From Jambanja to Planning: The Reassertion of Technocracy in Land Reform in Southeastern Zimbabwe

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Sustainable Livelihoods in Southern Africa:
Institutions, Governance and Policy Processes

Through work in southern Africa this research programme has explored the challenges of institutional, organisational and policy reform around land, water and wild resources. The case study sites have been in Zambezia Province, Mozambique, the Eastern Cape Wild Coast in South Africa and the lowveld area of southeastern Zimbabwe. Three broad themes have been explored:

- How do poor people gain access to and control over land, water and wild resources and through what institutional mechanisms?
- How do emerging institutional arrangements in the context of decentralisation affect poor people's access to land, water and wild resources? What institutional overlaps, complementarities and conflicts enable or limit access? What new governance arrangements are required to encourage a livelihoods approach?
- How do the livelihood concerns and contexts of poor people get represented in policy processes concerning land, water and wild resources in local, national and international arenas? What are the challenges for participation in the policy process?

Summary

This paper examines the land occupations and fast-track resettlement process in Chiredzi District in Zimbabwe's southeast lowveld and argues that their broad-brush representation as chaotic, violent, unmodern and unplanned obfuscates two overlapping phases underpinned by same logic. Rather than constituting a descent into anarchy, the state bureaucracy has been able to enact a rapid return to 'technocratic type' – if, indeed, this ever went away. There has been a continuity of the project of modernity. It argues that the ostensible disorder and chaos of the farm invasions is really a different kind of order. But it is not so much that disorder is instrumental – although it evidently has been – but that in Zimbabwe the instruments and mechanisms of order assert themselves even in the midst of violent disorder – almost despite the intentions of its authors. The speed and short cuts of the fast-track land reform process and vagueness of policies to date have in the short term opened up a certain amount of space for negotiation. It allows for a degree leeway and flexibility in landuse planning and allocation. Whether this will result in a more equitable land reform programme, however, is open to question.

Introduction

A visitor to Fair Range Ranch in Chiredzi District of southeastern Zimbabwe in early 2000 would have encountered a scene familiar to newspaper readers at the time around the world. What had once been a heavily forested cattle and game ranch was 'scarred' by the randomly scattered rudimentary huts of 'farm invaders'. Fences had been pulled down, trees chopped down, cart-tracks and footpaths established, pasture ploughed up, and wildlife and cattle slaughtered. This ostensibly chaotic space was peopled by an anarchic bunch of self-proclaimed liberation war veterans, disaffected jobless and landless youths, and spirit mediums who appeared to be beyond the restraint of the police and even encouraged in their lawlessness by members of the governing ZANU(PF) party. However a closer inspection of the former ranch would have revealed that all was not quite as disordered and chaotic as first appeared. The rudiments of self-imposed technical landuse plan were evident in the siting and layout of the new homesteads and arable plots. These had been carefully pegged at regular intervals – in some cases measured out with tape measures and the apparently motley collection of invaders were carefully organised into cells run by Base Commanders. By May 2001 the state agricultural extension service had arrived to allocate plots formally, using the technical criteria of the colonial period, and the Base Commanders had been joined by village committees, with chairman, secretaries and women and youth league members.

The dramatic developments in Zimbabwe since 2000 accompanying the invasion of farms have led some commentators to pronounce the 'end of modernity'. The emergence of a 'new politics' has accompanied the 'abandonment of the development project' as the government has unraveled its own state structures. This 'profound and contradictory revolution in [Zimbabwe's] social order' (Worby 2001a: 475) is read as 'evidence of a decisive break with the manner of articulating power, nationalism and sovereignty' (Worby 2001b: 14). In essence these commentators have described how, since February 2000, the Zimbabwean state's expressions of legitimacy are no longer framed in terms of the neoliberal discourses of democracy, modernity, and civility.[1] There has been a collapse in the rule of law, the occupation and closing down of local district councils, and traditional authorities have been usurped by war veteran 'base commanders'. All of this has been accompanied by an upsurge in violence unseen outside of Matebeleland in rural Zimbabwe since the liberation war of the 1970s. The farm invasions and subsequent 'fast-track' land reform process, are thus seen as just one element of this 'normalising of the abnormal.'[2] They are described as at odds with the bureaucratic and technical practice of most of the prior independence period. Technocrats have been marginalised in the land reform process, planning has given way to chaos, and rule of law abandoned for violent and state-sanctioned appropriation of land.

This account of a cannibalistic state eating its own organs has a wider pedigree in writing on Africa. There are numerous accounts of the 'African crises' of economic collapse, political instability, socio-economic inequalities, corruption, crime and war, and depictions of 'failed', 'vampire' or 'collapsed' African states.[3] The narrative of contemporary Africa returning to a 'Heart of Darkness' is a well-rehearsed one in the international media. Until recently Zimbabwe, along with South Africa, was excluded from this pejorative categorisation of Sub-Saharan African states. But in the light of recent developments it is now being cast in the same light. In fact it is increasingly held up as an exemplar of African state collapse and disorder. But does the recent Zimbabwe experience actually fit with these narratives?

This is a big question, and we will only attempt to answer it in relation to the high profile land issue, rather than discussing governance more broadly, and we locate our analysis explicitly in one particular part of Zimbabwe – Chiredzi District in the southeast lowveld. It is our contention that the broad-brush representation of the farm invasion and fast-track resettlement process as chaotic, violent, unmodern and unplanned obfuscates two overlapping phases underpinned by the same logic. Rather than constituting a descent into anarchy, the state

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[1] See also Alexander (2001); Raftopolous (2001); McGregor (2002).
[2] Masipula Sithole 'Public Eye' *Financial Gazette* 28/3/2001.
[3] Chabal and Daloz (1999), for example, describe how a 'crisis of modernity' in Africa is worked through the 'political instrumentalisation of disorder' with the state an instrument for elite manipulation. See also Frimpong-Ansah (1991); Zartman (1995); Bayart et al. (1999); Mbembe (2001); and Gore and Pratten (2002).

bureaucracy has been able to enact a rapid return to a 'technocratic type' – if, indeed, this type ever went away. The ostensible disorder and chaos of the Zimbabwean farm invasions is not 'a different 'order', the outcome of different rationalities and causalities' (Chabal and Daloz 1999: 155). Rather, there has been a continuity of the project of modernity. It is not so much that disorder is instrumental – although it evidently has been – but that in Zimbabwe, familiar, deeply embedded instruments and mechanisms of order assert themselves even in the midst of violent disorder.

Resettlement before 2000

The events since 2000 – the focus of this paper – have emerged against a backdrop of extreme contestation over land resources dating from the colonial era. At Independence in 1980 Zimbabwe inherited a highly skewed land distribution, with around 6,000 white-owned farms and a number of large agroindustrial estates occupying more than a third of the country's land area, much of it areas of higher agricultural potential (Weiner 1988: 74). Despite the new government's commitment to land reform it was highly constrained by the constitutional provisions of the Lancaster House agreement signed the previous year. The limitations on compulsory acquisition through the 'willing seller/willing buyer' approach, with full compensation in foreign exchange meant that any resettlement was going to be slow and expensive. No major agrarian reform was on the cards – this was all going to be 'carefully planned', designed to increase 'farming efficiency'. The inherited dualistic structure of the farming sector, it seemed, was not open to question.[4]

This did not prevent the government from setting a number of increasingly ambitious targets for resettlement. In 1980 a target of 18,000 households was set. This was increased to 54,000 in 1982 and then to 1,620,000 households in two years. Although the resettlement programme never reached these more ambitious levels, it did have some significant impact. By 1989, the government had resettled some 52,000 households and had purchased 2.7 million hectares (around 16%, of commercial farmland). By 1996, a total of 71,000 families had been resettled (Palmer 1990; Moyo 1995, 2000).

At Independence, the government saw the resettlement programme as necessary to 'neutralise a looming crisis of expectation on the part of a land hungry population' (Ministry of Economic Planning and Develoment 1981: 124; cited by Alexander 1994). Resettlement was seen as a political imperative that would create stability and so promote economic growth. In the first years, an 'accelerated' resettlement approach was adopted, focused on displaced persons, ex-combatants and

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[4] In 1982 the Tribal Trust Lands had been renamed 'communal lands' to be contrasted with 'commercial' areas.

others. This was done with limited planning and infrastructure development, but later a more planned, technocratic approach was adopted, centred on a series of schemes, with associated plans and technical specifications.

In Zimbabwe, land reform is basically framed in terms of resettlement schemes, of which a number of models were developed in the early 1980s. While the cooperative Model B schemes were the ideologically preferred options of the new government (still with its socialist colours flying), most settlers were resettled in the Model A village schemes (93% by 1996). These were designed by planners in the Ministry of Agriculture and bore a striking resemblance to the earlier plans central to the Native Land Husbandry Act of the 1950s. The assumptions embedded in the technical models 'left unchallenged colonial myths about African farmers as subsistence oriented and inefficient, in contrast to market oriented European farmers' (Alexander 1994: 331). The appropriation of the same technical arguments used as the core of Rhodesian policy approaches was striking.

A series of commissions in the early 1980s reinforced this.[5] While recognising the importance of land reform, they made the case for rational planning and emphasised sound land husbandry, etc., highlighting the supposed ills of the communal areas: communal tenure, overstocking, soil erosion, poor land husbandry, and part time farmers not committed to rising the ladder to full commercial enterprises. The aim was to create a population, in the words of one commentator, of 'small big farmers',[6] mirroring the success of their commercial counterparts, with similar technical recommendations imposed. As such these resettlement schemes were perceived as 'self-contained islands of modernisation' (Drinkwater 1991), distinct and separate from the 'backward' communal areas.

Given the assumptions deeply held by Zimbabwean policymakers, technocrats and others about the technical requirements of 'modern' agricultural development, it is not surprising perhaps that the resettlement programme was very much in the mould of the previous attempts at technocratic intervention in the rural areas (Wolmer et al. 2003). While the rhetorical gloss of development had changed from the colonial era (participation, for instance, become de rigeur), this was perhaps only skin deep: 'Popular participation in planning was reduced to an exercise in convincing people that experts new best' (Alexander 1994: 332).

The 'target beneficiaries' for resettlement during the 1980s were largely resource poor farmers in the existing communal areas, returning war veterans, and those displaced by the war. Very often these people had few assets of their own (physical, financial and social) and found it

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[5] Notably the Riddell Commission of 1980 and the Chavanduka Commission of 1982.
[6] Interview with donor official cited by Keeley and Scoones (2000).

difficult to get started on new resettlement areas, particularly when the models assumed access to oxen and an ability to farm a relatively large plot full time. The idea was to transform the poor, 'backward', 'inefficient' farmer from the 'reserves' to a full-time farmer who followed all the recommendations stipulated by planners and extensionists.

This vision of modernist development was set alongside the perception that existing political and administrative systems were conservative and anti-development. Some of the key culprits were chiefs, headmen and other 'traditional' elements of rural society that were seen to be holding things back. A 1983 DERUDE (the then lead agency for rural development) report noted:

> *The resettlement process discourages spontaneity in settlements and fights against attempts at reversion back to traditional methods of agriculture … Resettlement can never be about extending the boundaries of existing communal areas, creating new power bases for the restoration of traditional authorities, such as chiefs, headmen, etc.*[7]

In the implementation of resettlement through the 1980s – and indeed in much communal area development more broadly – tensions existed between political posturing around the land issue, the reform of 'traditional' institutions, and a well orchestrated bureaucratic and technocratic response informed by a deeply held modernist view of development.

Through the 1990s, despite the flow of policy proclamations and much political rhetoric around election periods, little happened on the ground. This suited many. Land became available to the government, which it duly rented out at nominal rents to key political officials, civil servants, army personnel and others. Government continued to blame the lack of funds, technical, legal and bureaucratic delays for the slow pace of implementation.[8] Others less keen on the resettlement programme highlighted other apparent costs: potential production losses, market confidence and stability, and unemployment knock-on effects. It was only in the late 1990s that longer-term systematic research on resettlement scheme performance showed that – despite the bad press – resettlement schemes were performing rather well. Households in resettlement schemes had higher incomes, lower income variability and more evenly distributed incomes (but worryingly higher childhood malnutrition levels) than their counterparts in the communal areas (Kinsey 1999; Gunning et al. 2000).

Following the presidential election in 1996, there was another attempt to raise the tempo in the land debate. In November 1997 (under the powers of the Land Acquisition Act), the government engaged in a sweeping

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[7] cited by Alexander (1994: 334).
[8] Only 20,000 households were resettled between 1990 and 1996 (Kinsey 1999).

designation of 1471 farms.[9] The programme was officially focussed on two target groups (a shift encapsulated in the new land policy from 1990): poor, landless rural farmers from the communal areas; and potential entrepreneurial farmers (with appropriate qualifications, including college training and Master Farmer certificates). Implicit in this strategy was the maintenance of a dualistic structure, with the policy approach combining welfarist support alongside an increasing emphasis on creating a new commercial small-scale farming sector.

The whole process of land acquisition that ensued, however, got embroiled in an inordinately complex bureaucratic process involving the tracing of inaccurate land deeds and registration, etc., creating delays and confusion. The result was much uncertainty and a growing lack of trust in the government's policy approach. However, by 1998 a new initiative arose with a new donor-backed proposal from the government (Government of Zimbabwe 1998). Yet again there was no questioning of the basic technical premises of the resettlement models. A series of (now familiar) models were suggested (with planners' diagrams attached to show how it would all look). Again the government set an ambitious target of resettling 91,000 families in five years, and elaborated a complex institutional framework (involving linking eight Ministries). The criteria for selecting settlers emphasised, again, a particular sort of background and technical knowledge in order to create a particular sort of farming community on the new resettlement areas.[10]

But the land acquisition process faltered during 1999. Political proclamations from senior government ministers put the diplomatic and aid communities on edge, the British were reticent about paying out for land acquisition on a large scale, and lobbying by commercial farmers representatives and others helped delay the momentum established during the previous year. The context though dramatically changed during 1999, when, led by the war veterans lobby (who had already been engaged in major strikes and protests around compensation claims in 1997) land invasions accelerated, particularly in the lead up to the much delayed elections in 2000. Land invasion and squatting, of course were not new, but this time such protests were more overtly political and aimed to gain national (and international) attention. It was this new political setting (though, significantly, in a context of a long history of a

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[9] The criteria for listing were: multiple ownership, absentee ownership, derelict or underutilised, farm borders a communal area. These were of course controversial and open to interpretation. By 1998, 510 (plus some mistakes) were degazetted on the basis of incorrect assignation. A further 841 were challenged in the courts, with only 85 being uncontested. In November 1998 acquisition orders were signed for all 926 farms.

10 On 2 September, 1999 *The Herald* newspaper listed the criteria that farmers on resettlement schemes were supposed to meet: technical knowledge in agriculture; certificate, diploma, degree of other qualification in the field; command of sufficient resources to carry out a self-initiated and approved agricultural programme prepared to reside on allocated land unit or employ technically competent managers; have developed financially viable and agro-ecologically suitable five year farming programme. The article went on to stress that 'Government wants to disabuse people of the view that farms are weekend holiday resorts'.

particular style of technocratic intervention), that set the scene for the major land invasions in 2000, and with these the 'time of *jambanja*'.

The time of *jambanja*

In February 2000 ZANU(PF) suffered an unprecedented popular rejection when they lost a referendum for a new constitution incorporating a controversial clause obliging Britain as the former colonial power to pay compensation for compulsory land acquisition.[11] Soon after, there were large-scale occupations, spearheaded by the war veterans association, of principally white-owned commercial farms across the country. These were initially conceived of as political 'demonstrations' at the government and donors' failure to address the highly charged 'land question' after 20 years of independence and anger at the rejection of the new constitution.[12]

A word that quickly became popular to describe this new uncertain and dangerous time was *jambanja*. The term had been popularised by the singer Marko Sibanda in his chart topping song '*Jambanja Pahotera*' about a fight in a hotel between two naked couples discovering they had exchanged partners in separate extra-marital affairs. Literally *jambanja* means violence or angry argument, it has been used in subtly different contexts and to refer to different people and places, including: the ex-combatant farm invaders themselves,[13] the farm invasions, and more broadly to politically instigated violence. A particular popular war veteran catch phrase was '*jambanja ndizvo*' (violence is the answer). In some cases the term has also appropriated by opposition supporters to mean fighting back against a bully.[14] But in essence it has come to refer to a time and space of, at best, confusion and nonsense[15] and, at worst, disorder and chaos.[16] As Tagwirei Bango put it in the *Daily News*:

> *For new words to get accepted into a language, they must reflect the mood of the time, fill in a vacuum in the standard lexicon and be accepted as an appropriate form of expression. Thus, the word* jambanja *which became part of our vocabulary in the past two years, helped people to accept their confusion with an*

[11] In the event the land issue played second fiddle in the referendum to the issue of governance. Voters rejected the proposed constitution's attempts to entrench further the power of the executive despite repeated demands for the opposite during the consultation process.

[12] Explanations of the farm occupations have tended to cast them as either a spontaneous rejection of bureaucratic process of land reform or a state-orchestrated process. But this dichotomy is not necessarily helpful. There were a variety of further motivations for the farm occupations ranging from desire for restitution of ancestral land to opportunist 'poaching' (see Chaumba et al. 2003; Wolmer 2001).

[13] *Daily News* 1/8/2000.

[14] A number of letter writers to newspapers signed themselves 'anti-*jambanja*'.

[15] Human Rights Watch (2002: 17).

[16] Another popular metaphor used to exemplify the farm invasions is 'DRC' – meaning the war torn Democratic Republic of Congo. Poachers hunting on the invaded farms, for example, often refer to their expeditions as 'going into DRC'.

executive order directing the police to ignore crimes classified as political. Jambanja *means state-sponsored lawlessness. The police are not expected to intervene or arrest anyone in a* jambanja *scene because those taking part will have prior state blessing and approval. But, only one interest group, war veterans and ZANU(PF) supporters, is allowed to engage in a* jambanja.[17]

This term needs to be understood within the broader politics of Zimbabwe of the time. President Mugabe and the war veterans leaders such as Chenjerai Hunzwi and Joseph Chinotimba were deliberately deploying the language and symbols of the liberation war. This included: reviving the former enemies (Rhodesians and imperialist, mainly British, aggressors); slogans, *pungwes*, and the creation of a new cadre of youth brigades. Mugabe was at pains to assert that 'ZANU(PF) has a degree in violence' (see Blair 2002) and threatened to 'go back to the trenches.'[18] The political turbulence and violence of the 2000 parliamentary election segued into a drawn-out and equally violent campaign for the 2002 presidential election. *Jambanja*, in this context, also stood for the erosion of certain social norms – particularly shocking to many was the lack of respect from the young for the elderly. Sixteen year-old party youth brigade members were to be seen ordering around, interrogating – and sometimes even beating – their elders after stopping vehicles and searching them at road blocks and asking people to produce ZANU(PF) cards, sing liberation war songs, and chant party slogans. This was an opportunity for score settling as, for example, youths beat their former-teachers; and for theft and extortion from those accused of being MDC supporters.

The time of *jambanja* brought more subtle changes too. This was a new space and time where the fact that certain laws and norms no longer applied enabled the creation of new identities on the 'development frontier' (Worby 1998). In particular settlers on the former lowveld ranches liked to portray themselves as heroic pioneers[19] – directly paralleling the discourse of the earlier white colonial settlers in the lowveld (Wolmer 2001). *Jambanja* also gave younger settlers the opportunity to win their stripes as loyal party followers and hence lobby for a position on the new village committees or receive further land.

Jambanja and the land occupations

In February 2000 the Chiredzi District War Veterans Association mobilised people largely drawn from neighbouring communities to invade a number of properties in sequence across the district. On each farm 'demonstration', occupiers led by 'Base Commanders' were left behind to report back to a district committee. The dynamics of this 'time of *jambanja*' and farm invasions as perceived by the war veterans are revealed in some detail by one of the Base Commanders in the former Fair Range Ranch:

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[17] *Daily News* 27/11/2001.
[18] *Daily News* 3/4/2000.
[19] Interview with Ward 1 Councillor, Sangwe CA 14/12/2001.

It was a hard time for us as the pioneers of jambanja. *We must all be frank, it was a tough time. Imagine [having] to sleep in the bush not knowing when your next meal will be coming from. We just survived on handouts from different people including farmers and relatives. I was one of the first people to come here [Fair Range Ranch]. Before that we had held several meetings at cell, ward, branch and district levels to plan and mobilise people to go into the farms. It was a difficult time trying to convince people that we mean it and, mind you, MDC [the opposition Movement for Democratic Change] had infiltrated quite a lot. Many youth were MDC supporters. We had to use force. We sometimes had to force people to attend meetings in rural areas. We also got help from councillors, the District Administrator's office, the army, and the CIO [Central Intelligence Organisation]. We finally came in on 14th February and erected our tents which we got from the army. We then went back to the communal areas and told the masses that land is now available in the farms. And we told them that the government had delayed in fulfilling its promise. On 16th February more than 1,000 people, mainly from Sangwe communal area and Chiredzi, came. We thought it wise to elect leaders in different places. Youths were also chosen and elected to maintain vigilance. During this time food came from rural areas. There was a register that was marked everyday and a roll call done twice a day during the morning and evening. This was all for security reasons. If someone wanted to go to his rural area he would tell the seven member [settlers'] committee his reasons for going, how many days for and when he was likely to come back. We then decided to demand food from ranch owners. During holidays like Easter, Independence Day and Heroes Day a proposal was sent to the ranch owners to supply meat, sugar, salt, bowsers of water, mealie meal and people would come together and celebrate the holiday. Failure to supply these in time would mean that that person is an enemy and security and youth would then be sent to his farm house to get a full explanation on why that person did no bring the items.*[20]*

In the early stages this movement onto the farms was perceived as a risky thing to do. There were relatively few people involved in many cases and there was no guarantee that the lack of intervention by the police would be ongoing. To begin with, there were cases of farm invaders being attacked or having their huts burnt by opposition supporters; fear of retaliation by well-armed farmers; and numerous 'arrests' of poachers by game guards. People with assets to lose were wary about moving too many of them onto the newly occupied areas. Each base camp had a high turnover of settlers and there was a lot of movement between base camps. Young men were deployed as sentries to guard against 'infiltrators', morning and evening roll calls were held, and men and women were segregated at night (although some settlers were visited regularly by their wives who would bring food and do their washing) (see also Chaumba et al. 2003).[21]

However as it became clear that the invaders had the active support of government the occupiers increasingly grew in confidence. *Jambanja* came

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[20] Interview with Base Commander, Village 1, Fair Range 3/12/2001.
[21] Interview with settler, Village 3, Gonarezhou 13/11/2001.

to refer to all the illicit activities on these farms that rapidly became normalised. On Fair Range this included closing farm roads; cutting down trees; poaching; cattle theft and mutilation; starting fires; attacking game guards; demanding meat and mealie meal from white farmers; looting property and sugar cane; ordering farmers, farm workers and neighbouring villagers to attend political rallies; defying police orders, and at one stage appropriating a police vehicle.[22]

The *jambanja* landscape was characterised by a proliferation of signposts proclaiming 'No go area – war veterans inside'. This was a visibly politicised landscape where Zimbabwean flags were planted on anthills or hung from trees and ZANU(PF) posters proclaiming that 'land is the economy, the economy is land' and 'Zimbabwe will never be a colony again' plastered on trees and gate posts. This was countered by the message 'vote MDC' spray painted on every available surface from rocks to road signs, to the road itself. The presence of the farm invaders thus served a dual role. As well as appropriating land they were part of the ongoing ZANU(PF) political campaign for the parliamentary and Presidential elections of 2000 and 2002. The invaded farms were often literally a no-go area for outsiders (even the police sometimes) – somewhere for those instigating political violence to hide securely and from which to base intimidating attacks on opposition supporters in neighbouring communal areas (Human Rights Watch 2002). They were also cast by some, particularly evangelical Christians, as spaces of immorality, inhabited by 'degenerates' and 'drunkards' who otherwise would 'roam around shopping centres.'[23]

During the 'time of *jambanja*' ZANU(PF) and the war veterans described the farm occupations as 'demonstrations'. These were symbolic occupations – not intended as permanent allocations but to draw attention to the land issue generally and certain land claims specifically, and symbolically stake claim to that land through visible occupation.[24] These demonstration occupations would, at some stage in the future, be 'properly planned' and land allocated to settlers. Given this scenario what is rather surprising is that the occupiers often went to great lengths to employ the formal and technical tools of land use planning. As the sketch at the beginning of this paper shows on Fair Range Ranch, for example, the occupiers conducted their own survey and allocated plots. As another base commander put it:

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[22] According to the owner of Fair Range his attempts to report the invasions to the police were thwarted by the police saying they had no crime report books and were unable to react unless they received instructions from the CIO (CFU Situation Report 12/2/2000). However the farm invaders on Fair Range had a rather different perspective: 'policemen are being bribed and given diesel, meat and beer [by the white farmer] to torment us day and night' (interview with war veteran, Fair Range 9/11/2001).
[23] Interviews, Sangwe communal area, 11/2001 to 7/2002.
[24] Indeed there was a substantial ebbing and flowing of numbers of occupiers on most properties.

People were allocated 50 ha as part of the demonstrations. We pegged ourselves, when giving plots we used a tape measure. We could not give land in the waterways although some did it. Some cleared, few farmed although a woman got some bales of cotton … We were doing the occupations in order to make the government see us. The pegging of lands helped them see us.[25]

'Pegs' were initially rudimentary boundary markers: large stones, tree branches, poles, anthills, axe marks on trees, debarked trees, or hoe marks in the ground. The base commander or another senior war veteran would walk the plot boundaries with the settlers from either side fixing the demarcation lines. Even riverbank cultivation bans dating from colonial legislation were enforced to a surprisingly great extent.

The recourse to the technical practices and tools and linear spatial ordering of colonial land use planning was a mechanism by which the occupiers sought to become 'visible' and gain official recognition. This is in a sense an inversion of the more familiar thesis that the state seeks to 'see' and thereby control people by the disciplining measures of planning (Foucault 1977; Comaroff and Comaroff 1992; Scott 1998). Instead, local actors are seeking to enhance their visiblity to the state. This reveals a fundamentally modernist sensibility on behalf of the settlers. The new resettlements were not 'proper' or official unless they conformed to certain prescribed and 'modern' criteria – in this case the land use planning criteria inherited by the agricultural extension bureaucracy from the colonial era. After so many years of agricultural extension these criteria appear to have been internalised by the very people who might have been expected to resist them.[26] These new resettlement areas were soon to acquire an even greater air of legitimacy when the state arrived to conduct further surveys, planning and pegging – the invaded farms transmuted into 'fast-track' resettlement areas.

Fast-track resettlement

The accelerated Land Reform and Resettlement Implementation Plan – 'Fast Track' Approach was announced on 15 July 2000 by Vice President Joseph Msika:[27]

Under this approach priority is given to land acquisition, demarcation, settler emplacement and the provision of basic infrastructure such as water points and

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[25] Interview with Base Commander, Village 2, Fair Range 20/11/2001.

[26] This can be contrasted with the liberation war period when colonial landuse restrictions became a focus for resistance, as in *madiro* or freedom farming, and the destruction of contour bunds (Ranger 1985).

[27] In May 2001 this was ratcheted up to an 'ultra fast-track' '40 days and 40 nights' programme designed to settle an additional 35,000 people in advance of the rainy season *The Mirror* 4/5/2001. The official policy document outlining the Fast-track process was not released until a year later; see 'Basic infrastructure for resettled families: Made' *The Herald* 19/7/2001.

access roads. More comprehensive infrastructure and other support services will be provided later.[28]

These minimalist planning targets had much in common with the accelerated resettlement scheme in the early 1980s. During 2000 and 2001 there was an massive escalation of farm designation and resettlement with a view eventually to redistributing 9.2 million hectares from the commercial farming sector (or approximately 80% of the land in this sector) to 160,000 poor beneficiaries and 51,000 small to medium-scale indigenous (black) commercial farmers.[29] According to official records, by January 2002, 7.3 million hectares on 3,074 farms had been planned and pegged by the Ministry of Land, Agriculture and Rural Resettlement and 114,830 households had already been resettled on 4.37 million hectares (UNDP 2002).[30] Efforts were made to legitimise the process retrospectively by backdating legislative amendments.[31]

In Chiredzi District the fast-track land reform programme was being implemented in earnest by January 2001.[32] 23,500-25,000 people had been resettled under the programme in Masvingo Province by November 2001.[33] Teams of agricultural extension officers were at work seven days a week surveying and pegging the already invaded farms officially designated for resettlement. This heralded a shift to a new, and symbolically different, phase of land reform – as shown in the following quotes:

Jambanja *was there, then government came and now* jambanja *is over.*[34]

Now we are doing it the Agritex [national agricultural extension service] way. The other time it was the political way.[35]

Last season things were haphazard; now things are more ordered.[36]

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[28] http://www.gta.gov.zw/Land%20Issues/LAND.htm.
[29] People First – Zimbabwe's Land Reform Programme, Ministry of Lands, Agriculture and Rural Settlement in conjunction with the Department of Information and Publicity, Office of the President and Cabinet, June 2001 (http://www.zimbabwepeoplefirst.com); UNDP (2002) Zimbabwe Land Reform and Resettlement: Assessement and Suggested Framework for the Future – Interim Report; 'Govt seizes 90% of CFU farms' Zimbabwe Independent 6/7/2001. According to the UNDP report this was an aggregation of a series of one-off executive actions' which incrementally increased the target hectarage from 5 million hectares in 1998 to 6.2 million to 8.3 million to 8.8 million to 9.2 million in January 2002.
[30] This data needs to be treated with caution due to multiple discrepancies, bureaucratic confusion, duplicates and the political capital to be made from inflating the figures. See, for example, '35 000 people settled' *Zimbabwe Independent* 3/8/2001.
[31] See *Zimbabwe Independent* 16/11/2001 and UNDP (2002). Examples include the April 2000 constitutional change; amendments to the Land Acquisition Act; and the passing of Rural Land Occupiers (Prevention from Eviction) Act in July 2001 which removed responsibility from complying with previous court judgements.
[32] See Commercial Farmers' Union situation reports, http://www.samara.co.zw/cfu/news/sitrep.htm.
[33] Interview with Agritex officer, Masvingo, 17/11/2001.
[34] Interview with Village Chairman, former Fair Range Ranch 20/11/2001.
[35] Interview with Agritex officer, Chiredzi 21/11/2001.
[36] Interview with Agritex officer, Chiredzi 21/11/2001.

Last year we clearly told people not to build permanent structures. It was to get the planning process to catch up. Today we are saying we want you to build houses but not pole and dagga houses … because we expect people to plan properly so that there is a proper village with running water, electricity, toilets and proper granaries.[37]

The violent political demonstration element of the farm invasions during the 'time of *jambanja*' of 2000 was to be replaced with the imposition of a particular type of 'order' and 'planning' and a shift in register from the political to the technical.[38] It also saw a return to the maps, photo mosaics, and chinograph pencils of landuse planners, used from the colonial era through to the resettlement planning of the 1980s and 1990s (see above). Although, as we have shown, this did not necessarily mean bringing planning to bear on a state of absolute chaos. Instead this was often a case of superimposing state planning on settlements which – in many cases – had already been 'planned' and surveyed by war veterans and other occupiers who had measured out fields using tape measures, and settled in tidy lines.

The massive ambition and expected speed of the fast-track land reform process inevitably brought about a conflict between political imperatives (such as the need for speed, large numbers and fast evidence of production on resettled lands) and technical procedures and accuracy. Formalised planning procedures were further constrained by fuel and manpower shortages (exacerbated by the recruitment of large numbers of people from the Agritex Planning Branch into the Ministry of Lands) and severe funding constraints (operational costs were slashed in austerity measures imposed by the Ministry of Finance)[39]. This meant that formal planning mechanisms had to be short-circuited or adapted to greater or lesser extents. As Agritex staff admitted:

Our politicians wanted people settled. They need resettlement in advance of the ploughing season. We had serious deadlines.[40]

They wanted numbers, numbers, numbers, but we came to a compromise. You need to compromise technical principles because of politics.[41]

It is haphazard on the ground. We hope to make corrections later. Planning is a dynamic process.[42]

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[37] Interview with Ignatius Chombo, Minister of Local Government and National Housing, in *The Mirror* 4/5/2001.
[38] Two broad models for resettlement were defined during this period. The A1 model is based on allocations of individual arable and usually communal grazing, with village settlements. The A2 model assumes a small-scale commercial production unit, with farm and business plans.
[39] 'No surveyors for land reform' Zimbabwe Standard 3/9/2000.
[40] Interview with Agritex officer, Harare, 14/11/2001.
[41] Interview with Agritex officer, Masvingo 17/11/2001.
[42] Interview with Agritex officer, Harare, 14/11/2001.

In 'proper' Agritex planning we put a cut line. This time we used existing features, rivers, roads, fence lines… mark and connect.[43]

These tensions between political goals and technical criteria played out in practice in the form of continual negotiations and tradeoffs between Agritex planning officials and settlers on the ground – as formal technical criteria were shaped to local political and geographical contexts (wetlands, water ways, soil types etc). In practice – certainly on the former ranches of Chiredzi District – the war veteran commanders of the new resettlement areas and local political leaders were able to exert considerable influence over not just plot allocation but also the precise size and location of plots, frequently making minor adjustments to 'official' practice.[44] The war veterans perceived the pegging as a joint exercise with Agritex.[45] They often downplayed their role as just 'helping to carry pegs'[46] and sometimes 'advising Agritex on knowledge of the area.'[47] However many extension officials saw things rather differently – according to one 'we were just following behind the war vets, they were in charge not us.'[48] Another was even more explicit:

Fast-track is not planning, it's guided by war vet commanders. We tend just to ratify existing plots. We don't have time to deploy criteria of land use planning. Agritex will go as a team with the plan but the base commander will be in the same vehicle. There's lots of pressure to pack more and more people. So if the plan recommends 5 ha per family then it may end up as 3 ha, or the grazing area will be squeezed. The plans and reality are very different. Plans are sent to Harare to tell them what's happening – that's where they get all the information. But on the ground it may be a very different story. … Early occupations were supposed to be just demonstrations, and then planning would follow. But in practice people have found land and put up structures. Planning then must work around this. Often pegging is simply establishing things that have already been put on the ground.[49]

Similarly the Commercial Farmers Union complained that 'contrary to the very strict rules of the Surveyor General's Department, unqualified people are being used to conduct pegging and surveying.'[50] On the other hand, 'war vets are the contact persons in the area for Agritex. It makes work more straightforward.'[51] The fast-track planning process was thus sometimes merely ratifying and formalising existing self-allocations and at other times involved considerable reallocations of land. The over-stretched planners have also been unable and unwilling to stay on beyond the initial pegging exercises and, in practice, there has been a degree of

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[43] Interview with Agritex officer, Masvingo 17/11/2001.
[44] For an earlier description of on-the-ground negotiations in resettlement scheme planning, see Alexander (1994: 334-335).
[45] Interview with settlers, Village 4, Gonarezhou 20/11/2001.
[46] Interview with Councillor, Sangwe communal area 12/11/2001.
[47] Interview with Base Commander, Chiredzi district 9/11/2001.
[48] Interview with Agritex officer, Chiredzi 21/11/2001.
[49] Interview with Agritex officer, Masvingo 16/11/2001.
[50] CFU situation report, Masvingo Province 26/7/2001.
[51] Interview with Senior Agricultural Extension Officer, Chiredzi 21/11/2001.

latitude for settlers to adjust the position of their homestead stands and arable fields after pegging, and even, in some cases, extend their cultivation into wetlands and streambanks.[52]

Another notable departure from the previous tenets of planning for land reform in Zimbabwe is that there has been much less emphasis than previously on the qualities of settlers (other than on the A2 schemes). Previously, as we have seen, there was a drive to attract the 'small big farmer' to resettlement schemes – someone with agricultural qualifications, skills and capital. Now at least 20% reserved for war vets who have first choice of plots. The question is whether this consequently constitutes a more equitable land reform exercise or a party-politicised mode of selecting beneficiaries that offers more patronage opportunities (see Chaumba et al. 2003).

However, notwithstanding the accommodations and short-cuts outlined above, it is important to note that there has been a significant imposition of plans and regulations on invaded plots which were often themselves already much more 'planned' and 'regulated' than has often been supposed.

The reassertion of technocracy?

Alongside *jambanja*, 'fast-track' is another recent addition to Zimbabwe's popular lexicon with fast-track metaphors cropping up all over the place such as when the Minister for Information attempted to set up information command posts to get 'fast-track facts' on land reform out to the media.[53] But does the rapid implementation of the fast-track scheme constitute a reassertion of the technocratic imperative that has so frequently resurfaced in Zimbabwe prior to and after Independence or has there been a decisive break with the conventions of modernity and rigid landuse planning?

The fast-track resettlement process has been criticised in coruscating terms by the opposition MDC as well as by the independently owned press, almost all Zimbabwe's former donors, at times the ZFU (Zimbabwe Farmers' Union), ICFU (Indigenous Commercial Farmers' Union), many NGOs, and some chiefs. It is too hasty, incoherent, haphazard, unsystematic, chaotic, and lacking in rigour. The criteria for settler selection has been untransparent, vague and subject to cronyism; and there has been frequent and sustained criticism of the 'dumping' of people on land without adequate infrastructure (roads, shops, clinics), and with insufficient provision of inputs, credit and marketing assistance, and agricultural extension advice.[54] According to the MDC: 'the land

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[52] In contrast to previous resettlement schemes in Zimbabwe there is no provision for a resident Resettlement Officer.
[53] Interview with Agritex officer, Harare 11/2001.
[54] For example: 'Resettled farmers abandon land' *Zimbabwe Independent* 1/12/2000.

allocation exercise [has] been Zanuised and was more political and not genuine … [it is] designed to hoodwink people into voting for ZANU(PF) in the 2002 presidential election,'[55] and is 'sentencing people to perpetual subsistence because the land is not surveyed and there are no roads, clinics and other basic infrastructure … One cannot take a group of people, settle them in a bush and expect them to engage in meaningful production.'[56] As a comment piece in the Zimbabwe Independent argued:

> *The current phase of the land redistribution exercise is bound to fail as long as land re-organisation is not focused on enhancing productivity and preserving the environment. The present pattern is a far cry from what is required for a proper land resettlement programme to succeed. Politicians' emphasis on the current exercise has been land to people, negating the fundamental issue of land husbandry and the competency of those to be settled. The government's failure to carry out a scientific analysis on the efficacy of the programme, coupled with the irrational politics surrounding land, has dramatised the situation and thrown it back into the cauldron of partisan and racial politics. It is no longer an issue of land resettlement planned on the basis of poverty alleviation and improved productivity but an exercise that gives primacy to political considerations under the guise of social justice.*[57]

It has also depicted as ecological and moral catastrophe leading to 'scorched earth' and a 'drought of reason'[58] with particular outrage reserved for the slaughter of wild animals (see Wolmer et al. 2003).

On the other hand, by the end of 2001, there was evidence of quite significant progress in the establishment of fast-track resettlements in the former ranches of Chiredzi District. There had been significant state assistance in the form of seed and input packages, tillage assistance, loans for restocking, and in Fair Range Ranch even a school built by the settlers with teachers recruited and two permanent extension officers resident at the former farm compound. Land has been allocated to the young, women, unemployed and landless as well as war veterans, local elites and party stalwarts (Chaumba et al. 2003).

Despite admitting that the settlers usurped them to some extent in the planning and pegging of the resettlement areas, landuse planners describe the balance of power shifting back to the technocracy over time:

> *When the dust has settled, it gives new opportunities to exercise existing laws and legislation. In the new situation we will have to enforce legislation, as planned resettlement occurs. But the pressure of land is just too much. We will need to revisit some pieces of legislation.*[59]

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[55] 'Biti dismisses government's fast track land reform' *Daily News* 11/8/2000.
[56] 'Tsvangirai condemns fast-track resettlement' *Daily News* 18/8/2000.
[57] 'Fast-track land resettlement a cocktail for disaster' *Zimbabwe Independent* 11/8/2000.
[58] See, for example, 'Govt draws up $1,3b budget for land reform' *Zimbabwe Independent* 21/7/2000.
[59] Interview with Agritex officer, Masvingo 17/11/2001.

When pegging we use the 30m rule of thumb [streambanks]. We made sure it was followed, there was no resistance even from war vets. When it comes to it history has it that madomeni *[agricultural extension worker] is to be feared. The war vets are new in the trade; they will try and befriend the Agritex to help them with farming.*[60]

We will produce model by-laws which will guide all these [new resettlement] villages to produce their own.[61]

Conclusions

In Gokwe in northwestern Zimbabwe, Hammar (2001: 572) has argued that the state has in the past engendered a situation of disorder and constructed 'spaces of violence' deliberately in order to gain control of the area. Violence 'became a technology through which to control territory, populations and resources; in effect a mechanism through which to reorder the margin' (2000: 572). Similarly Chabal and Daloz (1999: xviii) argue that political actors 'seek to maximise their returns on the state of confusion, uncertainty … chaos'. But was this the case in the invaded farms of Zimbabwe's southeast lowveld? Can *jambanja* be understood as merely a tool of the state – a bizarrely anachronistic element of its technocratic ordering process? It appears that even during the most violent and chaotic farm invasions during the 'time of *jambanja'* there was order beneath ostensible disorder. In a strange, and typically Zimbabwean, contradiction the ethos of professionalism embodied by landuse planners was threatened and yet simultaneously reinforced by the ZANU(PF) government and war veterans' actions. At the same time as they were riding roughshod over the rule of law, war veterans and other land occupiers employed the tools and practices of colonial land use planning to become visible and 'legitimate'. The subsequent formal planning by Agritex recast the invasions as resettlement areas – legitimising their presence with codes that are familiar to all Zimbabweans. Ironically the very people who might be expected to argue for throwing off the technocratic yoke inherited from the colonial regime to return to emancipatory 'freedom farming' have embraced the colonial models of landuse planning with many of their accompanying regulations. The initially surprising result is that, despite the seeming chaos and fluxes of power on the ground during the farm invasions, the landuse planners have been able, to a great extent, to enact a revision to technocratic type in Zimbabwe's ongoing land reform exercise and have had significant sway.

This, then, is clearly not the end of modernity and development in Zimbabwe. We are not seeing a descent into the 'Heart of Darkness' and

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[60] Interview with Agritex officer, Chiredzi 21/11/2001.
[61] Interview with Chiredzi RDC official 22/11/2001.

an abandonment of the development project. However neither are we seeing an emancipatory release from the strictures of colonial landuse planning and the technical parameters of disciplining development. The reassertion of the technocracy – and its associated language, practices and procedures – has been effective and swift, and, in many respects, never went away. What is new, however, is that there are new actors negotiating land reform on the ground, situated in a new political terrain where new identities, patronage and client networks are at play (Chaumba et al. 2003). The speed and short cuts of the fast-track land reform process and vagueness of policies to date have in the short-term opened up a degree of leeway and flexibility in landuse planning and allocation. Yet, even in this new political context, the quest for modernity and the imprint of technocracy continue to run deep.

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