

**Tinkering on the Fringes?
Redistributive Land Reforms and
Chronic Poverty in Southern Africa**

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Abstract

Land redistribution is often seen as a powerful tool in the fight against poverty in areas where a majority of people are rural-based and make a living mostly, if not entirely, off the land. In Southern Africa, landlessness due to the asset alienation that occurred during colonial occupation has been acknowledged as one of several ultimate causes of chronic poverty. Strategies for poverty reduction therefore tend to focus on addressing the resultant imbalance in access to, and ownership of land resources. Land redistribution is thought to offer poor people secure livelihoods, as well as imitable assets to bequeath to future generations, hence reducing inter-generational transfers of poverty. In addition to redistribution, tenure reform is thought to help some landed but vulnerable households secure their livelihoods through enhanced rights to land. This has been known to spur poor households to increase investment on land, and lead to better production and higher productivity.

This paper looks at land reforms in Southern Africa, making five key observations with respect to land reforms and poverty in the region:

- First, although there is political appetite for deracialising land holding, there is little evidence to show a commitment to link this process to poverty reduction. In all three countries under investigation – Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe – policy rhetoric on land as a poverty-reducing asset often has not been followed through with a serious commitment of resources, either for enhancing access to land or for supporting those that have been ‘assetted’.
- Second, as currently designed, land reform efforts extend poverty ‘traps’ in the space economy rather than creating new opportunities. The quality of land provided and the terms of access both compromise the ability of beneficiaries to make a living as envisaged in plans.
- Third, in all three countries there has been policy capture of land reform initiatives by non-poor political and bureaucratic elite at the expense of the poor.
- Fourth, in all three countries, there has been reluctance to meaningfully reform customary forms of tenure seen as safeguarding the interests of the poor, yet at the same time there is growing evidence of commoditisation of land under such customary tenure that may not always work for poor households.
- Fifth, there is paucity of good quality data at country level for the systematic monitoring of the impact of land reforms. Monitoring and evaluation systems emerge as afterthoughts.

The paper concludes that although some poor people have had their lives transformed by access to more land in the short term, there is no systematic linkage between the programmes for land reform in the region and poverty reduction. As a follow up, the paper calls for systematic research that can produce good quality qualitative and quantitative data on the impact of land reforms on the livelihoods of the beneficiaries (vulnerable non-poor, poor and chronically poor) especially in Type-1 (redistribution) and Type-2 (tenure) reform countries.

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1 Introduction

One of the distinguishing features of chronic poverty is its extended duration or persistence (Hulme and Shepherd, 2003). *The Chronic Poverty Report 2004-05*, launched in May 2004, identifies lack of key livelihood assets, including land, as one of the major characteristics of chronically poor households (CPRC 2004). In regions where many people make a living mostly, if not entirely, off the land, access to land and the terms under which it is accessed often has implications for the ability chronically poor households to make a living (Jayne *et al*, 2002; de Janvry *et al*, 2001). Where ownership and access to land is unequal, redistribution is often seen as a way of helping land-constrained households out of poverty and chronic poverty through a significant ‘one off’ infusion of assets into the household (DfID, 2001; IFAD, 2001). In the ‘settled’ states of Southern Africa, severe land pressure and landlessness due in part to ‘asset’ alienation that occurred during colonial occupation has been acknowledged as one of several ultimate causes of chronic poverty (Aliber, 2003; Griffin *et al*, 2002). Strategies for chronic poverty reduction therefore tend to focus on addressing the resultant imbalance in access to, and ownership of land resources. Land redistribution is thought to give the chronically poor a secure livelihood platform and imitable assets to bequeath to future generations (Deininger, 2003; DfID, 2002; IFAD, 2001). Recent studies also show that under certain conditions redistribution of land resources can lead to increased incomes and higher economic growth, if followed by increased efficiency (Jayne *et al*, 2003). Land redistribution in the post-World War II period in South Korea, Taiwan, China and Vietnam has been credited with the rapid post-war recovery and economic growth (Deininger and May, 2001; Aghion *et al*, 1999; Barden *et al*, 1999).

Tenure reform is thought to help in poverty reduction, as delivering secure rights to land has been known to spur further investment on land and lead to better production and higher productivity (Deininger and May, 2001; Zimmerman, 2000; Deininger and Squire, 1998; Moene, 1992). In Sub-Saharan Africa, up to 90 per cent of the land is held under various forms of customary tenure with or without legal recognition (Deininger, 2003). This means that access to land in most of Sub-Saharan Africa continues to be determined by indigenous systems of land tenure that have evolved over time under both local and external influences (Palmer, 2003; Bruce, 2002; Cheater, 1990; Berry, 1993; Ranger, 1993). Customary tenure gives usufruct rights based on membership (usually kinship) to a community or tribal grouping, and is often seen as a vital safeguard against the loss of access to land by the poor (DfID, 2002). At the same time, it has been observed that “these systems are flexible and, under the stimulus of population growth and economic change rights have been consolidated and become more individual” (DfID, 2001: 10). Implicitly therefore, faced with commoditisation of produce or changes in population (i.e. growth in the number of smallholders), communal tenure does not always offer the protection it is assumed to offer (Bruce, 2002).

Although there is some work showing that in some cases ordinarily poor households may benefit from both tenure reform and redistributive land reform (see Jayne *et al*, 2003; Griffin *et al*, 2002; de Janvry *et al*, 2002; Kinsey, 1999; Gunning *et al*, 1999; Besley and Burgess, 2000), there is scant attention paid to who actually benefits from the reforms. More specifically, the question of whether land reforms actually help reduce poverty is often fudged. Work done at the Chronic Poverty Research Centre (CPRC) shows that there is need for a distinction between different poverty types and the formulation of more targeted policies (Hulme *et al*, 2001; Hulme and Shepherd, 2003). The question to ask therefore is what forms of poverty can be addressed effectively through each of the different land reform types.

This paper looks beneath the veneer of official poverty figures and macro-economic growth statistics and focuses on the emerging evidence on whether land reforms have made a difference to the lives of households in chronic and other forms of poverty in Southern Africa. While the focus of the paper is on redistributive reforms, where linkages in policy are

appropriate reference will also be made to tenure and administrative reforms. An appropriate framework is developed and applied in an analysis of the impact of land reforms on the livelihoods of poor rural households in Southern Africa.

2 Objectives of the paper

The paper analyses the extent to which the land reform agenda in selected countries of Southern Africa (Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe) has reached households in poverty. The following specific objectives are pursued:

- To analyse the major paradigms of land reforms in Southern Africa and review related empirical work.
- To develop and apply a framework for the analysis of the impact of land reforms on rural poverty.
- To identify and analyse the impact of contemporary land reforms on poor households in the region.
- To identify gaps in knowledge that can form the focus of future studies on land reform and chronic poverty.

3 Structure of the paper

The main body of this paper is divided into four sections. *Section 4* discusses the approaches to this analysis and the framework used. Using the livelihood approach to inform greater understanding of policy and practice, and ‘Theory-led’ understanding to analyse the impact of land reforms, this section argues that the extent to which land reforms address poverty issues can better be understood if we focus on the ways in which key facets of land reform programmes work, or are expected to work, to bring households out of poverty.

Section 5 introduces the contexts of poverty and unequal access to land resources in Southern Africa, and presents a typology of three main types of country pursuing land reforms in the region. This classification helps organise the analysis of land reforms, and is based largely on the key features of the reforms and their links to poverty reduction.

Section 6 discusses the emerging evidence on the poverty outcomes of redistributive land reforms in the three states that have undergone such reforms: Zimbabwe, South Africa and Namibia. The section argues that the scale of implementation and the way the programmes are designed mean that they can only have limited impacts on chronic poverty in the region.

In *Section 7* the paper looks at why land reforms have not benefited chronically poor households in these countries, focussing on technical and design failures; process failures; capture and patronage; and lack of clear programmatic articulation of the reform-poverty nexus. The final section of the paper concludes and provides some possible policy directions for a more poverty- focussed reform experience.

4 A framework for analysing land reforms and chronic and other poverties

In this section, some of the key narratives behind land reforms are outlined through a review of the literature on land reforms and poverty reduction. The focus is on empirical and theoretical propositions on how land redistribution or tenure reform can lead to reductions in poverty and chronic poverty. Two schools of thought on land reforms and chronic poverty reduction are sketched out: agricultural determinism and possibilism. These contrasting perspectives potentially lead to certain policy prescriptions and therefore directly influence the nature of land reforms attempted. Attention is then given to how using Theory-led Approaches (TLAs) can give a better insight into impact of land reforms on poverty.

4.1 Contrasting perspectives on land reforms and poverty and chronic poverty

Contemporary discourse identifies two main perspectives on the role of land reforms in poverty reduction. The first perspective, which we shall call the ‘agricultural determinism school’, sees agriculture in general and enhanced access to land in particular as the key to poverty and chronic poverty reduction in Africa (Lipton, 2003; Jayne *et al*, 2003, Griffin, 2002; de Janvry *et al*, 2002; FAO, 2000; Mellor, 1976). The narrative that derives from this school sees the creation of more smallholder farm-based livelihoods as an effective way of helping those in poverty, especially if chronic poverty exists under conditions of capital scarcity and labour surplus. The key argument is that since most of the poor in the region are located in rural areas where their livelihoods are linked to land (either directly for food or cash crop production or indirectly for employment income), enduring chronic poverty reduction can only be achieved by creating more small farm units. Post-World War II China, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and Vietnam, where land redistribution and tenure reforms played a crucial role in post-War recovery, are often used to show how land reforms can induce growth and help reduce poverty (Putzel, 2001). An emerging variant of this perspective sees the twin resources of land and water, in a context of enhanced human capital, as crucial to poverty reduction (Lipton, 2003; IFAD, 2001).

A second perspective, ‘possibilism’, sees land as playing only a permissive role in poverty reduction. Enduring chronic poverty reduction is seen as an outcome of interplay between land and several other capitals, e.g. human, financial, social and physical capital (Deininger, 2003; Bryceson, 2003; Zimmerman, 2002; Roth, 2002; DfID, 2002; McMillan, 1994; Stiglitz, 1998). The narrative is that rather than see the rural poor as land and water constrained farmers, we should conceptualise them as people with multiple livelihood strategies that may or may not be linked to farming at all times. Land therefore can provide them with a base from which to launch other livelihood ventures. It may provide chronically poor households with a key commodity, but one that still needs to be turned into a livelihood through other complementary activities. This is particularly the case in dryland regions where the need to spread the risk of crop failure implies that smallholder farming is but one of several livelihood activities pursued by households.

In conceptualising the poverty reducing effects of land reforms, this paper takes the view that land plays only a permissive role in poverty reduction. This permissive role varies from country to country, and even at the local level. For example, giving land to a land constrained household may allow them to produce food or cash crops, but only if household members have the required know-how, are healthy enough and have access to sufficient labour power; and if input supply and transport systems work and the markets are stable. It has also been argued that the above conditions for sustainable farm livelihoods are rarely met and so households in Africa tend to combine the use of land with many other off-farm and non-farm livelihood activities (Murray, 2002; Bryceson, 2003). Others have seen these multiple activities as necessary for income and consumption smoothing (Ellis, 2001; Dercon and Krishnan, 2000) or as a deliberate way of spreading the livelihood risk of agrarian failure (Fafchamps, 2000). In the next section we consider the literature on land reforms and the poor in Southern Africa.

4.2 Land reforms and chronic poverty in Southern Africa

Building assets, alongside income enhancement, is increasingly seen as an important aspect of reducing the number of households in poverty (Deininger, 2003; Jayne *et al*, 2003; Plateau and Baland, 2001; Sherraden, 2000). While income enhancement for the poor through welfare or other income generating programmes is seen as important for immediate survival, the long-term sustainability of poverty initiatives tends to depend on the ability of poor households to stay out of poverty. Assets, particularly those that are imitable upon inheritance, cushion households from livelihood fluctuations and in so doing provide the long-term resilience needed to stay out of poverty. Lipton (2003) has observed that only four per

cent of arable land in sub-Saharan Africa is under irrigation (compared with 44 per cent in Asia). Land alone without water may not help households depending largely on rain-fed agricultural activities make a secure living. This has led some to argue that reforming land without looking at the distribution of water rights, or developing new water infrastructure, is but a barren ritual unlikely to lead to significant poverty reduction (Lipton, 2003; Woodhouse, 2002; IFAD, 2001). Further, the extent to which households can make use of land depends to a very large extent on the interplay of this resource with social, human, physical and financial capital (Zimmerman, 2001; DfID, 2001).

Table 1 shows the four types of land reforms found in Southern Africa and the types of poverty these are likely to address. At the macro level, redistribution that results in a more equitable distribution of land has been known to spur higher economic growth rates (Aghion *et al*, 1999; Bardan *et al*, 1999; Deininger and May, 2001). This is particularly possible if land reforms are conceived of as part of a broader strategy of rural development, rather than as an end in themselves. Moene (1992) observes that growth induced by land reform is only possible if it is followed by improved efficiency under conditions of capital scarcity and labour surplus.

In combination with complementary assets, land reforms can improve general household welfare. This is in addition to the welfare gains that emerge from poor households being able to produce their own food. It also has been shown that targeted reforms that empower women usually result in better household nutrition, education and health (Jacobs, 1987; Quisumbing and Maluccio, 2000). In this way, land reforms can help transform household vulnerability scenarios through insurance against food and labour market shocks. However, some evidence suggests that for households that are deficient in other complementary assets, land may not be the best pathway out of poverty, as they are unable to produce food or utilise any available family labour (McMillan, 1994; Chimhowu, 2003). At the same time, it can be argued that land reforms reduce the potential for the intergenerational transmission of poverty by providing or securing access to land that can be passed down to the next generation.

While there is a tendency to underplay the poverty reducing effects of tenure reforms (Griffin *et al*, 2002; Jayne *et al*, 2003), it is important to recognise the importance of the terms and conditions under which land is accessed as an important influence on the way poor people make a living. There is also some evidence from India suggesting that tenancy reforms, for example, can account for a 10 per cent decline in poverty levels, especially among land constrained households (Besley and Burgess, 2000). Deininger (2003) has also suggested that securing tenure alone can increase land values by between 30 and 80 per cent as the prospects of ensured transferability improve confidence in land markets.

About 90 per cent of land in Sub-Saharan Africa still falls under customary tenure (Deininger, 2003). In Southern Africa, although some of the land is held under freehold title, the majority of poor people still reside in areas under customary tenure. Although it is often argued that this form of tenure protects the poor (see DfID, 2001; Toulmin and Quan, 2000; IIED, 1999), there is emerging evidence of active and growing informal land rental and sales markets evolving from what has up to now been considered to be a non-market commodity. Berry (1993) and Woodhouse *et al* (2000) have shown how the growth in the local agricultural commodity market or simply the emergence of new opportunities locally can influence the way land is accessed in southern and central Africa. For example, in Lesotho, Selebalo (2001) has documented the emergence of an informal communal land market as population increases trigger competition for scarce land. Households with access to remittance income have sought to expand their land portfolio by either renting extra land or 'purchasing' rights of access to farmland from both traditional leaders and other individuals.

Table 1 Conceptualising the poverty reduction impacts of land reforms

Land Reform Type	Poor targeted	Narrative	Possible Poverty Reduction Effects
Land Redistribution <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Break-up of large landholdings and creating smallholder farm plots◆ Transfer of land from one racial group to another◆ Land leasing through intermediary bodies◆ Colonisation of new lands	◆ Chronically poor	Chronically poor households usually do not own productive assets, especially land. Long-term poverty can be overcome by giving them ownership of land or facilitating access to land, and providing related capitals needed to make a living.	◆ Intergenerational effect of asset transfer ◆ Landed poor can engage in agricultural commodity markets ◆ Increased income and consumption smoothing opportunities ◆ Community membership and participation in decision-making
	◆ Descending poor	Households descending into poverty due to a collapse of livelihoods (income loss, asset loss, life cycle change or chronic illness) need a base from which to rebuild their livelihoods.	Land as a crucial starting point – gives place to construct a shelter and means to earn an income directly through production and indirectly through rents etc.
	◆ Fluctuating poor ◆ Vulnerable non-poor	Fluctuating and vulnerable non-poor households can fall into poverty in bad years and climb out in good years. Access to land increases stability of livelihood trends by giving households a steady source of livelihood.	Ownership of land can provide new and more stable livelihood options for income and consumption smoothing.
Tenure Reform <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Strengthening tenancy rights◆ Abolishing private land intermediation◆ Land ownership ceilings	◆ Vulnerable non-poor ◆ Chronically poor	Insecure tenure leaves the poor vulnerable to local formal and informal land market dynamics. Establishing a secure (i.e. formal) tenure will accord them new rights and the confidence to invest in land.	◆ Securing rights to assets allows continued access to land. ◆ Investment in land, stimulating a local land sales and rental market, empowers vulnerable groups and can improve local governance.
Farm Reorganisation <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Land consolidation◆ Land reorganisation◆ (usually break-up of unviable co-operative farms or consolidation of sub-optimal farm units)	◆ Vulnerable non-poor ◆ Chronically poor ◆ Fluctuating poor	Unviable land plots limits production and participation in commodity markets. Consolidating fragmented plots or reorganising land use can increase available land or present new opportunities for increasing the productivity of labour and land.	◆ Creating viable production units increases land availability for production. ◆ Facilities securing individual rights to land.
Administrative Reforms <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Governance and administration of land rights (juridical, regulatory, fiscal, cadastral, conflict resolution mechanisms)	◆ Vulnerable non-poor ◆ Chronically poor ◆ Fluctuating poor	Land use conflicts and loss of land by the poor is often caused by poor administration of land rights. Modernizing and decentralising records enhances governance and administration of land rights.	The poor have secure land rights and access to legal land administration systems when conflicts emerge. This reduces danger of arbitrary dispossession.

Similarly, in Swaziland where most of the land is held under customary tenure, an informal market has emerged as tribal leaders repossess communal land from the widows of AIDS victims (SAPRN, 2003). In this case, disguised ‘marketisation’ of communal land is working against poor and vulnerable groups. In Namibia, Werner (2003) has also shown how *de facto* ‘privatisation’ through fencing of ‘communal’ grazing land by wealthy and politically connected cattle owners has disadvantaged the poor communal lands dwellers. In South Africa, Claasens (2003) has documented how for a fee, ranging from R300-R1500 (US\$50-250) an individual can ‘buy’ land held under customary tenure from the *indunas* (chiefs) in South Africa. Similar observations have been made in Zimbabwe’s communal lands since the early 1980s (Saruchera, 2001; Hammar, 2001; Dzingirayi, 1998; Derman, 1997). When access to resources like land and water become subject to informal and ‘unregulated’ market forces, the extent to which customary tenure is still relevant for pro-poor land policies as argued by IIED (1999) and Toulmin and Quan (2000) can be contested. The above observations about the state of communal tenure in contemporary Southern Africa underscore the importance of tenure reforms in fighting poverty and chronic poverty in the region. Although some (see Jayne *et al*, 2003; Griffin *et al*, 2002) see tenure reforms as having a negligible impact on chronic poverty, the observation of long-term change in customary tenure shows that for the 90 per cent of Africa where this form of tenure prevails, fighting poverty will have to contend with how the land is accessed by the poor in the immediate and short-term. Land-constrained chronically poor households can be better helped by redistributive reforms, while tenure reforms tend to target the vulnerable non-poor households.

Based on the discussion so far we can say that the reality of livelihood situations in most of Africa implies that linking land reforms to poverty reduction, without careful consideration of the context in which land can make such a contribution is misplaced. Contemporary approaches have tended to make a lot of assumptions about the poverty reducing effects of land reforms without necessarily taking a closer look at the ways in which this transformation is supposed to work. This is in part a reflection of the limitations in the approaches to programme conceptualisation, and the methods of analysis in use. One way out of this reliance on an unqualified link between land reforms and poverty is to adopt a Theory-led Approach (TLA) (Chen, 1990; Donaldson, 2003). In the following section we discuss a TLA to land reforms and poverty.

4.3 Theory-led Approach to analysing land reforms in Southern Africa

Theory-led Approaches (TLA) are an emerging way of analysing complex programme interventions that require an understanding of how intervening variables are supposed to work to bring about a desired outcome (Chen, 1990; Donaldson, 2003). They are particularly pertinent in bringing fresh insights into the analysis of land reforms, as they facilitate closer scrutiny of the ‘black box’ where transformation of inputs is supposed to produce given outcomes (Lipsey, 1993). In its simplest form, the TLA involves construction of a “plausible and sensible model of how a programme is supposed to work” (Bickman, 1987). The model can be generated following the ‘hypothetico-deductive’ route or can simply be based on the implicit theories held by programme originators. We can also base programme theory on observations of the programme in action or, where conditions permit, exploratory process-type learning experiments (Rondinelli, 1993; Hulme and Bond, 1999). In exploring the impact of land reforms on various forms of poverty in Southern Africa, we can make use of a combination of theoretical postulations: Scudder’s 1984 Four Stage Linear Model, and Cernea’s 1996 Impoverishment Risk and Reconstruction Model.

4.3.1 Scudder’s Four Stage Linear Model (1984)

Scudder’s Four Stage Linear Model first appeared in 1984 as a result of a major USAID sponsored study of over 100 land resettlement projects. By the early 1980s, concern was mounting about households that were resettled after displacement by large projects. There

was a feeling that the effect of large projects on human settlements was not adequately taken into account in the large projects (Scudder, 1985). An explanatory and predictive model that sought to show how livelihoods among resettled households could be understood was proposed. This could be used to plan mitigation measures for displaced populations before the large projects were implemented. The model assumed that the resettlement was done by a central agency that would commission the resettlement of displaced persons and eventually pull out. It argued that livelihood development proceeded through four linear stages. Planners therefore had to anticipate these stages and incorporate them in planning. We find this relevant in this paper as it helps us understand the livelihood-related dynamics of land reforms. The model sees land resettlement as proceeding through four stages.

Stage 1 Planning infrastructure development and recruitment stage

This planning phase for land resettlement takes into account beneficiary inputs and the sensitivities of the host communities. During this stage, care is taken not to recruit only farmers, but to realise that a viable new settlement also will require people with non-farm skills. The model recommends that one-third of the beneficiary population be non-farmers, especially if the project is close to an urban settlement. Care also has to be taken to leave land for the next generation, and to resettle the beneficiaries in clustered rather than dispersed settlements. More significantly, at this stage the planners have to recognise the multiplier effect of the settlement scheme that have to be correlated with the expected diversification of household incomes.

Stage 2: The transition phase

During this stage, the model recognises the initial trauma caused by being resettled. Its main argument is that it takes time to resettle and when beneficiaries are still unsure about the new environment they tend to be risk averse and avoid experimentation. The model predicts that this is the most difficult stage, and one that determines whether the beneficiaries stay or leave the land. The trauma of resettlement, the model proposes, could be ameliorated by resettling people already familiar with each other rather than total strangers. This stage is anticipated to take four years in less complex settlements.

Stage Three: Economic and social development

Once the beneficiaries survived the first four traumatic years, they were expected to begin to ‘loosen up’ and perform. During this stage, the model sees the households as being able to take risks – a factor that means training and learning organisations can then come in with new ideas about crops and general economic innovations. By this time, the community is expected to have established survival networks and may have already begun to show some levels of differentiation. The model also predicts that beneficiaries will begin diversifying into high value crops and to experiment with a mix of activities outside the farm during this stage.

Stage 4: Handing over and incorporation

If the resettlement has been successful, the lead agency could then disengage and let the community evolve its own systems and structures for self-regulation.

Scudder’s model was very useful at the time as it helped planners to anticipate livelihood developments in land resettlement programmes for the first time. More crucially, the model focused minds on the social effects of planned rural settlements. Instead of seeing rural settlements as technical and economic units, the model brought to the fore concerns for

building social and human capital. The model, however, is heavily agriculture-centred. It envisages that resettled households would maintain farm livelihoods for at least five years before adopting multiple livelihoods. The model does appreciate the value of off-farm and non-farm livelihoods, but only sees this as a logical outcome of successful farming activities.

Three weaknesses of the Scudder model need to be highlighted. Firstly, the model is largely linear, and sees a linear sequence of events through which the *settlement* rather than the *households* go through. We now know that not all households go through the stages in the way the model proposes (see Oberai, 1988). Rather, we should envisage different households going through the stages according to their initial circumstances and other factors. We should even conceptualise that some households would not go through some of the stages at all. This weakness of the model is particularly critical in Southern Africa where drought spells that occur with increasingly predictable five-year cycles mean that livelihood progression is more cyclical than linear (Scoones, 1996).

Secondly, the model limits its applicability by assuming a leading role for a central agency. This makes it of limited relevance to other forms of resettlement that are not implemented by a central agency. Contemporary land resettlement is increasingly a multi-actor activity that often includes a combination of state, market and civil actors.

Thirdly, the model still assumes that those resettling were ‘small farmers’. With the benefit of hindsight we now know that not all who settle are farmers. In Southern Africa, beneficiaries often are involved in many other activities even if it is assumed that they are ‘farmers’ (Francis, 2000). They may derive only part of their livelihood from the family farm but may do a lot of other activities and, may even leave the family farm to pursue other opportunities at different times of the year and at different points in their lives.

Lastly, the model is of little relevance to tenure reforms since its formulation relates to resettlement but pays little attention to the terms of access to the land as a factor influencing investment decisions. For this paper, Scudder’s model will be of use only in as far as it outlines the experiences (rather than stages) of resettled households. The study will therefore not seek to place the land reform beneficiaries in any of the linear stages since, as noted earlier their lives do not necessarily progress in a linear pattern. The model is, however, used to understand that livelihoods among resettling households are dynamic within a given context. Next we consider an alternative model for planning and analysis of livelihoods of settled households.

4.3.2 Cernea’s Impoverishment Risk and Reconstruction Model (IRR)

In the 1990s, increasing focus began to fall on the risks and vulnerabilities that confront individual households in new settlement schemes. Studies in East Africa showed that households often formulated livelihood strategies on the basis of the risks confronting them (Dercon and Krishnan, 2000; WB, 2001. Cernea (1997) suggested that planning for resettlement of displaced households had to appreciate the risk environment of the households and factor this into the settlement planning process. These ideas gave birth to the Impoverishment, Risk and Reconstruction Model (IRR model). This model emerged in 1997 from a major review of the experiences of households displaced by major development projects. A key feature of this model, therefore, is the involuntary nature of the resettlement it seeks to address. So, like Scudder’s 1984 model, the IRR model only focuses on a specific subset of possible forms of resettlement although some of its features will be relevant to all cases of people seeking to resettle.

The model identifies what it terms ‘eight impoverishment risks’ that confront displaced households and then outlines how these can be taken into consideration in planning. The eight risks identified are: landlessness, joblessness, homelessness, marginalisation, increased morbidity and mortality, food insecurity, social disarticulation, and loss of access to common property. Households are seen to confront some or all of these as they resettle after displacement. If mitigation measures are not taken in planning, then impoverishment is seen

as inevitable. The model is therefore a predictive-cum-planning tool that can help those planning to resettle displaced persons to consider the risks they will face.

A key observation that can be made about the model is the residual analysis that it engenders. By removing or mitigating these risks, the model suggests that displaced households can be resettled successfully. The model is potentially reductionist as decisions are all put down to the need to avoid the risk of impoverishment. Settlers should be seen instead as pursuing their own livelihood strategies, the aims of which may go beyond the ones identified in the model.

This paper does find the concept of risk that the model engenders useful for understanding how land reform beneficiaries might formulate livelihood strategies. However, we do not make risk a central focus, as implicit in the model, since risks are part of many other considerations taken into account in the design of livelihoods by resettled households. It is appreciated that the central role ascribed to risks in this model stems from its sole interest in involuntary resettlement. As this study focuses on voluntary resettlement, risk is noted as an important – but not necessarily core – factor affecting livelihoods decision-making by settled households.

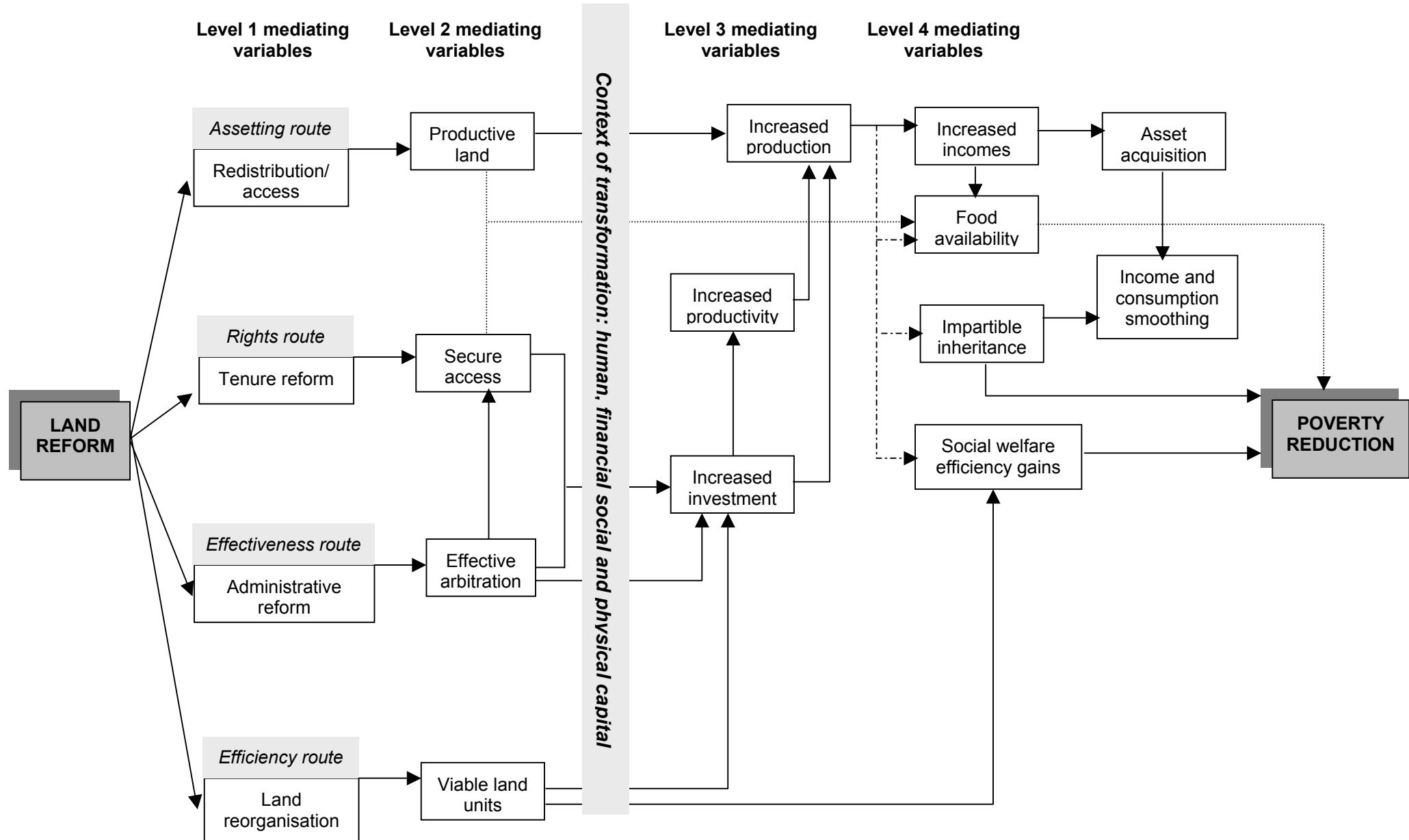
To conceptualise the poverty reducing effects of land reforms within a permissive TLA we can construct an illustrative model of how land reforms are imagined as translating into poverty reduction (*Figure 1*). We base this understanding on: Scudder's (1985) concept of livelihood dynamics among resettled households; Cernea's (1997) concept of risks and reconstruction of livelihoods; and an analysis of the 'chatter' within the land reform discourse coalitions and actor networks in Southern Africa. Four types of reforms are considered, all seen as contributing to poverty reduction. An important area of focus for this conceptual model is that all forms of reforms act together through the indicated mediating variables to effect poverty reduction. Equally, however, we can see each as working on its own by working on the linkages between the type of reforms, its mediating variables and the anticipated impacts on chronic and other poverties.

The narrative behind this model is that given sufficient land, secured access to land, efficient arbitration systems, and viable land units working through 'third level' mediating variables like increased productivity, investment and production, land reforms can affect 'fourth level' variables. Fourth level variables tend to be the traditional foci for land reform assessments and include incomes, imitable assets, food availability and social welfare gains. All of these combine to provide sustained poverty reduction. Contemporary land reform analyses tend to pay limited attention to mediating variables. Once the importance of these factors in terms of understanding how the intervention works in practice is recognised, it is possible to ask focused questions based on how the programme theory expects these mediating variables to operate. From *Figure 1* we can generate appropriate generic questions to inform an analysis of the assumed relationship between chronic and other poverties, and land reform (*Box 1*).

Box 1 Key questions in theory-led analysis of poverty reducing effects of land reforms

- ◆ Are the land reform programmes based on an appropriate, well-articulated and validated theories of how assetting can reduce chronic and other poverties?
- ◆ Is the employed theory of intervention reflective of recent research on how assetting land constrained households can help such households emerge from poverty?
- ◆ Are the identified land reform beneficiaries, programme design, operation, and intended outcomes consistent with the guiding theory?
- ◆ If the programme is consistent with theory, are the expected results being achieved?
- ◆ Are the programme inputs producing outcomes in the ways the theory predicts?
- ◆ What changes in the programme design or implementation might produce better outcomes?
- ◆ What elements of the land reform programmes are essential for programme replication?
- ◆ Overall, is the land reform programme theoretically sound? Were expected causal linkages confirmed? What aspects need modification?

Figure 1 Conceptual model of the poverty reducing effects of land reforms



5 Introduction to land reforms and poverty in Southern Africa

Box 2 outlines some of the specific socio-economic features of the land-poverty nexus in the three settled states with Type-1 reforms. It is clear that at least to some degree, poverty in the region has historical and structurally-induced causes. Efforts to address chronic and other poverty with structural causes tend to emphasise the importance of redistribution of resources.

For the three settled states of Southern Africa – Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe – three main features of poverty can be identified that are relevant to the link between poverty reduction and land reforms. First, poverty is in part attributed to structural inequalities between racial groups. The legacy of colonial occupation usually makes the design and execution of land reform policy as emotive as it is controversial. In Namibia and South Africa, white Africans own most of the productive land. In Zimbabwe, until the violent seizure of land in 2000, this was also the case. It can be argued, therefore, that poverty and chronic poverty in these countries have, at least in part, structural causes (see Aliber, 2003; du Toit, 2005). Addressing chronic poverty may require policies that focus on correcting resource access imbalances.

Box 2 Poverty and unequal access to land resources in settled states

Inequality in landholding is a structural feature defining the nature and distribution of chronic and other poverty in the settled states of southern Africa. Namibia for example is generally a very arid environment. Agro-ecologically most of its land is deemed unsuitable for agricultural production particularly by 'resource constrained households'. The historical legacy of race space segregation that ended in 1990 left some 4,300 white farmers owning 48 per cent of the land and most of the water rights, while some 140,000 mainly black households had access to about 50 per cent of the land and constrained access to water rights. This inequality has to be understood in the context of the large proportion of Namibians (70 per cent) that depend of subsistence agriculture for a living, and the fact that 75 per cent of the poor are found in rural areas. Among these poor households nearly 35 per cent live on less than 1US\$ per day (UNDP, 2001). From this structural inequality in access to land resources has emerged one of the most unequal societies in the region. In 2001, the five per cent wealthiest Namibians controlled 70 per cent of the GDP while the poorest 55 per cent controlled three per cent. The Gini-coefficient of 0.7 is among the highest in the world. At the same time, it must be borne in mind that most of the land in Namibia is semi-arid and not ideal for semi-subsistence crop and livestock production, especially among rural dwellers who are also poor in complementary resources.

The structural origins of chronic poverty in South Africa are also not in doubt. Although only three per cent of South Africa's area is classified as having 'high' agro-ecological potential, race space segregation, a legacy of apartheid, meant a concentration of chronically poor mainly black households in what then were known as tribal homelands. It is no surprise therefore that in South Africa, most of the chronically poor live in rural areas; a substantial number of whom are tenants on commercial farms. The 1993 SALDRU survey found that some 71 per cent of all rural people are poor, and 72 per cent of the poor reside in rural areas (Aliber, 2003: 475). Woolard (2002) has observed that of the country's estimated 42 million people, some 18 million subsist on less than US\$2 per day and 1.8 million people subsist on less than US\$1 per day. The *Final Report on Poverty and Inequality in South Africa* (May 1998) shows that only 26 per cent of rural households had access to land. Even for those with access, the average landholding was just 2.2 ha. In 1996, 85 per cent of the crop land and 60 per cent of privately held water rights belonged to white commercial farmers (Marcus *et al*, 1996). In fact, 95 per cent of all irrigation water and 99 per cent of all agricultural research output is consumed by the richest five per cent of the farming community (Lipton, 2003).

In Zimbabwe, about 38 per cent of the country is suitable for agriculture. Until the violent seizure of large-scale commercial farmland in February 2000, most of the good agricultural land belonged to about 4,500 mostly white commercial farmers. Most of the poor reside in rural areas, and up to 70 per cent of the population relies on agriculture for a living. A 1995 study found that a majority of Zimbabweans, and up to 75 per cent of the rural population, lived below the poverty line (GoZ, 1996). More generally, chronic poverty was found to be worse in marginal and remote rural districts of the country. Urban areas were generally found to be better than rural areas. Subsequent studies by the NFEWU (2000) show that within rural areas some households are more vulnerable than others. Specifically, female-headed households, grandparent-headed households, child-headed households and those headed by young male adults were found to be the most vulnerable.

Second, in all three countries a majority of the chronically poor and other poor are found in rural areas where they make most, but not all, their living off the land. Most of them reside in 'tribal homelands' assigned to them specifically on the basis of the poor quality land resource base. These tribal homelands never have been viable social entities because of this poor resource base; others have observed that chronic poverty induced by the creation of such homelands was a design to ensure supply of cheap labour for urban industrial centres, mines and commercial farming concerns (Bernstein, 1998).

Third, most of the land accessible to the poor in rural areas is under customary tenure of one form or another. Freehold title is mostly common in the mainly white large-scale commercial farm sectors of Namibia and South Africa. This means, land reform policy will of necessity need to consider whether this dual tenure arrangement is part of the structures perpetuating chronic and other poverty and therefore in need of reform.

Fourth, the process of attaining majority rule in all three countries was in part justified on the basis of the unequal distribution of land resources. This makes land reforms in the three countries an emotive political powder keg.

5.1 A Typology of Land Reforms in southern Africa

Countries pursuing land reforms in southern Africa can be divided into three main types (*Table 2*). This classification has been developed to help organise the analysis of land reforms in the region and is based largely on the key features of the reforms and their links to poverty reduction.

Table 2 Typology of Land Reform States in Southern Africa

Reform Type	Countries	Key Characteristics	Poverty Focus
Type-1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Namibia ◆ South Africa ◆ Zimbabwe ◆ Malawi 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Decolonisation agenda linked to restructuring of landholding ◆ Politics of race in land ownership influences agenda ◆ High potential for violent confrontation over land ◆ Cyclical policy attention linked to elections and key political events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Correcting asset alienation as a structural cause of chronic poverty ◆ Creating growth through more smaller and efficient small-holder production units
Type-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Angola ◆ Mozambique ◆ Zambia ◆ Botswana 	Focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ formalisation of customary tenure ◆ reforming rights regimes ◆ administration of land at the local level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Restructuring the vulnerability profile of assetted non-poor but vulnerable households ◆ Reformed rights regime and land administration systems to offer secure livelihood platforms ◆ Extending rights to women
Type-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Lesotho ◆ Swaziland 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Traditional monarchy ◆ Post decolonisation agenda ◆ Land shortage in the midst of poverty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Strengthening rights of access through tenure and land administration reform. ◆ Providing viable units of production

5.1.1 Type-1 Reform States

Type-1 land reform states are Namibia, South Africa, Zimbabwe and, to a limited extent, Malawi. In this discussion we have called these ‘settled states’. By this, is implied that these countries experienced extended periods of settler colonial rule and had significant populations of white Africans with settled status and owning much of the land. Four key features distinguish Type-1 reform countries.

First, ‘asset alienation’ inspired by racism and the subsequent inequitable distribution of productive resources is one of several structural causes of chronic poverty in these countries. In Namibia, South Africa and (until recently) Zimbabwe, a minority of mostly white Africans own most of the best land while a majority of mainly non-white Africans eke out a living on marginal lands. This inequitable distribution of land often fuels political passions around to election time. Reforms proceed in fits and starts, often seeing bursts of energy close to elections and stalling during the intervening period. Events in Zimbabwe since February 2000 show that Type-1 reforms have the potential of stalling and spiralling into politically-inspired violent seizure of land.

A second feature of Type-1 reform states is the dual nature of land tenure systems. Most of the best land for agricultural production is under formal freehold title while the bulk of poor land is under formal (and at times informal) customary or traditional tenure. Type-1 reform countries maintain a strategic ambivalence to tenure reforms. At one level there is a desire to secure rights of access to those under customary tenure. However, there is also a nostalgic passion for such systems, often seen as indigenous safeguards of the rights of access of the poor. Although in reality, these systems have been modified by both colonial and post-colonial encounters and no longer offer the protection attributed to them (Ranger, 1991; Berry 1993), this misplaced belief in the merits of customary tenure means that any reforms tend to be cosmetic. In fact, as is discussed below, any newly established land rights still fall within the influence of ‘traditional’ institutions, in spite of attempts to democratise how land is accessed and managed at the local level. For the poor in communal lands of Type-1 reform states, redistributed land still retains high levels of tenure insecurity.

A third feature of Type-1 reform countries is that they were the last countries in the region to gain majority rule. Most of the rights and political freedoms emerged from years of often-violent armed struggles. Consequently the ruling political elite in these states still derives legitimacy from among those that led the struggle for majority rule. The significance of this is that land reform is framed in the policy discourse as unfinished business of decolonisation. Interaction between the bureaucratic and political elite of these countries, dating back to the struggle for independence, tends to enhance policy transfers and mutually reinforcing behaviours.

In Type-1 reform countries, poverty objectives of land redistribution may be mentioned in ‘selling’ the reforms but the real motive is the deracialisation of landholding that may or may not benefit the poor. As we shall argue later, this fixation with deracialisation often subverts the poverty reducing effects of land redistribution: the best land is captured by the political and bureaucratic élite, while little post-settlement support is offered to resource-poor beneficiaries. Cousins (2002) coined the term ‘fat cat’ land reforms to refer to this process capture by the ruling political and bureaucratic elite at the expense of the poor. At best, some vulnerable non-poor households benefit, and at worst, resource-poor beneficiaries descend further into poverty. We can also postulate that, if led from below, any second generation of reforms after deracialisation may well involve expropriation of the remaining large-scale commercial farm land from the mostly black political and bureaucratic elites.

5.1.2 Type-2 Reform States

Type-2 reform states are characterised by a focus on the reform of land rights and how these are administered and enforced. We have called these ‘post-decolonisation reforms’ because the absence of the race factor in the land issue creates a different dynamic, one which

revolves around restructuring local governance and rights of access to land. In Angola, Botswana, Mozambique and Zambia, land reforms currently focus on strengthening the rights of smallholders and decentralisation of land administration systems. A key feature of Type-2 reform states – the attempt to decentralise land management and the administration of rights to local level structures – may actually be an extension of state control into rural areas that have hitherto been state-controlled only in juridical terms, while in practice traditional institutions had effective control.

5.1.3 Type-3 Reform States

Like Type-2 reform states, Type-3 reform states are past the decolonisation states and do not have a race-based inequitable distribution of land resources as a key issue. What distinguishes these countries from the rest is severe land pressure due to their small size; the special influence of a traditional tribal authority in land issues; and that struggles for land rights are intertwined with general governance reform issues. Lesotho and Swaziland fit the profile of Type-2 reform states because land reforms in these states are interlinked with the general struggles for democratic rights and local governance issues.

We can see from this discussion so that there are variations in the nature and form of reform programs in the region. This study focuses on Type-1 reform states where redistributive land reforms are currently underway. The next section looks at the policy and practice of redistributive reforms in Southern Africa.

6 Land reforms policy and practice in Type-1 reform states

Redistributive land reforms have mainly involved the twin strategies of creating more smallholder farm units by subdividing large-scale commercial farms, and restructuring the racial profile of ownership of large-scale commercial farmland. A key argument for the former strategy (apart from the political goal of social justice) is the economically determined inverse relationship between farm size and productivity (Ellis, 2000; Ellis and Biggs, 2001) while for the latter the idea is to deracialise land ownership without disrupting commercial agricultural production. Smallholders are seen as being potentially more efficient producers and therefore giving them more land can lead to equity and efficiency (Moene, 1992; Deininger and May, 2000). On the other hand, the highly mechanised commercial agriculture earning substantial foreign currency is seen as an engine for economic growth.

In practice, redistributive reforms can be supply-led or demand-driven. In supply led reforms, the state uses public funds to obtain land from the market to redistribute to those in need. The argument is often that chronically poor households lack the ability to participate in the land market either because of a combination of internal distortions in the market (land is not the right type and quantity, process is too complex and expensive for the chronically poor) and lack resources by chronically poor households to participate in the land market (capital markets have no suitable products for them). Until the early 1990s when plural models, especially market-based initiatives, emerged, land reform was seen as the business of the state. The argument for state involvement is that the land market in most post-colonies has structural distortions that market forces alone cannot correct (Deininger, 2003; Moyo, 1998). Supply-led approaches have played a much more prominent role in Zimbabwe and to a lesser extent in Namibia. In demand driven reforms, the state does not actively take part in the actual redistribution through direct land acquisition. It plays a passive role by facilitating the participation of beneficiaries in the land market through loans. It is often said this works well for non-poor households. In South Africa, the market has been used to effect the redistribution, with the state facilitating the participation of poor groups. *Table 3* shows the advantages and disadvantages of supply led and demand driven approaches. It is clear that for the chronically poor, supply-led approaches tend to have some advantages especially

when we take into account the fact that capital markets tend not to work well for those without assets (a key feature of those in chronic poverty).

Table 3 Supply-led and demand-driven redistributive reforms in southern Africa

Approach	Characteristics	Advantages	Disadvantages	Countries
Supply-led	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ State acquires and redistributes land ◆ Top down selection and decision making ◆ Little contribution from beneficiaries ◆ Predetermined models of resettlement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Better beneficiary targeting ◆ Better beneficiary post-settlement support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Potential for excessive state paternalism ◆ Can be slow ◆ Potential for capture by political and bureaucratic elite ◆ Costly to implement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Zimbabwe ◆ Namibia ◆ Malawi
Demand-driven	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Market-driven land acquisition ◆ State assists beneficiaries to participate in land markets through subsidies on loans or sets up special loan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Less bureaucratic ◆ Less costly ◆ Ensures only those keen to use land get it 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Poor households lose out as they cannot afford the up front costs ◆ Poor post-settlement support ◆ Potentially slow ◆ Ineffective where structural distortions of the land market exist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ South Africa ◆ Namibia

Table 4 shows progress with land reforms in the three countries to date. In Zimbabwe, close to 91,000 families were resettled in a programme of planned resettlement between 1980 and 1998 (GoZ, 1998:3). In some areas, resettlement was successful in reducing social inequality among the settlers. Households that were poor at the time of resettlement were shown to have made the biggest gains (Kinsey, 1999). Co-operative models of the resettlement schemes were declared a failure, however, and wound up in 1996 (Akwabi-Ameyaw, 1997; Government of Zimbabwe, 1998). Since the beginning of the *jambanja* (violent) seizure of mainly white-owned commercial farmland in February 2000, 134,452 households have gained access to land. In South Africa, between 1994 and 2002 some 130,453 households benefited from state-assisted land market transfers (Hall *et al*, (2003). Similarly in Namibia some 30,000 households were resettled on smallholder farm units between 1990 and 2000, while some 300 households were assisted to buy large-scale farm units over the same period (Pohamba, 2002: 3). Some 365,435 households or only 3% of the estimated 13 million households in the three Type-1 reform states have been given access to almost 15 million ha of land between 1980 and 2003. If we consider the combined redistribution target figure of about 42 million ha of land it can be said that the redistributive reforms still have a long way to run. In the next section we look specifically at the land reform experiences of the three countries in the region.

Table 4 Redistributive reforms in southern Africa

Country	Mode	Year Started	Land Redistribution (hectares)		Beneficiaries (#)	
			Target	Achievement to date	Target	Achievement to date
Namibia	Supply and demand driven	1990	9,000,000	829,486 ¹ 3,125,143 ²	243,000 ³	30,720
South Africa	Mostly demand driven	1994	24,660,000 in 15 years ⁴	1,480,000 in 9 years ⁵	Not stated	130,453
Zimbabwe	Mostly supply driven	1980	9,000,000	9,800,000 ⁶	162,000 ⁷	205,027 ⁸

Compiled from Jacobs *et al* (2003:6); Sherbourne (2004:1, 2002:3); Utete Report (2003:24).

Notes:

¹ Figure for December 2003 for state settlement of chronically poor households.

² This figure, also for December 2003, is for the transfers facilitated through subsidized loans and is targeted at the non-poor in a programme intending to change the racial balance of large-scale farming in Namibia.

³ Figure quoted by Namibian Prime Minister Gurirab in address to parliament, 25 February 2004.

⁴ Initial target was the transfer of 30 per cent of land to 800,000 households over five years. This was changed in *The Land Redistribution for Agricultural Development* sub-programme (LRAD) to 30 per cent of land to be redistributed within 15 years. This figure includes land transferred under all components of the reform.

⁵ Figure for December 2002.

⁶ 3.4 million ha acquired for planned resettlement by February 2000; 6.4 million ha forcibly acquired by 2003.

⁷ Targets for Zimbabwe changed in early years. In 1980, it was 18,000 on 1.1 million ha over three years. This changed by 1982 to 35,000, and by 1983 it was 162,000 on 9 million ha. The last target has been the working figure since.

⁸ Under planned resettlement, 81,000 beneficiaries got land by February 2000. Under Jambanja phase, there were 134,452 beneficiaries (127,192 in smallholder units and 7,260 in commercial farm units). The Jambanja figures are still quite fluid as take up rates are massaged. Officially take-up rates are up to 97 per cent in smallholder units, but some estimates suggest effective take-up rates closer to 60 per cent. In commercial farm units the take-up rate is officially 66 per cent, although independent estimates indicate that up to 40 per cent of beneficiaries never took up the land.

6.1 Supply-Driven Land Reform in Southern Africa

Firstly, with the exception of Zimbabwe (before the fast track land resettlement schemes) state-sponsored settlement schemes in sub-Saharan Africa rarely give the economic and financial returns on investment at either the scheme or household level. This means that beneficiaries of land settlement schemes did not in most cases experience any expected improvements in their lives (Hulme, 1988; Cernea, 1994). Reasons for failure are many and varied, but discourses around them have long pedigrees. For example Lewis (1954) isolated seven criteria that he felt determined the success or failure of settlement schemes. These include: location of settlement in space; settler selection; physical infrastructure; availability of financial capital; organisation of activities; quality of land; and conditions of tenure. Projects were seen to fail if during the planning stage they did not take these into consideration. Almost forty years later, there have been marginal changes in the results of conventional evaluations. This has led some to explain why the state never seems to learn from the past, by pointing to the political mileage to be gained through land settlement schemes (Hulme, 1987).

A second shortcoming of state-sponsored land settlement schemes is the observation in some cases that they create dependency on state institutions (Legesse, 1998; Molina, 1999). Years of state support are thought to hinder the development of 'livelihood networks' crucial for household survival in new settlements (McMillan *et al*, 1994). Thirdly, state-sponsored settlement schemes promote corruption and politics of patronage (Hulme, 1987; Moore, 1998). In some cases, heavy emphasis on financial and economic returns to investment at the expense of social and other factors has compromised the social aspects of state-sponsored land settlement schemes (Scudder, 1984; Cernea, 1999; McMillan, 1994).

Box 3 Assetting with limited room for manoeuvre at Nyamakate, Zimbabwe

Upon taking up land, each settler signed three permits that were issued in terms of the Rural Land Act (chapter 155) and statutory instrument 247 of 1980. Each permit had conditions that guided settlers' livelihood activities. The permit to reside, for example, stated that 'The holder shall not carry on or allow any other person to carry on any trading commercial or industrial operations on the site'. This was meant to discourage any non-farm activities among the settlers. The permit to cultivate also stated that the permit holder was required to 'personally, actively and continuously carry on agricultural activities on the holdings to the satisfaction of the Minister' and that the beneficiary would not 'without the prior written consent of the Minister, engage in any other occupation or employment during the currency of this permit'. These conditions were meant to ensure that the settlers would not seek off-farm employment and would always be available on the farm throughout the year. They were to be small farmers. The third permit allowed the settlers to a specified number of livestock. It was designed to ensure the settlers did not overstock or invite livestock from relations in the barren communal lands.

Enforcement of these conditions was to be done through responsible agencies working with the resettlement officer. This was however always problematic as the enforcement mechanisms were neither effective nor systematic. Many of the settlers did not take the conditions seriously. In the case of Nyamakate, successive droughts forced many household heads to leave to work on commercial farms after failing to harvest enough. The state appointed resettlement officers were powerless to stop the settlers from periodically leaving their farms to pursue other livelihood activities, especially during drought years. Once the first drought was over, a pattern was established in which settlers would always go to the nearby commercial farms to raise cash for inputs and other household needs. From the early 1990s, it became clear that farming alone left the settlers vulnerable. An informal relaxation of this rule (in reality, regularising what had been a practice since the late 1980s) was effected.

Source: Chimhowu, 2003.

Fourthly, the state can adopt an overly paternalistic attitude and ritualised benevolence that can begin to impinge on the rights of individuals to pursue livelihoods as they see fit. The planned resettlement programme in Zimbabwe up to the early 1990s is a typical example where excessive state control of beneficiary livelihoods begins to impair their ability to innovate. *Box 3* presents a case study of a settlement in north-western Zimbabwe to demonstrate this process. What this case illustrates is a restrictive paternalisation of poor beneficiary households. Giving assets without rights to decide on livelihood strategies compromises the ability of the poor to innovate and come up with a compendium of livelihood strategies that are sustainable. We know in the case of Zimbabwe that once the state agencies left the settlement schemes in 1993 most of the poor households reverted to multiple livelihood strategies that took into account vulnerability to drought and other risks inherent in their environment.

Alternatives have emerged in response to some of these observed weaknesses of the state-sponsored land settlement schemes. In view of these criticisms and the general failure of the schemes to improve the livelihoods of resettled people, alternatives to the state model are sometimes the focus of attention. These are the market-driven schemes and human agency-led spontaneous settlements. We now turn to a discussion of the markets model before looking at spontaneous forms of rural land resettlement.

6.2 Market-driven (demand-led) land reforms

Market-driven land reforms are part of a wider shift in thinking on the role of the state in development since the early 1980s (Binswanger, 1993). The market is seen as an alternative to state domination in the implementation of land settlement schemes (Dorner and Saliba, 1981; Binswanger, 1993; van Zyl *et al*, 1995; Deininger and Binswanger, 1999). Market-led land reforms have taken root in South America, where in some countries such as Mexico, the

constitution has even been changed to reflect that the state is no longer responsible for resettling people (Quintan *et al*, 1998). Non-market reforms are seen as inefficient because they are controlled by bureaucracies with interests seen to be at odds with rapid land redistribution (Hulme, 1987; Kinsey and Binswanger, 1993; van Zyl and Kirsten, 1997).

Two approaches to designing land reform programmes can be identified under the market paradigm. Where rural land markets are fully developed and there is effective demand for land, the market is seen as the most efficient way of resettling people (Quintana *et al*, 1998). No state intervention is deemed necessary. In cases where there are market distortions and there is no effective demand for land, corrective state intervention is seen as necessary, but only in so far as the state is enhancing both the supply and demand for land through regulation or through direct assistance to the poor (Molina, 1997; Deininger and Binswanger, 1999). The market paradigm is therefore based on the premise that the land market can be used to benefit the poor in a way that does not over commit state resources (Dorner and Saliba, 1981). State intervention is only accepted in a regulatory role, or through small grants to the poor to assist them to access the land via the market. The main premise of the market paradigm is that market imperfections, particularly asset endowments, transaction costs and insecure property rights, limit the ability of the poor to make use of the market in securing land for their livelihoods (Molina, 1997). This differs fundamentally from the state paradigm that views the problem as being structural, requiring the state to intervene on behalf of the poor in an uneven playing field.

Land market imperfections, according to the market paradigm, are seen as constraining the livelihoods of the poor in three main ways. Firstly, they are seen as limiting demand for land because the poor lack the capital to participate in the market (Dorner and Saliba, 1981). So there is a failure in the finance market. Secondly, the imperfections are deemed to be a constraint to the supply of land at affordable prices (Shearer *et al*, 1991). The third reason relates to legal and administrative requirements of land transactions that are seen as being too cumbersome for the uneducated poor who may not have the resources to hire legal services (Carter and Mebah, 1990; Shearer *et al*, 1991). The poor, it is argued, can benefit from land market reforms through increased supply of land available for purchase. The reforms, it is argued, also increase the effective demand for land by the poor through a reduction in access costs (Dorner and Saliba, 1981)

In the market-driven land reform paradigm, a multi-actor perspective is adopted in which the private sector, individuals, NGOs and communities are working together. More importantly, however, the paradigm distinguishes between what might be termed the 'bankable poor' and the 'non-bankable poor' (van Zyl *et al*, 1995; Molina, 1997). The bankable poor are defined as those who can subsist and still manage small commercial sales from their productivity. The bankable poor may have significant savings, but inadequate levels to participate in the land market. The shortfall in savings is expected to be met through seeking loans (Molina, 1997). Thus, the bankable poor can in theory access land on the market, with minimal state assistance in the form of loans proportional to their own savings. On the other hand, the non-bankable poor are very poor households with limited or no savings. They have little scope for investment and therefore would require a lot of assistance (usually in the form of grants) to participate in the land market (van Zyl *et al*, 1995). A further feature of this paradigm is that it recognises that land may be part of a wider survival strategy and therefore allows beneficiaries to adopt multiple livelihood strategies, even non-farm income opportunities (Molina 1997).

Although there is significantly less published literature on experiences with this form of resettlement in Sub-Saharan Africa, emerging evidence from South Africa shows that market-based land settlement schemes can be slow and therefore may not have a significant impact on structural inequalities over the short term (van Zyl *et al*, 1995; El Ghonemy, 1999). Examples from Colombia, Brazil, Guatemala and the Philippines, however, show that the introduction of market-driven land reforms increased levels of flexibility in the design of such

projects, as beneficiaries are allowed to come and go as they wish. Further, relaxation of ownership regulations allowed them to sell land as and when they wished.

In short, this new market-driven paradigm advocates for and recognises a multiple livelihood perspective. It realises that individuals construct their livelihood strategies without necessarily restricting themselves to farming. As McMillan *et al* (1994) show in the case of West Africa, although crop agriculture is vital as a starting point, settlers around the world prefer and strive for a more diversified production system. In fact, the results from West Africa show that those settlements with farmers who had more diversified income sources – particularly non-farm sources – were better off than those who relied solely on the family farm for a living.

However, results of initial evaluations of this new generation of land reforms are mixed. While indicating increasing productivity in Colombia and Brazil's land settlement schemes (see Ferero, 1999), results from South Africa suggest that more active state involvement may still be necessary in countries where non-market forces have led to a highly dualistic ownership and operational distribution of land (Murray 1998; Graham and Lyne 1999; Deininger, 1999). Further, market forces may actually result in the wrong target group accessing the land, or land in poorer, more marginal areas being accessed. In particular, evidence emerging from southern Africa shows an increasing number of investments in land by the rich who are looking for tax shelters (van Zyl and Kirsten, 1997). In the end, land resettlement via the market may not reach the groups that public policy is targeting since the idea that beneficiaries self-select according to their ability to pay up front costs (rather than need) tends to limit the attractiveness of the scheme by those social groups incapable of making the investment pay returns soon after taking up land (Zimmerman, 2000).

To conclude the discussion on land reforms via the market, several points need to be highlighted. Firstly, although this is a less confrontational way of distributing land as a productive resource, because of the poorly developed institutions and structures for managing this in Sub-Saharan Africa, this mode of land reform may still need time to prove itself. Secondly, as Deininger (1999) observes, in countries where historical and structural factors played a role in land distribution, it may still be necessary for considerable state and NGO intervention in the resettlement process. The market may not achieve the social and political goals aspired to by politicians, the public *or* state planners. The question remains – have the programmes helped those in chronic and other forms of poverty?

In the next section the paper discusses some of the emerging evidence in the three Type-1 reform states. We start by looking at the case of Zimbabwe, partly because this is the oldest programme among the three and also because until the mid-1990s there was a comprehensive and systematic monitoring of the post settlement dynamics.

6.3 Resettlement policy and practice, and poverty, in Zimbabwe

Until February 2000, Zimbabwe had largely followed a programme of planned land acquisition and resettlement. After February 2000 there was a dramatic policy shift and the programme of planned resettlement disintegrated into often-violent seizure of mainly white-owned commercial farmland. Box 4 summarises key policy development in Zimbabwe since 1980. The intention here is not to go into details of the policy as this has been done elsewhere (see Chimhowu, 2003). Rather the point is to only introduce elements of policy crucial to our understanding of the poverty implications.

Although increasingly an area of multidisciplinary focus, studying the social outcomes of resettlement is traditionally the domain of such disciplines as sociology and anthropology. In Zimbabwe, studies have ranged from official evaluative studies, simple one-off studies with a thematic focus (see Jacobs, 1987; Elliot, 1989; Gobbels, 1999), quasi-experimental designs (see Kinsey, 1999), and comparative case studies of the outcomes of planned and unplanned resettlement (see Chimhowu, 2003).

Box 4 Land reform policy and practice in Zimbabwe

Soon after the Lancaster House Agreement was signed on December 21, 1979, signalling Zimbabwe's independence from white rule, Zimbabwe's new leaders announced their commitment to a programme of planned land resettlement to correct the land imbalances inherited from the colonial state. Box 2 outlined the land imbalances that existed. When the state (with a matching grant from the UK's ODA) launched the intensive resettlement programme in September 1980 with the declared aim of resettling 18,000 families on 1.1 million hectares of land over three years, it appeared that a modest programme was planned (GoZ, 1980:5). Initially the programme targeted returning refugees, those displaced by the war internally, the poor and unemployed, those displaced by large public projects, and the landless. Resettlement had already started under the Zimbabwe-Rhodesian government in the 1979/80 financial year when 86,000 hectares of land was acquired. By 1982 the targets for resettlement had been scaled up to 35,000 households, rising a year later to 162,000 households to be resettled on nine million hectares (in the programme plans announced in the Transitional National Development Plan of 1983/4).

Four models were adopted for implementation. By 1998 the majority of beneficiaries were resettled in Model A schemes that emphasised individual smallholder agriculture. These models emphasized the dominance of the technocrats in the whole programme; even the model names implied formulaic precision. Planners believed they were in full control of the project environment. This dominance by planners and the complete disregard for inputs by beneficiary households emerged later as one of the main criticisms of the programme (Kinsey, 1983).

Models for Resettlement in Zimbabwe during the 1980s

Model Name	Characteristics	Number of households by 2000
<i>Model A</i> Normal Intensive Resettlement	Individual settlement in nucleated villages with individual arable land allocation and communal grazing. Each settler had 5 ha arable land and grazing rights for 4-10 livestock units. After 1992, Model A2 was introduced, with self-contained residential and grazing units.	51,006
<i>Model B</i> Cooperative Farming	Cooperative ventures on farms suitable for specialised enterprises. State assistance of establishment grant for equipment and technical assistance. Households resided in nucleated villages and produced co-operatively. Failed and were dismantled in the 1990s.	7,936
<i>Model C</i> Specialised Crop Farming	Resembled model A in terms of individual plots, except that it was based around a central estate that mentored the specialised farmers. Settlers contributed labour in return for free tillage, training and extension support. Used for sugar, tea and tobacco estates.	636
<i>Model D</i> Livestock Ranching	Applicable to drier parts of the country. Initial version involved resettling households on commercial ranches with a minimum of arable land. A later variant, the Three Tier System, involved nucleated villages where basic services were provided, along with grazing rights for 5 livestock units (subsistence use) and scope for 10 livestock units per household for commercial livestock production.	19,048

Source: GoZ, 2000.

The resettlement programme stalled from the mid-1990s for a variety of reasons. By February 2000, when planned resettlement was abandoned in preference for what was officially known as the Fast Track programme but more commonly termed *Jambanja* (violent seizure of land without immediate compensation), some 3.4 million ha of land had been acquired for planned resettlement. In August 2003, when this the Fast Track programme was declared complete, some 6.4 million ha of land had been forcibly acquired and distributed to about 134,452 beneficiaries. Some 127,192 were smallholder households while about 7,260 were in commercial farm units. Results of the fast track reforms are only beginning to emerge but in the short-term the agricultural production has declined. A combination of drought and the effects of land seizures saw severe food shortages starting in 2001 that still persist.

Table 5 Main Findings and Recommendations of Key Evaluation Reports on Planned Resettlement in Zimbabwe

Year, type	Report title, details	Main findings and recommendations
1984 Internal Evaluation	<i>Report of the National Survey of the Normal Intensive Resettlement Programmes, Harare</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Productivity in Model A schemes higher than on communal land (CL) ◆ Increased use of Agricultural Finance Corporation (AFC) credit facilities ◆ Infrastructure bottlenecks affecting social life ◆ Emerging social differentiation based on initial assets
1988 External Evaluation	<i>Cusworth, J. and Walker, J. ODA Evaluation Report EV434. Land Resettlement in Zimbabwe – a Preliminary Evaluation, Sept 1988</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Project did better than expected. Estimated rate of return of 21% vs. appraisal expectation of 14% ◆ Significant increase in productivity and crop income but many farmers in debt ◆ Some households benefiting more than others and women are disadvantaged ◆ No impact on decongesting CL ◆ Productive institutional support could be better
1988 External Evaluation	<i>GFA-EEC Evaluation of EC Co-funded Resettlement Schemes in Zimbabwe, Final Report Sept 1988</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ ERR of 14.8% to 44.4% depending on region ◆ Farmers heavily in debt and lending system collapsed ◆ Increasing productivity and cropping intensity ◆ Cattle complex has set in ◆ Not replicable because of amount of land needed ◆ Pay more attention to under-utilised land in the small-scale commercial farming areas ◆ Integrate them with CL in planning infrastructure
1991 Internal Survey	<i>CSO-Income Consumption and Expenditure Survey 1990/91</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Resettlement households with a Theil index of 0.25 in food expenditure are the least differentiated vs. national average of 0.32 and 0.33 for CL ◆ Resettlement areas have the least diversified income portfolio
1991 Internal Evaluation	<i>DDF Progress Report up to 1991</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Productivity fluctuating but rising ◆ In 1990, 77% of AFC's resettlement loan portfolio in arrears. Drop in loans uptake from 70% in 1984 to 10% in 1990 ◆ Increasing and substantial permit violations rising from 9,191 in 1987 to 13,756 in 1990
1992 Internal Evaluation	<i>Evaluation Report of Model B Resettlement Schemes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Most are underperforming due to poor selection, skills and extension advice, and lack of access to loans ◆ Some are no longer operating as co-operatives
1995 Internal Evaluation	<i>DDF-Review of the Land Resettlement Programme 1980-1995</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Background of settlers has a bearing on productivity ◆ Communal grazing problematic and needs changing ◆ Inappropriate models for the drier regions. Models B and D have been a failure, Model A successful ◆ Need to scale up productivity in the resettlement areas which is still lower than the plan models
1996 External Evaluation	<i>Cusworth et al. ODA Report of the Land Appraisal Mission</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Land redistribution now benefiting black elite rather than poor ◆ Land shortage not necessarily delaying resettlement as there is still unallocated land ◆ Scale down resettlement to 3,000 families/year ◆ Return to the willing buyer-willing seller principle ◆ Introduce other players e.g. NGOs, private sector
1998 Internal Report	<i>Report on Squatting in the Resettlement Schemes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ 7,000 illegally resettled farmers in Schemes ◆ Re-plan the villages into self-contained to get rid of communal grazing area, seen as vacant land by squatters

Compiled from: DDF, 1984, 1991, 1992, 1995; ODA, 1988; 1996, GFA-EEC, 1988; CSO, 1991

At least five internal and four external evaluation studies of the land resettlement programme were conducted by 2000. These yielded a lot of information about the outcomes and impacts of the programme. The resettlement programme operated without a formal evaluation unit until 1984 when the UK's Overseas Development Agency (ODA) provided technical assistance for setting up such a unit. *Table 5* provides a summary of the key findings of these studies.

It is apparent that the programme was seen as being generally successful. The ODA report put it succinctly: "it must be a source of satisfaction that such a complex and politically oriented programme that was required to achieve a range of, in some cases apparently conflicting objectives, has not been in economic terms a waste of resources" (ODA, 1988: 191). This endorsement is qualified, however, by a further statement that "it is however questionable whether future formal resettlement can generate comparably high rates of return" (*Ibid*: 194). The European Economic Community evaluation deemed the programme results 'not replicable' owing to the costs involved (EEC, 1988: xiii).

Since the evaluations were largely positive, the expectation of the Zimbabwean state was that the land redistribution would continue to be state-led, although it was benefiting only a few households. On the other hand, there was growing concern that an overarching focus on resettlement was leading to a neglect of the communal areas that still hosted the largest concentration of poor and especially chronically poor people. This view had sympathy among senior technocrats responsible for rural development as reflected in the first five year national development plan (see GoZ, 1996), and was broadly shared by technocrats in most line ministries. Among politicians, there was a general belief that the programme was underfunded and had not lived up to expectations, and as such that high economic returns did not translate into better lives for households. For example, on 15 August 1990, when a motion was put in parliament to debate lack of infrastructure in the resettlement schemes, one legislator argued that the scheme areas were

generally worse off compared to the communal areas.... nine years since we started on the resettlement schemes, people are drinking water from the small dam or river at the farm...it should not be that when one accepts to be resettled he has accepted to serve a punishment (Parliament of Zimbabwe (PoZ), 1990a:1478).

Similarly, it was felt that the resettlement schemes had turned productive land into wasteland. One legislator observed that "the initial intention was for the scheme(s) to be much productive because the farms bought were bought from productive people. What has happened now is the other side of the story" (PoZ, 1990b:1479). Socially, the resettlement models were seen as lacking foresight. As another legislator who had resettled put it:

if my son marries, he has to move to another area. We wonder what is going to happen when we get old. It will be an area of non-productive people who need to be looked after by the state when their children could have looked after them if they were given provision within those resettlement schemes (*ibid*).

Clearly, some legislators found it difficult to share the economic optimism expressed in the ODA evaluation, although it must be said that the ODA evaluation was very explicit that the high rates of return had been achieved because most of the land acquired for resettlement during the early 1980s had been lying idle.

Apart from the official evaluations, other geographical studies have focused on the effect of resettlement on natural capital, particularly the clearing of land for agriculture. A national study of land degradation in Zimbabwe by Whitlow (1988) looked at the whole country through remote sensing. While the study found that while land degradation was indeed a feature of communal lands, it also established that 60 per cent of the newly-resettled land was already showing signs of degradation at the time of the study. The main factor at play was identified as the clearing of land for crop cultivation, overstocking, and a rapid growth in wood biomass demand in small-scale tobacco growing areas. Thus, Whitlow saw resettlement schemes as contributing to environmental degradation, a factor that could

undermine the long-term sustainability of any poverty-reducing effects of land reform. In a separate study, Zinyama *et al* (1990) focused on the Model A resettlement scheme in Devure, southeast Zimbabwe. The study showed that because of its location in marginal agro-ecological regions, some of the households were not yet able to build livelihoods anchored in agriculture. Yet government continued to resettle more and more resource-poor farmers in these regions. The study also showed evidence of wealth differentiation based on initial assets and concluded that the cruel juxtaposition of poverty and wealth within the same village was a feature of resettlement areas as well as communal areas. In this case the study depicted an environmental setting that was hostile to the construction of secure livelihoods by resource-poor farmers and called for resettlement to be pursued differently.

The most detailed study of Model A schemes is a longitudinal study focusing on 400 families located in 20 villages of state-sponsored resettlement. Since 1982 the study has provided a wealth of information on the social transformation taking place in these settlements. Evidence from this study suggests that there has been a growth in income across the board, and that it is initially poor households that make the greatest gains (Kinsey, 1999).

While showing resettlement as beneficial, the studies have begun to question the ability of the households to maintain levels of productivity and income without the need for more land. The studies argue that increases in productivity were achieved not because of efficiency – e.g. improvements in skills and farming methods – but because more land was being brought into production. With all available land having been brought into production, the studies expressed doubt that the increases in production levels could be maintained. They further argue that productivity in resettlement areas, which never reached the targets, were beginning to decline as natural fertility declines and resource-poor farmers fail to purchase the necessary inputs for the crops (see for example Kinsey, 1999; Mabenza-Chimedza, 1998). The studies also argue that families have been investing in non-productive assets, particularly cattle, rather than developing the arable production base. Two contrasting life stories from settlers in one Zimbabwe's Model A settlements can help to put into perspective the livelihoods that emerged from the land reforms (see Boxes 5 and 6).

Box 5 Assetting success story

Thulani Moyo was born in 1943 at Karuru, in Hurungwe. At the time of the interview in December 2000 Thulani was married to Sibongile and the couple had six children. A retired civil servant, Thulani had worked for twenty years in the Midland town of Kwekwe before he retired to his rural home village in June 1985. Although on a regular pension, this was hardly enough for his needs as two of his sons were in boarding school. He decided to supplement the pension through dryland farming. Thulani joined the local farmers club and enrolled for a three-month course on cotton farming at a training centre near Kadoma in 1986. Upon completion, he went back to farm at Karuru but soon discovered that his one-and-one-half hectares of land were inadequate for his needs. He registered for resettlement and got a place on the Nyamakate Scheme in 1988 where he has lived with his family ever since. In 1992, Thulani qualified as a member of the elite 'master farmers club'. By November 2000, there was only one other household with this status in his village of fourteen households.

As a model farmer, he obtained most of his income from dryland farming. In the 1999/2000 season, the household produced twenty-two tonnes of maize, two tonnes of ground nuts, and sixteen bales of cotton. In addition, the household also produced four bales of tobacco from the demonstration plot that a tobacco firm set up to encourage farmers to take up tobacco farming. The total annual household earnings from dry land farming was about Z\$380,000 (over US\$8,800). The household had eight head of cattle, nine goats and sixty-four chickens. In the 1999/2000 season, the household sold 165 chickens worth Z\$10,175 (about US\$235). Thulani owns a small tractor that he used to plough his fields and also to transport goods locally. In the 1999/2000 season he did contract ploughing for local households that earned him an estimated Z\$2,300 (over US\$50). From his public service pension, the household earned Z\$48,000 (about US\$1,100) between September 1999 and October 2000. One of Thulani's four grown-up children sent some groceries over the period from December 1999 to August 2000 with an estimated value of Z\$1,600 (about US\$35).

Source: Chimhowu 2003

Thulani (*Box 5*) is a *hurudza* (master farmer). This is an elite group of individuals whose wealth derives largely from their consistent ability to make good farm livelihoods. Being a *hurudza* in Nyamakate was a desirable goal as it was associated with modernity and community leadership. Often highly trained and literate, the *hurudza* in Nyamakate were often quick to embrace new farming techniques and crops. Often, *hurudza* were the only persons eligible for loans from cotton and tobacco companies. In Nyamakate, those on the plan strategy (master farmers) received most of the extension support and often benefited from farm demonstrations. Income from other sources was limited. In all cases encountered, however, the household always had a regular income source outside agriculture to fall back on in times of hardship, as agriculture remained a high-risk strategy because of its vulnerability to extreme weather conditions and unfavourable market conditions.

Box 6 Assetted, but still vulnerable and in poverty

Kerecencia Karima was born in 1952 at Kazangarare. Her household had eight members in 2000. She came to Nyamakate by default. When she was divorced in 1994 and forced to leave with nothing, options were few. In 1995 she received word that her elder sister was seriously ill at Nyamakate. The sister's death from 'an illness' was soon followed by the sister's husband's death of the same 'illness'. The resettlement land was inherited by the son of the deceased, who was not interested in farming and preferred to continue his work as a delivery van driver at Kariba. Therefore, Kerecencia took over the land, but because it was too late to plant she got a job at a local farm as a tobacco grader, earning Z\$2,400 (about US\$55). With this money, and also with the help of her two sons, Richard and Tariro, she was able to go into farming.

The local village chairman organised for the CAMPFIRE (Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources, a longstanding GoZ programme) tractors to help all villagers with ploughing. Thus, in her first year farming, Kerecencia was able to save close to Z\$800 (over US\$15) because she did not have to hire much labour to work on her four acres. In the 1997/1998 season, she earned Z\$8,500 (less than US\$200) from growing maize, cotton and ground nuts. Since she did not have a farmer's card, she sold her produce through a local trader. During the dry season she also quarried for glitter stone for a local concession holder and earned Z\$2,000 (about US\$45) after four months of quarrying. Also, the community court finally heard her case in July 1996, and her husband was ordered to pay maintenance amounting to Z\$500 every three months – almost US\$4/month. Her sons also continued to support her and would send her Z\$200 every two months, in turns – another US\$2-3/month. Kerecencia's life was now bearable. She used part of her earnings to purchase two donkeys, three goats, a plough and some personal belongings, and was also able to send her children to school.

In 1998/99 season she was able to increase her earnings from agricultural produce to Z\$13,500 (about US\$310). This was, however, a bad season for her. Her earnings from remittances had taken a knock when Richard died of pneumonia in December 1997. Apart from the trauma of losing her son, she took on additional responsibilities when Richard's wife and two children moved in with her. She barely could support them all from her farm earnings. The 1999/2000 season started badly when she lost one of her donkeys to a pride of lions. This depleted her ploughing ability badly in a year when the CAMPFIRE tractors that helped in the past were working in another ward. Her crop income was only Z\$8,500 (less than US\$200) – hardly enough to feed her household, let alone buy inputs for the new season. A dispute between the council and the owner of the glitter stone concession stopped the artisanal quarrying activities, so Kerecencia could not turn to that work either. Instead, she began to harvest giant elephant thatch grass for sale on the main Kariba highway. This earned her only Z\$1,300 (US\$30) after four months of very hard work.

Source: Chimhowu 2003

Kerecencia's livelihood game plan was based on surviving through pursuing livelihood activities wherever they could be found, both on and off the farm. It illustrates a growing dilemma facing the officials who designed the resettlement schemes. As the first generation of settlers dies off due to a combination of old age and HIV/AIDS, there is every danger that the increased and sustained farm productivity on which the resettlement scheme planning was based would falter. The case further shows the common trend of young adults succumbing to the HIV/AIDS epidemic, leaving their families in the care of grandparents.

These two cases illustrate the mixed effects of ‘assetting’ in Zimbabwe. For some the land gives them a productive asset that transforms their lives. Most in this group are vulnerable but non-poor households who already have another regular source of income. For the majority of poor households, however, assetting without sustained support can still leave them vulnerable.

Although a 1994 state review commented that “generally, settlers at Model A resettlement schemes are better off than they were at their communal lands” (GoZ, 1994:22), the 1995 Income and Expenditure survey found the prevalence of poverty highest among resettled farmers (CSO, 1999). The survey highlighted that ‘assetting’ had not reduced household vulnerability to poverty. In the case of Zimbabwe, as in all other state-sponsored initiatives elsewhere, success stories are told much more enthusiastically than failures. It has been an open secret that most of the production gain in resettlement areas initially could be attributed to elite farmers constituting about 10 per cent of the total population. The remainder have been unable to realise the design predictions in either production and productivity, as they lacked the means to transform this resource into a livelihood or, more specifically, better welfare conditions for the household.

Poor nutrition is one of the key ways in which the intergenerational transmission of poverty can occur, and Kinsey (1999) showed that resettlement productivity and income gains did not translate into better household nutrition, as children from communal lands were found to be better nourished than those in then resettlement areas. He concluded that: “additional land has enabled resettlement area households to produce higher value crops but this has not benefited social reproduction of these areas as reflected in better-fed children” (Kinsey, 1999:186). By 2003, there was sufficient evidence to lead to the conclusion that “poverty in resettlement areas remains high, perhaps just as high as in the communal areas from which resettlement was to have provided such contrast” (Kinsey, 2003:262).

Once planned resettlement gave way to the chaotic ‘fast track’ approach from February 2000, ex-farm workers emerged as the worst of all those affected. Some 300,000 households were displaced (Sachikonye, 2003). Apart from losing employment, most did not get land. In those areas where they did receive land, ex-farm workers were discriminated against (Gonese and Mukora, 2003:220). They were seen as people in need only of residential stands and therefore received only two hectares, compared with the five hectares allocated to all other beneficiaries. It has to be said that because the fast track phase of the land reform relied on individual initiative (participation in invasion and occupation) compared with the orderly selection using set criteria of earlier phases, most chronically poor households remained stuck on communal land while the entrepreneurial (although perhaps vulnerable) non-poor households benefited from this newly available resource.

Based on this discussion, it is clear that resettlement achieved mixed results, depending on the aspect of resettlement reviewed. While some studies show that land resettlement resulted in positive economic returns in the short-term (Cusworth and Walker, 1988) and long-term (Kinsey, 1999), others show that this is only the case for some households, and that improvements reflected in technical economic measures did not seem to have translated into livelihoods less vulnerable to shocks (Jacobs, 1987; Alexander, 1994). Measuring success in income terms alone may not give an accurate picture of livelihood struggles and how they are waged. Evaluative studies based on programme objective achievement over the long-term describe a programme that had by the year 2000 missed most of its targets (GoZ, 1992, 1994), was under funded (PoZ, 1990a), and heading for a decline in productivity by its second generation (PoZ, 1990b).

6.4 Land reform policy and poverty in South Africa

The advent of majority rule in South Africa in 1994 saw a series of policies designed to correct the racial imbalances that had afflicted the space economy and were in large part responsible for poverty in South Africa (see Box 2). Land was a key area of intervention. New

policy pronouncements on land emerged, some carried forward from the transition period, as part of broad development strategies. South Africa has opted for a market route, along with a land restitution component as part of processes to correct the legacy of forced relocation during the apartheid era. *Box 7* summarises some of the key land policy issues.

Box 7 Continuity with change: land reform in South Africa

South Africa has largely followed market-led approaches to land reform. The policy was announced as part of the Programme for Reconstruction and Development announced soon after the demise of apartheid in 1994. The policy was further articulated in the South Africa Land Policy (SALP) of 1997. This restated the policy purpose as: correcting past injustices; equitable distribution of land; poverty reduction and economic reform; security of tenure for all; and efficient systems of land management. With respect to poverty the policy sought to achieve 'a better quality of life for the most disadvantaged' (DLA, 1997:7). Three components of the land reform were envisaged.

The first component was land restitution. This component was aimed at reaching closure for those wronged by apartheid era removal policies. It was initially to stop accepting restitution claims in 2000 but this was extended by a further year and has since run its course. By October 2002, some 35,173 restitution claims by 84,928 households had been lodged with the Land Claims Court. Most restitution claims involved urban land (up to 70 per cent in some areas) and most were settled in cash. Lyn and Darroch (2003) observe that only one-third of the designated R1.8 billion (US\$300 million) was used, to purchase some 437,021ha of land.

The second component of land reform policy was tenure reform. The SALP states that this aimed to 'upgrade de facto vested interests in land into legally enforceable rights' (SALP, 1997:64). It was mainly aimed at vulnerable groups working as tenants on large-scale commercial farms, and those in the former homelands without any defined rights to land. This would be achieved through formalisation of informal rights, upgrading weak rights to land, and restrictions on evictions and removals. A series of legislation was passed to affect these policy positions. In 1996, the Land Reform (Labour Tenants) Act Number 3 and the Interim Protection of Informal Land Rights Act 31 were passed to protect labour tenants and homeland dwellers respectively. In 2003, the Land Rights bill was promulgated to replace the Extension of Security of Tenure Act 62 of 1997 (ESTA) and created new arrangements of protected rights determined through decentralised structures (land boards). Some have judged these legal reforms ineffective as they failed to stem the problems they were meant to address. For example, Hall *et al* (2003) show that in KwaZulu Natal, illegal evictions persist and outnumber legal ones by a factor of 20 to 1. Similarly, they reveal only 32 projects have given long-term rights for ESTA occupiers. Part of the problem is with a lack of legal extension support and education among the intended beneficiaries.

The third part of land reform policy in South Africa is land redistribution. This was entrenched in the 1996 constitution and sought to initially to transfer 30 per cent of the 86 million ha of white-owned and commonage land to over 800,000 households in five years. This was changed in February 2000 as achievable after 15 years. The redistribution sought to target those people previously left out of the land market. The World Bank recommended in 1993 that the option of land grants for the poor was ideal as the poor could not finance land with mortgage loans because at the time land values exceeded the productive value. Initially the grant was pegged at R15,000 (US\$2,500) but this was later increased to R16, 000. By February 2000 when a new policy was announced, some 484 projects involving 780,407 ha (1.2 per cent of target) had been transferred to about 55,383 households. A new 'Strategic Direction for Land Issues and Policy' was announced. This introduced a new, deliberate policy for 'the development and promotion of emerging black commercial farmers' (DLA, 2003:13). Although the new policy increased the size of grants, some have observed that the non-poor are targeted, rather than the chronically poor victims of structural inequality in access to land (Hall *et al*, 2003). Apart from transfers from white commercial farms, the 1997 Municipal Commonage Programme was intended to give the urban poor access to land for both income and consumption smoothing through a combination of food gardens, cultivation, grazing, eco-tourism, and harvesting of natural products. The proximity of commonage to major city markets makes it attractive. This programme was discontinued in the new policy announced in February 2000.

Quan *et al* (2003) have made two important observations about attempts to assess whether land reform in post-apartheid South Africa has helped households in chronic and other poverty. Firstly, getting detailed work on the livelihoods of beneficiary households is difficult. Most evaluative work to date has largely been on the processes of accessing land and monitoring targets, rather than post-transfer livelihoods. This means “the impact on livelihoods or on local economic development remains almost entirely unexplored” (*ibid*:23). There are fewer comprehensive studies on the livelihoods of resettled households than would normally be expected for such a large programme.

A second observation is that the only systematic attempt at reviewing the impact of land reforms based on three-yearly Quality of Life (QOL) surveys has tended to produce work of inconsistent quality, making it difficult to compare trends across time. Survey design and quality problems associated with the first QOL in 1997/8 were rectified in the second QOL study in 1999/2000, and the third QOL in 2003 was redesigned, making it difficult to draw significant comparisons between studies.

Lack of information on post-settlement livelihood dynamics, coupled with quality inconsistencies and lack of comparability across QOL studies to assess the impact of land reform on the poor, limits the extent to which judgements can be drawn. This in itself is telling, and ties in with the conceptual argument of this paper. It was argued in Section 4 that a lack of good quality systems to generate information on the poverty impact of reforms is a programme design flaw and demonstrates a lack of focus on the processes meant to transform land into sustainable livelihoods, as much as it is about the real concern of political elite with targets for land transfers.

Perhaps the most detailed work to date has emerged from the University of Western Cape’s Programme for Land and Agrarian Studies (PLAAS). A series of papers with an evaluative theme has given some very good but patchy insights into the impact of the land reforms on the lives of the beneficiaries. Based on the QOL studies and the work done at PLAAS we can make the following observations about the impact of land reform on chronic and other poverty in South Africa.

6.4.1 Well-targeted reforms, but to the vulnerable non-poor?

The redistributive reform programme was well-targeted at the poor, as 75 per cent of the beneficiaries of redistribution fell below the poverty line (Deininger and May, 2001). Although 50 per cent of the land and capital budgets are, according to the policy, appropriated for the poor, some have argued that in practice there was never an attempt to distinguish the poor from other groups. There is some evidence to show that there was a tendency for higher income groups, in per capita terms, to obtain more land. The ratio of per capita land accessed through this policy worked out as 88 ha for the higher income groups, 15 ha for the middle income groups, and three hectares for the bottom income rung (Jacobs, 2003:11). Others go further and question whether or not the market mechanism for transfer excludes the chronically poor. Zimmerman (2000) has observed that the design of market-led reforms makes it more difficult for households entrenched in poverty to participate. Vulnerable non-poor households, on the other hand, usually have the means to pay the upfront costs of relocating, and also usually have access to the complementary assets needed to begin making a living. In the case of South Africa, however, households struggled to provide for physical infrastructure once resettled.

Cerneia’s (1997) model of impoverishment, risk and reconstruction can bring some valuable insight into how households faced with resettlement conceptualise and perceive the risks they confront. When land reform beneficiary households are expected to relocate to remote rural areas lacking in basic infrastructure and social services, this often exposes them to a range of unmitigated covariate risks. In market-led land reforms, beneficiaries are expected to self-provide basic infrastructure, rather than depend on the state. This is not always possible if the beneficiaries are poor. In an attempt to spread and minimize the risks brought on by poor infrastructure and social services, households often relocate over an extended

period of time. Straddling is often an ex-ante risk management strategy that gives the resettling households a foothold on the new land without facing the full uncertainties brought about by the trauma of relocating. In the case of Zimbabwe, Kinsey (1983) has shown how households often resorted to maintaining two homes just in case they find life intolerable in the newly allocated area. This is particularly the case if the area where the land purchased is far from the original home (Zimmerman, 2000).

The case of Gallawater Farm near Queenstown illustrates the inability of poor land reform beneficiaries to provide for basic services and infrastructure on their private land (*Box 8*).

Box 8 Straddling to spread the risks of land resettlement

In 1975, a group of 102 households learnt that they were subjects for removal under the Group Areas Act (GAA, 1950) from their homes in Glen Grey district of Eastern Cape near what was then Transkei. In 1977, they were moved to Zweledinga area in the north of Ciskei. In 1995, after the demise of apartheid in 1994, the group used a loan and subsidised funding provided for under the Provision of Land and Assistance Act 126 of 1993 to purchase Gallawater Farm with the aim of resettling. Gallawater Farm lacked housing and basic social services and infrastructure. There were also limited prospects that the local authority would step in to assist. As a result, most of the households did not relocate to Gallawater. By 2000, only 22 of the 102 households had moved onto the land. The rest remained at Zweledinga where they continued to used irrigated land, some communal grazing, and local services and infrastructure. However, they also used the available land at Gallawater Farm to supplement their communal grazing.

Compiled from Andrew *et al*, 2002; Mokgope, 2000.

This case is in no way representative of all projects, but it does illustrate some of the post-settlement dynamics affecting the reform programme's impact on poverty. It also reinforces the argument that for the land-constrained chronically poor, it may be desirable for the state to be actively involved in land delivery and in setting minimum standards of quality and quantity for the provision of post-settlement support. Evidence from an analysis of data from the second QOL survey suggests that project viability is probably much more important than land delivery, as only 16 per cent of projects were found to be delivering sustainable revenues, with median incomes per year of R10,000 (around US\$1,400; May and Roberts, 2000:14). In fact, some reach the conclusion that "in many projects no production is happening and some beneficiaries are worse off ... most of the beneficiaries only focused on staple food crop production for consumption" (Ahmed *et al*, 2003).

6.4.2 Spreading and sharing assets too thinly

The high cost of land and limited size of grants during the first phase of land reforms meant that a number of beneficiaries needed to pool their resources together in order to raise enough resources for the land purchase. The second QOL study shows that on average, 25 households teamed up to build enough grant support to purchase land (May and Roberts, 2000:12). There are wide variations between provinces, with some, like the Western Cape, seeing groups of eight members while others, like Mpumalanga, had groups of up to 95 members. Lyne and Roth (2002) observe that in KwaZulu Natal between 1997 and 2001 more than 50 per cent of land purchased was by groups. Andrew *et al* (2003) make the additional observation that the low grant levels may have prompted people to 'rent-a-crowd' i.e. ask eligible people who have no interest in land to apply anyway for the grants only so that the land purchase can go through. The livelihood implication is that insufficient assetting still leaves the beneficiaries vulnerable and in poverty. Since, chronically poor people can only afford land under these programmes by pooling their grants and other resources, the land they have access to for farming/grazing is insufficient for livelihood building, particularly as its often poor quality and without any services. This is particularly so if it is considered that in some areas, like the Northern Cape, more than half the land transferred up to 2003 is in semi-arid areas with few obvious livelihood opportunities (Hall *et al*, 2003). The situation is worse if already resource-poor beneficiaries take over the land with little additional support from state institutions. *Box 9* illustrates a typical case of spreading the assets too thin.

Box 9 Spreading the asset too thin? The case of Clipstone Farm beneficiaries

Originally part of KwaZulu-Natal's vast Sherwood Estates, Clipstone Farm is a 630 ha farm that is now jointly owned by 38 beneficiaries of South Africa's land grants. All were labour tenants on Sherwood Estates. After applying for labour tenant status in 1999, the beneficiaries qualified for land grants of R15,000 (about US\$2,400) each. These grants were available to households classified as poor (with monthly incomes below R1,500/US\$240), and became the vehicle through which poor households could participate in the formal land market in South Africa. By 2000, when a new policy framework for land reform was announced, some 55,383 households spread across 484 such projects had benefited from the grants, through the purchase of a total of 780,406 ha of farmland. In the case of Clipstone Farm beneficiaries, by pooling their grants together as eGamaletu Communal Property Association they were able to purchase Clipstone Farm. This transformed them from being labour tenants kept on the land at Sherwood Estates through the protection of the Land Reform (Labour Tenants) Act 3 of 1996, into private landowners.

Most of the 38 households relocated to Clipstone Farm before comprehensive land use plans were developed and before any infrastructure was in place. The 300 herd of cattle they collectively owned was beyond the carrying capacity of the farm and as a result, instead of accumulating these 'liquid' assets, they began involuntary disposal during 2002. To ameliorate the situation, members entered into an equity sharing arrangement with Sherwood Estates in which they have exchanged cattle for equity on the estate. Although all the households qualified for a land grant on the basis of their low incomes, emerging evidence suggests that getting access to land has not made a significant difference, as the monthly mean income of R219 still places them below the poverty threshold of US\$2/day.

Compiled from Shinns and Lyne (2003).

Box 9 illustrates the difficulties that these beneficiaries face after gaining access to land. Without continued state or other institutional support to help organise the enhanced access to land resources, land reform beneficiaries often find it difficult to turn their investment in land into meaningful livelihoods endeavours. The poverty reducing effect of enhanced access to land in the short-term can therefore be compromised by the quality of the resource and the nature of state support available. In this case, the redistribution of land has set unrealistic land grant amounts, forcing households into arrangements of convenience that make it difficult to eke out a living as the land is not nearly enough (using current production methods) to meet their expectations. Hall *et al* (2003: 9) have made similar observations about land reform beneficiaries in the Western Cape, and go further to show that wealthier beneficiaries get substantially more land than poorer ones – on average, 88 hectares compared with only three hectares. Lyne and Roth (2002) further show that when there are insufficient rules and operational arrangements to create viable enterprises, the formation of such large groups of convenience causes a free rider problem that ultimately can undermine their viability or survival as group-owned units. But how do the resettled households make a living? Are they all 'farmers'? In the next section we look at this issue and explore its implications for the design of land reform programmes in South Africa.

6.4.3 Multiple livelihoods among beneficiaries

Gaining access to land is often seen in lay and professional circles as the fulfilment of a latent desire to farm. In the case of South Africa, the worker-peasant tradition was well entrenched by the time of majority rule in 1994 (Bernstein, 1996). Almost all households will have someone working away from home for all or part of the year. This means that new land may just create a new base to work from but not necessarily alter this pattern of livelihood composition, especially among chronically poor households. While Shackleton *et al* (2001) show that 15-28 per cent of household income comes from crop production, up from 10 per cent in the early 1990s (Andrew *et al*, 2003), evidence available does not suggest a systematic and significant increase in farm income as a result of the reform programme. Rather this is related to how the income is measured. Shackleton *et al* (2001:17) point to the "small land grants and the acquisition of insufficient land of low agricultural potential exacerbates the problems and makes it impossible"[to make a living on farm livelihoods

alone]. Apart from this problem with quality, Zimmerman (2000) has asserted that labour constraints also affect the ability of households to use the new land. He argues that the assumed labour surplus in most of the rural areas is not actually guaranteed, as migrant labour trends coupled with HIV/AIDS mortality have decimated those who otherwise would work the newly acquired land. Carter and May (1999) make specific observations about KwaZulu-Natal showing that labour shortages are a common adverse factor for rural production.

6.4.4 Linking up with private capital to make a living

Quite apart from some of the projects that have not worked, other beneficiaries have sought to foster strategic partnerships with large scale private farm enterprises in: equity arrangements; contract or out-grower schemes; share-cropping; and company supported schemes. These have become especially important as part of global commodity value chains supplying large retail conglomerates in the developed world. The most common have been contract schemes. These involve producing agricultural commodities for the market under forward contracts that specify the commodity type, time, price and quantity to be paid. Three types of contracts are common. Procurement contracts or marketing contracts specify sale and purchase conditions. It is the responsibility of the landowner to produce according to stated quality specifications but using their own inputs. They are simply guaranteed the market and price. In partial contracts or production contracts, some of the inputs are supplied and the produce is purchased at pre-agreed prices. Total contracts usually require the contracting firm to supply and manage all the inputs. The land reform beneficiary supplies land and labour.

A review of the literature on land reform in South Africa suggests that at present joint venture schemes have allowed beneficiaries to build their livelihoods based on the linkages to the established large scale private farms and estates (Mayson, 2003; 2004). A key criticism of South African land redistribution is the lack of post-settlement support, and joint ventures have provided some beneficiaries with such support. Through joint ventures, land reform beneficiaries have accessed additional sources of capital. Price certainty allows them to take greater risks by venturing into high value commodities. Some have also been able to access new technologies and inputs ordinarily inaccessible. On the other hand, the private farm or estate contracting the out-grower is assured of a stable source of quality raw materials without bearing any local overheads. The private firm also gains through gaining a positive marketing image as a firm working with formally disadvantaged locals. In some cases firms have also accessed concessional loans to promote such ventures.

The joint ventures are not, however, without their own problems. For those eager to see a more radical transformation of the rural space economy, the joint ventures are a typical example of capitalist penetration of small-scale agriculture for capital accumulation. The contracts are seen as promoting self-exploitation of the land reform beneficiaries as they are at the bottom end of the value chain. Large retail conglomerates are seen to gain access to scarce land that could have been used for food production.

NGOs involved in land and rural development have been active in supporting such joint ventures. Such projects have centred on the production of high value commodities destined mainly for the local horticultural and European markets. The most common products currently include vegetables, flowers, sugar, fruit and wine, beef, timber, cotton and game. In some cases, it is the commercial farmers that have initiated such ventures, increasingly so after the land invasions in Zimbabwe in 2000. *Box 10* gives some examples of these. The only setback for such schemes is that although they can improve the livelihoods of the beneficiaries, they are not usually seen as powerful political symbols of the success of land redistribution policy. Further, there is no evidence so far that these schemes actually reach the chronically poor who, in most, cases find it difficult to organise let alone form such strategic links due to their lack of both social and political capital.

Box 10 International value chains and land reform beneficiaries in South Africa

Several sectors have started programmes to link up with beneficiaries of land reform. In part a response to market demand, and also as a clever marketing tactic (on the part of the giant food and other commodity supermarkets in the North), it is now common for large estates to sub-contract part of their supply contracts to local smallholders. In South Africa, this has most commonly involved diversifying ownership of farms without breaking them into smaller units. The fruit and wine sector and forestry sector have mainly been characterised by share equity offers to interested individuals. In so doing, companies can recapitalise while also giving the shareholder access to profits without direct physical involvement in the production of commodities. Through this, multiple-ownership of farms is developed without actually sharing the land. Risks of market failure are also spread across various individuals. Similar arrangements have spread to large, privately-owned game farms and eco-tourism projects. In some cases, however, the physical subdivision has been affected. For example, in the sugar industry company lands have been subdivided and leased to individuals with requisite skills to produce sugar on contract to the sugar mill. Such schemes have targeted black and Indian farmers. In some cases, farmers are entitled to as much as 10 per cent equity in the business. In addition, they acquire full title to the land and can also access subsidised company loans.

The case of South Africa suggests that land redistribution without post-settlement support has compromised the ability, particularly of poor households, to make a living based on their new asset. New and emerging approaches of linking up with private farm owners in joint ventures show promise, at least in the short-term while beneficiaries establish themselves, and as long as the ventures have access to lucrative international markets and can still make profits. It is however still in question whether this approach will help those in chronic poverty as some are pointing to the emergence of the ‘talents effects’. The slightly better off small-scale households tend to move to exploit such ventures more than the poor ones. South Africa continues to share the legacy of Type-1 land reform states – assetting that leaves households vulnerable and, in some cases, still in poverty.

6.5 Land reform and poverty in Namibia

Namibia is one of the Type-1 reform states confronting the twin challenges of an unequal and racially-linked land ownership and chronic poverty in communal areas. Although the Namibia Round Table Conference on Poverty Reduction in November 1995 identified landlessness as a major cause of poverty, it is, however, a truism that most of the land is as agriculturally marginal as it is unequally distributed between racial groups (Owolabi and Tjipueja, 2001). Only eight per cent of land receives the minimum 500 mm of effective precipitation for dryland farming (Werner, 2003:5). At independence in 1990, some 4,200 mainly white large-scale commercial farmers owned nearly half the usable land (about 8% of Namibia). Of these farms, 282 were foreign-owned, mainly by South Africans and Germans (Adam and Devitt, 1991:6). The unequal land distribution was compounded by multiple farm ownership in the midst of severe landlessness: while some 1,300 commercial farmers had more than one farm property, 145,000 rural households unsuccessfully tried to make a living on 41 per cent of the land.

For rural households, however, landlessness falls quite far down on a list of causes of poverty. A UNDP study in 1995 suggested that of ten important causes of rural poverty, landlessness was only the fourth most cited. A household income and expenditure survey done by the CSO also featured landlessness as fifth on a list of ten (GoN, 1995). It is little surprise therefore that both the 1998 Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper for Namibia and the National Poverty Reduction Action Programme 2001-5 avoid linking land reforms directly to poverty reduction. This has led some to argue that on balance, in the case of Namibia, “land reform is not about poverty. It is about finding the economically least damaging way of achieving a politically acceptable racial balance of commercial land ownership” (Sherbourne, 2004:1).

In Section 5 we argued that for most Type-1 reform states land reform is not just about correcting resource alienation. It is about completing the process of decolonisation. This in part stems from the largely unresolved issue of the future of landed white Africans in Type-1 reform states. We showed how in Type-1 states the tendency is for the politics of liberation to spur, in fits and starts, wholesale expulsion of white Africans off the land, replacing them with a new black elite (as occurred in Zimbabwe), in contrast to Type-2 reform states that are courting white Africans to take over land (as in Zambia and Mozambique). The land reform process in Namibia must be understood from the imperative faced by Type-1 reform states.

At the level of policy rhetoric, some Namibian politicians have maintained that,

"it is the view of our government that acquisition of land is a crucial element in the entire spectrum of poverty alleviation measures because the one who possesses and owns land has the key to the means to acquire wealth...<the> aim is to empower the majority of our people and uplift their well being, through access to the central factor of production land" (H. Pohamba (then Foreign Secretary), speech to Parliament, 02/03/04: 4).

Land reform policy has therefore tended to emphasise and deploy substantially high levels of resources to achieve the deracialisation goal. Initially there was a desire to do so without compromising the foreign exchange earning capacity of the large-scale commercial farm sector. However, addressing Parliament on 25 February 2004, Prime Minister Mr T. B. Gurirab indicated that some 240,000 Namibians still awaited resettlement. Increasing impatience among the electorate at the slow pace of deracialisation has thus seen some moves toward compulsory land acquisition beginning March 2004. Land reforms in Namibia have proceeded via a two-pronged strategy since independence from South Africa in 1990. One strategy has been to deracialise commercial farming and farm ownership through targeted assistance, initially to the elite among communal farmers, and since the late 1990s, to the new bureaucratic and political elite. Box 11 outlines how this strategy has worked and some of its achievements.

Box 11 Success story: targeted assetting to deracialise land ownership

Namibia is one of the Type-1 reform states that has openly supported the idea of creating a new class of black commercial farmer, and has provided resources to achieve this objective. Perhaps learning from the colonial administration and its support for the white land owning class, the Affirmative Action Loan Scheme (AALS) is a demand-driven approach to land reform. AALS is aimed at creating a new black elite making a living mostly or in part from large-scale commercial farming, based on targeted assistance to enter the land sales market. Under the Agricultural Bank Amendment Act No 27 of 1991 and the Agricultural Bank Matters Amendment Act No 15 of 1992, beneficiaries are granted subsidised bank loans to purchase commercial farmland on freehold title. Starting in 1992 the scheme has been providing 25-year loans at subsidised interest rates, particularly during the first ten years of the loan.

Initially the programme was aimed at vulnerable non-poor households. The idea was to decongest communal areas by targeting successful communal farmers who owned a minimum of 150 large-stock or 800 small-stock. Clearly the programme was not targeted at the poor. The objective was to deracialise land ownership without affecting the contribution of the country's lucrative livestock exports to the economy.

From the late 1990s, the AALS was altered to cover both full- and part-time farmers (*read* bureaucratic and political elite). This programme has been so successful that between 1996 and October 2003, some 528 loans worth N\$106 million (about US\$11) had been extended to purchase 3,125,143 ha of land. This is in stark contrast to the 829,486 ha bought for N\$121 million to resettle about 37,000 poor households in the supply-driven variant of the land redistribution programme (see below).

Sources: Werner, 2003; Sherbourne, 2003; Pohamba, 2002.

We can see from this case that the state has assisted groups previously discriminated against to participate in the land sales market. Given the relatively small size of the Namibian population, the rate of transfer to a new black elite is often hailed as a success by regional standards. However, others have coined the term 'fat-cat' land reforms to recognise the idea

that the new bureaucratic and political elite have privileged access to state resources to participate in the private land sales market, while ordinary poor households who need the land to make a living have still not benefited (Cousins, 2002).

A further puzzle is the fate of the 35,000 wage labourers working on the commercial farms and their 150,000 dependents. Emerging evidence suggests that the reforms have seen a reduction in the number of people employed on the farms. This has meant that a process of displacement of labour from the farms is likely to take place, perhaps substantially increasing the number of chronically poor households seeking resettlement. In the next section we look at the supply driven initiative that targets poor Namibians.

6.5.1 Supply-led land reform in Namibia

While it was possible to initiate demand-led land purchase assistance soon after independence, it was not until the mid-1990s that the National Resettlement Policy (NRP) established a clear framework for resettlement. The delay in coming up with a policy, and actually setting up a programme, has been attributed to a critical shortage of technical staff (Pohamba, 2002). Under the Agricultural (Commercial) Land Reform Act No 6 of 1995 and the National Resettlement Policy White Paper of 2001, this programme targets poor Namibians from communal lands, as well as commercial farm workers. The state purchases land from willing sellers. (Under a new policy announced in March 2004, the state now has the option to compulsorily acquire land. This was always possible under the constitution, but until this new policy, the state preferred to take a willing buyer–willing seller approach.) Ideally beneficiaries should be landless bona fide ‘smallholder farmers’ with some livestock and some income. Beneficiaries are given a 99 year lease of the land and also provided with some resettlement assistance during the first few years. Between its inception in the mid-1990s and 2003, some 829,486 ha have been bought at a total cost of N\$121 million to resettle 30,720 households (Sherbourne, 2004).

It is too early to attempt to see the impact of these reforms on chronically poor households. Three earlier attempts to look at supply-driven resettlement in Namibia have all shown that the programme has not really given such households secure livelihoods as they have continued to rely on state food handouts for sustenance. Box 12 illustrates some of the key issues from the evaluative studies done to date.

Box 12 Assetting that leaves households vulnerable and dependent on the state

Supply-driven reforms have distributed land to some 30,720 Namibian households to date. All reports to date point to poor post-settlement support or ill thought out models of resettlement as affecting the ability of households to make a living off the newly allocated land. Attempts to form farm co-operatives comprising former farm workers has not worked as well as had been expected. A study of such schemes commissioned by the then Directorate of Co-operatives in the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Rural Development observed that “co-operative resettlement schemes have become mainly social welfare projects providing free accommodation, food and other transfers, which show few signs of being resettlement projects” (Werner, 2001:9).

Similarly, a report by Namibia’s Legal Assistance Centre makes the observation that “the reality of life in the resettlement projects is of settlers being dumped on a few hectares of poor land, equipped with hoes and shovels, and expected to earn a living” (Harring and Odendaal 2003). Such lack of support is seen to drive resettled households into cycles of vulnerability and poverty, which has required the state to maintain some level of welfare support. In some cases, households are reported to be sub-leasing the newly-allocated land to communal farmers in need of grazing, for a fee.

The evidence suggests is that supply-driven land reform in Namibia is a process that has provided land but is yet to make a difference in the livelihoods of the beneficiaries, owing to a combination of factors. In the absence of detailed studies, it is difficult to conclude that the programme has failed, but rather the observation can be made that the benefits from the land assetting processes have not been maximized. The Namibian case also illustrates a lack of adequate attention to the mediating variables for transforming land into livelihoods. In

Section 4 we presented theory-led approaches as a useful framework to see how ideas are supposed to work in reality. In the case of Namibia, as with all other Type-1 reform states, fixation with numbers (of beneficiaries, hectares, sums of money) and the rate of deracialisation has meant an inadequate focus on the transforming variables – a factor that has meant resettlement schemes become an extension of the poverty traps found in the communal lands of these respective states.

7 Why have land reforms in Southern Africa not benefited the chronically poor?

The mixed results of land reform explored for all three Type-1 reform states indicate that the poor have not benefited as much as they could have. Given the level of investment by both individuals and the state, it would be expected that ‘land assetting’ would make a much more pronounced impact on poor households. This section discusses four key factors that have influenced the impact of land reforms for poor households.

7.1 Technical and design failures

Supply-driven redistributive reforms in Type-1 reform states have mostly been implemented in a top-down fashion. In Zimbabwe, standard commercial farm models formed the basis for the resettlement designs. These models fail to take into account the constrained factor environment that persists among poor households. As a result, most poor households were not able to realise the full potential of the model, and those that did found they could not sustain it. In spite of knowing that a drought afflicts the region at least once in five years, the reforms have tended to focus on land as a separate resource from water. Resultantly, considerable gains are usually eroded by environmental calamities. This is particularly true of Model A resettlement schemes.

In the case of South Africa, Quan *et al* (2003), Jacobs *et al* (2003), and Andrew *et al* (2003) show how the grant ceilings for poor households, and the tendency to consider the land grants as a ‘business’ venture, ended up forcing households to go through the motions of ‘renting a crowd’ to access the grant. In some cases this resulted in unsustainable numbers teaming up to purchase land resulting in unviable livelihood activities. Zimmerman (2000) has also observed that participation by the poor is limited by the requirement that potential beneficiaries fund the upfront costs. This means only non-poor households with some savings can access the schemes. Chronically poor households with no assets or other forms of savings therefore tend not to benefit from land reform programmes led by market forces, even if the state attempts to help chronically poor households to participate in the market. A similar problem has been reported on the cooperative farms set up for programme beneficiaries in Namibia (Werner, 2001). Most have failed to work because of faulty production models bearing little semblance to the perceptions of programme beneficiaries emerging from worker-peasant livelihoods.

The narrow focus of the assistance on land purchases also limits the potential numbers of chronically poor households that can participate. Exploring land rental markets may actually provide the poor with the initial starting capital to think of participating on the land sales market.

7.2 Process failures

For redistributive land reforms, the tendency in the region has been for political processes to move faster and demand greater results than can be realistically delivered by a generally weak bureaucratic capacity. The result is often a politically correct policy decision implemented without clear thinking about how land transforms into secure livelihoods, or even what role land can play in the lives of resettled beneficiaries. Such process failures

often result in assetting that leaves households vulnerable and sometimes in increasing poverty and dependent on the state and donors for sustenance ever extended periods of time. With planners seeking to stick to 'ideal' models in an 'un-ideal' environment of delivering under political pressure, process failures always result in poor coordination among the major players. In addition, political and other pressure brought to bear on planners for tangible results often mean there is often little time to do all the planning preparations and as a result most resettlement plans begin to unravel from inception.

7.3 Project capture and the politics of patronage in 'fat cat land reforms'

Cousins (2002) has coined the term 'fat-cat land reforms' to illustrate how project capture has occurred in land reforms that have ended up benefiting the new bureaucratic and political elite. In the absence of a pro-poor state apparatus, the benefits of land reforms are subject to 'capture' by those with power. Consequently, land issues have not consistently addressed the plight of the poor.

One of the ironies of land reforms in Type-1 states is that although the poor form a majority and occupy a privileged position in terms of policy advocacy for land reform, lack of well-organised actor networks, especially in rural areas, has effectively shut them out of the debate on land reforms for poverty reduction except in cases when they are mobilised for local political gain. Apart from South Africa where the Landless People's Movement has been attempting to challenge the slow pace of reform, there are no strong, broad-based advocacy coalitions that can challenge and influence resources allocated for land reform or influence the design and implementation of land reform. NGOs and civic organisations have tended to shy away from organising local people for structural transformation of wealth and land ownership.

7.4 Lack of clearly articulated programme theory

Although all the three Type-1 reform states have well-articulated policy documents which set targets for acquisition of land, a major weakness relates to their inability to conceptualise how land is supposed to contribute to poverty reduction, and any basis for making such postulations. The link between land dispossession during the colonial period and chronic poverty among the majority black population in the Type-1 reform states is usually well made and supported by robust analysis. When it comes to how the reversal and restoration of land should lead to better livelihoods there is often reference to wealth creation, but often limited analysis or theoretically sound programmes formulation. This has resulted in some programmes that are meant to benefit poor households lacking in sufficient detail or logical linkages between the various programme components. This has often been made worse by the institutional balkanisation that characterises the land reform programmes. With different arms of the state allocated a variety of functions, there is often incongruence in how supporting structures for post-settlement support work. In all three cases there is evidence that lack of post settlement support is largely a function of poor coordination among the various actors.

7.5 Lack of Critical Mass in Scope of Reforms

One of the broader questions that has not been adequately addressed in the discourse on land reforms is whether or not there is there a critical mass of 'reform inertia' that needs to be breached before land reforms can begin to address the structural causes of chronic poverty. Evidence from land reform success stories in Japan and South Korea suggests that perhaps land reforms may have worked in part because of the scale at which they were done. In both cases reforms involved more than 50 per cent of the population and land area. Could this therefore mean that land reforms in the Type-1 reform states may need to be substantially

scaled up (from the current three per cent of the population) to reach this critical mass ‘of reform inertia’ if they are to have an impact on chronic poverty, especially if it has structural causes? This is a question beyond the scope of this paper but certainly one worth revisiting in some detail, as it may hold the key to the future of land reforms in the region.

8 Conclusions

This paper has considered the major research question of the relationship between land reforms and poverty in Southern Africa. Focusing mainly on redistributive and tenure land reforms in Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe, the paper has used a livelihoods approach in an analysis and discussion of the different land reform experiences. In this concluding section, the paper draws out some conclusions and provides some possible policy directions for more poverty-focused land reform.

8.1 Assetting that does not reduce poverty and vulnerability

A crucial theme developed in Section 4 of this paper relates to the type of poverty that land ‘assetting’ is expected to address. In Section 5, it was shown that redistributive reforms are often used as a blunt instrument to target different forms of poverty, although in the case of Type-1 reform states redistributing land was seen as a way of addressing some of the structural causes keeping households in poverty for extended periods. Access to land provides them with a stable base or ‘security blanket’ to pursue other livelihood activities knowing that they something to fall back on when things do not work out with other livelihood ventures. Additionally, being ‘assetted’ accords the chronically poor certain rights that go with belonging to a community, including participating in decisions that affect their future.

Some 365,435 households in the three Type-1 reform states have been given access to almost 15 million ha of land between 1980 and 2003. Evidence provided in this paper shows that land reform programmes in all three Type-1 reform states give the chronically poor land in circumstances that do not reduce their vulnerability in the longer term. In the case of South Africa, chronically poor households had to team up in large numbers to raise enough capital to purchase land. In so doing this has spread the newly acquired asset too thinly to make a significant difference to their original poverty status. Namibia’s supply-led reforms placed poor households on marginal land without the requisite skills and support systems, and thus failed to provide a decent livelihood for the beneficiaries. In Zimbabwe, where planned resettlement initially did make a difference to poor households, second generation problems (such as declining productivity and production due to life cycle changes) have begun to erode some of the gains. This has been worsened by a deterioration of the macro-economic environment and periodic drought. We can say, therefore, although there are policy utterances linking reforms to the fight against poverty in Type-1 reform states, the lack of strategic articulation of how land reform policy works with other mediating variables to reduce chronic poverty limits this potential.

For a more poverty-focused land reform program it is crucial to get the initial programme theory ‘right’. What has tended to happen is that ‘land’ is bestowed mythical powers to reduce poverty, without careful articulation and follow up of how this can be achieved. This paper forms the view that in dryland Africa, adopting a livelihoods approach to land reforms can help us understand and situate the role of land within the range of activities available to households. Further, the paper makes a point for adopting a ‘theory-led approach’ to land reform programme formulation with a poverty focus. This can help open up the ‘black box’ of transforming variables that have hitherto largely been ignored, and that can result in assetting that neither reduces poverty nor vulnerability.

8.2 Land redistribution as the unfinished business of decolonisation, and the future of white Africans on commercial farms land

In Section 5 it was argued that land redistribution in the region has special significance because of its ability to excite political emotions fed by reflections on past injustices. Quite separate from the key issues of livelihoods and poverty, the defining feature of land politics in Namibia and South Africa (and, until recently, in Zimbabwe), most land is still in the hands of a minority of mainly white African and other landowners. This is seen as the most visible metaphor of continued settler colonial hegemony, and a central rallying point uniting and defining post-colonial regional discursive practices among the political elite in the three Type-1 reform states. Redistribution is therefore seen as a way of completing the demise of 'settler' colonialism and the resource alienation associated with it in the region. Such an argument has popular political appeal among the local electorate although, as argued earlier, the extent to which there is a broader crosscutting strategy for poverty reduction linked to 'decolonising' land tends to be coincidental rather than deliberate. For Type-1 reform states, as long as inequality among racial groups in landholding persists, the extent to which the agenda can be linked to poverty is subsumed under the emotive argument of colonial dispossession. The effect of the deracialisation emphasis is that not as much energy is given to post transfer support, as the focus is on the amount of land transferred and the processes of this transfer.

8.3 Surviving on the crumbs: land redistribution and the chronically poor

With only about 15 million ha of a targeted 42 million ha redistributed within the three Type-1 reform states, deracialisation of land holdings will continue to define and set land reform agendas. Given the pace of reforms in both Namibia and South Africa, new initiatives may be needed to hasten access to land by land-constrained poor households, for whom the estimated half a century required to complete the process without disrupting local agriculture is unacceptably long.

An unexplored area of innovative access by the poor is the land rental markets. We know from patchy evidence that most poor people use the informal land rental market in communal areas. While most transactions are among kin, and payment for land use is usually in kind, it may be feasible to experiment with fixed cash rentals that can be paid on behalf of the poor by the state or another development agency. Examples of such initiatives exist in South Asia, where development institutions have facilitated the development of land rental markets in which chronically poor households can participate. Local NGOs in these Type-1 states could begin experimentation with such initiatives while the slow machinery of the bureaucracy and markets grind on to redistribute land. In the cases of Bangladesh and Pakistan, it has been shown that even help to secure a five year lease of good quality land can provide chronically poor households with a head start in building assets especially if they venture into high value activities. In the case of Asia some have gone on to purchase their own plots of land after renting for a period of time. For this to be successful however, lessons emerging from Bangladesh point to a need for strong local development organisations that are well capitalised. It is this area that could provide a useful channel for non-political use of donor funds to facilitate access of the chronically poor to land.

8.4 Room for manoeuvre for the poor and 'fat cat' land reforms

One of the unresolved tensions in Type-1 reform states is the imperative to reduce poverty through land redistribution without undermining agricultural production and productivity. It has therefore been a common strategy to redistribute commercial farm land to the new political and bureaucratic elite in the hope that deracialisation of land ownership leaves the general structure of large-scale commercial agriculture largely unchanged. This new dynamic has meant that the new elite receives a disproportionate allocation of public funding at the

expense of the poor. In Namibia, for example, the level of loan subsidy and the amount of land transferred to this new black elite far exceeds the total amount spent on an ordinary poor households. There has also been a discernible shift in the new land resettlement policy announced by South Africa in 2000. Greater policy support is now toward those perceived to have access to inputs and be able to use the land. This opens up a new future arena for struggle for land – this time between an emerging black landed class that benefited from political patronage and bureaucratic cronyism on the one hand, and ordinary land-constrained poor households on the other. Such struggles have already been developing in some parts of Zimbabwe both before and after the violent expropriation of commercial farmland that started in February 2000. Unresolved tension between the economic imperative of deracialisation, keeping the high tech large-scale farms intact and in full production, and the need to asset the poor, tends to temper the poverty focus of land reforms.

8.5 Policy and programme learning systems

In this paper, attempts to assess whether land reform policy has helped those in chronic poverty has exposed a lack of systematic evaluation and learning systems in each of the three Type-1 reform states. This clear lack of systematic monitoring and evaluation systems and infrastructure makes it difficult for lessons learnt to be fed into improving future programme design. In Zimbabwe, Mukora and Gonese (2003) make the observation that since the demise of the then Department for Rural Development (DERUDE) in 1993 and the withdrawal of resettlement officers, systematic monitoring systems have largely collapsed. Similarly in Namibia, it has been observed that: “no systematic and independent evaluations of the land reform and resettlement programme in its entirety exists” (Werner, 2002: 9). For the South African reforms, some have commented that, “monitoring and evaluation of the South African land reform programme has to date been somewhat limited, and as a consequence the impact of land reform on livelihoods or on general economic development remains largely unknown” (Quan *et al*, 2003:17). As a result, it is difficult to find good quality data that are comparable both in space and time. More significantly, the data available tend to focus on the *quantitative* modelling of quality of life. There is a clear paucity of high quality *qualitative* case studies that can illustrate non-quantitative aspects of land reform and poverty.

Thus, the lack of systematic formal data collection on the effects of the reforms on poor households means that the potential to find out what works and what does not work is limited. One of the key areas for intervention by the Type-1 reform states is the establishment of such learning systems as an integral part of policy. Using theory-led approaches can help strengthen the design of such systems. Where donor interest exists, this also can be an area for their involvement. When the then ODA helped set up the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit in Zimbabwe for example, this allowed systematic evaluation to be carried out and perhaps helped produce better resettlement designs deriving from this feedback.

This study has demonstrated the existence of several individual studies on the emerging impacts of land reforms on poverty. These tend to refer to individual countries, and those comparative cross-country studies that have been attempted have not related land reforms to poverty in its different forms. A detailed study covering the impact of reforms on chronic and other poverties in the Type-1 reform states is required. Such a study should aim to produce good quality evaluative case studies that can inform on the effectiveness of land assetting as a poverty-reduction strategy. In addition, there is need for more empirical work at the global level to establish if there is a threshold or critical mass at which ‘land assetting’ begins to influence economic growth. Although redistributing land has the potential to help chronically poor households, this paper has observed that under the current conditions, Type-1 reform states have programmes that leave chronically poor households ‘assetted’ but still facing

livelihood vulnerability. While this fulfils the political objectives of achieving equitable land distribution, failure to ensure that this newly acquired asset makes a difference in the lives of beneficiaries undermines the usefulness of such programmes in any way beyond the political.

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