effective operation. This is because many of those owning multiple farms tend to be politically connected and use their influence to resist measures to bring equity to the sector, in spite of the opposition from many seeking to gain access to land. This has become an arena of class struggles over land.

While land concentration and underutilisation of land persists in particular among a minority of A2 farmers, there is increasing landlessness especially among heirs of land beneficiaries who were children in the early 2000s and are now in need of their own land (Scoones et al. this issue). This has led to many resorting to informal land markets, characterised by the sale of land by customary authorities (chiefs and village heads), local state structures such as village development committees (VIDCOs) and district administrators and private individuals. Although illegal, such markets have become an important avenue for the landless to access land and their broader dynamics need further investigation as limited empirical data show that they have led to conflicts between those selling land illegally and their clients

(Scoones et al. 2010; and Mkodzongi 2013b). Moreover, the sale of state land has led to illegal settlements on consequently deteriorating common grazing lands. This is likely to lead to conflicts in the near future as people fight over finite land resources.

Moreover, land tenure security has become an increasingly pertinent issue. Many farmers, especially those on the A2 model, feel that the current system based on 99-year leases is problematic and question its worth as collateral against bank credit, despite recent pronouncements by the government to the contrary. Very few A2 farmers have secured such leases because of the difficulties in so doing, thus fuelling suspicion among beneficiaries that only politically connected individuals can secure them. As a result, some of the new farmers have been forced to raise capital by mortgaging their homes or by raising money informally. This is expensive and risky: some have lost homes after defaulting on loans. Land tenure security has thus become a major issue, with those offered land wanting creditworthy tenures. The inability of the new farmers to leverage loans from the banks has also affected agricultural investment while the government has failed to provide financial support to such farmers.

There is thus a major debate about what kind of tenure regime is appropriate. The previous government was reluctant to reintroduce freehold tenure especially after the land reforms (although importantly a few people still retained freehold tenure), because most of the A2 farmers were offered land by the government for free (under leasehold) and they were only required to pay for improvements on the land. The government thus felt it could not extend freehold tenure to the new farmers as they might sell such land on the open market. While the position of the new government on tenure issues is yet to be clarified, the previous government was generally against the return of land markets as it feared the return of former white farmers who could potentially buy back their former farms redistributed under the FTLRP. Ironically, as noted above, some of the white farmers have indeed returned, albeit indirectly through contract farming arrangements.

Another issue that tends to be ignored in debates about tenure security is that while the landed petty bourgeoisie have sought to force the state to extend 'secure tenure' (leasehold and freehold) to them in order to improve their accumulation trajectory, many, especially the more politically connected, have failed to improve their land as a condition of their 'offer' letters. This has led to some resentment among those who have failed to leverage such leases from the state. As a result, intra-class conflicts, especially among A2 farmers, have become more evident.

Land tenure security issues will continue to be contested at least in the near future. The nature of the state that will emerge in the post-Mugabe era will determine the trajectory of the tenure debate. The new president and his minister of agriculture have both indicated their willingness to address the tenure security issue. This needs to be resolved as a way to address conflicts among land beneficiaries and increase production especially among the A2 farmers. The new political dispensation thus faces a major challenge in terms of maintaining government control over land by limiting leasehold and freehold tenure, while also promoting agricultural investments by liberalising agrarian markets that will *de facto* undermine tenure security. The fact that informal land markets are intensifying across the Zimbabwean countryside signals that tenure issues must be resolved. The new government thus faces the task of normalising relations with global capital to secure agricultural investment, while at the same time maintaining sovereignty over land by restricting the return of land markets.

A return to neoliberal orthodoxy?

While the FTLRP reconfigured agrarian relations in favour of a diversified group of farmers by class and gender, future agrarian scenarios need to be considered especially in the context of

current political developments in the country. In the aftermath of the land reform, debates on the outcomes of the FTLRP have tended to be contested between what Moyo and Yeros (2012, 242) have called the 'civic/post-nationalists and indigenisationists', who have both failed to 'identify the class dynamics' of agrarian change and regurgitated 'bourgeois social science'. The first group has labelled the land reform as a land grab or an 'assault on the state' through the deployment of a legalistic bourgeois property rights analysis. The second has overly celebrated the land reform as the 'culmination of black empowerment' without further elaborating the class struggles underpinning the agrarian transformation process. Transcending these entrenched polarised positions through ongoing 'critical analysis' would highlight the class struggles that persist under the new agrarian structure. As Moyo and Yeros have cautioned:

> The immediate result of the land reform is clear and urgent, marked by worsening poverty and the inability to supply food to the local population. … imperialism continues to exercise its financial power deliberately to isolate Zimbabwe and smother the process of agrarian reform … agricultural production has been severely impeded from recovery … the urban and rural population has been relegated to a state of humanitarian aid. … the state has not yet devised a coherent plan for reconstruction and development, given that it cannot cajole private capitals into a national plan of introverted accumulation. … the danger is the full reversal into a process of recompradorization and recolonization under a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, and ultimately the failure to fulfil the developmental potential of the new agrarian structure. (2012, 242)

The above is a clarion call to avert the hazards of a return to neoliberal orthodoxy. For example, the land-owning petty bourgeoisie in the ruling ZANU–PF and their counterparts in the country's principal opposition party, the MDC, have been agitating for the return of land markets and security of tenure (freehold and leasehold) in order to consolidate their position as an emerging agrarian bourgeoisie. This is likely going to undermine the deepening of the agrarian transformation process through a return to land markets and extroverted accumulation as demonstrated by the dramatic increase in contract farming in 'export' crops and the return of white landowners reclaiming 'their land' under the guise of reconciliation. While this might provide temporary economic relief and stability by increasing economic activity and employment opportunities, its benefits will be short term. The twin processes of re-peasantisation and accumulation from below witnessed after the implementation of the fast-track land reforms in 2000 are now under threat.

The post-Mugabe era is thus likely to witness an intra-elite realignment of political forces to accommodate global capital as a goodwill gesture to imperialism and neo-colonialism. Imperialist sponsored forces are believed to have used underhand tactics in influencing the trajectory of a political transition within ZANU–PF. For example, the British diplomatic mission in Zimbabwe is believed to have played a covert role in ZANU–PF succession struggles that culminated in the dramatic removal of Mugabe by a military coup (Tendi 2017).

The replacement of Mugabe by Emmerson Mnangagwa, who was openly preferred by the British government, confirms this hypothesis. Mnangagwa and many of his surrogates were viewed by the British as progressive and amenable to a reconciliation with imperial interests in the post-Mugabe era (Marima 2017).

This is potentially bad news for the peasantry as it could create a springboard for land concentration, extroverted production and exploitation. The relative autonomy that peasants have enjoyed in the aftermath of the FTLRP is threatened by an encroaching regime of contract farming that on the one hand has been a key source of capital for agricultural investments and accumulation from below (as witnessed among A1 farmers), while on the other hand it

has promoted the reinsertion of peasants into global commodity circuits under unfavourable terms (Muchetu, in this issue).

The FTLRP myths and the reality on the ground

The articles in this special issue explore a broad range of questions concerning Zimbabwe's new agrarian structure. The authors provide important accounts of what is happening on the ground and go beyond the polarised debates that initially dominated scholarship. They provide new conceptual insights on key aspects of the post-reform agrarian structure and reflect on key issues that remain unresolved a decade and a half after the implementation of the FTLRP.

For the reforms to have had an impact on productivity and livelihoods, they need investment in the land and in agricultural implements. In the first article, Toendepi Shonhe highlights the changing dynamics of agricultural production and markets. He shows how after FTLRP, newly resettled farmers face a wide variety of challenges in securing capital for agricultural investment owing to the limited state support and lack of bank credit referred to above. As a result, Shonhe finds that across settlement models contract farming now represents one-third of agricultural financing, especially for tobacco. He shows that this funding by merchants is linked to 'domestic and international capital' and that local banks do not risk unsecured funding. Many farmers are forced to 'self-finance using sales of agricultural produce, personal savings from non-farm income and diaspora remittances, which together constitute 89.4% of funding overall'. The reliance of farmers on self-financing shows the varied dynamics of agrarian investments in the countryside, while contract farming has become a key driver of accumulation among a socially differentiated peasantry. However, some peasants are leaving contract farming to escape exploitation in favour of semi-autonomy in commodity production and accumulation from below.

The FTLRP significantly increased the number of small family farms, but as noted earlier many newly resettled peasant farmers have struggled to acquire agricultural inputs and access to markets because of lack of government support. Rangarirai Muchetu examines the possibilities of their commercialisation after the FTLRP in the light of this. He argues that there is a need for the government to promote the integration of these small farms into both input and output markets to address rural poverty. Since such farmers are already partially inserted into global commodity markets, the government could promote their integration under favourable terms, that is, higher producer prices and better access to inputs and markets. This could improve agricultural production and reduce rural poverty, although how far this leads towards an agricultural strategy focusing on the domestic food economy and its linkages with a domestic food industry remains an issue.

Farmworkers were both winners and losers from the land reform. Exploring the dynamics of agrarian labour relations after the FTLRP, Manase Chiweshe and Takunda Chabata argue that although the reform led to a large-scale redistribution of land to diverse classes of farmers, including farmworkers, it also led to job losses and to some people not gaining access to land because they were from outside Zimbabwe. This was especially the case for farmworkers. Those who were able to remain employees of the new farmers found that their labour was casualised. These developments forced them to seek opportunities in off-farm activities. This study contributes to the often contested debates on how the FTLRP impacted on farmworker livelihoods (Chambati 2011 and 2013). It demonstrates the changing dynamics of these livelihoods, as many of the workers who are no longer bonded to the farm are able to reproduce themselves socially through off-farm activities such as fishing, brick-moulding, market gardening and artisanal mining.

In the implementation of the FTLRP, peasants have been far from passive beneficiaries of state patronage as sometimes argued, but active in a changing agrarian situation. Arnold Chamunogwa highlights the agency of land seekers during the implementation of the FTLRP. Contrary to claims that land occupations were generally disorderly and violent, he shows how occupiers deployed legal bureaucratic procedures to sustain occupations of white-owned farms and to legitimise their claims over such land. Furthermore, his study shows the need to transcend earlier debates that gave prominence to 'violence, chaos and disorder' in the way that occupations unfolded across the Zimbabwean countryside. By highlighting how occupiers consciously manipulated bureaucratic legal procedure to their advantage, he demonstrates their agency, largely ignored in discussions of the outcomes of the reforms. Furthermore, he shows how occupiers often had to resort to the courts in order to sustain an occupation and gain access to land.

Using the law has been one way in which land claims have been resolved. There has also been contestation involving traditional authorities laying counter-claims based on their version of history. Innocent Dande and Joseph Mujere examine the way customary authorities have used indigenous ancestry to make claims over land redistributed under the FTLRP. They show how these authorities used land restitution discourses to claim control over territories that were resettled under the land reform. Furthermore, they show how rival chieftaincies have set out their versions of history to justify their land claims. Such contestations are not only over land but also over history, as 'rival oral traditions, oral histories and even archival files were deployed to validate territorial claims.' Linked to the above is the way that places of spiritual significances such as mountains and graves of ancestors were used to make a connection to 'specific places' to legitimise 'traditional' claims over land in newly resettled territories.

Although the fast-track land reform allowed women to gain direct access to land, instead of, as previously, through largely patriarchal structures (village heads, chiefs and male relatives), women continue to face challenges in exercising their *de jure* rights over land. Although such rights are now entrenched in the constitution, the persistence of patriarchal structures in the countryside has undermined the ability of women to exercise such rights especially in the event that their husbands die and male relatives deny them access. Moreover, customary authorities have promoted the marginalisation of women by controlling how they access land. However, the more positive effects of the FTLRP on women's empowerment has been regarded as one of the most important impacts of the reform. In this issue, Lincoln Addison points to some of these positive effects, but also to their fragility. He found that in the area of resettlement he examined, women were responsible for the bulk of both household and farming tasks and that their labour has intensified after the reforms. However, women are happier to be in a situation where they have more control over land, but also more control over consumption decisions. It is in this sense that he argues that women have greater empowerment after the reforms. Addison argues however that the gains are 'fragile'. Women, whose husbands are the sole registered settlers and who give them plots under the *tseu* tradition, find that with changing circumstances – such as better transport leading to closer proximity to markets – men are likely to want the return of this land so that they can engage in the more commercial agricultural activities that nearer markets facilitate. A further source of fragility is the pressure of population on land which limits allocation to women. Addison finds that fragility is differentiated by marital status with legally designated female-headed households and widows being in more secure positions, while married women granted *tseu* land by their husbands are relatively insecure. He concludes that *tseu* allocation, while being bound by traditional norms in male-headed households, may become a way of limiting women's empowerment as men take advantage of new commercial opportunities that require control over their land.

As noted earlier, young people who have reached adulthood after the FTLRP face challenges to social reproduction as a result of a lack of economic opportunities and access to land. Ian Scoones, Blasio Mavedzenge and Felix Murimbarimba highlight these socio-economic challenges in the wake of the FTLRP. Using the concept of 'waithood', they show how the children of parents resettled in 2000 are now grown up and in need of their own land. They describe the major challenges faced by youth in terms of social reproduction due to the lack of economic opportunities and access to land. The biographies captured by the authors show how some youths who have struggled to secure viable livelihoods have been forced to come back to the countryside to try farming but have faced challenges in accessing land. As a result they have been forced to stay with parents or extended family members in order to gain access to a piece of land to pursue farm-based livelihoods. The biographies captured in this article challenge the myth that the youth are not interested in farming. Rather, many are trying to go back to the land after exploring other livelihood opportunities in urban areas and across Zimbabwe's borders.

The FTLRP fundamentally restructured agrarian relations in favour of a diverse group of farmers. However, as the articles in this issue demonstrate, the land reform and agrarian transformation process continues, as do the struggles over land underpinned by class, gender and ethnicity. The new agrarian structure provides an opportunity for peasants to diversify livelihoods and participate in global commodity markets with their relative autonomy presented by the possession of land. Any return to neoliberal orthodoxy under the new government poses serious challenges to the agrarian transformation process and is likely to undo the gains of the agrarian transformation process that has been favourable to peasants and other marginalised groups.

However, there is still much uncertainty as to how land reform and agricultural policies will evolve. Will the government allow a full return to land markets, and if so, how will that affect the current agrarian structure? How will new forms of primitive accumulation in the agrarian sector affect the peasantry? Will such a move lead to the unravelling of the entire new agrarian structure under neoliberal marketisation? It is our hope that the articles in this special issue can provide an overview of the situation as it currently stands, and also provide a base for future research.

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As our fellow *ROAPE* editor Leo Zeilig noted in the introduction to his study of Frantz Fanon (Zeilig 2016), '(s)ince his death Fanon has been endlessly resurrected, sometimes bastardised, often deified'. The holistic approach that Zeilig takes, placed Fanon's revolutionary position at the centre of his thinking and action. As Chris Newlove argues in the Debate section of this issue, this prompts an analysis of the extent to which Fanon's ideas about revolution were influenced by Marx and Lenin. Newlove presents some solid evidence that not only was Fanon guided by Marx's work, but when it came to revolutionary tactics and strategy he was strongly influenced by Lenin's analysis of the national bourgeoisie as an ally in liberation but counter revolutionary thereafter, and of the working class as a labour aristocracy. He was heavily influenced too by the strategic link Lenin made between national liberation and the struggle for a different society. These continue to be key questions today, and Newlove's contribution provides a relevant background to the issues raised in the two Briefings that follow.

In the first of these, Roger Southall discusses the implications of the apparent generational change of leaderships in southern Africa. While it is true that there is a substantial age difference between the new and old presidents, it is also true that in most cases, old men have been replaced by younger old men. A more important issue highlighted by Southall is whether the

replacements are making a break with the National Liberation Movement generation steeped in authoritarian behaviours and prompting a more democratic anti-corruption agenda. This will depend on the degree to which they retain ministers from the previous government or appoint new ministers steeped in the culture of the movements, and in both cases steeped in corruption. His discussion of the change in Zimbabwe is especially relevant to the theme of this issue.

The second Briefing attempts to set the record straight on a key moment in the South African transition to democracy. The granting of an US$850 million Compensatory and Contingency Financing Facility by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to South Africa in December 1993 has been argued as the main reason for the African National Congress (ANC) moving from its more socialist, interventionist economic policy to one consistent with the neoliberal Washington consensus. Vishnu Padayachee and Ben Fine argue that though there was indeed a sudden shift of policy, the reasons for this lie elsewhere. They demonstrate convincingly that the IMF facility would have come with minimal or no conditions, may never have been used, and in any case was fully repaid. They also show that the change in policy came well before the IMF facility was granted, that it may not have been needed, and that after it was repaid, South Africa declined borrowing offers from the IMF and World Bank because of fears of loss of sovereignty. It would appear rather that the loan was a 'stamp of approval' for the austerity policies that had already been adopted by the ANC leadership, after persuasion by 'local capital and the late apartheid state', thus fulfilling the wishes of the Washington consensus that countries should take ownership of their policies with no need for conditionalities at all. These findings are further confirmation that governments have much more leeway than they suggest and that domestic failures are not always the consequence of supposedly externally imposed policies.

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Over the last four months the website has published some exceptionally important and strong pieces. This has included a further exposé of Rwanda's poverty statistics which has revealed the methodical faking of statistical evidence (Roape.net 2018). This was followed up with a blogpost by An Ansoms (2019) who looked at how the space for open contestation around problematic aspects of rural policy seems to have increased in the country. An update on the Rwanda poverty debate in April (Roape.net n.d.a) forced the World Bank to come to the defence of the Rwandan government. The impact of the debate on questions of development, poverty and international donor support for African governments has been enormous.

Roape.net has also co-hosted, with the Thamir Collective, Max Ajl's (2019) interview with the Marxist economist Utsa Patnaik, speaking about agrarian history and imperialism. This is part of an ongoing debate on Critical Agrarian Studies which is edited by *ROAPE*'s Ray Bush (Roape.net n.d.b). The website also posted Ben Radley's blogpost on the involvement of TNC-led mining in the Congo which has undermined the productivity and development of locally led artisanal mining in the country (Radley 2019). Earlier in the year we posted a piece by Thando Vilakazi (2019) on the form and extent of corporate collusion and cartels across much of the continent: he points to limitations of conventional 'governance fixes', namely competition law, to address private cartels in Africa.

Continuing our coverage of popular protests and resistance on the continent, Mebratu Kelecha (2019) contributed a detailed blogpost on Ethiopia's recent protest movement, and the impact of this movement on elite manoeuvring and reforms in the country. Events in Sudan have shaken the continent, and the major analysis by Magdi el Gizouli (2019) on the revolutionary crisis in the country, written for Roape.net, has become required reading on

the uprising. We have also published on Algeria's mass movement, the most significant struggle in the country since the early 1980s, and the government coup. Tin Hinane El Kadi describes a young generation determined to go beyond the usual arrangements between parties and the establishment to produce radical change (El Kadi 2019). These pieces have had a major impact on many readers, informing and advancing debate about the nature of popular agency and change on the continent.

Note

1. In the 2008 elections the governing party ZANU–PF lost its parliamentary majority to the two factions of the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). In the presidential election, Robert Mugabe was returned unopposed after MDC candidate Morgan Tsangvirai withdrew from the second round alleging intimidation of his supporters. The subsequent political stalemate in forming a new government was followed by a process of intermediation by the South African president, Thabo Mbeki, and resulted in a political agreement between the two main parties to form a Government of National Unity with Mugabe as president and Tsangvirai as prime minister. See Southall (in this issue) for more background on Zimbabwe's recent political history.

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