



# **Democratizing Environmental Use?**

## **Land and Water in Southern Africa at the End of the Century**

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# INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>

Southern Africa is in the midst of massive social, economic and environmental changes. They form a mixed balance sheet between difficulties and opportunities. On the one hand, there are the multiple and interconnected, economic, employment, environmental and health crises. On the other hand, there are the opportunities that have arisen due to the ending of apartheid in South Africa and Namibia, the ending of the war in Mozambique and possibilities (not yet realized) of democratization in Zimbabwe. All parts of the region are being integrated albeit in uneven ways into the world economy and environmental agreements and accords. In turn, the region or countries within, are also influencing the world economy and such agreements.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps more importantly, Southern Africa nations are experimenting with a set of reforms concerning the fundamental resources of land and water which are locally and internationally generated. This paper explores a few of the complex intersections of development and environment through the lenses of land and water reform in Southern Africa with primary emphasis upon Zimbabwe. The purpose of the paper is to examine the fundamental bases of these reforms and how they compare with each other. A comparative look at the reform processes will permit us to examine how and in what ways equity remains an important objective and whether or not that goal can be achieved within the discourse and practice of reform.

It is surprising that in most of the social science, legal and historical literatures on Southern Africa, land and water are treated separately.<sup>3</sup> This is especially the case since for both land and water the issue of equity underlies the fundamental rationale for reform. The first objective of the Water Act (1998) in Zimbabwe is to ensure fair access to water by all Zimbabweans. The rationale for the Land Acquisition Act of 1992 was to provide a process whereby lands could be restored from whom it had been stolen (in the metaphorical, not literal, sense). In Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe there is a broad and important set of literatures on the “land issue”, the “land question” or the “agrarian question”. Land has been deeply politicised at the national level whereas water has not. This is not to say that water is not politicised but rather not in the same ways or at the same scale.<sup>4</sup> Arguably, the most important issue facing Southern Africa is the long

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<sup>1</sup> The research on water has been supported by the Centre for Applied Social Sciences at the University of Zimbabwe, the BASIS CRSP (supported by USAID), Michigan State University, the African Studies Center and the College of Social Sciences. The research team includes Dr. Bevyne Sithole, Mr. Claudious Chikozho, Mr. Stanley Vombo, and Professor Anne Ferguson of Michigan State University. Professor Anne Hellum of the University of Oslo and Bev Sithole kindly read and commented upon the manuscript. The paper is, however, my sole responsibility.

<sup>2</sup> The most dramatic example in environmental policy has to do with permitting trade in elephant products through modifying the Committee on International Agreements on Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) to permit Botswana, South Africa and Zimbabwe to auction some ivory to Japan.

<sup>3</sup> A marked exception is some of the irrigation literature. Of particular interest is the edited book by Manzungu and van der Zaag (1996) and the article on integrated water resource management by Manzungu et al. It is one of the few efforts to integrate the hydrological cycle with human activity in a comprehensive framework.

<sup>4</sup> I have been clipping for the past three years on water. For example on February 22, 1999 in the Daily Mail and Guardian there was a lengthy article entitled “The mighty river that politics turned into a trickle” in

delayed process of land reform. The issues and solutions vary between countries. In addition, how the environment is to be taken account of, also varies greatly. In general, large-scale chemical dependent agriculture is not problematised but rather taken as the model by the current governments. There continues to be great resistance in the leadership of Southern African nations to learn lessons from the organic and nonchemical dependent agriculture that characterized Southern Africa until the 1920s as well as to the contemporary dilemmas of industrial farming. Partly due to a set of class and gender biases the importance of rural livelihoods often gets lost in the planning or implementation of rural development policies and projects.<sup>5</sup>

Environment and development has become an important trope. Yet there is widespread disagreement about both ideas. Environment can include everything from fiscal policies, neocolonialism, and cyberspace to air and water pollution, soil erosion, etc. For the purposes of this paper, I will use environment in its more narrow sense to refer to natural resources and the utilization of them by humans.<sup>6</sup> Development is even more problematic. Anthropologists have both been highly supportive and highly critical of international development. It has been one of the more polarizing issues for anthropology.<sup>7</sup> The term and concept of development finds multiple uses in the United States, Europe and in the industrialized world in general. Thus, development can be paving over wetlands in Michigan or teaching San to use the plow in Botswana or expanding the scope of human freedom (Sen 1999). Development, because it can be deployed for virtually all human activity and since economic growth as the motor for development also constitutes the gravest threat to human and other life I wonder if the time hasn't come to offer clearer conceptual alternatives?<sup>8</sup> However, since development is used consistently in Southern Africa to refer to strategies for ending poverty, reducing illness, improving life expectancy, increasing education, improving housing and improving and maintaining the quality of the environment, I will continue to employ the term. In addition, I

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which a combination of misuse, harmful forestry practices and the proliferation of non-indigenous species dramatically reduced the river's flow.

<sup>5</sup>. For an excellent attempt to redress the underestimated economic value of crop production, livestock production and natural resource harvesting in South Africa see Shackleton, Shackleton and Cousins.

4. I regard humans as both part and apart from the environment. Humans are both "animals" (that is living organisms, with differentiated organs, hormones, etc. and utilize a complex set of technologies and knowledges to transform "nature" for human purposes. In general, the approach that I use is "political ecology." This refers to questions concerning how land and water should be used, who should use it and how should it be managed to conserve the environment. Who makes decisions, for what purposes and with what ecological knowledge frameworks are central to a political ecological perspective. I also think such an approach can be normative both about "nature" and "culture." In short, values are central to approaching both and we should be clear about who we think gains and who we think loses in different policies and practices.

5. The context in which these reforms are taking place is within the increasingly contested discourse of development. The underlying rationale for change lies in Zimbabwe's economic and social development. It is our hope that these studies will make a contribution to the broad array of anthropologists working on economic and social reforms in the context of development (Robertson 1984; Long and Long 1993; Hobart 1993; Pottier 1995; Escobar 1995; Gardner and Lewis 1996; Cooper and Packard 1997).

<sup>8</sup>. There is not space here to explore issues of over-consumption, over-development, and too much growth in the north. It is not my argument to oppose all economic growth but that certain kinds lead to the intensification of environmental and other problems.

have sought to include democratization as part of the reform process signalling the extension of this political term to everyday decision-making about land and water.<sup>9</sup> This paper focusses on the two reform processes underway in Zimbabwe and therefore any conclusions must be preliminary and tentative.

The paper is divided into four parts. The first provides a brief context for land and water reform in Zimbabwe. To include the other countries would make the paper far too long. The second considers land in general with a brief analysis of the Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE) because environment figures so prominently in its creation and operations and because it is so often cited (including by myself) as an alternative to current top-down land-use processes (Derman 1997; Derman and Ferguson 1999b). In the third section, the water reform process is detailed and in the fourth section the two reform processes are compared. I conclude with some observations about the rough road ahead.

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<sup>9</sup>. Amartya Sen in his new book reverses the relationship between development and freedom by suggesting that emphasizing economic growth tells us nothing about why it is or should be sought. Sen emphasizes that the focus should be on the expansion of human freedom “...to live the kind of lives that people have reason to value.” Economic growth then must be tied to “the expansion of human capability to lead more worthwhile and freer lives (1999: 295).”

## PART I. CONTEXT FOR LAND AND WATER REFORM

Most discussions of Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe begin with the profoundly inequitable division of land due to colonialism and the racial policies that accompanied colonial rule. The place and importance of land vary between these nations. In Zimbabwe, despite a relatively high degree of urbanization, land remains central to cultural identity for the vast majority of black Zimbabweans. Harare, the capital city of two million people, continues to be characterized as a “bedroom community” signifying that close connections are kept to rural areas. Fleets of buses continuously move between Zimbabwe’s urban and rural areas. In my earlier work in what was supposed to be a remote portion of the eastern Zambezi Valley, I was surprised to find that there were eight buses a day from there to Harare.<sup>10</sup> On the other hand, agriculture is far less central to the industrial and mining economies of Namibia and South Africa. There, it has been more difficult to keep land reform as a central part of political priorities.

Zimbabwe’s lands are divided into the following categories: state land (safari areas, forests and national parks), urban areas, large-scale commercial areas, and communal areas (including resettlement areas). Between 1922 and 1980 what today is Zimbabwe was Southern Rhodesia, a white settler colony, nominally independent from Great Britain, the Colonial power. A small minority of Europeans owned large amounts of land, had substantial autonomy from Britain, and held the levers of the state.<sup>11</sup> The economy was based primarily upon agriculture after it was discovered that the colony did not contain the same quantities of precious metals as South Africa. European settlers appropriated the best of Zimbabwe’s lands which became recognized as Commercial farming areas, while the majority of the black population was forced onto the less productive lands called Communal lands. These social divisions in most cases paralleled the “natural regions” based upon rainfall and soils into which the country was - and remains - divided. The best watered areas (at the core of the central plateau and the eastern highlands) are classified as Region I while the lowest rainfall areas are identified as Natural Region V. Communal areas are greatly over represented in the lowest rainfall areas.

The type of land, land area and population are shown in Table 1.

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<sup>10</sup>. This is not to downplay the importance of seasonality when during heavy rainy seasons movement by any means becomes very difficult and communities can be isolated for days or weeks.

<sup>11</sup>. Other former settler colonies in Africa include Algeria, Kenya, Namibia and South Africa. These colonies all had a difficult and often violent path to national independence.



**Table 1 [as of 1994]<sup>12</sup>**

Type of Land	Area (km <sup>2</sup> )	% of Total Area	Population
Communal Land	163,500	41.8	4,662,000 <sup>13</sup>
Resettlement Land	26,400	6.7	355,000
Commercial Farming Land	142,400	36.4	1,713,000
National Parks Estate	47,000	12.1	-
State Forest Land	9,200	2.4	-
Urban and State Land	2,200	0.6	3,500,000

As of the last census in 1992, nearly 70% of Zimbabwe's population lives in rural areas, and the country generates most of its foreign earnings from agricultural exports. The major crops grown today are maize, tobacco, cotton, cut-flowers, sunflower seeds, sugar beans, sugar, wheat and oranges along with an array of vegetables and wheat. The country has long striven for internal food self-sufficiency combined with high value export crops, the most important of which is tobacco. Tourism is the second most important foreign exchange earner. CAMPFIRE takes on particular importance given the importance of the tourism sector and consistent efforts to bring more employment and revenues to communal areas.

Southern African environmental issues are often situated in the north in the context of wildlife -- in particular elephants, lions, rhinos, etc. -- and how to protect their habitats from expanding and increasing human populations<sup>14</sup> rather than on land and water. These environmental concerns have particular resonance in Europe and the United States where the importance of African animals and environments seem to have superseded concerns for African peoples.<sup>15</sup> Dozens of international environmental organizations have taken stands or developed programs with

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<sup>12</sup>8. There has been a slight increase in resettlement land since 1994. In addition, the government's program of land acquisition and reform will, in the long run, change these figures as well. However, it is as yet unclear what property regime acquired land will belong to other than resettlement land where the title rests in the hands of the state.

11. This figures includes small-scale commercial farmers. Administratively they are considered residents of communal areas.

<sup>14</sup>. This does not include all Southern African nations but particularly Botswana, Namibia, Zimbabwe, and the national parks of South Africa.

<sup>15</sup>. Concerns for wildlife have increasingly been turned by many NGOs to provide resources for development. For example IUCN and WWF have increasingly attempted to portray themselves as focussing upon people first.

Southern African nations on behalf of conserving the environment and/or wildlife. Southern Africa is all too often characterized as either wilderness or wild places without recognition that these wilderness areas were often taken from local populations. Wildlife tourism continues to grow in importance at the same time those local populations' standards of living are often falling. Tensions between the environment and development are frequently palpable. In Zimbabwe, for example, large-scale commercial farmers have expanded their production to include wildlife -- either for tourist purposes or to meet the growing market for game meat and products in some of the highest productive areas. The internationally known program for the Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE) which seeks to have local communities benefit from wildlife, is faced with increasing threats from migrant agriculturalists seeking to raise their standards of living. For most southern Africans, and even those in Botswana, Zimbabwe and Namibia, the importance of wildlife pales in comparison to land and water.

Received wisdom asserts that Zimbabwe's independence struggle was fought primarily for land (see Martin and Johnson 1981; Lan 1985; Ranger 1985; Kriger 1992 among many others). Thus, an early goal of the newly independent Government of Zimbabwe was to resettle 162,000 households on 8.3 million hectares of land by 1985. This goal, while unrealistic, did lead to the resettlement of 71,000 households on 3.5 million hectares of land by 1998. Thus, ten percent of Zimbabwe's total land area is now in resettlement schemes. More than 80% of these resettlement schemes are known as Model A. The Model A type is based on a separation of fields (called arables), homesteads (called residential) and grazing areas with homes arranged in straight lines in villages. Each settler and family (it was initially assumed that they would be male-headed) are given 5 hectares for cultivation and .5 hectares for their home. It is a permit-based system with resettlement officers having the right to take-away permits if the schemes' rules are not followed.<sup>16</sup>

In a highly politicized move, President of Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe announced in September of 1997 that the Government would be acquiring 50% of the large-scale commercial farming areas for three different types of resettlement. The largest land area and number of households were to be a modified type A scheme but there was also to be land obtained for more commercial operations. The implementation of a compulsorily land acquisition has led to an intense set of conflicts within the government, between the government and large-scale farmers, and the government and international donors. In addition, some rural populations have undertaken either land occupations or land invasions on their own. Sometimes these occur on privately owned land, but more often they have occurred on government-owned land leased by important individuals. It is extraordinary that in 1998 no firm plans existed as how to proceed. Thus Sam Moyo, Zimbabwe's leading scholar on land and land reform wrote:

Land redistribution must be directed at an appropriate range of beneficiaries who will have to follow land use, outputs, income and employment targets established in relation to clear goals, and the quality of land and related resources allocated to them (1998: 55).

In short, these goals, procedures and methods have not been developed. One can only raise questions as to why this has not happened to date and what the real goals are of Zimbabwe's

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<sup>16</sup>. For an analysis of the continuities between colonial and postcolonial land use programs see Derman 1997.

highest political leadership?<sup>17</sup> To think that equity remains the central focus of resettlement is highly problematic.

## **WATER: THE 1976 AND 1998 WATER ACTS AND RELATED LEGISLATION**

In Zimbabwe, rights to water are not co-terminous with rights to land, although both display similar types of inequities - they have been concentrated in the hands of a small minority of the population. In the 1976 Water Act (and in previous Acts), water use rights were allocated by the state on a first-come, first-served basis. These rights were granted in perpetuity and they could be transferred separately from the land. The majority of water rights holders were (and are) commercial farmers who were organized into River Boards. These features of the 1976 law meant that it was very difficult for new participants - particularly communal area farmers - to gain water rights.

As might be predicted, the environment was generally ignored in the 1976 Water Act. The focus was on water management, the property relations underlying access to water, and the provision of water to cities, farms and mines. Concerns with the quantity of water rather than its quality predominated. Only in one place in the legislation was environmental issues explicitly discussed. This was in relation to the creation of outline management plans for river systems. Such catchment plans were to incorporate areas for the conservation and improvement of the physical environment. These plans, however, never materialized under the old Water Act although they are central to the implementation of the new Water Act.

The major arena for debate and contestation over the environment dealt with erosion, the protection of wetlands and the headwaters of rivers. These issues were addressed in the 1942 Natural Resources Act (and in preceding Acts). This legislation attempted to create mechanisms to prevent African farmers from “destroying the environment.” Most Rhodesian authorities firmly believed that African farming practices, particularly riverine cultivation, were detrimental to the environment. Farming methods employed by those of European ancestry (whether they are growers of tobacco, winter wheat, cotton or maize) were, on the other hand, regarded as environmentally benign or beneficial. In the Streambank Cultivation Regulations of 1942 everyone was prohibited from cultivating within 100 feet of streams or rivers during their “normal” flow. This primarily affected black Zimbabweans since their lands were away from the best watered areas. This legislation, which remains on the books today, is highly contested and only sporadically enforced. In most rural areas, river banks and associated wetlands are used to grow supplemental food crops during the dry season, and thus are essential to small-scale farmers’ household survival strategies. The Southern Rhodesia government also enacted laws to reduce the number of cattle owned by Africans (but not by Europeans) in order to curtail soil erosion and siltation of rivers. Overall, environmental legislation related to land and water use represented another set of indirect and direct measures to control the African population.

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<sup>17</sup>. At the time of writing this paper, there is now a unit in the President’s office designing the resettlement programs, their pace of implementation, how they will be managed, etc.

## PART II. LAND

Land reform remains central to debates for historical justice in Southern Africa. The debate is sharpest in Zimbabwe -- both for African urban elites and rural populations.<sup>18</sup> Land reform, while normatively supported on the basis of equity and justice, with some attention paid to national productivity and exports, includes multiple and significant environmental issues. These are often muted in discussions of what kind of land reform should be followed.<sup>19</sup> Debates and discourses surrounding land tend to be more powerful and central to how change should proceed than those surrounding water.<sup>20</sup>

There appears to be little national consensus in Zimbabwe as to what forms of land tenure should be legally permitted even while land reforms have been mooted. Should the current dual system continue? Should there be a single system based on private ownership, or should there be several alternatives? The Commission of Inquiry into Appropriate Agricultural Land Tenure Systems concluded that the tenure for those in freehold or private sectors in both agricultural and residential areas was secure. The problems of tenure were in the communal areas where the key sets of rights - inheritance, subdivision, and receiving compensation for loss of improvements - were not. The Commission recommended that village level institutions should be strengthened which in turn would lead to the better management of natural resources. The institutional and legal administration of communal areas would be based upon village assemblies where all adults would be equal (in theory). They proposed the surveying and mapping of Communal Land and giving land certificates to communities and households. All land transactions would then be recorded. Those villages, which had complied with their recommendations, would cease to be state land and would become Traditional Village Land. Resettlement Land, which is now under Communal Lands, would become freehold. There was no serious consideration of gender anywhere in the Commission's report. They basically ignored women's presentations to the commission which sought to have women's rights to inheritance of land established after death of the spouse, and rights to land after divorce in both communal and resettlement areas guaranteed.

In response to the government programme of how to resettle newly acquired commercial farm land and the recommendations of the Land Tenure Commission, there have been numerous attempts to consider and analyze land reform. Perhaps the most interesting is the FAO

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<sup>18</sup>. In the industrial economy of South Africa despite the fact that 46% of the population lives in rural areas, land reform has a much lower priority and profile. There is not time nor space here to include how the land reform process is playing out in the other nations.

<sup>19</sup>. These include biodiversity of both domesticated and "wild" plants and crops, the use of biocides and fertilizers, the protection (or abuse) of soils, deforestation and reforestation, etc.

<sup>20</sup>. Perhaps this will shift with increasing emphasis upon the growing crisis of freshwater - both in volume and in quality. As Scudder has stated:

Water is not just a basic human need. It is also a basic need for the management, restoration and enhancement of ecosystems of which people and their cultures, though ecologically dominant, are just one component. (1999: 2)

We perhaps can anticipate a time in the near future when water will take its place along with land.

commissioned study by Shivji, Gunby, Moyo and Ncube (1998). They have criticized the Land Tenure Commission on the one hand, while proposing new directions for the government led land reform process, on the other.<sup>21</sup> This process is just beginning and its outcomes are in doubt due to complex internal and external factors not the least of which is the cost.

Shivji et al. through their critique, seek a more democratic and equitable future for rural Zimbabweans. For example, they are highly critical of past resettlement efforts by denying democratic rights to occupants of these schemes in comparison to those in freehold and commercial farm areas.<sup>22</sup> They object to the proposed new government plans because they state they will remain in a top-down planning mode dominated by a central government agency. They assert the need for a new agency which they provisionally name the National Land Board, to coordinate all functions of land redistribution, land use planning, land administration and a land register. They suggest that at the local level there should be a village assembly with an entrenched quorum of 40% women.

The Government of Zimbabwe has provided plans for how it intends to implement its new land reform programme.<sup>23</sup> However, because of the multiple uncertainties and challenges to the government's proposal I will not go into it in detail. In broad outline they are proposing to continue what has become known as the Model A Resettlement Model which has meant designating specific land for cultivation, residency and grazing in specific amounts for each household. This is termed Model A1 in the new scheme. Most acquired land will be used in this fashion. There will be a second group within Model A that is proposed to select good farmers. They are expected to meet more of the programmes' costs. This is known as A-2 approach. There will also be a more commercial dimension of acquisition of land whereby both the future owners and the government will contribute to its purchase. The first effort to do that created a huge scandal when around 149 individuals were allocated parts of commercial farms.<sup>24</sup> This land was, in the government's initial plans, to go to those with demonstrated farming capabilities instead went to ministers, a former minister, prominent politicians, a university law professor, sixteen physicians, senior civil servants and high profile indigenous businessmen. Seven were women and fourteen were husband and wife. Less well known is that land was only allocated to those requesting land in their natal or family areas thus continuing a form of ethnic politics.

While the principles underlying the Shivji et al (1998) document may be sound, it is unrealistic unless there are major political shifts in power. While the authors are fully aware of the political structures that support the modest and politically motivated land acquisitions of the present, they

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<sup>21</sup>. It's hard to know how to list this piece in the bibliography. It is printed as a government document entitled National Land Policy Framework Paper by the Ministry of Lands and Agriculture. Yet it is clear from the Minister's foreword that he regards this piece as being a contribution to the debate, not one adopted by the ministry. It seems logical to include under the author's names since they have well-known and clearly defined positions on land policy (Shivji, Guby, Moyo & Ncube 1998).

<sup>22</sup>. There has been a long sustained critique of government blueprint plans. For an early but still important sustained argument against this see Drinkwater 1991.

<sup>23</sup> There has been a long and drawn-out set of disputes about the program ranging from its arbitrariness and non-transparency to the fact that those whose lands are designated by government cannot appeal to the courts the assigned value to their property (Maposa 1995)

<sup>24</sup>. This was first reported in the new daily newspaper **The Daily News** on Monday, July 19, 1999.

do not incorporate their political analysis as to how to implement such radical changes. These radical changes would block those in power from continuing to use their political positions to gain access to the best land.<sup>25</sup> This subject will be returned to below, for the ignoring of nested power relations is also a feature of the water reform process. In sum, the political situation in Zimbabwe is highly volatile, the economy is struggling more than at any time since 1980, the trade union movement is better organized and highly politicized, and human rights have become a major issue for urban populations. This volatility pervades the region holding both promise and danger. Unlike the top-down, blueprint approach to land use planning, the internationally known Communal Areas Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE) has been cited as a potential alternative for how to proceed with a more participatory approach to resettlement and how to systematically include environmental concerns.

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<sup>25</sup>. Moyo writes:

Most allocations of land, such as the distribution of state leasehold lands, loans and resettlement scheme lands, have tended to be a secret' affair. Even data for research on these matters tends to be inaccessible. Thus, many public policy debates on access to land by black elites are based on rumour mongering and usually inadequate media reports. Even the new Provincial land identification committees , intended to promote decentralised land acquisition for redistribution, comprising Government and farm union representatives, and the parallel provincial Zanu (PF) committees, also operate outside of the public view at both provincial and national level. (1999: 7)

## **PART III. THE COMMUNAL AREAS MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME FOR INDIGENOUS RESOURCES (CAMPFIRE)**

This section comments only briefly on CAMPFIRE and is certainly not exhaustive. CAMPFIRE is important because it is proposed as a model for participatory land use planning. In many circles, including many of those engaged in rural development, debate has shifted toward the importance of local communities in the management of land and water. The emphasis has dramatically shifted away from the state towards what has been termed “community based natural resource management” (CBNRM). CAMPFIRE has been central in providing thirteen years of experiences with decentralizing wildlife management and shifting towards community-based land use management. Experience and experimentation proceeds far more rapidly than the research publications analysing them. In addition, CAMPFIRE has had difficulty in moving from wildlife management to profitable and sustainable management of all “wild” resources (including plants) in protected areas.<sup>26</sup>

CAMPFIRE has shifted its emphasis away from practices that conserve the environment toward development first and the environment after. It has placed itself as an alternative way to incorporate local communities in determining how they will enhance economic development while protecting the environment primarily in those areas where agriculture was thought to be difficult. Other programmes in Southern Africa seek to place the primary emphasis upon development and its benefits with less emphasis upon environment. Strong international and national environmental non-governmental groups, the World Bank and other multilateral agencies and bilateral donors have all, in multiple ways, taken up the baton of trying to have it both ways (what is often termed “sustainable development”) by attempting to see environmental conservation and development as mutually compatible. Often, however, this is not so easily accomplished. One major threat to CAMPFIRE programmes comes from migrant farmers seeking land and pasture to “develop” in, for example, the less densely populated areas of the western and eastern Zambezi Valley. Cotton, in particular, thrives, at least in the short term, in these regions. This places CAMPFIRE in the unenviable position of opposing efforts by entrepreneurial farmers, often migrants, to improve their standard of living and determining their own best practices for particular places. This raises complex issues around what is “community”, what is “local”, what is “indigenous”, and if we reject these terms/concepts what should replace them?

It is difficult for those engaged in implementing CAMPFIRE to easily see alternatives given the complex realities on the ground. Vupenyu Dzingirai (1999) for example reports on conflicts between a District Council and those they represent; the Council seeks to maintain wildlife revenues by opposing in-migration by cotton farmers. In a complicated story, he comments on how cotton production (including the widespread use of oxen for drought purposes) on a

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<sup>26</sup>. Campbell et al. explore this issue with a focus on woodlands. In their discussion they conclude that woodlands are an important source for income and resources to communal area residents. However, they remain sceptical of turning back control to local users because schemes that do have a relatively short life. Because of pressures for change it is unclear that this is the most effective way. They suggest that much more information is needed to know how and in what ways devolution of control and decision making to local users really works (1999: 13)

relatively large scale can jeopardize hunting and safari operations. In addition, the migrants are not Tonga, the long established residents of the region, thus adding ethnic elements to the conflict.

Madzudzo (1999) reports on another Rural District Council struggling to keep an area relatively free from cattle grazing to permit safari operations. CAMPFIRE's resources become part of a struggle over resources. In my research, the Mid-Zambezi Valley Rural Development Project rejected the formation of CAMPFIRE programmes until wildlife habitats were greatly reduced. Conflict, perhaps, should be seen as a normal part of CAMPFIRE rather than notions of harmonious communities that can or will easily resolve resource issues. Indeed, with the increased focus and emphasis upon CAMPFIRE, with international resources placed at the disposal of both the Campfire Association and local communities, it would only be reasonable to expect greater conflict.

It has been suggested that the idea of "community" be dropped, since the common purpose and non-conflictful interest that is assumed by non-members maybe, and often is, absent. In its place the core issue has been described as "group governance of natural resources at the local scale."<sup>27</sup> This permits the analysis of different CAMPFIRE experiences throughout the country (as well as internationally). Because of national legislation, it has been difficult in many circumstances for there to be locally based land-use decision-making. There have been conflicts including issues of gender, class, and ethnicity. In short, CAMPFIRE communities are no different than any others, as should be expected. CAMPFIRE programmes, because of the specific history and context of Zimbabwe, have only with great difficulty been extended to other natural resources.<sup>28</sup> Thus water, which would appear to be a suitable resource for local management, has been dealt with very differently.

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<sup>27</sup>. The Centre for Applied Social Sciences, University of Zimbabwe and the Programme for Land and Agrarian Studies, University of Western Cape have a Research program on Community Based Natural Resource Management in Southern Africa: A Regional Programme of Analysis and Communication. They have just held a workshop initiating the research. The quote is from their research proposal.

<sup>28</sup>. Each sector, water, forestry, land, local government, wild life, etc. has its own legal

structures. Management of wild life has been devolved due to a particularity in the law which provided for Appropriate Authority given to land owners which was then applied to Rural District Councils. In their critique of land use planning and land management, Shivji, Moyo et al. critique the top down planning and lack of engagement by local peoples which has hindered the application of more democratic principles. There is now a large literature on CAMPFIRE. See for example Metcalfe, Murphree and Cumming (1993), Murphree (1995)



## PART IV. WATER

Water serves as an important window to view contemporary integration (or non-integration) of “environment” and “development”: 1) a global process is underway led by the World Bank and a host of “donors” to have water be considered an economic good. This is being contested by ecologists and biologists who present alternative understandings. 2) water management is to be shifted away from central governments toward “stakeholders” who will now have to bear far more of water’s costs and managing its allocation; 3) in the states of Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe, water, like land, is inequitable and thus requires reallocation although how this will take place will be highly contested especially given current financial conditions of the different nations; 4) the environment is now recognized in the new Water Bills to be a “user” of water in its own right and thus have requirements of its own. However, how the environment is to be understood and who will speak for the environment has not been determined; 5) “water” has been a longstanding site of contestations over its precise meaning. The new water reforms, while not necessarily designed to override all other forms of knowledges and practices, will attempt to do so. This will be because the moving actors in the process will be engineers, ecologists, and economists. 6) what are to be the appropriate units of management, and how will these units fit with the current region-wide support of community based natural resource management? In Zimbabwe, for example, the national government is strongly promoting stakeholder management which will disenfranchise, among others, women, and lead to gender being an add-on, rather than intrinsic to the process.

In examining the map of Zimbabwe, we can see that the headwaters of most rivers originate in the highlands surrounding Harare. This means that the commercial farms benefit from both rainwater and river water. The colonial government set up a dual property structure in which the African areas (known through time as reserves, tribal trust lands and then communal areas) are subject to “customary tenure” in which land may not be bought and sold. The European areas were constructed to be market-based with the exception that Africans were not allowed to buy or sell land initially designated European. The emphasis over time became the unequal, or unfair or unjust land distribution in which Africans were forced out of the best lands. It is clear that they were also greatly disadvantaged in terms of access to wetlands and rivers as well. This alienation was reinforced through water law.

Water in Zimbabwe has been administered on the basis of Roman Dutch law (like the Western United States) and secondarily on English law. The principle underlying Roman-Dutch law is the notion of appropriative rights which can only be obtained from the state. Under this system, access to water could be obtained by landowners only through application to a water court which then granted water rights in perpetuity. This is in marked contrast to English law which is based on riparian rights where the owner of the land adjacent to a stream can use the water passing through his land. The basis for obtaining water in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe requires filing an application which demonstrates that the water is available and that it will be put to beneficial use. Priorities for water allocations in times of scarcity are determined by the date at which the water right was granted (the priority date system).<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> I use the current tense because the old Water Act still remains in effect until all the preconditions for the implementation of the new Act are met.

The riparian principle, however, is extended to ground water. Thus water found on land by wells or boreholes were, under the old Water Act, the property of the land's owner. It is one of Zimbabwe's continuing historical ironies that vast attention has been given to the potential loss of stream flow due to wetland cultivation by black Zimbabweans but virtually no attention has been paid to ground water extraction (now on a massive scale) by commercial farms, although its regulation and measurement are to be carried out under the new Water Act.

The new Water Act covers all waters in Zimbabwe. It abolishes the separate categories of ground water, surface water, and government water.<sup>30</sup> Ownership of water is vested in the President with the Minister of Rural Resources and Water Development responsible for the planning, use and protection of all of the country's water resources. The Zimbabwe National Water Authority (ZINWA), a new entity established under the law, is tasked with the operational dimensions that previously had been the responsibility of the Department of Water Development. The division of labor and responsibilities with ZINWA and how much it will replicate the Department of Water Development is unclear since it is to begin operation on January 3, 2000.

Major changes introduced by the new legislation include:

- (1) The system of water rights in perpetuity will be terminated and replaced by water permits allocated for a fixed number of years (most probably twenty). The characteristics of the permit system that will replace the current priority system set by date at which the water right was obtained have yet to be established. It is clear, though, that some system of priorities will need to be in place in times of water scarcity.
- (2) Zimbabwean citizens will continue to have open access to water for primary use. Protections will now be established for people whose waters for primary use may be affected by others' water development plans.<sup>31</sup>
- (3) Beyond primary use, priority will be given to productive uses of water. The new act specifies ways to evaluate the economic potential of a proposed use of water, including the suitability of land for irrigation and irrigation methods. Such evaluations will be made by the newly established Catchment Councils along with ZINWA and the Ministry of Rural Resources and Water Development.
- (4) Water is to be treated as an economic good which means in part that there must be secure financing to provide for the operation, maintenance and expansion of the water management system.
- (5) The water rates that are established will need to take cognizance of those unable to pay the full price as well as move toward a market determination of water pricing for those who can pay.
- (6) The new Water Act provides for the creation of Catchment and Sub-Catchment Councils to manage the seven major watersheds identified in the country. Each Catchment Council will prepare a Catchment Plan for its river system, review applications and grant permits, regulate

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<sup>30</sup>. The Act recognizes that water which is above the surface and that does not leave the owner's property (e.g. a shallow, seasonal pond) continues to be "private water" which the land-owner can use as she or he sees fit. This is a very small percentage of Zimbabwe's waters.

<sup>31</sup>. Primary use which was defined in the earlier water acts has not changed. Primary use refers to water used for drinking, cooking, washing, watering livestock (in small numbers, undefined), and making bricks

and supervise the exercise of rights to, and use of water in the river system for which it is established, supervise Sub-Catchment Councils and ensure compliance with the Water Act.

(7) The environment is to be considered as a water consumer in its own right.

(8) Polluters are to pay. A new system of ensuring water quality is proposed which will include permits for the rights of discharge or disposal into river systems.

The new law incorporates environmental concerns in a number of ways. First, there is a growing concern with water quality, a focus which was absent in previous legislation. Part VI of the law treats Water Quality Control and Environmental Protection. The emphasis in this section is principally on pollution, not on “environmental needs.” Second, the law recognizes the environment as water user. The new legislation states that due consideration will be given to the protection, conservation and sustenance of the environment, although it does not address how the environment’s needs are to be taken into account. Third, the legislation also recognizes people’s rights of access to enjoy places of leisure or natural beauty related to water or water bodies. The thrust of the law is that all water users (including the environment) should have access to clean water.

The vast majority of existing water rights in rural areas continue to be held by a small group of large-scale commercial farmers.<sup>32</sup> Overall, 85% of Zimbabwe’s recorded water is used in agriculture. Given the erratic rainfall, the country is heavily dependent on irrigation. Large-scale commercial farmers control 85% of the land under formal irrigation (an estimated 130,000 ha of the 152,000 ha irrigated). Farmers in communal areas and resettlement schemes, in contrast, have access to approximately 6% of irrigated land (8,882 ha) in formal irrigation schemes. Many others probably rely on very small-scale informal irrigation from boreholes, wells and other sources which are not counted in these statistics (Government of Zimbabwe 1994: 402-405).

The area of land under irrigation has increased dramatically since 1985. Particularly striking is the large number of dams constructed by commercial farmers to intensify production. Nearly all of Zimbabwe’s major rivers are heavily dammed. Unlike the situation in most African nations, few free flowing rivers remain in Zimbabwe. In most cases, the “natural” flow has been severely altered. Many rivers which used to seasonally flood or which flowed all year no longer do so. These changes have had dramatic, and usually negative, effects upon communal area riverain and wetland cultivation, an important source of livelihood for residents in many communal areas. In addition, Zimbabwe has created relatively large reservoirs to supply drinking water for its major cities, and the massive Kariba Dam project to generate hydroelectricity. There are other large government dams most of whose water is not utilized by communal area farmers or small-scale farmers because they do not have the capital to move the water and generate the income necessary to pay for it, even at its currently subsidized price.

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<sup>32</sup>. It is difficult to obtain accurate and up to date figures on the racial composition of commercial farm ownership. It appears that approximately 15 percent of the 4,900 large-scale commercial farms are black owned (although this does not include government owned farms leased to black political figures and businessmen). The Government has attempted to compulsorily acquire 1,471 large scale farms for acquisition. There is to be resettlement of both small-scale black farmers and larger-scale ones. This process is on-hold awaiting clarification of how it will be paid for and precisely what kinds of resettlement organizations will be pursued. In addition, what to do with the farm workers on the farms has not been resolved (Moyo 1998).

The impetus toward water reform was accelerated by the two major nationwide droughts in the 1990s, in addition to a number of other droughts of regional significance. Agricultural production for domestic consumption and export plummeted in some years. Industry and urban areas were also seriously affected. In 1992-93, Zimbabwe's second largest industrial city, Bulawayo, almost ran out of water and numerous industries were shut down. In this and other cities, severe rationing of water use was imposed, bringing to the fore issues of equity among different sectors of the economy and the population. This situation, combined with pressures from government and donors toward bureaucratic and economic reform, created the social and political environment for changes in water law and management.

The Department of Water Development was requested by the President's office to take the lead by drafting new water-related legislation. Realizing that there would be a two to three-year period from the initial drafting of laws to their enactment, donors stepped in to provide funds to create an organization within the Department of Water Development, the Water Resource Management Strategy Group (WRMS), to plan for the transition and to formulate the principles for a new Zimbabwe National Water Authority (ZINWA).

The new water act and ZINWA are both premised on the decentralization of water management. Zimbabwe is to be divided into seven catchment areas. These are primarily geographical in nature but in order to reduce the number some smaller catchments have been combined with larger ones. In the interim, the Royal Dutch Embassy funded a consultancy, which recommended the creation of a pilot catchment authority, the Mupfure, to serve as a model for decentralized water management. Simultaneously, water management specialists and commercial farmers in another catchment, the Mazowe, petitioned to be a second pilot catchment authority. They were assisted in this effort by the German development agency, GTZ. The Water Resource Management Strategy group was designated to assist both pilot catchments in formulating catchment management strategies.

These Catchment Councils are at the heart of the reform process and represent an innovation in the state's management of natural resources comparable in some ways to other innovative natural resource management strategies such as CAMPFIRE and co-management efforts underway in the forestry sector. While Zimbabwe has long had River Boards responsible for overseeing the distribution of water to commercial farms, the innovation of the Catchment Councils is that they are to involve a much wider range of water users in decision-making processes than did the older River Boards.

The Mazowe and the Mupfure were to be the Pilot Projects whose experiences were to be captured in the nationwide expansion of the process. However, for reasons that are not entirely clear but related to demands by the International Monetary Fund for cuts in the civil service and the legal requirements for rendering the new Water and ZINWA acts operational, all of the country was ordered to be in Catchment Councils by July 31, 1999. So as ministers and high bureaucrats raced around the nation in July, five new Catchment Councils were formed virtually overnight under the government's seal of approval. This process contradicted the consultative and organic nature of the process envisioned through the creation of pilot projects.

## PART V. COMPARING THE WATER AND LAND REFORM PROCESSES

In Table II. below are listed some of the ways by which the water and land reform processes can be compared. Since both processes are only just underway and many changes are possible, the “after the reform” column must be regarded as provisional.

**Table II. Comparing Land and Water Reform**

Resource	Water Before	Water After	Land Before	Land After
Qualities	Flowing	-	Stable	-
	Uneven availability	-	Stable/uneven quality	-
	Storable	-	Not Storable, hold for speculation	
Tenure	State-owned with private water. Tenure through system of rights in perpetuity	Almost all state-owned. Shift to 20 year permit system	Private, communal and state owned	Private and as yet undetermined
Use Rights	Rights System – in perpetuity	Permit System - for 20 years	Usufruct in communal areas	Most likely unchanged
Market	None (Government sells water but not market determined) Private individuals are not allowed to sell	Being considered Permits add value to land	Dual System - full market and ostensibly no market	Reduction of market with resettlement land. Otherwise continues with dual system High taxes for underutilised land
Price	Government set, called Blend Price	To be more market determined with subsidies for those who can't afford	Yes	Unclear how land markets will operate
Transferability	Yes	Yes, but not entirely clear how	Yes - dual system	Dual system, at least, continues
Inheritance	Yes	For remainder of permit	Yes	Yes - but unclear
Management in terms of scarcity	Yes - Priority Date System	Some form of fractional allocation but not decided	None	Solved by land reform?
Participation	Only those with water rights	To be worked out but primary mechanism is representation by stakeholder group	Depends upon sector Interest group politics, Commercial Farmers Union,	Efforts to change – particularly on resettlement projects. Efforts by ZFU to speak for

			Indigenous Commercial Farmers Union, ZFU, etc.	all small-scale farmers even though they are highly differentiated
Scale of Management	National, regional and local but only for rights holders	Same scales but greater local management. Third Tier of local users uncertain	Through government and blueprint planning or else private	To be determined
Gender – taken into account?	No	Not really	Partially, some resettlement officers assigned land to women	To be determined
Beneficiaries of reform process	-	Wealthier individuals		Wealthier and relatively powerful and/or influential individuals.
Legislation	Water Act 1976	Water Act of 1998 and ZINWA Act of 1998	Series of Acts on land	Land Acquisition Act of 1992., Rural District Councils Act, Traditional Authorities Act and new draft environmental act.

There are multiple ways by which we can compare the two processes. I have selected three areas to do so. First, the nature of the resource determines at least in part, differences in both management and reform; second, past and proposed management practices and third, the nature and kind of broad-scale public participation in the reform process. This brief comparison will enable us to partly answer the double question as to whether or not environmental use and management is indeed being democratized in Zimbabwe, and the extent to which equity remains a viable priority and goal.

## **THE NATURE OF THE RESOURCES:**

Water flows, runs, evaporates, replenishes and provides land with the potential for vegetation – either “natural” or “cultivated.” It can be controlled, managed, stored, polluted, and indeed chemically altered. Land is relatively stable, moves gradually over long-periods of time and can be counted on for relatively long periods of time. It too can be controlled, polluted, chemically altered and physically moved, and remains unproductive without water. Land in Zimbabwe is a highly politicized and emotional issue. Water, on the other hand, while producing local conflicts, does not yet have the same national importance. It is not easy to account for this difference since farmers and others who work the land make continuous plans and decisions based upon water. It would appear, adopting a rather pragmatic stance, that given the dependence on rainfed agriculture by most black Zimbabwean farmers, the ritual and emotional emphasis continues to be placed upon rainfall. The emphasis upon water for irrigation resides among the large-scale farmers who tend to be less concerned about the relationships between humans and the ancestors that bring good rainy seasons.

They embody the now hegemonic western logic of management of nature. In addition, are differences in the scale of water use whereby commercial farmers are in the forefront of irrigation technologies and storage.

## **MANAGEMENT PRACTICES:**

The characteristics of water and land lead to significant differences in management. Land needs to be nourished and kept productive over shorter and longer periods of time through a range of techniques. Water on the other hand stays for a much shorter time. The strategy of the large-scale farmers (as for the cities) is to store water for future use, thus controlling water's flow patterns. Water's management has been less at the farm level (as with soil) than in the complex patterns of damming, storage and irrigation works. Large-scale commercial farmers have continuously worked with central government (the Departments of Hydrology and Water Development) to have their irrigation and dam plans approved. Alternatively, they have purchased government owned water from government dams. Both the Governments of Rhodesia and Zimbabwe have built a series of large dams to provide water for both drinking and irrigation. It is only the commercial farmers who have had the capital to utilize that water. Thus, dependence upon irrigation is much less in the communal lands than on the commercial lands. The smaller-scale farmers rely upon rainfed agriculture or else wetlands.

The government, for a range of reasons, has placed itself between communal area farmers and water. The central government through the Department of Agricultural, Technical and Extension Services (Agritex) and a large parastatal, the Agricultural Rural Development Authority (ARDA) has sought and obtained water rights to develop irrigation schemes. Most irrigation schemes in communal areas were and are government planned, implemented and managed. Many observers, for example Makadho 1993; Government of Zimbabwe 1994, Manzungu, Senzanje and van der Zaag 1999, have concluded that the government has been relatively unsuccessful in managing their irrigation schemes. While there is not space to enumerate all the reasons why, they are reasons common to most of Sub-Saharan Africa. These concern shifting from seasonal to permanent cultivation, managing labour, adequate marketing systems, flexibility toward changing marketing opportunities, good transportation, etc. What is different in Zimbabwe is that there is a large scale private sector of irrigated agriculture. This sector has benefitted from both a government-sponsored irrigation fund and subsidized government water.

Land is highly politicised due to the place of the resource in the struggle for national independence, and the high profile of government strategies to resolve land distribution issues. Due to government management of large quantities of water and most communal area irrigation schemes, it is difficult to attribute blame to anyone else. Indeed, in the few studies that are available, government run schemes often conflict with private schemes in communal areas (Manzungu and van der Zaag 1999). Politically it is much more difficult to mobilize rural peoples against the government and much easier against large land owners. Although on the larger scale, government is often viewed as the obstacle to development or more generally "an enemy."

The management system that is in the process of being created for water is quite different from that for land. In part, this is due to differences in the resource. As noted earlier Zimbabwe is being divided into seven catchments, each with its own Catchment Council and subcatchment councils and there is currently much discussion about whether or not there will be a third tier of management. While one ostensible purpose of the reforms is to have equity concerns take greater precedence through changing the nature of the management entities, whether or not this will occur remains to be seen. Difficulties emerge in examining the practices of Catchment Councils, who is on them, and

how they will interface with the new management entity, the Zimbabwe National Water Authority. These new Catchment Councils vary in their composition, and the degree of knowledge of their members. Catchments also vary by their reliance upon private dams versus government stored water, and the amounts and availability of water, which in turn influences the degree of competition for water. For example, in the Mazowe Catchment, there is plenty of water for everyone even though it is the most intensely developed river in the country.

Claims upon ancestral land have been much more intense and widespread than claims for access to dammed water. In a range of local contexts, land remains central and powerful. The government, partly in response to local interests and partly in its own interest, has tried in fits and starts to resolve what it sees as the “land issue.” However, government meets far more powerful vested national interest groups (e.g. the Commercial Farmers Union, the Zimbabwe Farmers Union, the Indigenous Commercial Farmers Union, bankers, the Affirmative Action Group, War Veterans Association and international interest groups (including those nations and multilateral institutions that form what is euphemistically termed the “donor community”). Given World Bank estimates of costs of approximately \$20,000 U.S. for each resettled family, the price tag for this exercise is enormous. Vested interests are powerful and those seeking to benefit from the programme will be numerous. If one adds numerous documented instances of high-level government corruption and patronage it is difficult to envision the transparent, democratic process of land reform being urged by many Zimbabweans. In addition and often ignored are the real economic costs associated with attempting to maintain transparency and openness.

## **PARTICIPATION AND OTHER ISSUES OF DEMOCRACY:**

Policies that are formulated on the basis of equity would, on the surface, appear to also rest on popular participation. In the case of the two processes under review in this paper, surprisingly greater participation is built into the water reform process. Despite the newness of the new institutions for water management, there are not comparable units for land. There continue to be proposals on the table for land management and land use entities. However, for the time being the strategies to be pursued rely on the old blue-print models and implementing agencies. This could change, if, (and it’s a very large if), some of the proposals put forward in the Land Tenure Commission and Shivji et al. Reports are adopted. In this alternative, Zimbabwe’s rural communities would be debating and choosing what form of land tenure they would prefer. The proposal currently being implemented by the Government of Zimbabwe that Chiefs draw up the priority lists for those to be resettled, while there are no clear lines of local authority for land use planning, will continue the longer-term historical hierarchical patterns of Zimbabwe.

It is clear, in both processes, that the national government will and should have an important stake in the outcome. However, this would be more acceptable and viewed with less suspicion if the reform processes were distanced from political manipulation. New institutions do need to be crafted that will respond to equity issues, but are insulated from narrowly defined partisan politics too often based on personal economic interests. In both the land and water reform processes women have been fundamentally excluded. The Land Tenure Commission rejected the idea that women should be guaranteed a certain percentage of resettlement land while no provision of women’s representation has been made in the new institutions of water management. Anne Ferguson (1998) - has commented on the irony of the widespread depiction of women as the “drawers of water” while the reform process excludes them from decision making. Water management provides a fascinating context in which all users are supposed to be brought to the table. For land, the different tenure



systems continue to divide and do not provide a comparable structure to discuss and analyze land issues. The idea that different communities will be empowered to choose their tenure system may produce a series of profound discussions about rural life and livelihoods. On the other hand, if the land reform process follows the water reform process, then government does not seem to be really ready to give up its power.

## CONCLUSIONS

In examining the water and land reform processes in Zimbabwe we find that there is great attention paid to notions of equity and poverty alleviation. Land is primarily to be given to the landless, the land-poor or those from hard-pressed communal areas to deal with poverty, and to good farmers to address potential problems in maintaining current levels of productivity. In water, the central ostensible goal is to ensure fair access to water by all Zimbabweans. How this is actually to be done is not specified and will be left to negotiation between Catchment Councils, the Zimbabwe National Water Authority and a now depleted Department of Water Development which apparently has no budget line for the next fiscal year. The other goal of having users pay the economic value of water will certainly maintain current patterns of water distribution. Current interest by relatively wealthy black Zimbabwean business and political leaders in land appears, in part, to be blocking genuine land reform. Another important component rests in decision-making at the highest levels of government as to where Zimbabwe's national revenues should be spent.

At present the environment can only be an afterthought, despite acknowledgement of its critical importance. The pressures, however, are short term, pressing, highly politicized and all too often externally generated. The intersection of land and water will become far clearer as land reform proceeds and more land is taken from the commercial farm sector. Irrigation and water management will become a central issue in the actual implementation of land reform. To date, little attention has been paid to how to decentralize centralized irrigation systems. But these processes are just underway and to find gaps is not surprising.

Change is so rapid, pressures to conform to new international requirements are so great, the degree of national conflict so intense, that it is difficult to envision how these issues will be resolved easily or indeed democratically. Part of the reason is that moving from concerns with women, to water and sanitation, to development, to "water for all", to preserving biodiversity, globalization, free markets, and all the other United Nations and donor programmes has meant that there is a continuously shifting political and economic terrain. Little attention has been paid to how long it takes for a shift in national programmes to root in the practice and ideas of most of a nation. Pace and scale are just as important as transparency, good governance, and the other slogans of the day. Perhaps all new donor requirements should be suspended, and most institutions remain in place, while people figure out how to work them and work with them? There remains the profound contradiction between changing national and donor priorities, on the one hand, and requiring democratisation and participation by the "grassroots", on the other.

As change accelerates, one can only regard with amazement how local groups balance so many competing and conflicting demands. If it were not for the ravages of AIDS, one could be more optimistic about the resiliency of Southern Africa's rural populations. As it stands, I wonder if the pressures will not be overwhelming. Without slower paced and more adaptive strategies the immediate future contains threats to livelihoods which seem to be beyond the coping capabilities of many families and local populations in the region. How to make national and international policy makers care about what happens to these poorer, more vulnerable populations who constitute the vast majority of people and who are the subjects of all these changing policies should remain high on all of our agendas.

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