The Rough Contours of Land in Zimbabwe

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During the past five years, Zimbabwe has become a global mass media icon. It is represented either as a land sinking into quagmire and poverty or as a land at the forefront of the battle against racist Western imperialism. In both scenarios, the emphasis is placed on land and on the government of Zimbabwe, led by President Robert Mugabe and his Zimbabwean African National Union (Patriotic Front) (ZANU (PF)) party. These scenarios are powerful narratives that map the political and social issues surrounding land reform in Zimbabwe.[1] This paper argues that these two competing generalizations neglect some of the complexities associated with the current Zimbabwean conflict. What they both tend to overlook are the overlapping "territorializing projects"—the varied political attempts being made to control and influence the Zimbabwean people and their social relations through divisive land resettlement policies. This paper highlights associated socio-political dynamics, and suggests that these dominant narratives can themselves contribute to current or future territorializing projects in the form of land resettlement programs, which may further increase the vulnerability of many Zimbabweans in rural areas.

ZIMBABWE AS A GLOBALIZED ICON

Current international interest in Zimbabwe started in February 2000 when black Zimbabweans, led by veterans of the guerrilla armies that fought against the Rhodesian forces of the Ian Smith regime in the 1970s, began "symbolically" occupying white-owned and white-operated commercial farms across the country. These occupations were supported by the state as a way to demand land redistribution,

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redressing the racially unequal distribution inherited from the colonial period. Government support also served to criticize the perceived role of white farmers in mobilizing farm workers to vote against—and officially defeat—a draft constitution in a national referendum, held one week before the farm occupations. The defeat of this referendum was a landmark moment in the country's history—it was ZANU (PF)'s first defeat in a national contest since the party gained power in the 1980 independence election. The referendum defeat encouraged the opposition and garnered more resources for a new party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC).[2] A parliamentary election had to be called within months.

The violence and intimidation that typically accompany elections in post-colonial Zimbabwe increased dramatically. ZANU (PF) recognized the strength of its electoral opponent and its own weakness in the face of a growing economic crisis. Economic problems were made worse by the government-imposed economic structural adjustment program of the 1990s, the government's costly decision to remunerate war veterans with a one-time pay-out and monthly allowances, and the country's military involvement in the war in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). These state decisions, coupled with a growing demand for political openness and democracy from civil society, students, and citizens, led ZANU (PF) to recognize that a strong opposition party, such as the MDC, was a grave threat to the ruling party's hold on power.[3] Symbolic land occupations became a politically-initiated violent means to enforce ruling party discipline on both farmers and their workers, while prohibiting opposition activists and candidates from entering these rural areas. After the June 2000 parliamentary election, in which ZANU (PF) barely won a majority of seats in a contest that many judged to be unfair, the symbolic demand for land turned into what the government began to call its "fast-track land redistribution program." State and para-state organizations used hastily-created laws, intimidation, and violence to chase away white farmers, displace or intimidate tens of thousands of farm workers, and partition commercial farms into small-scale or medium-scale holdings. In the nomenclature of the state, the former are defined as A1 farms, designated for peasant farmers, while the latter are defined as A2 farms, designated for indigenous commercial farmers.[4] Five years later, as a result of these state-led policies and tactics, only about 300 to 400 of the approximately 4,000 original white farmers were still farming the land.[5]

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MAPPING LAND AND POLITICS IN ZIMBABWE

Researchers and journalists not working for state media have had a difficult time conducting studies and writing reports on rural Zimbabwe because of the heightened political importance of land in Zimbabwean politics. What limited research does exist points to great variability in terms of the effects of land invasion and redistribution. For example, there are inconsistencies between provinces where the majority of the white farmers were displaced almost immediately through evictions and provinces where it took much longer for displacement to occur, as negotiated arrangements between land-occupiers and white farmers emerged. Additionally, there are discrepancies between districts where those farm workers displaced by the redistribution have been actively excluded, and districts where former farm workers have received access to land. For example, research carried out in 2003 suggests that 5.5 percent of 274 farmers resettled on A1 schemes in Chikomba District were former farm workers, while slightly to the north in Goromonzi District (located near the capital city of Harare), only 1.5 percent of 1,719 resettled farmers were farm workers.[6] Official numbers, when made available, have sometimes even been repudiated by government officials. These disavowals illustrate the government's uncertainty over the land program, even as they struggle to project confidence.

Recently, John Nkomo, Minister of Special Affairs in the President's Office Responsible for Lands, Land Reform, and Resettlement, declared that since 2000, a total of 5,890 farms, measuring 7.8 million hectares, were compulsorily acquired for resettlement purposes. Minister Nkomo says 140,866 families on A1 schemes have been resettled on 2,611 farms measuring 4.2 million hectares; and 14,500 farmers on A2 schemes have been resettled on 2,331 farms measuring 2.3 million hectares. Momentarily disregarding the fact that government figures have been faulty in the past,[7] it is important to note that not only does Nkomo admit that 948 farms, measuring some 1.2 million hectares, have not been resettled, he also boastfully declares that 800 farms, measuring 1.3 million hectares, have been "confirmed,"—which refers to land that legally becomes property of the government.[8] In other words, 5,090 farms, or over 86 percent of the total farms acquired for the resettlement scheme, are not yet "confirmed," indicating how unsettled the fast-track land resettlement program actually is.

It is here that the mapping of the socio-political contours of the land reform has been so important. Many see two dominant narratives characterizing the crisis in Zimbabwe. At the center of these divergent accounts lie the differing explanations of the reasons for and the resulting effects of land distribution.[9] Critics of the land redistribution strategy argue that these events are fundamental to understanding Zimbabwe's "deep, seemingly irreversible decay."[10] For example, Samantha Power, a Harvard professor, suggests that "destroying the engine of

productivity" is the first of the "10 steps" by which President Mugabe has gone about "killing" Zimbabwe.[11] Detractors argue that by cynically playing the "race and land card," Mugabe shores up his reputation as an anti-colonial, anti-imperialist leader, while simultaneously undercutting the linchpin to the national economy—commercial agriculture.

Between independence and the 2000 land redistribution, commercial agriculture was largely controlled by Zimbabweans of European descent, a legacy of racial segregation imposed by the British government in colonial Zimbabwe. However, as a result of the "fast-track" redistribution of commercial farmland, the production of food crops and other agricultural commodities dropped tremendously, and macroeconomic indicators such as inflation and unemployment levels skyrocketed. Foreshadowing Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice's inclusion of Zimbabwe along with North Korea, Iran, and three other nations as an "outpost of tyranny" in January 2005,[12] Power lumps Mugabe in a category with Stalin, Amin, and Hitler while observing that "[w]hatever spikes in popularity these moves generated, the economic damage was profound, and the dictators had to exert great effort to mask it."[13] Like Amin's discriminatory policies towards Asians (in 1972, he expelled Indians from Uganda in order to "nationalize" the country), and the destructive corruption that pervaded Mobutu's regime, Mugabe's land policy has become another demonstration of ignominious African policy. [14] It raises questions about the commitment to home-grown African efforts to promote democracy and neo-liberalism, such as the New African Partnership for Development (NEPAD),[15] and leads to (mis)characterization of land redistribution efforts elsewhere.[16]

Alongside these dire warnings and harsh condemnations, one also finds uncritical celebrations of Mugabe's land policies. Mugabe has been lionized in public events in Johannesburg and Geneva, and invited by radicals to the New York City Council and indigenous rights conferences. Some see in Mugabe a man unafraid to challenge the powers that be by redistributing land to the formerly colonized, against the wishes of the colonizers.[17] As Coltrane Chimurenga, of the U.S.-based December 12 Movement, declared at a Harare conference: "We are one community when it comes to the question of national liberation and sovereignty."[18] This was echoed by Michael Anderson, a founder of the Sovereign Union of Aboriginal Nations and People of Australia, who proclaimed that indigenous peoples around the world—like Zimbabweans—"want self-determination; they want return of the lands [and] control of their natural resources."[19]

LAND AND TERRITORIALIZATION PROJECTS

These sorts of mass media(ted) portraits are deeply problematic.[20] Such oversimplified notions of how land intersects with politics in Zimbabwe cannot

hope to do justice to the depth or complexity of the racial, class, ethno-regional, and gender-based institutional and political arrangements that have shaped social relations on and off farms in rural Zimbabwe, both during and after colonization.[21] Moreover, these mapping exercises reinforce a state-centric view of rural Zimbabwe that leads to a naive faith in the government's current ability or future possibility to (re)order rural life for the betterment of all.[22] Given the checkered history of state policies toward land in colonial and post-colonial Zimbabwe, such faith inspires more concern than relief.[23]

Framing national politics in Zimbabwe so starkly and narrowly simplifies more than it illuminates. In her critical overview of the historical and social science literature concerning land struggles in Zimbabwe, Jocelyn Alexander observes: "Land cannot be reduced to playing a single role in a single narrative."[24] Ironically, narratives explicitly engaged in debates about the politics of Zimbabwe tend to gloss over the diverse political projects involved around land in Zimbabwe. Projects that speak to varying territorializing efforts at different scales of action are often intertwined with livelihood and accumulation ambitions. Territorializing projects refer to "the attempt by an individual or group to affect, influence, or control people, phenomena, and relationships by delimiting and asserting control over a geographical area."[25] They occur on different and sometimes overlapping scales of action, at national, local, regional, and global levels.[26] It is extremely important to pay attention to what occurs at the scale of the nation-state. However, to understand what is happening on the ground in rural Zimbabwe, and to inform future development, reconstruction, or other types of policy interventions, it is also imperative to examine how these state efforts sanction, force, intersect, or are undermined by, actions concerning land and power at different scales of action.

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To illustrate this argument, it is useful to examine how some of the land struggles and activities are predicated on competing strategies of, and responses to, territorializing power. To use David Hughes' term, the contours of these "cadastral politics" can be violent, or at the very least can be tinged with the threat of violence, as they are arenas for competing and overlapping attempts to make routine one's control over land and labor, leadership projects, and accumulation possibilities.[27] As in pre-2000, this is the scene of rural class politics; still tied to the national scale and to international networks, but now more precarious, desperate, and subject to greater violence. Three factors in particular subject rural

class politics to greater violence and instability these days. First, the intense national stakes involved as ZANU (PF) attempts to suppress the MDC and to consolidate its hold over state and society tend to amplify the situation in the countryside. Second are the alluring new land-accumulation possibilities: The displacement of white farmers has led to access—for an unpredictable length of time—to prime land, homes, agriculture, and agro-industrial processing infrastructure. Finally, deepening food insecurity, arising from the great upheaval in agricultural practices and employment possibilities over the last five years, has created an atmosphere of desperation and instability.

STATE PROJECTS AND THE LAND

In order to focus attention on the politics, ambitions, and livelihoods of rural Zimbabweans—all of which are intertwined with access to and control over land—it is crucial to look at land reform through the framework of territorialization. The framework provides depth to the otherwise superficial media(ted) narratives of the events since 2000. Specifically, there are three territorializing projects concerning current (and historical) land politics in Zimbabwe that should be noted.

The most powerful territorializing thrust is, of course, that of state and ZANU (PF) officials trying to gain ever-greater control over the rural areas. Massive and violent land distribution efforts are not merely a way to "take back" land from white Zimbabweans; they also allow the state and ruling party to control this land and its inhabitants more tightly than they have in the past. Since the 1900s, both colonial and post-colonial government officials and white farmers saw commercial farms as islands of quasi-sovereignty in and of themselves. Both parties were generally satisfied to have farmers carry out general governance activities for farm workers (also referred to as "domestic government;" i.e. health care, education, food security, and labor relations).[28] However, from the mid-1990s onwards, many activists, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and unions—as well as some government officials and the occasional white farmer—began to increasingly criticize the neglect of farm workers. This limited state (and party) presence took on greater political importance with the emergence of the MDC, particularly in light of the opposition party's support among white farmers.[29] As mentioned earlier, the government's resettlement plan represents an attempt to extend its control over the farmland and the people on it. The grand ambition of this territorializing project is evident in Minister John Nkomo's public suggestion in June 2004 that the government should convert the freehold title of all former commercial farmland into state land that would then be leased to black commercial farmers for 99 years—a policy statement that the government quickly retracted.[30]

ACCUMULATION AND THE LAND

Two other territorializing projects intersect the wider state program. The first refers to individual accumulation plans, whereby people seek to gain control over part or all of a farm, to lay claim to the land, and to influence people living on it. This scenario is principally carried out on A2 farms, via state institutional authority and power (such as government documents, the courts, and the police) and resources (such as agricultural input schemes and state credit and loans). Recent media reports suggest that virtually all of the government money allocated to a fund to provide resources for newly resettled farmers went to senior government and ZANU (PF) officials.[31] There have also been several non-state avenues to acquire or to invoke such authority and power, such as the church, ZANU (PF), and traditional leadership positions.[32] There have been a number of clashes and conflicts concerning these competing territorial claims, with accompanying means of persuasion, threat, and violence, particularly through the use of "youths."[33] Such claims have occurred on three different fronts: between different claimants to land; between claimants and people already living on the land, be they already-resettled A1 families or former farm workers continuing to reside at their old place of employment; and between the abovementioned groups and state bureaucrats and ministers, seeking to create some normalcy and order (and potential favoritism of one claimant over another).[34] These territorialization tactics are especially apparent in the case of displaced farm workers whose labor new settler farmers try to secure for themselves through several means—by forcing them to pay rent for their homes in the farm's labor compound (or "farm village"), by providing subsidized food on condition of working on the farms, or by using force and the police to displace people from informal settlements.[35]

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LEADERSHIP AND LAND

The second overlapping territorializing project is tied to rural leadership. Distributing land has been a major source of authority in Zimbabwe since the colonial period. For the last century or so, there has always been competition between leadership claimants and authorities about who has power, direct or delegated, to distribute territory—chiefs, headmen, *kraalheads* (village leaders), *mhondoros* (royal spirits), family heads, village development committee (VIDCO)

chairs, counselors, state officials, politicians, or war veterans.[36] Leadership has entailed not only the distribution of land and settling of disputes but also, at times, making demands upon those living on the land (e.g. to provide labor for public works or development projects).[37] The politicization of the civil service and local government authorities over the last five years[38] and general upheaval regarding land politics have created an environment in which preexisting land-giving authorities and aspirant leaders (business people and war veterans) have been trying to stake out territorializing claims and to more openly contest those of others.[39]

LAND AND LIVELIHOODS

Finally, it is important to underscore that these territorializing strategies not only shape the strategies for governance, accumulation, and leadership ambitions of elite Zimbabweans, they also intimately condition the livelihood strategies of most Zimbabweans. Land-based livelihoods have always been integral to most Zimbabweans, including many of those who live and work in urban areas.[40] During the past four years, there has been an even higher worker retrenchment rate. The main causes for this increase are twofold: first, as industries and commercial farms shut down due to political compulsion or economic reasons, workers are let go with no alternative employment options. Secondly, the HIV/AIDS pandemic renders more productive adults unable to work because of illness or responsibilities to care for sick and dying family members. As a result, land-based livelihoods are even more important for the majority of Zimbabweans, in spite of the increasing personal insecurity that comes from the growing scarcities of agricultural inputs, capital, and labor, as well as the usual uncertainty over rainfall and other weather patterns. Land attainment strategies include acquiring land as settlers or finding work on newly-resettled farms or other land holdings.[41] Such livelihood dependence on land means that many people in rural Zimbabwe are subjecting themselves, willingly or unwillingly, to the territorializing strategies of state officials, farm entrepreneurs, and rural leaders. It also often means that rural Zimbabweans are directly involved in the violence tied to these strategies as either victims or as participants.[42]

TECHNOCRATIC SOLUTIONS TO THE LAND CRISIS?

What does this quick sketch of the socio-political contours suggest about the preexisting dominant mapping exercises, which either condemn or laud President Mugabe? Both attempt to normalize the national territorializing strategies, bureaucratic or political, in terms of ensuring government control over the land and people while overestimating the government's capability of using land to control people. Yet, Bill Kinsey, who has studied Zimbabwe's land resettlement

programs since the early 1980s, emphasizes that state capacity was already very limited in directing the government's land resettlement schemes, which were implemented between 1980 and 1997.[43] Given the reduced resources and increased politicization of the civil service, it is highly improbable that the state apparatus has the capacity to do so now or in the immediate future. Nonetheless, both mapping exercises are inspired by technocratic dreams of "seeing like the state," whereby it is assumed that the "high modernist" state apparatus that emerged in the nineteenth century, and which spread globally through European colonialism, can be used to reorder social life and nature in a progressive manner.[44] This technocratic faith that better planning can improve land resettlement crosses party lines.

The MDC and others decry the illegal violation of property rights (and human rights), and characterize the "fast-track land resettlement" as having more to do with ensuring political victory for ZANU (PF) and with helping achieve land consolidation for a few at the expense of farm workers, among others.[45] Zimbabwean business commentator Erich Bloch noted that legalized land redistribution geared towards "viable, commercial operations" is necessary.[46] The MDC recommends that the redistribution be implemented "through a democratic and participatory process that seeks to achieve equitable, transparent, just, lawful, and economically efficient distribution and use of land."[47] In the same vein, others such as Michael Roth, of the Land Tenure Center of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, advocate for stakeholder-driven dialogues within a policy framework that reestablishes the rule of law, enables land markets to reemerge, and allows for NGOs to play a role in working with land reform beneficiaries to guarantee success of the reforms. Yet Roth's thoroughly calculated planning exercise is predicated on the assumption that an "institutional void" has been created due to "a breakdown in law and order, in property institutions, and in the functioning of agrarian contracts, caused by or connected with loss in trust and the ethical foundations for market transactions."[48]

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However, it should be no surprise that such technocratic neo-liberal models towards land are not only proposed by the MDC or by critics of the current "fast-track land resettlement" exercises;[49] they are also supported by officials and individuals involved in the land redistribution exercise itself.[50] For example,

the Zimbabwean Reserve Bank Governor, Gideon Gono, recently claimed that the ZANU (PF) government would (now) respect property rights and international trade agreements concerning the rights of foreign-owned agricultural estates. He called upon the international financial and donor community to "support this gesture in good faith and not continue to judge us on the basis of a transitory episode of our history designed to redress historical imbalances."[51] Although an emphasis on planning and law would be welcomed by most Zimbabweans, who have been experiencing increased economic insecurity over the last five years, it does neglect the fact that such technocratic solutions have been caught up in territorializing projects in the past that have not necessarily benefited the majority of rural Zimbabweans.

CONCLUSION

Reducing land to a single narrative overlooks competing politics operating at different, overlapping scales. Promoting the singular narrative concerning the crisis in Zimbabwe is inherently political—not just in terms of contesting narratives, but also in terms of mapping the contours of the national territory, in an attempt to control people and their social relations. The proscriptions feed into territorializing projects of government officials, donors, NGOs, and others at overlapping scales of action. As governments discovered—including ZANU (PF) in its first 20 years of rule, and especially during the last five—such mapping exercises are unlikely to succeed fully, given competing and overlapping territorializing projects. Rather, it is important to see such mapping exercises as part of the political contestation of particular territorializing projects, which, if implemented, get (re)translated into a variety of practices at the national scale and other projects and routines at different scales of action.[52]

In order to achieve security and sustainability, it is crucial to find ways through which Zimbabweans can participate in forging policies that meet historically resonant, economically essential social justice demands within the country. Such demands ought to include issues such as secure access to land and remunerative farm jobs with safe working conditions. These require fuller engagement with the rough contours of land politics in Zimbabwe today, and in the past, rather than an attempt to paint them over with a thin veneer of simple, trite images of "chaos" and "decay," or hollow appeals to "national sovereignty." ■

NOTES

1 See Emery Roe, "Development Narratives, Or, Making the Best of Blueprint Development," *World Development* 19 (4) (1991): 288, 296.

2 MDC was formed out of the Zimbabwean trade union and civic movement and launched in September 1999. It is the only opposition party operating in Zimbabwean politics today to be perceived as a threat to ZANU (PF). For further information on the current political situation, see Brian Raftopoulos and Ian Phimister, "Zimbabwe Now: The Political Economy of Crisis and Coercion," *Historical Materialism* 12 (4)

(2004); Amanda Hammar, Brian Raftopoulos, and Stig Jensen, eds., *Zimbabwe's Unfinished Business: Rethinking Land, State and Nation in the Context of Crisis* (Harare: Weaver Press, 2004); Sara Rich Dorman, "From the Politics of Inclusion to the Politics of Exclusion: State and Society in Zimbabwe, 1997-2000," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 29 (4) (2004): 845-864; and John S. Saul and Richard Saunders, "Mugabe, Gramsci and Zimbabwe at 25," *International Journal* (forthcoming).

3 See Jonathan Moyo, *Voting for democracy: Electoral Politics in Zimbabwe* (Harare: University of Zimbabwe Press, 1992); and Norma Kriger, "ZANU (PF) Strategies in General Elections, 1980-2000: Discourse and Coercion," *African Affairs* 104 (414) (2005): 1-34.

4 See Eric Worby, "A Redivided Land? New Agrarian Conflicts and Questions in Zimbabwe," *Journal of Agrarian Change* 1 (4) (2001): 475-509; Sam Moyo "The Land Occupation Movement in Zimbabwe: Contradictions of Neo-liberalism," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 30 (2) (2001): 311-330; Lloyd Sachikonye, *The Situation of Commercial Farm Workers after Land Reform in Zimbabwe* (London: Catholic Institute for International Relations, and Harare: Farm Community Trust in Zimbabwe, 2003); David Moore, "Marxism and Marxist Intellectuals in Schizophrenic Zimbabwe: How Many Rights for Zimbabwe's Left? A Comment," *Historical Materialism* 12 (4) (2004): 405-425; Bill Kinsey, "Zimbabwe's Land Reform Program: Underinvestment in Post-Conflict Transformation," *World Development* 32 (10) (October 2004): 1669-1696.

5 Timothy Neill, *Labour and Union Issues in the Zimbabwean agricultural sector in 2004*, <www.sarpn.org.za/documents/d0001159/P1278-Zimbabwe_Neill_2004.pdf> (accessed March 13, 2005).

6 Walter Chambati and Sam Moyo, *Impacts of Land Reform on Farm Workers and Farm Labour Processes*, Draft Report for European Union in the Review of the Agricultural Sector following the Implementation of Land Reform (Harare: African Institute for Agrarian Studies, 2004), 18-19.

7 In contrast to periodic claims by ZANU (PF) politicians that over 300,000 families had been resettled on the small holder resettlement scheme, a government-appointed land commission declared that 2,652 farms totaling 4,231,080 hectares had been allocated to 127,192 households under the A1 resettlement model as of July 31, 2003 with a take-up rate by beneficiaries of 97 percent. As for the A2 resettlement model, the corresponding figures were 1,672 farms amounting to 2,198,814 hectares for 7,260 applicant beneficiaries. The take-up rate under this model however ranged from 42 percent (Manicaland) to 100 percent (Matabeleland South), with an average take-up rate of 66 percent nationally. Government of Zimbabwe, *Report of Presidential Review Committee under the Chairmanship of Dr. C.M.B. Utete* (Harare: Government Printers, 2003), 6.

8 "Significant Progress Made in Land Reform: Nkomo," *Herald*, January 18, 2005, <www.ijr.org.za/monitors/mon_pgs/zim/Articles/landjan05.doc (accessed February 24, 2005).

9 Blair Rutherford, "Commercial Farm Workers and the Politics of (Dis)Placement in Zimbabwe: Liberation, Colonialism, and Democracy," *Journal of Agrarian Change* 1 (4): 626-651; Linda Freeman, "Unraveling the Contradictions—South Africa's Zimbabwe Policy," paper presented at *Ten Years of Democracy in Southern Africa: Historical Achievement, Present State, Future Prospects* conference, Queen's University, Kingston, May 2-5, 2004; David Moore, "Marxism and Marxist Intellectuals in Schizophrenic Zimbabwe: How Many Rights for Zimbabwe's Left? A Comment," *Historical Materialism* 12 (4) (2004): 404-425; and Wendy Willems, "Peasant Demonstrators, Violent Invaders: Representations of Land in the Zimbabwean Press," *World Development* 32 (10) (October 2004): 1767-1783.

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11 Samantha Power, "How to Kill a Country: Turning a breadbasket into a basket case in ten easy steps—the Robert Mugabe way," *The Atlantic Monthly* (December 2003): 86-100.

12 In the 2005 Secretary of State remarks, Condoleeza Rice pointed out six countries which the United States regarded as "outposts of tyranny": Burma, Cuba, Belarus, North Korea, Iran, and Zimbabwe. See Associated Press, "Text of Condoleeza Rice's Remarks," *The Boston Globe*, January 18, 2005.

13 Power, "How to Kill a Country: Turning a breadbasket into a basket case in ten easy steps—the Robert Mugabe way": 89.

14 David Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1993), 94-95.

15 See Ian Taylor, "Is Nepad just a Toothless Blueprint?" *Zimbabwe Independent*, November 8, 2002, <http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/nov14_2002.html#link8> (accessed March 3, 2005). For a critical discussion of NEPAD, see Patrick Bond, ed., *Fanon's Warning: A Civil Society Reader on the New Partnership for Africa's Development* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2002).

16 This is in reference to when a conservative member of the Scottish Parliament declared that the changes in land laws to permit land redistribution in Scotland were a "Mugabe-style land grab." See "It is done: history made by land law. Centuries-old system ends," *Glasgow Herald*, January 24, 2003, <http://www.zimbabwe-situation.com/jan25_2003.html> (accessed February 24, 2005).

17 See, respectively, "Mugabe gets standing ovation from SA democracy party," *SABC News*, April 27, 2004, <www.sokwanele.com/homepage/headlines_29april2004.htm> (accessed February 24, 2005); Mark Doyle, "Mugabe slams global inequity," *BBC on-line*, December 10, 2003, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/3303129.stm> (accessed February 24, 2005); and Vincent Kahiya, "NY councillors boycott Mugabe reception," *Zimbabwe Independent*, September 20, 2002, <http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/sept21a_2002.html> (accessed February 24, 2005).

18 This organization is based in New York City and was formed in 1987 on December 12th, International Human Rights Day. It has been an active promoter of the Zimbabwean government's actions since 2000, particularly within African-American networks. See "Cover Story: Analysis–The Debate on Zimbabwe will not be Throttled," *The Black Commentator*, July 31, 2003 <http://www.blackcommentator.com/51/51_zim.html> (accessed March 8, 2005).

19 "Aussie backs Mugabe land policy," *The Australian*, April 23, 2004, <www.zimbabwesituation.com/apr23_2004.html> (accessed February 24, 2005).

20 I have carried out research on black farm workers on white-operated farms in Zimbabwe since 1992. Financial support of my research has largely come from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, to which I am grateful.

21 See, for example, Jocelyn Alexander, JoAnn McGregor, and Terence Ranger, *Violence & Memory: One Hundred Years in the 'Dark Forests' of Matabeleland* (Oxford: James Currey, 2000); and Blair Rutherford, *Working on the Margins: Black Workers, White Farmers in Postcolonial Zimbabwe* (London: Zed Books and Harare: Weaver Press, 2001).

22 James Scott, *Seeing Like a State* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999).

23 For excellent critical overviews of the vast literature concerning state policies and land in Zimbabwe, see Eric Worby, "A Redivided Land? New Agrarian Conflicts and Questions in Zimbabwe," *Journal of Agrarian Change* 1 (4) (2001): 475-509; Amanda Hammar and Brian Raftopoulos, "Zimbabwe's Unfinished Business: Rethinking Land, State and Nation," in Amanda Hammar, Brian Raftopoulos, and Stig Jensen, eds., *Zimbabwe's Unfinished Business: Rethinking Land, State and Nation in the Context of Crisis* (Harare: Weaver Press, 2004), 1-47; and Jocelyn Alexander, "The Historiography of Land: Silences and Questions," in E. Chipembere, G. Mazarire and T. Ranger, eds., *Which History for What Zimbabwe?* (Harare, Weaver Press, forthcoming).

24 Jocelyn Alexander, "The Historiography of Land: Silences and Questions," in E. Chipembere, G. Mazarire, and T. Ranger, eds., *Which History for What Zimbabwe?* (Harare: Weaver Press, forthcoming), 1.

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26 See Anna Tsing, "Inside the Economy of Appearances," *Public Culture* 12 (1) (2000): 115-144.

27 David Hughes, "Cadastral Politics: The Making of Community-Based Resources in Zimbabwe and Mozambique," *Development and Change* 32 (4) (2001): 741-768.

28 See Blair Rutherford, *Working on the Margins: Black Workers, White Farmers in Postcolonial Zimbabwe* (London: Zed Books, and Harare: Weaver Press, 2001).

29 Blair Rutherford, "Desired Publics, Domestic Government, and Entangled Fears: On the Anthropology of Civil Society, Farm Workers, and White Farmers in Zimbabwe," *Cultural Anthropology* 19 (3) (2004): 122-153.

30 "Zimbabwe Not Nationalising Land," *BBC on-line*, June 15, 2004, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/low/africa/3808297.stm> (accessed February 24, 2005).

31 "ZANU PF gurus plunder $50 billion agricultural fund," *Zimbabwe Online* (South Africa), November 5, 2004, <http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/nov5a_2004.html#link12> (accessed March 7, 2005). Similar reports concerning bias in beneficiaries have been made concerning other government schemes directed to newly resettled farmers. See, for example, Henry Makiwa, "Chefs hijack tractor scheme for new farmers," *Zimbabwe Standard*, August 3, 2003 < http://www1.thestandard.co.zw/sections/archive_front_reader.asp?st_id=2037&datein=8/03/03> (accessed March 7, 2005).

32 As a political party, ZANU (PF) has its own dynamics separate from the state. Of course, these internal dynamics often have wider consequences, since it has been the ruling party since 1980.

33 "Youths" refers to young Zimbabweans (a.k.a. "Green Bombers" because of their green uniforms) who come from government national youth training services, which started after 2000. These camps and cadres of young adults were designed as a way to inculcate loyalty to the (Party-defined) national interest and to act as a weapon against the MDC and rival ZANU (PF) factions and against youths from different ZANU (PF) structures or who work for individual political entrepreneurs. See, for example, Solidarity Peace Trust, *National Youth Service Training: "Shaping youths in a truly Zimbabwean manner"* (Johannesburg: Solidarity Peace Trust, 2003).

34 There are many reports concerning such conflicts. See, for example, Reginald Gola, "Mugabe is Bribing Traditional Leaders," *The Worker* (Zimbabwe), April 2003, <www.africaonline.co.zw/theworker/Archive/April03/commend.html> (accessed March 7 2005); Energy Bara, "Settlers face eviction to make way for politicians, SA investor," *Daily News*, May 15, 2003, <http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/may16_2003.html#link9> (accessed March 7, 2005); Nyasha Bosha and Savious Kwinika, "Mohadi Sues Made," *Zimbabwe Standard*, June 27, 2004, <www.zimbabwesituation.com/jun27a_2004.html> (accessed March 7, 2005); Munyoradzi Wasosa, "Jokonya kicks out new farmers," *Zimbabwe Independent*, April 2, 2004 <www.theindependent.co.zw/news/2004/April/Friday2/2461.html> (accessed March 7, 2005); and Nelson Marongwe, "Farm Occupations and Occupiers in the New Politics of Land in Zimbabwe," in Amanda Hammar, Brian Raftopoulos, and Stig Jensen, eds., *Zimbabwe's Unfinished Business: Rethinking Land, State and Nation in the Context of Crisis* (Harare: Weaver Press, 2004), 155-187.

35 There are many reports concerning farm workers and land over the last five years. See, for example, "200 farm workers stranded as Mugabe's brother-in-law allegedly torches their homes," *Daily News*, July 26, 2002, <http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/july27a_2002.html#link10> (accessed March 7, 2005); Caiphas Chimhete and Nyasha Bhosha, "Displaced Kondozi Farm workers now destitute," *Zimbabwe Standard*, April 25, 2004, <www1.thestandard.co.zw/sections/readers/ archive_local_reader.asp?st_id=3894&datein=4/25/04> (accessed March 8, 2005); and Precious Shumba, "Mugabe's assaulted," *Daily News*, September 3, 2003, <http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/sep4_2003.html#link2> (accessed March 9, 2005); and, for a rich, in-depth analysis of a case study of displacement of farm workers, Andrew Hartnack, "'My Life Got Lost': Farm workers and Displacement in Zimbabwe," *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* (forthcoming).

36 "Kraalheads," or *sabhuku* in chiShona (literally "keeper of the books"), is the lowest rung amongst officially recognized "traditional leaders," after headmen and then chiefs. *"Mhondoro"* are often translated as "royal spirits" who have had ritual and political significance in regards to localized and national land politics in certain rural areas at different times. "VIDCOs" refer to "Village Development Committees" that were set up as a form of local administration over social, political, and land issues during the 1980s. What these positions and structures mean and do, and how they have interacted with each other and the other forms of authority noted in the text, differ dramatically between locations and over time. See Jens Andersson, "The politics of land scarcity: Land disputes in Save communal area, Zimbabwe," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 25 (4) (1999): 553-578; Blair Rutherford, *Working on the Margins: Black Workers, White Farmers in Postcolonial Zimbabwe* (London: Zed Books, and Harare: Weaver Press, 2001), 201-243; Pius Nyambara, "Immigrants, 'traditional' leaders and the Rhodesian state: The power of 'communal' land tenure and the politics of land acquisition in Gokwe, Zimbabwe, 1963-1979," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 27 (4) (2001): 771-791; and Marja Spierenburg, *Strangers, Spirits, and Land Reforms: Conflicts about Land in Dande, Northern Zimbabwe* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2004).

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