

Emergent Social and Economic Relations after Land Reform: Exploring the Farm Compound System in Zimbabwe

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Abstract: *The article explores the social and economic dimensions of the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) undertaken in Zimbabwe from the year 2000. The focus is on the farm compounds found on former large scale commercial farms in the Goromonzi District of Zimbabwe. The article presents the argument that the socio-economic reconfiguration of rural Zimbabwe which occurred due to the FTLRP, has not only had an impact on those who benefitted from the programme but it has also had both negative and positive impacts on former and current farmworkers. Using the farm compounds as the focus of analysis, the article shows that these places are now a site of new and dynamic socio-economic and political relationships which are having an impact on individuals and the society as well as on the emergent rural economy. The article goes on further to try and understand the new rural landscape in the new farming areas of Zimbabwe and the overall impact which the land and agrarian reforms have had on people's lives from a sociological perspective.*

Keywords: land reform, agrarian structure, farm compound, farm workers
Goromonzi, transformation

Introduction

The fast track land reform programme (FTLRP) which was undertaken in Zimbabwe from the year 2000 is one of the most radical and unprecedented land and agrarian reform programmes in recent history. It has been described as being comparable to the '...leading land reforms of the 20th century which include those of Mexico, Russia, China, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Cuba and Mozambique' (Moyo and Chambati 2013:1). The FTLRP had the effect of reversing the racially skewed agrarian structure which the country inherited at independence in 1980. In a very short period of time it had expanded '...thenumbers of small and medium scale farmers, while diminishing the numbers and hectares of large farms and estates' (Moyo 2011: 261). Given the nature and extent of the FTLRP, it is beyond any doubt that such a radical and unprecedented programme has had impact not only on agrarian relations and the agrarian structure in rural Zimbabwe but also on the social structure. It is the aim of this article to assess how the FTLRP has impacted on rural communities using the farm compound as its point of reference. The farm compounds are areas of residence which were built by the old large scale commercial farmers for their workers. These compounds have continued to exist in the aftermath of the FTLRP. They are seen as an important institution in the agrarian structure of the country as well as in

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the rural economy and the social structure. They have been in existence for decades serving important functions on the farms and even to date they are still serving important functions which will be explored in detail in this article.

Farm compounds are places of residence which farmers built on the farms for their workers. Depending on an individual farmer, farm compounds were not uniform in their appearance or the type of housing which they had. Some comprised of traditional thatched huts while others had brick houses or a combination of both. Despite their lack of uniformity and differences, farm compounds are regarded as important and at the centre of the farming economy in rural Zimbabwe. Besides being areas of residence they are shown to be sites of agrarian power relations, political and economic contestations, social groupings and class stratification. They are also important centres for social transformation as shall be shown below.

This article seeks to understand the functions, relevance and the roles which these farm compounds are playing in the new dispensation. This is in the backdrop of radical changes which have been brought about by the FTLRP. It presents a brief history of land and land reform in Zimbabwe and the farm compound system in colonial and post-colonial Zimbabwe. Basing on empirical evidence obtained from Goromonzi District in Zimbabwe, it shows how farm compounds are a site of labour provision for the farms. The socio-cultural functions of the farm compounds as well as economic and political issues are explored in this article in the context of the FTLRP. The article is quite important and significant in exploring one of the most important and integral structures which has supported the agrarian system in rural Zimbabwe. Despite the importance of this structure it has remained generally understudied and ignored in dominant literature which has emerged in contemporary times which explores the social and economic outcomes of the FTLRP.

Land Issues and Land Reform in Zimbabwe

The year 2000 is a year which will be remembered in Zimbabwe as a year in which the country officially undertook a radical and unprecedented land and agrarian reform programme. It marked the beginning of a decade in which there was the reversal of a land and agrarian structure which successive colonial administrations had developed for almost a century. In Zimbabwe, as in other countries land has always been viewed as a resource which was essential for social and economic well-being. Land dispossession by the colonialists (the British and their descendants) using institutional and legal statutes had resulted in a racially skewed land tenure system which favoured the white minority and had been a major source of concern and antagonism between the races in the country for decades. Ultimately this antagonism which was further fuelled by demand for political independence had culminated a protracted liberation struggle which had ushered in Zimbabwe's independence. From the year 2000, over an 11-year period the government of Zimbabwe managed to resettle 170 000 families on 4 500 former large scale commercial farms comprising of 7.6 million hectares of land. This figure represented approximately 20% of the total land area of the country (Scoones, Marongwe, Mavedzenge, Murambinda, Mahenene and Sukume 2011; Manjengwa, Hanlon and 2014). This was in a context where at independence in 1980

there were 6 000 farmers or 1% of the population owning 45% of the prime agricultural land while the majority of the indigenous black population could be found residing in marginal and poor areas. These areas were heavily congested and the soils so poor that the people were unable to undertake in any meaningful agricultural activities there (Ruswa 2007:3).

Post-colonial land reform programmes had scored limited successes with the government over a period of 20 years from 1980 to 2000, only managing to resettle 70 000 families on 3.4 million hectares of land. This number fell far short of its intended target of 162 000 families which it had set in the 1980's (Moyo 2005). A variety of factors had combined to slow down land reform in the post-independence era. Scholars have indicated that constitutional constraints brought about by the Lancaster House Agreement of 1979 (which had ushered in the country's independence), lack of commitment to pledges made at Lancaster House by donors and the British government in particular to fund the land reform programmes, ideological orientations favouring the protection of 'property rights', a perceived alliance between the ruling nationalists and settler capital the adoption of neo-liberal economic policies in the 1990's among other factors and dynamics had contributed to this slow progress (see Masiwa 2004, Chitsike 2003, Moyo 2005, Moyo and Yeros 2005, PLRC 2003, Sadomba 2013, Palmer 1990, Sachikonye 2004). It was due to slow pace of land reform which had stimulated the FTLRP resulting in the resettlement of thousands of families.

Farm Compounds and Farm Workers in Colonial and Post-Colonial Zimbabwe

A century of institutional and legal tinkering by successive colonial governments on the country's agrarian structures has had impact on tenure systems and socio-economic relationships in farming areas. The farm compound system is one of the most important and prominent legacies of colonialism. The farm compound was a system in which the farmers reserved a piece of land on their farms which they gave their workers to build houses on. In some instances, the 'kind hearted' farmers built houses on the land for their workers on land set aside for that purpose or they simply allocated 'stands' to the farmworkers who constructed the houses on their own. Clarke (1977) and Palmer (1977) have argued that the compound system found on farms can be best understood as a labour system which the farmers used to control and regulate labour. The creation of farm compounds during colonialism was closely tied to land dispossession. The aim of this was to create a readily available labour reserve which would serve the colonial capitalist economy. The imposition of taxes had forced the black population to engage in labour on farms and mines and the colonial administration brought in migrant labour from neighbouring countries to supplement available labour (Arrighi and Saul 1973). It was this labour that resided on the farm compounds.

Residence in a farm compound was subject to a person providing their labour to the farmer thus the right to residency on the farms was subject to the worker providing labour. These rights to residency could be withdrawn if the worker failed to provide labour to the farmers as per the contractual agreement. The system was thus designed to tie down or bond workers to a particular commercial farm and it was based on what Moyo (2011) views as insecure residential tenure rights which farm

employment as a key pre-requisite. Rutherford (2009) has argued that the labour and social relations between farmers and farm workers was developed as a form of 'domestic government' in which the farmers had their own system in place on their farms. They used this system to resolve issues as per their own laws. A consequence of this was lack of uniformity in the application of laws especially labour laws and the powers of the State were appropriated by the large scale commercial farmers giving them a lot of power and authority over the farm workers.

The living and working conditions of the farm workers have always been seen poor with residents in the farm compounds accessing social services based on the goodwill of the farmer. In the farm compounds, farm workers resided with their families and in the majority of cases the men were fully employed by the farmers in different capacities with women and children usually engaged in seasonal or part time work although some were fully employed. The physical set up of the compounds was such that each family was allocated a house or houses to use. In the majority of cases the houses were the traditional thatched huts but on some farms, there were brick houses. Each family had their own homestead but they were in close proximity with other homesteads. The foremen and senior personnel on the farm were the ones who were usually allocated brick houses and in most instances their houses were located a distance away from the other homesteads in the compounds. The overall responsibility of taking care of the houses, repairing and building huts rested on the farm workers. The farm owners were known to undertake periodic inspections of the farm compounds just to make sure that all was in order, no illicit activities were taking place and there were no 'undesirable' elements residing in the compounds. It is during these inspections that there are documented incidents of brutalisation of farmworkers by farm owners. Across all the farms, the working structure was usually uniform with workers being put into grades based on their experience and technical expertise but to a large extent one's location on the grading system was dependent on the goodwill of the farmers.

Moyo, Rutherford and Amanor-Wilks (2000) argue that farm workers, who were residents of farm compounds when looked at in colonial and post-colonial Zimbabwe, are a constituency which was completely ignored and seen as being tied to the white commercial farmers. Consequently, when it came in issues of land redistribution (in the early post-independence reforms and the FTLRP) they were never taken into consideration or considered as part of the landless indigenous population. This was in a context where the majority of these farm compound residents were seen to be of foreign origin or descendants of foreign migrant workers hence they were never seen as citizens or fully integrated into Zimbabwean society and this is observable even in contemporary times. Most of the farm workers can trace their origins to Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique and by virtue of them staying together on the farm compounds (far removed from other people and cultures) and their continued use of their language and practising their culture they were never fully integrated into Zimbabwean community hence negative perceptions on farm workers and the 'outsider tag' has never been removed. The negative perceptions of farm workers also has its roots in the days of the liberation struggle in which Raftopolous (2003) has argued that farm workers were associated with the white farmers and they were seen as being far removed from their counterparts in the communal areas. This was in addition to the 'foreigner tag' and

consequently they were never taken to be a part of the 'native community'. They were seen as being opposed to the liberation struggle. Post-independence land reforms according to Moyo (1995) saw in the 1980's farm workers from a government policy perspective being viewed as foreigners, unproductive and lacking an identity. Such perceptions have shaped the way in which farm workers are perceived in Zimbabwe. It was only in the 1990's that there was effective lobbying for the recognition of farm workers as citizens who are also entitled to social protection and land rights (Moyo et al *ibid*). With the coming in of organisations like the General Agriculture and Plantation Workers' Union of Zimbabwe (GAPWUZ), the Farm Workers Action Group (FWAG) and the Farm Community Trust of Zimbabwe, there was effective lobbying for the observance of the interests of farm workers who for decades been exploited. Despite the lobbying on behalf of farm workers by these groups the social relations that existed between farmers and farm workers which Amanor-Wilks (1995) has termed as a 'master-servant' relationship has never changed. Both on and off the farms, the commercial farmers controlled the farm workers and they remained in charge of a social system which saw them controlling social and economic relationships between them and the farm workers.

As labour and civic organisations in the late 1990's fought for the rights of farm workers, the FTLRP brought in a new dimension to the situation of the workers. Farm workers prior to the FTLRP process found themselves being used as pawns between the political fights between the trade union movements which later became a fully-fledged political party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), white commercial farmers and the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) party and its affiliates. Raftopolous (2003) indicates that farm workers during the FTLRP process were mobilised by the trade unions together with the commercial farmers to oppose the government and its overtures towards land reform. A consequence of this was what Raftopolous perceives to be a 'demonization' of farm workers by the ZANU (PF) government. They were viewed as championing white interests and the situation was worsened by white capitalists and western media which supported farm workers and made them appear to be victims of the FTLRP. This resulted in them being viewed with suspicion by the government. Thus, the FTLRP, in its own way had diverse and complex impacts on farm workers. Research undertaken by Sachikonye (2003) and Magaramombe (2010) has shown that due to the FTLRP, many farm workers lost their jobs and there was the physical displacement of the farm workers from their places of residence after farms were acquired for resettlement. This was in a context where there was seen to be massive negative impacts of the FTLRP and sharp declines in agricultural production in the country. This has been attributed to the reforms and it has been accused of precipitating a decline in farm labour as a source of employment (Masiwa and Chipungu 2004; Richardson 2005).

The farm compound is thus an important feature of the agrarian structure in Zimbabwe which has existed for decades. It was used by the farmers as a labour pool which they could easily monitor and control and it was essential that every farmer had this own farm compound so that they were assured of labour which they could effectively use for their agricultural production processes. The FTLRP effectively transformed the land tenure system with farms becoming subdivided into smaller plots

housing the small A1 (villagised) farms and the larger A2 (small scale commercial) farms. Farm compounds continue to be found on the farms with former and current farm workers residing on these farms. The main question's that exist is the role which these farms compounds are playing in this new dispensation and the socio-economic and political realities of those who live in these farm compounds. It was with this in mind that a study was undertaken in Goromonzi District in the Mashonaland East Province of Zimbabwe.

Due to the stigma attached to the farm workers the government of Zimbabwe never really prioritised them in land allocations and neither did it seriously consider their welfare in the disruptions that occurred during the FTLRP process. It however protected them by directing that no farm workers were to be evicted from the farm compounds as the farm compounds were located on State land over which the new farmers did not have jurisdiction over. This directive tended to provide a form of security for the farm workers who in most instances did not have anywhere else to go. What cannot be doubted is that the FTLRP affected farm workers in different and diverse ways. Moyo and Chambati (2004) have said that some farm workers lost their jobs due to the FTLRP while others retained their jobs with others getting new jobs. What has been clear from the FTLRP was that it altered the lives of farm workers. Due to its nature and impact, the FTLRP has given rise to a new rural landscape which has new socio-economic and political dimensions which are only becoming evident now that the FTLRP has been concluded.

Research Methods

The research which informed this article was undertaken in the Goromonzi District of Zimbabwe. The district lies approximately 39 km from the capital city of Harare and agro-ecologically it is considered to be one of the best in the country. The research was broad based focusing on the social outcomes of the FTLRP of which issues to do with the farm compounds are just one. It entailed eight months of fieldwork using both qualitative and quantitative research approaches. Research tools which were utilised included focus group discussions, in-depth interviews and the administering of a structured survey questionnaire. Additionally, secondary sources of data and observations were employed to augment the research tools indicated earlier. Purposive, random and snowballing sampling methods were employed and the study managed to reach 150 newly resettled A1 farmers who are now settled on 24 former large scale commercial farms, 48 key informants and 66 former and current farm workers. The study focused specifically on 10 farm compounds which were purposively chosen in the district. The research was undertaken ethically in accordance with international best practice.

Presentation and Discussion of Findings

The Reality of Farm Compounds in Goromonzi District

The FTLRP in Goromonzi resulted in the resettlement of 2 822 A1 farmers on 75 old large scale farms and 846 A2 farmers from 51 former large scale farms (field interview held with the Lands Officer on (12 October 2015). The FTLRP resulted in the creation of two distinct resettlement models which the Lands Officer above refers to as the A1 and A2 models. The A1 comprises of either a 'villagised' settlement

scheme in which the household was allocated 5 to 6 hectares of land in addition to a 'common' grazing area like a village system in the communal areas. Alternatively, it is a self-contained variant in which households are allocated a plot of land in which they decided where to place the homestead and the rest was divided into grazing and arable land. This model was aimed at decongesting communal areas and providing land to landless urbanites. The A2 model on the other hand was designed to be more commercially oriented and it was much larger than the A1 farms. 'In practice (however), the distinction between these two models varies considerably, and there is much overlap' (Scoones et al 2011:2).

During the fieldwork, farm compounds were found to be very much in existence on the old large scale commercial farms which have since been subdivided into smaller, A1 and A2 farms. It was noted that the farm compounds were not only serving the new farmers on the farms where they are located but they also serve neighbouring farms as well. Some of the residents of the farm compounds reported that they were no longer employed on the farms but they were working for companies or doing domestic work in the nearby towns of Harare and Marondera. Some indicated that they were now informal traders running their own businesses. All the ten farming compounds had a population of approximately 1 635 people who were coming from 322 households. The number of houses in the three compounds was 212 of which the majority of houses were thatched huts with a few brick houses usually reserved for those with supervisory or managerial positions on the farms.

The perceptions of key informants on the nature and functions of the farm compound system in Goromonzi District support the observation by Clarke (1977) and Palmer (1977) that the farm compound system was developed as a means to control labour and to create a labour reserve on each large scale commercial farm.

Graver Phiri (not real name, aged 66) who is a former farm worker but now a landowner at Mashonganyika farm and a third-generation Malawian indicated that the farm compounds were a place which the farmers deliberately set up so that their workers could reside. The farmers chose an area where the houses were built and it was usually in areas where no agricultural activity could be undertaken and was not in close proximity to the farmhouse. In these compounds workers were allocated a 'stand' to build their houses and it was usually three houses per individual. Depending on the farmer, workers had access to water and basic health and primary education for their children although this was not always guaranteed. Residence in the compounds was subject to the worker or members of each family providing labour to the farmer and those who became too old or sick depending on the character of the farmer were at times made to leave the compounds and go back to their areas of origin or go and leave in communal areas and make way for productive individuals. Some farmers according to Graver however did not mind having their old workers residing in the farm compound even after leaving employment (field Interview held on 3 October 2015).

The ages of the farm compounds encountered differed from farm with some reporting that the farm compounds in which they resided had been built as far back as 1905 as in the case of Dunstan farm,

early 1900's as in the case of a compound at Warrendale farm or as recent as 2013 as shown by a compound found at Mashonganyika farm after some farmers decided to build their own farm compounds where their employees would reside. On the reason behind the creation of the farm compounds in the district the Provincial Vice Secretary of the Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans (field interview held on 24 September 2015) had this to say:

When the white men came to this district they chased the original inhabitants of this land the *vashawasha* and confined them to the communal areas in this area the likes of Chinyika and Chishawasha. On their farms, they needed people to work on the land hence they established these farming compounds with poorly built houses but for them they were sufficient and cheap for the natives to live and work on the land. You will realise that the farm compounds were places where farm workers lived and the white farmers preferred migrant workers rather than local people. These farm workers tended to be tied down in a cycle of exploitation which they could not easily run away from. Employing locals was a problem for them because the locals if the job was too painful they could run to their homes in the communal areas hence they preferred foreigners who came from far and could not run away easily and some came through employment agreements and were only paid on completion of their contract so you can see how the whole system was designed as a means of each farmer having their own labour pool to use on the farms.

The Farm Compound in the Post FTLRP Era

One of the major aims of the study was to find out the functions of the farming compounds in the aftermath of the FTLRP. Having established that farming compounds are in existence the major question is the role of these farming compounds in contemporary times. The functions of the farm compounds are outlined in sections below.

Farm Compounds as Sites of Labour Provision

The majority of farmers who were interviewed during the fieldwork indicated that the farm compound for them is an important source of labour. In the farm compounds, they indicated that they are able to have access to a variety of skills and expertise which was developed by the former commercial farmers in the form of human capacity development of the former farm workers. It was indicated that the majority of residents of the farm compounds especially the older generation had been employees of the former large scale commercial farmers and thus they had a lot of experience and specialisation in the production of 'difficult' crops like tobacco, soya beans, wheat, flowers, seed maize among others. In addition, some of the workers had specialisation in servicing farm machinery and these skills were seen as being an important asset for the farmers. Due to the nature of the set-up in the new farming areas which farmers claim has seen a shift from the rigid labour tenancy system former farm workers are seen by some of the new farmers as being free agents who can provide labour to a farmer of their choice and whom they can hire at any time should they require their skills. Farmers also indicated that they normally utilise labour that is found in the farm compounds for menial tasks which include digging, planting, weeding and harvesting. Labour for these tasks is usually provided by women and youths with men who are mostly experienced former farm workers providing specialised expertise in crop production or operating farm machinery. Residents in farm compounds who are hired on a part time bases are usually hired between the months of October and May when most agricultural activities are undertaken. Farm compound residents are given tasks to perform which are subject to an agreed contract. It is a popular form of labour provision known locally as *maricho* or *mugwazo* and payments for these contacts

are according to agreed terms which in the new farming areas range from cash payments, provision of agricultural products or groceries.

Large farms in the district especially A2 farms that are into tobacco production and irrigation usually have large number of employees ranging from 10 to upwards of 100 comprising both permanent and part time labour. These farms are seen as utilising the farm compound system to their full advantage as it is an important labour pool. These farms due to the nature of their operations and impressive output enable them to engage in profitable productive activities. They are able to get credit to finance their activities, they engage in contract farming and often times they are run professionally hence their ability to hire and maintain a high labour pool which they utilise for productive purposes. Due to the way, they are set up and their operations, workers can be found residing in the farm compounds on these farms which are usually well built and electrified. This is in contrast to the old farming compounds and an example of such a compound is one found at ZB farm in Goromonzi. The conditions of the farm compounds on these highly productive and mechanised farms are in sharp contrasts to the conditions at farm compounds found on 'poorer farms' or the small scale A1 farms which in most instances are not commercially oriented.

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It should be noted that depending on farm size and level of agricultural production, the levels at which farmers utilise farm compound labour differs. The larger A2 farmers can have a large number permanent workers working for them who reside in the farm compounds and would occasionally hire part time workers either from the farm compounds or elsewhere. In some cases, senior staff at some farms who once resided in the farm compounds would upon promotion be offered alternative accommodation which is not in the farm compounds. In contrast the smaller A1 farmers may not even utilise labour from the farm compounds as some may not have high production levels and they would utilise labour which is provided by their families and a small number workers who usually are not full-time employees. Some farmers including A2 farmers have preferred to utilise labour from communal and urban areas due to various individual factors.

In as much as the farm compounds are an important labour pool for the farmers the study discovered that due to changes which have been brought about by the FTLRP they have become areas of much contestation and antagonism between the farmers themselves and the and residents of the farm compounds. The tenure system under the FTLRP saw the subdivision of a single farm into several plots and usually on that farm there would be a single farm compound. Disputes have arisen between farmers as they have fought to control the farm compounds. Some farmers feel that since the area where the farm compound is located is close to their plots then they have rights over the farm compound while others have felt that since they have more workers residing in the farm compound or since they may be providing the farm compounds with basic amenities then they are entitled to be in charge of the compounds. In some instances, it was indicated that farmers had disputes over workers or remuneration to be paid to workers.

The most common disputes are seen arising from the farmers especially A2 farmers demanding that farm workers or persons residing in farm compounds on their farms were obligated to give them labour or the first preference in providing them with labour. This is in the backdrop of farmers inheriting social and physical infrastructure which although it is owned by the State they have been granted user rights and responsibility over it. Farmers are seen as using it as a tool to threaten farm compound residents who refuse to provide them with labour of consequences should they withhold their labour. In most instances farmers are said to provide amenities like electricity, water and transport to hospitals in emergencies. They also support local schools and clinics some of which are located on the farms. The support which they give, makes them believe that they have the powers to demand labour from the farmers in return of access to services and residency rights. These contestations especially those between the farmers themselves over the farm compounds and between the farmers and residents of farm compounds have seen some new farmers building their own compounds over which they now have total authoritarian control. They decide who resides and who does not reside in the farming compounds and they have the powers to evict. Thus, relationships between farmers and farm workers have not always been and are not perfect. This is seen as stemming from the days of farm invasions when farm workers were seen as siding with the former large scale commercial farmers. Farmers indicated that they don't trust the farm workers and they believe that they will never be fully faithful to them. Some farmers even view farm compound residents as thieves who steal their agricultural products and assets.

Focus group discussions held with current and former farm workers (at Dunstan farm (27 June 2015), Banana Groove farm (11 July 2015), Ingwenya farm (16 August 2015), Warrendale farm (19 September 2015), Mashonganyika farm (3 October 2015) and Chibvuti farm (2 November 2015) had similar issues raised on the issue of labour in which it was agreed by most of the participants that there was the continuation of the repressive labour tenancy system. The farm workers indicated that they were third to fifth generation migrants whose parents had originated from neighbouring countries. They had no alternative places to go or stay and they felt that this made them vulnerable to abuse by farm owners who forced them and their families to provide them with labour at low remuneration as a condition for them to continue residing in the farming compounds.

The farm compound as a labour pool for the farmers is thus a very important asset which assists farmers in their endeavours to attain high levels of agricultural productivity on their farms. High levels of production can be achieved in agriculture if the productive potentials of the farmers are enhanced, there are adequate agricultural support services and there is adequate and knowledgeable human capital. Having specialised, experienced and committed labour can make a huge difference in farmers increasing their agricultural output. In this context, the farm compound is seen as providing a diversified and rich labour pool which lies at the disposal of the farmers. In most instances, most of the workforce was trained by the old large scale commercial farmers hence for the new farmers it is a cheaper form

of labour in which they do not invest much except to provide on the job training and additional refresher courses.

Issues raised above on the farm compound system highlighted above are indicative of the continued importance of the farm compounds as a source of labour for farmers. The challenge which has arisen has been that the majority of the farm workers did not directly benefit from the FTLRP with some of them now only having secondary access to the land. Given the history of the farming areas and farming areas in which there were structural constraints to them accessing education some of the farm workers now find themselves trapped in an equally vicious cycle of labour tenancy which is very much similar to that which was developed and enforced during colonialism. Lack of education has limited their opportunities to relocate and being descendants of migrants they do not have any alternative places of residence and the need to make a livelihood forces them to continue providing labour to the new farmers whom one of the farm workers described as ‘... not paying at all, they would rather we go for months without paying a cent even after selling their produce at the markets and they would rather spend the money on luxuries and pay us in bits and pieces’ (field Interview held with farmworker Sandiforo on 12 October 2015).

Farm Compound Residents and Social Protection

Barrientos (2010) wrote on social protection and labour and argued that workers when workers are employed, they receive protection in the form of social insurance (pensions, health benefits, funeral assistance etc). He also indicated that there can be labour market interventions that can be put in place which are aimed at protecting the basic rights and standards of work for those people who will be working. In labour interventions Barrientos (ibid) said there can be active interventions like trainings and policies to stimulate employment. There can also be passive interventions like maternity benefits, injury compensation, sickness benefits which are financed by the employer. When we look at the ideas of Barriento's in the context of the social protection of farm compound residents especially the farmworkers it can be seen that the FTLRP has brought on new and interesting dynamics. Farmworkers who participated in the study believed that the FTLRP had negatively impacted on their lives if one looks at it from a social protection perspective. Firstly, they indicated that for those lucky enough to be working they are not guaranteed of a written contract or gazetted wages, At the time of the field-work negotiations by government, workers unions and farmer organisations had seen wages pegged in the following categories: C1 – US\$250.00 a month, C2 - US\$200.00 a month, B – US\$144.00 a month, A2 - \$78.00 a month and A1 - \$74.00 a month. Many of the farmworkers were complaining that the new farmers did not use this salary scale and it was challenging for them to demand these salaries as they were afraid of being dismissed. They felt that their union, the General Agriculture and Plantation Workers Union (GAPWUZ), was failing to stand up for their rights.

The farm compound residents especially workers were in agreement that the FTLRP had brought new issues and challenges for them. Firstly they were no longer guaranteed of full-time employment and the contracts which they had mostly were not written down or were just verbal agreements. This stripped

them of some benefits like pensions, health, maternity and funeral insurance which some had when they were employed by the old large scale commercial farmers. They felt that this new dispensation had hindered the transfer of income from the farmers to the workers leaving them vulnerable. Their basic rights and working conditions were no longer as well regulated as before and most of the farm workers were said to be at the mercy of the new farmers who now had a lot of power. Thus, for the workers, the new dispensation created by the FTLRP, has left them more vulnerable than ever before and they felt that the new farmers have an indifferent attitude towards their welfare. The responses by a farmer and a farmworker below aptly summarise the attitudes that the two groups have towards social protection of the farm workers in the aftermath of the FTLRP:

I have no idea about the welfare of the farm workers. This is because personally I don't have permanent workers and I only employ seasonal labour. In this type of arrangement, we rarely have contracts or any water tight arrangements. It is usually a verbal agreement. We agree on the work which they are supposed to do and we pay them as soon as they complete the task. I think the things which you are talking about like medical aid and pensions apply to A1 farmers with permanent staff. But I doubt they will be having such packages for all workers maybe for managers (farmer No: 35 field interview held on 19 September 2015)

We have been let down by government and GAPWUZ. Before farms were taken, farmworkers had pensions and the farmers assisted a lot in times of illness or death. They did it because it was part of their obligation to workers. Unions during those days were also very strong. Even the working conditions were not too bad as the machinery was maintained and safe. The only problem was that the white farmers were too harsh and cruel at times. But compared to now we don't have contracts to speak of. We don't have benefits and there are no working clothes. I work in my own clothes from home. So, in all fairness if we are to speak the truth we are not protected. If I get fired today I go with nothing and the people at GAPWUZ cannot do anything (Focus Group Participant - Farmworker on 11/07/15 at Banana Groove Farm).

Farm Compounds and their Social and Cultural Functions

Observations which were undertaken in Goromonzi District show that farm compounds in the aftermath of the FTLRP are an important site for cultural and social class reproduction and they are seen demonstrating the individual agency of the farm compound residents which they use to shape their lives. According to Stolley (2005) culture is an important and integral part of human society making up society's ideas, behaviours and beliefs which shape people's interaction and their world view. Social class on the other hand is seen as a 'continuum of economic positions that leads to differences in lifestyle or life chances' (Stolley 2005: 242). Rodrigues (2007) adds on social class to say that economic differentiation cannot be the sole criteria that can be used to define social class. Although Max Weber provided a distinction between social classes based on one's position in the economic he also indicated that there is also social status in which people share a common lifestyle and thus social class is shaped by the interaction which occurs between both class and status.

The study showed that farm compounds are not just houses or homesteads located on a farm but they are in fact communities. These communities which have been in existence for decades are seen to be sites cultural and social class reproduction serving multiple functions on the farms and in local communities. From a sociological perspective, the study discovered that farm compounds are not just facilities which provide farm workers with a place of residence but they are in fact communities which have their own unique characteristics and dynamics. Traditional views on residents of farm compounds

have focused on the farm workers who are usually the male heads on full time employment on the farms or their spouses or widows providing part time employment or seasonal labour on the farms. Interactions with residents of farm compounds in Goromonzi revealed interesting patterns which give a new face to farm compounds. It was seen that in these compounds there can be seen to be households comprising of the nuclear family, single parent, joint, monogamous and polygamous families making up the households thus creating unique and dynamic family structures. Respondents in the study who reside on farming compounds indicated that the social relationships that are found in farming compounds are unique and different from conventional social relationships found in either urban areas or communal areas in Zimbabwe. This was said to be due to the evolution of the farm compounds which over a long period of time have seen residents developing strong friendship ties which have been cemented by marriages resulting in a unique spider web of kinship ties in the farm compounds. The majority of residents in the farm compounds as indicated earlier originate from countries like Mozambique, Zambia and Malawi and they are seen to share areas of origin and kinship relations from their forefathers and intermarriages have strengthened and at times complicated the relationships to outsiders. These relationships are further strengthened by shared cultures, customs and traditions which are seen as having continued to exist in the farming compounds.

The strong friendship and kinship ties which are found in the farm compounds are shown as being of much importance and as serving various functions. Friendship ties are especially important given the years in which residents have lived together. It is strengthened by social processes including the occasional beer drinking of illicit beers like *kachasu* (this is home brewed illegal beer) during weekends. The spider web of social relations has served functions which have not only contributed socially to the farm compound residents but it has also enhanced them economically in different and diverse ways. These strong social ties which have rarely been studied or empirically understood in dominant literature have contributed and shaped the farm compounds as we understand them today. They have played important roles in ensuring that they remain in existence and are in a gradual process of reproducing themselves in response to changing dispensations and environments in the farming areas. A new phenomenon which was noted was that the families of the new farmers and the people whom they brought with them after being allocated land are also becoming part of this social system usually through marriages.

Social stratification was also seen as being quite evident in the farming compounds. One's location on the social ladder was reported as being based on one's position at the farms basing on seniority at work, the closeness of a farm worker to the farm owner, age, marital status, access to resources, standard of living and one's membership and hierarchy in a traditional, religious or any social institution. The social class which residents in the farm compound were seen as having was not only restricted to the household head but it tended to extend to that particular individual's household as well. An example of the existence social stratification is shown by farm compound residents at Gilnockie farm who referred to some household members and individuals on the farm as *vana vaaforomani* (children of the foreman), *mwana waadriver* (child of the driver), *amupurisa* (the police – referring to farm security),

ashoot bhoyi (shoot boy). These terms although at first appeared to us outsiders as derogatory were in fact acceptable and quite respectable to the farm compound residents themselves. The social classes in the farm compounds were seen to be closely linked to kinship and social ties which were seen as being quite prevalent in the farm compounds and they were quite fluid and always in a continuous process of changing and reproducing themselves. Some respondents indicated that these social classes which are found in the farming compounds are a major source of antagonism and contestation as there is a lot of competition by the residents themselves to achieve high social status at the workplace and at home and the situation is further complicated by kinship ties with no-one wanting to be of low social status or low class.

Respondents who participated in focus group discussions indicated that these close knit social ties help the farm compound residents in various ways which include:

- Assisting each other to secure employment. This is especially important as some farmers rely on informal social networks to find the best and affordable workers and a word of recommendation of one farm worker can be used as the basis for the farmers to call someone and assess their suitability for employment or to perform a certain task.
- As a social support system and as a means for social protection. In instances of sickness, bereavement, food shortages among other calamities, these communities support each other in numerous ways. This has been in a context where some of them were migrants with their relatives and communities far away which made it impossible to support those facing challenges and in such instances, support has come from the farm compound communities.
- Supporting, sustaining and preserving cultural identities.
- Developing individual identities at a physical, social and intellectual level.
- The farm compounds were seen as presenting a united front for the workers which they could utilise in instances when they felt that they were being unfairly treated by farmers. Some examples were given on farms where workers had used the farm compounds as a base and symbol of resistance to forced labour and evictions by the new farmers especially in the early days of the FTLRP and such actions were made stronger by social and kinship ties.

As indicated above, farm compounds are seen as important social institutions which embody traditions, cultures and religions of the people. Cultures and religions are an important part of African societies and the study on the role and importance of the farm compounds in the aftermath of the FTLRP sought to understand the social relationships that exist in the new farming areas which are based on cultures and religions. As stated earlier, the farm compounds house residents of diverse origins but the majority share common ancestry and traditions of which those of the *Chewa* and *Nyanja* people were seen as being the majority. These residents indicated that they share the same traditions and cultural practices and despite being far away from their original homes in Zambia, Mozambique and Malawi they have kept their traditions alive on the farm compounds. To them the farm compound is a sanctuary where they are able to freely practice their traditions and religions which they see as having some features and practices which are incompatible with their ways of doing things. The cultures of these farm compound residents are said to have been passed from generation to generation and it was indicated

that there are no changes to these cultures which still remain very similar to practices held by communities in rural Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia. These cultures are shown by the way in which farm compound residents practice their burial rites, marriages, practices during pregnancy and child birth, initiation rites into adulthood among other practices.

One of the most common, frightening, secretive and most misunderstood religious and traditional practice which was encountered on most of the farming compounds which has continued to exist after the FTLRP is that of the *nyaodancers* or *nyao* groups who trace their origins from Zambia and Malawi. Farm compound residents especially those of foreign descent and those who at some stage been members of the *nyaogroups* view the *nyao* as serving important societal functions as they are important for rituals and traditional purposes and they associate the dancers with issues of spirituality. Ordinary societal members however indicated that for them the *nyao* groups are for recreation and entertainment purposes while others who said '*tiri vanhu vanonamata*' (we are people who pray) saw the groups as evil secret societies which practise black magic and witchcraft.

During the fieldwork three important leaders of the *nyao* groups named the Chairperson of the Dunstan Nyao Dance Club, the Leader of the Gule waMkulu based at Alymersfield farm and the Leader of MusuwoNyao divulged some information on the *nyaogroups* who are a very common feature on the farms. These leaders of the *nyao* dancers indicated that their societies are sacred hence they do not give out information about their activities as this is sacred and doing so is 'dangerous.' Membership to the *nyao* groups was said to be a lifelong commitment and if one wanted to join they were supposed to bring a chicken with them and have 'sponsors' from members of the *nyao* group who would vouch for the suitability and character of that prospective member to join. The rituals which were performed to the prospective member were said to be sacred but were said to be by no means easy as they involved beating here and there to strengthen the member's character and ascertain their commitment to join the group. Traditional medicine was also given to the prospective member and its aim was to strengthen the heart of the member and to make sure that the particular member would never divulge the secrets of the group and doing so would result in misfortune and death.

Membership of the *nyao* groups is mainly made up of residents from the farm compounds and at face value their activities comprise of dancing to the drum wearing masks while women, men and children sing along during different occasions. For the leaders of the *nyaogroups* however, it is more than wearing masks and dancing. They view it as a dance spiritual which has deep meanings and significance which cannot be understood by non-members. The *nyao* leaders indicated that the *nyao* dancers are an important part of the farm compounds and one cannot speak of farm compounds and the history of these compounds without referring to the *nyao* groups. The dancers perform at funerals, memorial services, initiations, marriages among other important social functions. Increasingly these groups are performing at commercial and social events and not only in the farm compounds. The *nyao* groups have a ranking system in place with members wearing the masks according to seniority and

personal preferences. For one to understand the ways and roles one needs to understand the traditions and customs of the *Chewa* and *Nyanja* people.

For the residents of the farm compounds, the *nyao* groups despite their controversies are seen as important as safeguarding the people's cultures, they provide a connection between the people and the ancestors and they are a place where the young are taught their history, traditions and roots. Physical beatings which are at times ordered by the leaders act as a means to ensure adherence and discipline to acceptable social behaviour. Acceptable societal norms and values are seen as being transmitted through these groups which also provide entertainment and recreation. The *nyao* groups are thus a prominent feature in the new farming areas which have continued to exist in the aftermath of the FTLRP. The old large scale commercial farmers had gradually over the years accepted the groups as an integral part of the people's culture but some of the new farmers expressed reservations on the groups which they viewed as 'demonic' and as disrupting their farming activities. Thus, there was a seemingly cultural clash between farm compound residents who believe in the *nyao* and the new farm owners with the *nyao* leaders saying that some of the new farmers had attempted to ban the dancers but had met with resistance.

Religions like Christianity and the Islam are practised in the farm compounds with Christianity seemingly becoming more popular among the younger generation while a few of the older generation are Muslims. Most of the Muslims in the farm compounds were not very visible preferring to practice their religion in a seemingly private manner as opposed to their Christian counterparts who were witnessed publicly worshipping through conducting open air services and church crusades at different farms during different periods at the farms across Goromonzi. These religions are seen to be playing an important role in teaching good moral values, norms and practices and ensuring social cohesion by strengthening social relationships and personal responsibility by individual residents of the farm compounds. This according to the Apostle of the Royal Priesthood in Goromonzi South (field interview held on 19 September 2015) is achieved through teachings on praying, fasting, reading the word of God and works of charity). In terms of Christianity, most of the residents indicated that they are either members of the apostolic church, the new and flamboyant Pentecostal churches or the old traditional church's. Religion has always been an important part of the farm compounds traditionally with the old commercial farmers allowing the farm workers to have freedom of worship as long as it did not interfere with their agricultural activities and in the majority of cases these farmers are reported as availing their buildings for use by churches like the Anglican and Catholic churches on Sundays. The majority of the new farmers did not seem to have a problem with farm compound residents practising their religions. The relationship between these church's and farmers has been strengthened by the strong relationship between the church's and the ruling elite in the country whom they have supported over the past years more so especially on the issue of repossessing the land. These apostolic churches are very popular to residents of farm compounds and during the study it was noted that a huge number of residents as well as farmers belong to these church's whose members are distinctive in their white and red gowns.

Economic and Political Issues Surrounding Farm Compounds

The study undertaken in Goromonzi District showed that the farm compounds exhibit interesting dynamics as they show interplay between economic and political issues. In addition to their role as being critical in the agrarian structures of Zimbabwe, the farm compounds showed that they are an important economic centre in the new farming communities. This is due to the fact that not only do they provide labour on the farms but they are an important part of the rural economy and farm compound residents engage in various economic activities both on and off the farms. They are a market for both agricultural and non-agricultural products and they engage in legal and illegal economic activities like gold panning, farming, brick moulding, firewood cutting, animal poaching, and sand poaching among other activities which provide them with incomes. This engagement in illegal activities has tended to result in conflicts and physical confrontations between farm compound residents and farm owners. The farm compound residents provide a market for agricultural and non-agricultural products and merchants have exploited this market by setting up stores and beer halls in the farming communities which target farm compound residents. Traders usually bring their goods into the farm compounds and sell them there for cash, credit or as barter exchange. Farm compound residents were also shown to be active customers for major wholesalers where they purchase goods in bulk and they are also traders in their own right. The households that are found in the farm compounds are seen to undertake productive activities in their own right which are separate from the mainstream farm level agricultural production system and they are quite effective in generating income and supporting the rural economy and they are seen to be active in creating a functional economic linkage between the rural economy in the farming areas and the larger regional and national economy.

In addition to economic issues, farm compounds are also affected a lot by issues of politics. As stated earlier farm compounds have traditionally been viewed with suspicion politically due to the perceived alliance which farm workers are seen as having had with the former large scale commercial farmers, the trade unions opposed to the post-colonial Zimbabwe government. They are seen as supporting opposition political parties in the country especially the MDC whom the ruling ZANU (PF) party believed that the farm workers were sympathetic to. During the FTLRP process the farm compounds were areas of intense emotional and physical confrontations which sometimes erupted in violence due to political allegiances. The farm workers and old large scale commercial farmers were perceived to be a threat to the ruling party such that legislative enactments like the Citizenship Amendment Act of 2001 which banned dual citizenship and disenfranchised thousands of Zimbabweans from participating in the electoral processes until they had renounced their foreign citizenships. This was seen as just one of the many examples which show the political contestations around farm workers. The perception of the State towards farm workers has in the long term shaped the general political perceptions of Zimbabwean society towards farm workers as opposed to state sponsored reforms.

In the aftermath of the FTLRP, the farm compounds are areas of much political contestation especially given that the majority of farm owners are members of the ZANU (PF) party and most feel bound to support the party as it gave them land hence they are not tolerant of opposition supporters on their

farms. The need to politically control the farm compounds and to shut out opposition political parties has seen ZANU (PF), the powerful Committees of Seven which are found on the farms and the Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association setting up cells and branches in the new farming areas with residents of the farm compounds making up the membership. Intense political mobilisation is periodically undertaken involving farm compound residents and in most cases attendance to rallies and membership to the ruling party is enforced. Engaging or being sympathetic to the opposition political parties can result in victimisation or forced eviction and the farm compounds have become an integral part of the political system in rural Zimbabwe. Participants in focus group discussions indicated that this the poor relationship between the residents and the ruling party and its affiliates had a negative effect on the farm workers. Firstly, they said that in terms of programmes like the Presidential Well-wishers Input Scheme or the free input scheme by the Ministry of Agriculture and Agricultural Development which provides agricultural inputs each year they were usually side-lined with preference being given to new farmers and communal farmers. They usually were not seen as deserving for Public Assistance or Public Works Programmes as it was said that they were not vulnerable or having labour constrained households hence they were not enrolled to receive assistance. They felt that this was being done despite the fact that there were some people including the elderly and orphans who needed assistance but this was not happening because of soured relations with the ruling party. Lastly, they felt that the relationship which was usually strained had contributed and was still contributing to them being side-lined in resettlement processes with very few of them being considered. For them these examples showed the relationship which exists between them, the ruling party and the government and it depicts the prevailing relations in the aftermath of the FTLRP.

Conclusion

Farm compounds can thus be seen as providing interesting dynamics characterising the emergent rural landscape which has come about due to the FTLRP. They are shown to be representing some important features of the rural landscape in Zimbabwe which is made up of unique agrarian power relations and social stratification which has resulted in the emergence of diverse social classes. They show contestations over resource use and space as well as interesting socio-economic and political realities which are now evident in the aftermath of the FTLRP. The farm compounds are shown to be persistent and important in the new dispensation and have evolved with the changing times to remain relevant in the aftermath of the FTLRP. They have become sites of social solidarity, social reproduction, production, culture, tradition and are an important site for resources which has boosted agriculture in rural Zimbabwe. The FTLRP has not destroyed the farm compound system but it the farm compounds remain as an integral and indispensable part of the rural landscape in the country serving important functions and contributing to some of the successes which the new generation of farmers is shown to be enjoying as their lives have been positively transformed after gaining access to land.

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