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Gender Facets of Zimbabwe's Fast Tracked Land Reform Viewed from a Transformative Social Policy Perspective

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ABSTRACT: *The paper interrogates gender aspects of Zimbabwe's fast track land reform programme from a Transformative Social Policy (TSP) perspective. Utilising a qualitative dominant research design and one hundred (100) land beneficiaries drawn from three farms in Zvimba district (Fenmerre, Noordt Gate and Lion Kopje), the paper brings out the gendered aspects of the land reform. These are based on the functions/tasks of social policy as outlined in TSP (production, redistribution, social protection, social reproduction and social cohesion). The paper shows that overall, most women did not equitably benefit from the land reform and its outcomes. The central argument is that land is a key resource for socioeconomic transformation. The transformation of the lives of the land beneficiaries is best achieved through addressing gender issues and provision of post settlement support.*

Keywords: *Gender perspective, Development, Fast Track Land Reform, Rural development, Social policy*

I. INTRODUCTION

Gender parity and equity are crosscutting themes in various disciplines and development interventions. How a development programme articulates and addresses the issues pertaining to gendered groups - women and girls, and men and boys is an essential consideration in evaluating a programme. Gender policies are intended for the benefit of all groups (men and women). The empowerment of women, who hitherto were excluded from mainstream development, is a priority in gender policies and protocols. Zimbabwe implemented the first National Gender Policy in 2004 and a revised one in 2017 to address gender inequalities in the social, economic and realms. The 2004 national gender policy was the first framework to provide a gender perspective to the principle of growth with equity that had been adopted by Zimbabwe to address gender and race inequalities. The Republic of Zimbabwe revised gender policy prioritises a gender just society in which men and women enjoy equity, contribute and benefit as equal partners in the development of the country. At continental level, the African Union (AU) developed a gender strategy for the 2018 to 2027 period, while the Southern African Development Community (SADC) introduced the revised SADC Protocol on Gender and Development in 2016. The United Nations (UN) creates fora for various deliberations on gender, development and governance; and introduced various gender frameworks and strategies. The Strategy for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (2018-2021) is an example.

Zimbabwe's fast tracked land reform (known formally as the Fast Track Land Reform Programme, FTLRP) has widely been interrogated as shown by the accumulation of selected scholars over the years (Moyo, 2000, 2002, 2005, 2008, 2013; Chipenda, 2018, 2019; Mkodzongi and Spiegel, 2018; Mazwi, Muchetu and Chibwana, 2018; Tekwa and Adesina, 2018; Chambati, 2011, 2017; Thebe, 2018; Chibwana, 2016; James, 2015; Mkodzongi, 2013; Binswanger-Mkhize and Moyo, 2012; Scoones, 2017, 2018; Scoones et al., 2010, 2011, 2015; Chiweshe, 2011; Chakona, 2011; Mutopo, 2011a, 2011b; Sachikonye, 2003, 2005a, 2005b; Moyo and Chambati, 2013; Zamchiya, 2011; Moyo and Yeros, 2005a, 2005b, 2007; Murisa, 2009, 2013, 2017; 2018; Sacco, 2008; Moyo, Helliker and Murisa, 2008; Richardson, 2004, 2005). Scholarly focus on gender issues in Zimbabwe's fast tracked land reform is still low. Several scholars focused on gender and land reform (Mutopo, 2011; Gaidzanwa, 2011; Chingarande, 2006, 2008; Ndor, 2006). How did gender and the fast tracked land reform play out? Current literature on gender inequalities, particularly that which focuses on women in terms of those who got the land, production opportunities and constraints, gender division of labour, social reproduction, social protection and social cohesion. These are essential social policy tasks/functions (Adesina, 2009; Mkandawire, 2004), upon which the outcomes of the fast track land reform programme can be evaluated.

II. STUDY APPROACH

The paper is grounded in a study conducted in Zvimba district. Zvimba is located in northern central Zimbabwe in Mashonaland West Province, one of the ten provinces of the country (Moyo, Chambati, Murisa, Siziba, Dangwa, and Nyoni, 2009). The province has six districts, Zvimba being one of them. The district is bordered by the City of Harare; Chinhoyi, Guruve, Mazowe, Chegutu and Makonde districts. The district can further be divided into 35 wards. The Census Report by the Zimbabwe Statistical Agency, the district had 245 489 people (122 562 males and 122 927 females) in 2012. Zvimba had 718 large scale commercial farms and approximately 150 000 households in the ambit of customary tenure) before the FTLRP (Murisa, 2009, p. 21). The LSCFs were converted into A1 and A2 farms under the FTLRP. Three farms were selected for the study (Fenmerre, Noordt Gate and Lion Kopje).

Data gathering and analysis were approached from a TSP approach. An interpretive research paradigm was adopted due to the quest to attain indepth of the gender aspects of Zimbabwe’s fast track land reform programme. This worldview led to the application of mixed methods with qualitative dominant oriented research design. Such a design created opportunities for gathering both qualitative and quantitative data and conducting detailed exploration of lived experiences and situated meanings of gender in the context of the fast track land reform. Several scholars on research methods focus interpretivism (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007; Lincoln and Guba, 2000).

The mixed methods design demanded the use of both probability and non-probability sampling techniques. However, the qualitative dominant orientation led to the use of more non-probability sampling techniques. Random sampling was applied to the selection of male land beneficiaries in the 3 farms. Stratified sampling was essential in capturing the views and experiences of women, men and youth while purposive sampling was applied to select key informants (female land beneficiaries, female-headed households, farm community leadership – village heads, agricultural technical and extension, Agritex and lands officers). Secondary sources (journal articles, books, policy documents on land, gender and social policy) were essential in providing secondary data. Primary data were gathered to provide primary evidence and to complement and address the weaknesses of secondary sources. Questionnaires, key informant interviews (KIIs), focus group discussions (FGDs), indepth interviews and participant observation, informal interaction and questioning were the corpus of data collection applied in the study. These ways of data collection and ethics of social science research are topical in the work of various scholars (Creswell, 2012; Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Neuman, 1994). Ethical considerations were made and fulfilled in data collection. These included but are not limited to informed consent, guaranteed choice and decision to terminate participation, avoidance off harm in its diversity, confidentiality, trustworthiness, responsible reporting and provision of feedback.

III. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Transformative Social Policy (TSP) developed under the Social Policy in Development Context, focuses on returning to the wider vision of social policy and moving away from the neoliberal approach (Tekwa and Adesina, 2018). The TSP gives primacy to the wider vision of social policy with its diverse functions (production, redistribution, social protection, social reproduction, social cohesion and nation building (Yi, 2015; Hujo, 2014; Adesina, 2009; Mkandawire, 2004). Working within TSP, Adesina (2009, p. 38) views TSP as the collective public efforts of securing people’s wellbeing while Mkandawire (2004) emphasises that TSP as the collective interventions in the economy to influence access to and the incidence of adequate and secure livelihood outcomes. The TSP framework, used as a basis for interrogating gender issues and the outcomes of the FTLRP is outlined in Fig 1.1 below.

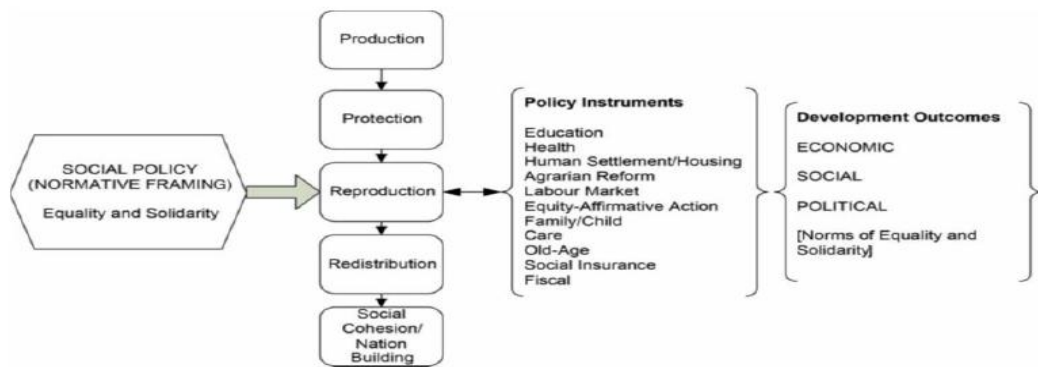


Figure 1: Transformative Social Policy Framework

Source: Adesina (2011, p. 463)

This framework reiterates the centrality of a comprehensive approach in the social, economic and political spheres; and transforming unjust and unequal relationships that hinder broader wellbeing. In addition, the framework emphasises policy linkages and the inseparability of the social from the economic. The economy is conceived as being embedded in society where diverse social, economic and political relations and structures interact through processes of exclusion and adverse incorporation, preventing the poor from benefiting from development policies and market changes (Tekwa and Adesina, 2018; Mkandawire, 2004; Hulme, Moore and Shepherd, 2001).

Notable of the TSP is the deliberate challenge of underlying structural risks and their longer term implications for vulnerability and poverty and inequalities. These deliberate efforts are missing in current safety nets and social protection programmes including those by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank (WB) and other institutions. Despite emphasis on transformative social protection by Sabates-Wheeler and Devereux (2008) and other scholars, such an approach falls short of addressing the underlying socioeconomic and political structural factors that create and sustain inequality and poverty. TSP has potential to transform gendered, racialised, ethnicised and other forms of inequality and poverty which according to Shields (2008), are manifestations emanating from the intersections of these social identities and categories.

IV. THE FTLRP AND GENDER IN THE CONTEXT OF TRANSFORMATIVE SOCIAL POLICY

The transformative social policy focus of the study determines the interrogation of gender issues in outcomes of Zimbabwe's fast track land reform.

4.1 Accessing to the land and redistributive outcomes

The LSCF were accessed either formally or informally. The informal mode was the main way of accessing the land particularly in the early phases of the fast track land reform programme. This mode, particularly prior to 2000, entailed spontaneous and widespread occupation of white owned farms led by war veterans (Sadomba, 2013; Masuko, 2013); and was not sanctioned by the government. Other land beneficiaries accessed land through formal allocation when the fast tracked land reform was formalised in 2000. Formal land allocations were done by the Ministry of Lands and Rural Resettlement and beneficiaries were either slotted in A1 or A2 models. Those who had accessed land informally were formalised. Formal allocations were accompanied by issuing of offer letters. Most women did not access land in their own right either formally or informally.

How well a policy programme leads to redistribution is a consideration in social policy. Land redistribution is a major outcome of Zimbabwe's fast tracked land reform that lead to a transformation of the colonially engineered bimodal agrarian structure to a trimodal one. Due to the FTLRP, 180 000 families were resettled (170 000 under A1 and 10 000 under A2 model) on 13 million hectares of land (Scoones et al., 2015). In addition to redistributing land, the land reform also redistributed an array of natural resources (fauna and flora) that had been formerly a preserve for the whites (James, 2015; Mkodzongi, 2013). Such redistributive capacity is significant and qualifies to be evaluated in the context of transforming the land beneficiaries' lives. However, gender inequalities exist and as is in the other spheres less women own land in their own right.

Particular interrogation of informal land occupation shows masculine biases. Entirely the men and male youth led by male war veterans participated in the *Jambanja* (local term for the movement to dispossess the whites of the land). In the initial phases of the *Jambanja*, women were left behind in the communal areas or towns mainly because the 'war' is a male activity. Women were safe in the usual place of residence (the communal areas) and had to remain behind to safeguard land rights, children and homesteads in the communal areas. Accordingly, in the three farms included in the study, no woman accessed land through the spontaneous land occupations.

Longstanding patriarchy also affected formal land allocation. Most of the informal land occupiers were men therefore on formalisation they were registered in their names. Moreover, the view that the men are the heads of families and the socially acceptable owners of land even in customary land tenure in communal areas, female applicants for land was low. In cases where the traditional chiefs had to recommend names for formal allocation to the District Administrator (DA) or District Land Committees (DLCs), the recommendations were biased against women. Accordingly, at national level, 18-22 percent of those who accessed land are women (Scoones, 2010). These figures are far too low particularly in a context where women's rights (to land and other key resources) are important, female-headed households are increasing implying greater role by women in looking after household members and where women (and children) contribute greater proportion of land than the men.

Caution is essential in analysing the redistributive outcomes of the fast track land reform programme because some women 'own' the land through their husbands and fathers, and may have a "women's portion" in the main farm used for productive purposes traditionally known for use in producing 'feminine' crops such as groundnuts and roundnuts. This subdivision is locally known as *tseu*. The land may also be formally redistributed to women (wives) in the event of death (because the current land permits require both spouses to be registered); or informally (informal subdivisions for siblings within the formally allocated plot or on 'retirement' of the husband or father). However, in the study area, sons are preferred in informal allocations because of the view that daughters will be married. This being a gender issue because the land is a key socioeconomic resource regardless of marital status. Furthermore, problems are rife on how land should be inherited by wives in polygamous marriages after the death of the husband. However, these issues should not be generalised across all households. Indirect ownership of land in a context where the women can legally own the land in their own right is not a sound state of affairs. Earlier, key organisations that pursue gender equality in Zimbabwe including the Women and Land Lobby Group (WLLG) urged the government to reserve a 20 percent quota for the resettlement of women (Chari, 1999, p. 3). Such a lobby, although it was not incorporated into policy, is important in assessing the gender inclusiveness of the fast track land reform. Several scholars share this view (Ndoro, 2006; Chingarande, 2004, 2008).

4.2 Gender-related land use and production outcomes

Land use and production after the fast tracked land reform are major themes in the contributions by various scholars (Chipenda, 2018; Chibwana, 2016; James, 2015; Mkodzongi, 2013; Hanlon et al., 2012; Binswanger-Mkhize and Moyo, 2012; Zikhali, 2012; Moyo, 2011a, 2011b; Chambati, 2011, Scoones et al., 2010; Moyo et al., 2009). In addition, various scholars focused on gender specific aspects of Zimbabwe's land reform (Mazhawidza and Manjengwa, 2011; Mutopo, 2011; Derman and Hellum, 2004). The study revealed various gender issues pertaining to the post-fast track land reform.

In the three study areas, gender inequality in land/farm use decisions, control of produce and income, gender division in crop production, the use of the women's portion (*tseu*) and skewed gender division of labour were reported by 85 percent of the women particularly those in male-headed households. The percentage proportion experiencing these gender-related challenges is high. However, such issues defy simple overgeneralisations. The traditional dominance of men under customary tenure seems to have been transferred to the new farms. By virtue of most men having been socialised to dominate, owing capital and contributing more financial and material resources to agriculture (and other economic activities), they have more leverage to control land use and income from agriculture. However, these issues do not affect female-headed households and fewer male-headed households, particularly those that recognise the importance of gender equity and equality depending on the situation.

Another crucial area is gendered crop production. In all the three farms, maize production is grown across the households (male-headed, female-headed and child-headed). Ubiquitous maize production in the new farms in Zvimba district, communal areas of Zimbabwe and undesignated urban spaces symbolises the crop's importance as a staple food. Tobacco is mainly grown by male-headed households due to the crop being labour-intensive. However, female-headed households are also venturing into tobacco production because it is a leading cash crop in Zimbabwe. Where these households engage in the production of this crop, they either make use of male child labour or hire in male labour mainly on casual basis.

Yet another crucial gendered area of land use and production is the women's portion in the main farm (the *tseu/tsewu*). This area has been examined by various seasoned scholars (Mutopo, 2011; Scoones, 2015, p. 95; Bourdillon, 1992). There is general consensus that the woman's portion may increase women's access and utilisation of the land. However, basing on the study areas, several issues were unearthed. First, very few women have women's portions (35 percent). Owning land through the *tseu* is informal and falls under the men's area of control. The intention of this paper is not to divide families or households on gender lines. However, where opportunities for owning land in their own right exist, women should utilise such opportunities. All the women who have a women's portion reported increased gender division of labour with women bearing the burden. These have to work on their portions and the main farm (planting, weeding and harvesting) and fulfil other household duties. The women produce mainly food crops for the household and where excess is realised even if there is excess, it is sold to generate household income. Food crops grown on the *tseu* (unlike cash crops) have low market value. Women empowerment through 'owning' and using the *tseu* lacks substance. However, despite challenges, women who own land in the study sites are in a qualitatively better position by virtue of owning land as a core factor of production and produce and income derived from using the land.

4.3 Benefits of owning and utilising the land: Social protection outcomes

The land had been reported as a source of socioeconomic security and prosperity. All the households included in the study are producing own food through use of the allocated land. All households in the chosen

farms (and anywhere else) need food to survive. Food is a necessity without which people fall in the extreme/abject poverty category. Income for complementing own food production or for school fees, clothing, purchasing household property and investment in agriculture (purchasing inputs, equipment and developing farm infrastructure) is generated through mainly agricultural (crop and animal production) and on-farm activities and non-agricultural or off-farm activities. The most common non-agricultural/off-farm activities include gathering and sale of natural resources (grass, firewood, wild fruits, medicinal plants and so on); gold panning (*chikorokoza*), cross border trade and vending. Diverse testimonies of how utilising the land has improved food production, availability and security, and income generation capacity of the land beneficiaries were gathered from various land beneficiaries (in A1 and A2 models). Table 1.1 below shows the most emphasised food sources and the proportion of the land beneficiaries in each category. Overall, the Table shows that most of the households grow food that they consume and complement with food purchases from other land beneficiaries and shops in and outside the wards. Most of the foodstuffs purchased are those the land beneficiaries cannot produce themselves.

Table 1: Household food sources in the selected farms

Source of food	Percentage (%) of households utilising the source
Own food production	98
Food purchases	87
Food aid	5

*Households grow some food and purchase that which they cannot produce.

Source: own fieldwork (2019)

The protective outcomes of the fast track land reform programme transcend food production, availability and security. Through the land reform, the beneficiaries now have own place, shelter and *musha* as opposed to being tenants in cities and towns where they had to pay rentals and bills (electricity, water and so on); or being 'landless' or owning small and unproductive land in the communal areas. Furthermore, livestock production is acting as a social protection tool. Livestock are vital for short-term insurance and long term accumulation. The women, men and children are now more secure in terms of having a place to stay and to conduct socioeconomic activities. These protective outcomes accrue to all groups regardless of gender.

Regardless of gender, the benefits from utilising the land for agricultural production are minimised by production constraints (unavailability or shortage of agricultural inputs, low capital base, shortage of farm equipment and infrastructure, poor performing markets, shortage of labour, dwindling national economic performance and so on). These constraints are even worse for under-resourced female and child-headed households. The benefits derived from utilising land are key features of various scholars (Binswanger-Mkhize, 2012; Moyo, 2011a; 2013; Chibwana, 2016; Chipenda, 2018; James, 2016; Mkodzongi, 2013; Moyo et al., 2009).

4.4 Gender aspects of social reproduction outcomes

The concept of social reproduction can be traced to both classical and contemporary theorists. Of core importance is Karl Marx's orthodox conceptualisation of labour reproduction under 'crude' capitalism. Several other scholars contributed to social reproduction (Naidu and Ossome, 2016; Rao, 2014; Mafeje, 2003). The concept can be applied to various aspects of land reform. However, within the scope of this paper (focusing on gender aspects), importance is attached to sources of household food, income and labour; biological reproduction and capital accumulation.

As explained in the social protection outcomes households (female-headed, male-headed and child-headed) are reproducing themselves mainly through grown food they grow and income from sale of agricultural produce and non-farm activities. The farm households raised concern on reproduction of households through labour within the household or selling labour (locally known as *maricho*). Women indicated assuming greater burden within the households particularly in executing household chores, looking after children, working in the gardens and in the main farm. According to reports from the land beneficiaries, men also do these roles but overall contribute less. However, some men may assume greater responsibility in sourcing income (for example, through gold panning locally known as *chikorokoza*) and in providing manual labour to agricultural production (for example tobacco curing).

The women, children and men may sell labour to complement household income or food reserves. This practice is mainly done by the women and children. In the selected farms, sale of labour for money, food and clothes is most common in the villagised model (A1 farms) than in A2 farms. Mostly women and children sell labour to better-off A1 farmers or to A2 farmers. However, the *maricho* practice is not unique among the land beneficiaries neither is it a mere characteristic of social reproduction in the aftermath of the fast track land

reform programme. Sale of labour for money, food or clothes has always been and continues to be practices in the communal areas. Yet another area of social reproduction is capital formation and how capital enhances the households. Gender issues were noted. Money, equipment and other material resources for productive agriculture or off-farm economic activities are highly gendered. Although the findings defy uniformity, most women (who also do not own land in their own right), lack finance and equipment therefore on their own, cannot reproduce agricultural activities and sufficiently provide for the needs of households. However, some women (the few), have accumulated capital from agriculture, formal employment and non-farm activities; and are contributing significantly to farm and household reproduction.

Biological reproduction is an essential component of social reproduction. Ownership and use of land has improved most households' security with some indicating that they can choose to have more siblings. They can produce food and generate income through the land, and have managed to own a place and built *musha* which can be inherited by the children. In cases where such a decision is taken, naturally, the burden of women in childbearing and rearing increases and providing for the income needs (for the women who are contributing to income generation). Women will bear the greater brunt of these roles while the burden of men to provide for the income needs may also rise.

4.5 Gender and social cohesion outcomes: Social organisation, associational life and agency

Broadly, the land beneficiaries (both men and women) are organising and cooperating in the aftermath of the fast track land reform programme. Farmers' groups composed of men and women characterise social organisation in the new farm communities. Cooperation is not restricted to activities pertaining to agriculture. The land beneficiaries are also cooperating on community development initiatives (school development, potable water and road maintenance), HIV and AIDS support groups and burial associations. An important characteristic is that these various associations transcend gender, ethnic and regional backgrounds of the land beneficiaries. However, farmers' groups (*Kupfuma Ishungu* at Lion Kopje farm and Noordt Gate Farmers' Association at Noordt Gate farm) are mainly composed of men because men are the dominant formal land owners. Burial associations and HIV and AIDS groups are composed of men and women but the latter is dominated by women mostly due to the conception of caring for the ill people as a feminine role. The various members of groups and associations have the urgency to improve their wellbeing but they are encountering constraints mainly pertaining to finance, transport and inflation and declining economic performance that is decimating savings. Associational life and agency of the land beneficiaries in the new farm community is evident in the work of many scholars (Moyo et al., 2009; Chibwana, 2016; James, 2015; Mkodzongi, 2013; Chiweshe, 2011).

V. CONCLUSION

The gender aspects of Zimbabwe's fast track land reform programme, basing on selected farms in Zvimba district, have been interrogated from a Transformative Social Policy perspective. The land reform had wide land redistribution outcomes and real and greater potential for enhancing production, social protection, social reproduction and social cohesion. These benefits accrue to both men and women. However, the point of departure of this paper has been to scrutinise the gender aspects of the land reform. The selected farms exhibit diverse gender issues that are tilted against most women. These include low ownership of land in their own right, land inheritance (for women in polygamous marriages), gender-specific land use and production constraints, social reproduction burden and gaps in social protection. However, these issues do not apply uniformly across all women and households in the farms selected farms or to all farms in Zimbabwe in the aftermath of the fast track land reform programme leading to the need for contextualised and nuanced interrogation of gender issues. However, addressing gender issues and supporting the farmers enhances the role of land reform as a means of transformative social policy and as an alternative women empowerment tool in Zimbabwe and the Global South.

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