

State Power, Land-use Planning, and Local Responses in Northwestern Zimbabwe, 1980s-1990s

PIUS S. NYAMBARA

Abstract: The paper seeks to understand the rationale behind the introduction of the villagization program in post-independence rural Zimbabwe between the 1980s and the 1990s with a particular focus on the Gokwe South District. This is particularly interesting in that similar programs in the colonial era generated resentment and faced resistance among the rural population and were eventually abandoned. Given that the history of Africa is replete with examples of such programs that failed dismally, the most representative being the *ujamaa* experiment in post-colonial Tanzania, one wonders why a post-independence government would still have faith in such unpopular programs. The paper is based on fieldwork conducted between 1996 and 1997, and again in 2002-3 and more recently in 2011 in selected areas of Gokwe South District. The research made use of minutes of meetings of the Gokwe South Rural District Council, especially those of the Council's Natural Resources Board and Resettlement Committee; national and local newspapers; interviews conducted with Village Development Committees (VIDCOs), chiefs, village heads, ward councilors, Council and Agritex officials, the district administration and ordinary villagers. Largely in response to the influx of immigrants into the district, among other factors, state officials in Gokwe constructed a land degradation narrative to justify the program. Research work revealed that the program was not adequately explained to Gokwe rural communities. However, the program was eventually overtaken by the land occupations of commercial farms that began around 1997 and dominated the Zimbabwean political landscape for much of the first decade of the twenty-first century.

Introduction

This article analyses the rationale underlying the introduction of villagization, or in some official documents "internal resettlement" or also Communal Land "re-planning," by the post-independence Zimbabwean state in the communal areas of Zimbabwe in general and in the Gokwe District (see map below) in particular between the mid-1980s and late 1990s.¹ The paper further examines the varied responses of Gokwe villagers to the program. It seeks answers to the following questions, among others: Why did the state introduce the program when similar programs faced rejection from the rural populace in the past? How did the villagers understand villagization? Why did certain sections of the community 'support' it and why did others reject and how did they demonstrate their opposition to the program?

Villagization was introduced in communal areas in a manner similar to colonial policies of "centralization" in the 1920s and 1930s, in which "going into lines" was part of an administrative attempt to structure and control rural society.² These schemes were aimed at

Pius S Nyambara is Senior Lecturer and Head, Department of Economic History, University of Zimbabwe and has also taught in the Department of History and Philosophy, Jackson State University. He has published several articles and book chapters on the economic history of Zimbabwe.

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re-organizing African land-use patterns and involved the ordering of settlement patterns in African areas through the demarcation of land into grazing, arable and residential “blocks.” These interventions were part of a so-called modernizing agenda that sought to transform what state officials and technocrats regarded as a “backward” and “traditional” African agriculture. This paper demonstrates that this conservationist ideology continued to inform land-use reform policies in independent Zimbabwe. The villagization of the 1980s reflected the same principles, i.e. just like centralization in the 1930s, it took place according to a set of authoritarian principles—rational, scientific planning and resource use—which all implied not only transformation but also improvement and progress.

The article highlights the continuities in conservationist discourse in Zimbabwe from the colonial to post-independence eras and argues that this genre of development discourse, whether espoused by the colonial or post-colonial state, attempts to portray development as a purely technical intervention. Yet, there is clear evidence to suggest that rural development is very much associated with the broad agenda of bureaucratic control in peasant agriculture.³ What villagization stood for—a more equitable distribution of land, proper management of land, and intensive use of arable land; and the economical provision of government services such as infrastructure, housing, and community services—all involved massive intrusion into the lives of rural communities for the state sincerely believed that it had the obligation to determine and organize the basic institutions of daily lives, including the spatial organization of community life itself.⁴

Some scholars have argued that development outcomes inevitably end up enhancing bureaucratic state power.⁵ James Ferguson, for instance, defines development as an anti-politics machine, an instrument “depoliticizing everything it touches, everywhere whisking political realities out of sight, all the while performing, almost unnoticed, its own pre-eminently political operation of expanding state power.”⁶ Ferguson found that one of the outcomes of the livestock development project he studied in Lesotho was the buttressing of bureaucratic state power. This study however, suggests that attempts at villagization in Gokwe to some extent undermined state legitimacy and authority. Field research conducted in the Njelele, Chisina, Nyarupakwe, Marungu, and Nyaje areas of Gokwe South district revealed a much more nuanced pattern of response to the program.

In some cases it was clear that the rhetoric of villagization created some space within which residents could comment on and articulate a local critique of state power through opposition to villagization. It also became clear that some residents supported the program on the basis of very limited understanding of it or a selfish desire to “benefit” from some aspects of the program that appealed to them. Some expressed uncertainty about what the program entailed because the responsible state authorities did not adequately explain it. Others expressed skepticism and outright opposition, particularly the vast majority who had entered the district through “improper channels” and were “illegally” settled in prohibited areas such as grazing, reserved forest, and sacred areas. One should bear in mind that villagization, with its emphasis on a particular order involving the demarcation of land into grazing, arable, and residential “blocks,” threatened the complex informal pattern of accessing land through a range of methods such as land grabbing, outright purchase, borrowing, inheritance, and squatting that characterized the frontier region of Gokwe. To this latter category, villagization “became a site of struggle between the villagers and the officials responsible for the program,” and also among the villagers themselves, over competing visions of development.⁷

Land Degradation Narratives and the Discourse of Land Use-Planning

Gokwe experienced several waves of immigrants at different times and of varying intensity since the late 1940s. By the 1990s, Gokwe officials began to craft a land degradation narrative to justify the introduction of villagization that blamed increased immigration for illegal and haphazard settlements, land conflicts, and general deterioration of the land. The history of immigration into the Gokwe district has been sufficiently dealt with elsewhere.⁸ Suffice here to say that Gokwe's first wave of immigrants were involuntary, having been evicted wholesale from Rhodesdale Crown Land in the post-Second World War period to give way to European ex-servicemen. The frontier nature of Gokwe attracted subsequent immigrants, especially those originating from land deficient regions of the colony. From the early 1960s, cotton introduced by state officials was successfully grown in Gokwe and acted as a powerful pull factor to immigrants. During the 1970s, many people took advantage of the guerilla war to immigrate to the district where land was still available. The removal of restrictions on movement to any part of the country after independence in 1980 witnessed an influx of people into Gokwe. The cotton boom of the early 1980s, aided by state policies emphasizing rural development, attracted more immigrants into the district. Also the droughts of early 1990s, the slow progress of the resettlement program in much of the country, and, finally, the Economic Structural Adjustment Program (ESAP) in the 1990s, which witnessed massive retrenchments from formal employment, added more people in Gokwe villages.⁹

Primarily as a result of immigration, the first national census in 1982 registered a net immigration rate of 44.7 percent over the previous decade for Gokwe, the highest in the country. The population in that year had grown to 238,566 and the population density to 16.59 persons per square km from 130,400 people and a density of 9.07 persons per km² the 1969 national census. In 1990, the population had further increased to 291,851 from 281,801 in 1989. By 2000, the population had grown to 399,906 with a density of 27.81 people per km².¹⁰ Clearly by the early 1990s there was pressure on the land as the frontier was closing; cases of landlessness, illegal settlements, and haphazard cultivation as well as incidences of land conflicts were on the increase.¹¹ It is within this context that land degradation narratives and the attempt at villagization in the district should be understood.

This article argues that state officials crafted a land degradation narrative in Gokwe that informed both the decision to introduce villagization as well as opposition to it. From the early 1990s the Gokwe Rural District Council was alarmed by the increase in land conflicts resulting from land shortages in the district but also by what they perceived as "an ecological disaster" resulting from increased immigration, a haphazard settlement pattern, and the relentless cultivation of cotton in unsuitable areas. There was also a growing concern among Agritex (Department of Agricultural, Technical, and Extension Services) officials, Gokwe Council officials, and in the local and national press about the problem of rapid land degradation. *The Herald*, for instance, lamented that the agricultural success of cotton in the district, was likely "to be short-lived unless communal farmers adopt positive changes to land use plan." It pointed out that "experts predict an ecological disaster in the district whose cotton farming has lifted most communal farmers out of poverty and underdevelopment."¹² The paper proceeded at length to enumerate the "financial windfall" which intensive cotton farming had supposedly created for most farmers since independence:

The benefits of cotton growing are evident in the number of decent brick-under tile houses that are sprouting all over, progressively replacing the pole mud and thatch huts. More service centers are emerging as some farmers graduate into entrepreneurship. Livestock population is increasing while acquisition of modern farming equipment like cultivators and tractors, which were a dream a few years ago, are finding their way into the district. The trappings of luxury are also creeping in as fully solar-powered homes, radio and television sets, even cars are now basics for some of the more successful communal farmers.¹³

However, these benefits were derived at the expense of the environment: "poor land management skills and massive land pressure had begun to take their toll on the fragile soils of the once sparsely populated district." The incentive to grow cotton was said to have "led to farmers expanding their landholdings even into areas unsuitable for cotton growing," a situation which had led to the disappearance of "dense forests and permanent water supplies that attracted people only two decades ago." Within a short space of time, "the dense forest and water supplies had been replaced by over-grazed and over-used land, silted dams and rivers and gapping gullies whose negative impact would be difficult to reverse." Major rivers like the Lutope, Sengwa, Mudzongwe, and Munyati "have now been reduced to sand beds." To many officials, "Gokwe is a future ecological disaster."¹⁴

The local *Cheziya-Gokwe Post* echoed similar concerns about the environmental situation in some parts of Gokwe as follows:

Gokwe District which only in the 1970s had thick lovely forests, tall savanna grass, growing well in rich clay and sandy soils, has now been reduced by men to semi-desert. The historic forests have disappeared exposing the once rich soils to denudation forces, and gullies. People are still cultivating crops and do gardening on stream banks and on slopes. They plough along these streams to take advantage of the rich alluvial deposits on the rivers. The most affected areas are Chief Jiri, Sai and Njelele. Here the soils are sandy and the destruction of the vegetation by men has left these poor soils bare, erosion has laid the land to waste. These areas are also overstretched by over population of both people and stock. Thousands of people flocked to these areas in the early 70s from as far a-field as Gutu, Mberengwa, Zvishavane and other areas in search of land to farm.¹⁵

In interviews with a Mr. Goto, the District Agricultural Extension Officer (DAEO), he indicted farmers for having rushed "to make quick money through cotton," but "had overlooked the need for appropriate land-use plans." He pointed out that, "The farming success which had lured thousands of immigrants from all over the country, creating land pressure, had forced the Council to suspend any new settlements." Yet there was no evidence that farmers would change their "rudimentary farming methods." He went on to suggest that, "What was required before the situation got out of hand, was a proper settlement plan demarcating homesteads and grazing and farming areas."¹⁶ His concerns were shared by the district administrator who described the settlement pattern in the district as "destructive to the environment, with the area of land under cultivation being 80-90 percent. This resulted in no land left for grazing" and "this situation has to be corrected

urgently. River banks are silting very fast. If this is left unabated, there will be a desert in Gokwe very soon and the consequences will be discouraging.”¹⁷ He complained of:

a serious land degradation [problem]. . . farmers along the major rivers like Lutope, Mbumbusi, Sengwa and Kana are ploughing without conservation. . . Bridges that were built 5 meters above the river are now silted completely. Sesame river for instance is completely silted because there are more people clamouring for the land, more land is being tilled, and more trees are being cut.¹⁸

According to the district administrator, “a serious approach was needed to organize land use and settlement patterns in the district . . . To arrest the problem there should be [specific] areas for grazing, for tillage and for settlements.” In other words, he was advocating for villagization.

Some concerned individual residents of Gokwe shared a similar narrative with that of officials mentioned above through anonymous letters to the district administrator and the Council.¹⁹ Some, however, chose not to be anonymous. In a letter to the district administrator, J. J. Ndhlovu, concerned about the situation in his area, summarized what he felt were the root causes of environmental degradation and land conflicts in the district:

The root cause of our problem seem[s] to stem from the random settlement and land grabbing, which occurred with the advent of independence in 1980. From this period there was never any proper definition of boundaries from one village to the other. While boundaries are there on paper, in people’s minds they don’t exist and they are not to be observed. It is therefore in this background that people have taken to encroach on other people’s land, random tillage of land going to the extent of ploughing on land originally designed for grazing as well as along rivers. These short sighted practices have among other things resulted in massive deforestation through unwanton [sic] falling of trees. The ultimate result has been to a large extent the formation of gullies [sic] all over and at worst the washing away of top rich soil. We are now faced with a situation where we are to lose portions of our fields and our livestock because we have no grazing land.²⁰

These newspaper reports are backed by two major scientific studies of the soils of the region. One such scientific study was of the soils of the area, which occurred at the Sebungwe Seminar in 1982, where all researchers who had worked in the area pooled their general knowledge in all facets of production in an attempt to generate a major development plan for the region after independence and confirmed some of the concerns especially about soil erosion. The study noted that: “soil erosion was presenting a major threat, due to the high human population within the area, which on average was 100-250 villages per hundred square kilometers.”²¹ The other study, the 1966 Farm Planning Study by A.K. Bromley and C. B. Jones, was for a long time the standard work on the soils of the Gokwe area. The report categorized all the soils of the Sebungwe region into “high potential, medium potential and low potential soils.” No conservation threat was seen in the area in 1966, yet in 1982, at the Sebungwe Semina, it was felt that the human population had grown to such an extent that soil erosion had become a major threat through deforestation of the area to get access to the arable soils.²²

While state officials crafted a narrative about land degradation to justify villagization, there were other narratives that either confirmed or differed from the official version. Those who came into Gokwe villages illegally and therefore were considered squatters had a different narrative about the land situation in Gokwe more generally and the degradation scenario in particular. Squatters, who were threatened with eviction because of their “illegal” status, objected to the land degradation narrative presented above. They expressed their sentiments in anonymous letters to the district officials. One such letter, addressed to the district administrator, written on behalf of twenty-two families who faced eviction from the district to give way for villagization, read:

You as administrator . . . knows very well that places for homes, and fields is very scarce [in Masvingo], thus why people migrate here. [And] to our surprise you call them as squatters. If Zimbabwe is a free Republic that people may go any corner of the country to stay, why then you say, they should go back where they came from . . . Your area is full of room for other families to occupy . . . If they tell you there is not enough land. . . they are jealousy. I suggest A LAND DISTRIBUTION FOR YOUR FIELDS ARE TOO LARGE 80 ACRES PER PERSON WHEREAS THE BUSHES HAVE LARGE AREAS WITHOUT PEOPLE.²³

The district administrator’s response was to simply dismiss the letter by scribbling a few remarks in the margin, which read: “Pure and sheer cowardice. He [the writer] should have written down his name and got a positive response from the office.”²⁴ It is clear from the letter that its author was using the criterion of national citizenship to lay claim to land in Gokwe. The writer also did not think Gokwe lacked land to accommodate more people. If anything, more people could be absorbed without causing land degradation because “the bushes have large areas without people.” One is bound to agree with Mellissa Leach and Robin Mearns who wrote that “The way in which problem and solution are framed. . . offers a classical example of how received wisdom about the environmental change obscures a plurality of the other possible views, and often leads to misguided or even fundamentally flawed development policy in Africa.”²⁵

By 1994 the environmental challenges, real or imagined, that faced the district were sufficiently worrying for the Council to warrant a series of meetings specifically to find ways to resolve the situation. At the fourth meeting of the Council’s Natural Resources and Resettlement Committee on 20 January 1994, the district administrator (DA) reported that he had received “numerous field disputes from certain areas of the district and that the problems were getting worse with the passing of each day.” He complained about his staff spending a lot of time solving these disputes. He recommended that: (i) the Council adopt the Communal Land (Model) (Land Use and Conservation) by-laws of 1985 as a matter of urgency; (ii) chiefs and village heads be co-opted members of village development committees (VIDCOs) in their areas for this would involve them in all development issues in their wards, especially in matters relating to the allocation of land; (iii) all village heads who proved to be difficult and continuously caused problems be removed from the registers; (iv) all members of the Natural Resources Committee receive photos of the Communal Land (Model) (Land Use and Conservation) By-laws of 1985 so that they were familiar with what was involved; and (v) that the Local Authority circular number 160 (Squatter Policy) be followed when evicting squatters, that is, squatter eviction orders. The Council also

complained that it was not well informed about people who transferred to Gokwe or from one ward to another.²⁶

On 17th October 1996, the Council held another meeting “to look into strong measures of solving land disputes.” Members again emphasized that action on all land dispute problems could only be enforced if the Council came up with by-laws on land issues. Members noted that due to financial constraints and administrative incapacity, the Council was unable to come up with a plan that indicated ward and VIDCO boundaries as required by the Land Use and Conservation by-laws. After a lengthy debate, members went on to make recommendations to assist in solving the problem of land disputes in the district. These were that: (i) the Council should urgently prepare a district plan that clearly demarcated all wards and VIDCO boundaries showing areas of cultivation, settlement, and grazing and all other relevant details; (ii) all wards should submit sketch maps of their areas after consultation with the local people for incorporation into the district plan; (iii) the executive staff of the Council should prepare clear and well defined land by-laws which included issues like classification of land, requirements for registration, issuing of permits, maximum acreage and number of livestock per household, and conservation measures; (iv) executive staff issue prohibition orders on all people settled in unauthorized areas, e.g., grazing areas and traditionally reserved areas; (v) the executive of the Council should assess and deal with all cases of land disputes brought to their attention and refer only the most critical cases to the Council’s Land Resettlement Committee; and that (vi) the executive members of the Council should liaise with the magistrate’s court on how to deal with land dispute cases before the by-laws were approved by the Minister of Local Government and Urban Development.²⁷

It is clear from the concerns raised by the DA and the DAEO and from the two Council meetings cited above that much of the blame for increased land disputes and land degradation in the district was placed on unplanned and haphazard settlement patterns in the villages. What was needed to remedy the situation before it got out of hand was the proper designation of grazing, settlement, and cultivation areas. In other words, villagization, which was initiated by Prime Minister Robert Mugabe in 1984, was seen as the answer to the malady. The new government believed, just like its colonial predecessors, in prescribing technical solutions to problems of the communal areas. The government also based their technical solutions on the beliefs and practices of the colonial government.

The villagization program or policy of internal land-use reform was launched in 1986 with a pilot program in a selected VIDCO in each of Zimbabwe’s fifty-five district council areas. The Department of Agricultural and Technical and Extension Services (Agritex) was responsible for demarcating arable and grazing areas, and for assessing water requirements for human, stock and irrigation purposes. The Department of Physical Planning would then plan a consolidated village settlement.²⁸ The three components of the program were: grouping together of homes into consolidated villages at sites chosen for their suitability for providing infrastructure; a village housing program with loans available for construction of permanent brick houses, subject to rather high government set-standards, in the consolidated villages; and land-use planning including consolidation of residential areas, as well as arable and grazing areas. The aims of the program were, first, to make easier the provision of services such as water and electricity to rural communities; and, second, to reorganize land-use in the Communal Lands. Communities for the program were selected rather than have them volunteer for the program.²⁹

Underlying calls for villagization were the “unfounded assumptions about the inherent environmental destructiveness and lack of productivity of African farmers, as opposed to

their white counterparts."³⁰ This is very evident from the tone of the reports of the early 1980s in which the origins of the program are to be found. The Riddell (1981) and Chavunduka Commissions (1982) set the tone for the agrarian reform debate by recognizing a pervasive demand for land and endorsing land distribution but proceeded to make proposals similar to the colonial officials.³¹ The Riddell Commission argued that peasant agriculture was an inefficient use of the land and called for "a substantial restructuring and transformation of agricultural production within the peasant sector." This involved consolidating arable land into blocks, fencing grazing areas, registering land with title, and abolishing labor migration, thus creating permanent farmer and worker populations. Of significance was the Commission's proposal for "blocks of land to be given to each village, dividing the land into arable, grazing and residential."³² The Chavunduka Commission repeated some of the views of the Riddell Commission pointing out that "communal areas are handicapped not only by a legacy of colonial neglect and discrimination, but also the continuance of . . . traditional shifting cultivation." It recommended that the government initiate, expeditiously, a study to identify existing land tenure systems in the communal lands with the aim of defining the future pattern of land tenure in those areas and the resettlement schemes.³³ The Communal Lands Act of 1982 and its 1985 amendment also called upon government "to introduce the demarcation of arable and grazing lands, and areas for rural housing construction."³⁴

Policy papers produced by the Ministries of Agriculture and Land in the mid-1980s demonstrated a tendency to draw on colonial ideas and practice. For instance, the Ministry of Lands' Communal Lands Development Plan of 1985 was very critical of communal tenure and its alleged destructive effects on the environment. Just like the LHA of 1951, it made proposals for the creation of surveyed, planned, and demarcated "economic units" and consolidated villages. It also called for increased state control over tenure through a system of leasehold that would exclude those who were not full time farmers, thus totally ignoring the links between and interdependence of rural production and urban earnings, which many scholars have ably demonstrated.³⁵ It also overlooks the contribution of communal areas to overall marketed crops in the post-independence period, described by Matte Masst as "the harvest of independence" and Mandivamba et al. as "Zimbabwe's Agricultural Revolution."³⁶ The Plan saw village consolidation as necessary "to restructure and reorganize the existing dispersed and isolated peasant settlements, to make for cost effective provision of social and physical infrastructure and services. . . ."³⁷ The Plan relied heavily for its information about communal areas on colonial research and reports done in the 1970s.

By 1985, the focus of the land reform program had clearly shifted from a concern with land distribution and the resettlement of the many landless families to an emphasis on internal reorganization of communal areas. In other words, land reform had come to mean the "efficient utilization of land" rather than the "redistribution and development of land and resettlement of the maximum number of families possible."³⁸ The reasons for this change of policy are well documented in the literature.³⁹ Among other factors, the government was heavily influenced by reports from the Whitsun Foundation and the World Bank and various other consultancy reports which did not think that resettlement was the solution to problems of population pressure in the communal areas.⁴⁰

In attempting to explain why post-colonial Zimbabwean technocrats retained conservatism and colonial ideas about "development," Drinkwater borrows from Habermas's concept of "purposive rationality."⁴¹ The post-independence government did not challenge the beliefs and practices that had informed technical development in the

colonial era. One of the reasons for this was the tendency of the post-independence officials to rely heavily on pre-independence research and technical data in devising their strategies and projects. In addition, most post-independence development plans were devised with the assistance of external funding agencies, whose financial control influenced the construction of plans and made it imperative to please them. Therefore, policy makers worked with development plans that had been produced by external sources. It took the new government time to develop its own more extensive data sources.⁴² To Beinart such projects, rooted in a scientific and modernizing logic, have been subjected to particularly critical scrutiny because they outlived the colonial era and remained central in the development strategies of independent African states and international agencies. He blames “political resistance and bureaucratic incapacity which played a part in the mishaps of planning, nevertheless lack of research, misunderstanding, scientific hubris and technical weakness have all been demonstrated by researchers.”⁴³ However, Munro, contrary to Drinkwater, argues that villagization, like the other conservation measures, “was driven not just by a particular bureaucratic rationality, but by the imperatives of constructing state authority. Technical order (the realm of scientific expertise) was intimately linked to political order (the realm of state authority.)”⁴⁴ It should be pointed out that the government’s development vision was far more contested within the state than Drinkwater’s account of a technocratic purposive rationality suggests. In the following section, the paper proceeds to demonstrate that this development vision was also contested by various elements of rural society.

Attempts at Villagization in Gokwe and Local Responses

From its inception the villagization program suffered from a lack of effective planning coordination between the various government departments involved, and more importantly, opposition from rural communities. State ministries and departments blamed each other for the problems and delays in implementation as some openly objected to aspects of the policy, while others did not co-operate or were simply unable to provide the necessary support. Agritex officials, who were responsible for the technical aspects of the program, were, for instance, critical of villagization.⁴⁵ In addition, Agritex had a host of other worries, most of which were clearly articulated in its 1988 position paper.⁴⁶ In that document, Agritex officials were hesitant to enforce technical calculations of carrying capacity, pointing out to the inadequacy of land in the communal areas to implement the villagization program successfully. Among other things, Agritex officials complained about the shortage of its own staff and poor resource allocation for undertaking land use planning. Its staff was already overcommitted due to their agricultural extension duties and a range of other non-agricultural responsibilities including drought relief work and public works programs among other duties. Partly for this reason, they complained that “there has been no opportunity for critical analysis of land use and management options for both Communal Lands and Resettlement Areas.”⁴⁷

Since the introduction of the program in Gokwe in the early 1990s councilors in particular were not readily forthcoming. In Mashame officials met resistance from the locals and were dismissed on the ground. Officials were also dismissed from Simbchembu in the northeast because people there said that they required more time to think about the exercise.⁴⁸ Government officials blamed councilors for failing to mobilize the people in support of the program. The Deputy Minister of Public Construction indicted councilors in general for failing to “mobilize and educate the people on the rural housing program, as

well as make them understand and accept the concept of planned villages,” and stressed that “households and their councilors must accept the concept of planned villages.”⁴⁹ Mrs. Chinho, the Executive Officer of the Gokwe South Rural District Council, admitted that one of the sources of resistance to villagization was that:

Gokwe is unique, it is quite unique. In other districts there is not much land to dispute over, where as in Gokwe there are still some vacant areas and many more people are still coming in. This presents problems because those who originate from the district and those who came earlier have reserved large tracks of land for their children and even for the unborn. Such households are very likely to resist attempts at having their land reduced.⁵⁰

She added that as a result “land use [planning] is going to be a big problem” for the council and that “there are areas where we have failed to remove people settled in areas that are not proper . . . the movement of people [into planned villages] will be the most difficult process.” She indicated that there were many areas of the district where council had failed to remove people settled illegally in order to facilitate planned villagization.⁵¹

Councilors were part of the new local government structures, which were unpopular with most rural communities. The council through the VIDCOs was the responsible authority, and yet these institutions were themselves relatively new and were struggling to gain some modicum of legitimacy and to function as organizational units.⁵² According to Alexander, “council and vidcos occupied a difficult position . . . [and] their role as policy implementers left them vulnerable where policies were unpopular.”⁵³ It is not surprising that councilors would object to the program because they feared to lose votes from their constituencies in council elections if they were seen to be supporting the unpopular program.⁵⁴

Even if the councilors had supported the program, there was often disharmony between the DA and the councilors over development projects in the district in general. With the introduction of councils in the mid-1980s, the DAs were having problems relating to the new autonomous rural district councils. The role of DAs was rendered vague.⁵⁵ The relationship between DAs and the councils was raised at a national level and debated by Members of Parliament in August 1997.⁵⁶ In that debate, parliamentarians “questioned whether DAs had any meaningful roles to play as rural district councils now have their own chief executives.” One MP described the relevance of DAs as “purely bureaucratic” while others suggested that there would be substantial savings if the positions of DAs were abolished. MPs generally felt that DAs were failing in their roles as co-coordinators of other ministries at the district level, adding that “their only visible function . . . now was that of installing chiefs.”⁵⁷

In Gokwe, the DA’s office and the rural council often accused each other of doing things without consultation. The councilors in particular felt that with their newfound autonomy, they did not need to consult the DA on matters pertaining to the development of the district. One of the biggest bones of contention pertained to the differences of opinion regarding villagization. The DA complained that the council came up with the villagization program, but this was not brought before the rural district development committee, of which the DA is a member, before being sold to the people. He strongly felt that he was being sidelined from playing a meaningful role in matters relating to the development of the district.⁵⁸ When the Chief Executive Officer of the Gokwe Rural Council was asked about the relationship between Council and the DA, he tried to play down the friction that existed: “DA’s position is that with the introduction of new local government structures, we have the

Chief Executive Officer who is supposed to work together with the DA. This is an advantage. DA comes to Council as an advisor . . . He is the leader of chiefs. When dealing with land disputes we help each other with DA because he knows village boundaries. We have worked with cooperative DAs."⁵⁹ The discord cited between different sections of the bureaucracy, for example between state ministries and departments, the reservations expressed by Agritex officers about the villagisation scheme, and the internal rivalry between the DA and the council are not uncommon in any state. They clearly demonstrate that the state is itself made up of often-contradictory sections and individuals. This is useful in understanding the implementation of the villagization program.

Following the meeting held in January 1994, the Gokwe Council recommended that the villagization program be carried out as a matter of urgency following these stages: accelerated method documentation, pegging by physical planning, and settling people because there were numerous financial and human resources constraints that made it impossible for the program to be implemented any sooner.⁶⁰ At the beginning of that same year, the program had only been implemented in the pilot ward, Ngomeni. Some planning was done in Ndhambi, Njelele, and Nemangwe wards, but implementation had not yet taken place. The Acting District Agritex Officer attributed the lack of progress to the fact that "the Agritex Department was not receiving support from the community as some people resisted being moved if found settled in the grazing area."⁶¹ The *Cheziya-Gokwe Post* carried an article in 1989 titled "Villagisation Programme Disregarded," which reported that "people in parts of the district refused to allow the villagization program to be implemented" and that "new village settlements were sprouting haphazardly in apparent disregard of villagization."⁶² Another article in the same issue titled "River-bank Cultivation Problem," reported that stream-bank cultivation had reached alarming proportions along the Sengwa River, and it was alleged that Headmen Sai and Rutope were allocating land without consulting VIDCOs. As a result of the headmen's actions people were ploughing wherever they chose. And in Ngomani ward (the site of the pilot program) along the Sengwa the situation was reported to be serious as people there were said to be using "force to do what they want including denouncing VIDCOs. Nobody can stop them planting along the Sengwa River."⁶³

In many parts of Gokwe the program faced problems due to opposition or lack of cooperation from rural communities. There were widespread reservations or outright rejection of key aspects of the program. People were generally suspicious that they would be cleared out of certain areas, particularly from areas designated as grazing areas. This was especially true for the "squatters" settled in grazing areas who objected vehemently to villagization because they would be removed from areas they occupied and would be forced to go back where they came from.⁶⁴ Households had a very real fear that their consolidated plots would not be of the size and quality as their previous holdings. Plans to reduce acreages were resisted because they threatened household subsistence. Some households were reluctant to move into designated residential areas because they had substantial brick buildings. There was no policy provision in the program to compensate those who were relocated for building a new homestead. In any case the cost of rebuilding was prohibitive to many, e.g., molding bricks, cutting poles, etc. The Land Commission of 1994 in a national survey of the program also documented these concerns expressed by rural communities in areas where the program was attempted.⁶⁵

Additional problems of the program included the fact that planning of new settlements was done with little regard to sources of water. In such cases women objected to relocation

because they would have to walk long distances to collect water. There was also a general complaint that if people lived close to each other there was a likelihood of increased disease, witchcraft, and theft and that this would aggravate conflicts.⁶⁶ In other words, some people simply did not want to live close together. Nor did they want to be away from their fields.⁶⁷ This point was clearly expressed by one correspondent who complained that:

Most people have been forced to leave their usual places to live in line resettlement along the main roads . . . When we asked our local councilor and VIDCOs, they simply told us it was the government's policy . . . We parents need ploughing and grazing land. So how come we were told to settle along the roads where conditions are unsuitable for ploughing and grazing? Can't the road follow the people, instead of people going to the road?⁶⁸

The DA dismissed the complaint as "bogus and first class rubbish." He then proceeded to remark that the complainant should "get it clear that this administration is here to implement the policy of Government, there are no two ways about that, and get it clear also that when we talk about Government we talk about the people themselves."⁶⁹

The above exchange between the correspondent and the DA is typical of the manner in which villagization was introduced and implemented, i.e., there was little consultation between the officials and the communities whose villages were supposed to be planned. Although Agritex emphasized that "the planning process will involve effective and thorough public debate and community participation," this policy remained rhetorical only.⁷⁰ The general official view was that "[where] campaigns were carried out, overwhelming reception of the program was witnessed and where there was no education, there was total resistance."⁷¹ However, as Gasper has noted, "it is very unlikely that critics would stand up and disagree with the party leaders and civil servants who have just spoken at mass meetings."⁷²

Writing in his classic study on rural development in 1981, Morris offered probably the most important advice on "some general tactics for effective program development." He wrote that "*Always remember that persons are more important than programmes* [emphasis in the original]."⁷³ For most of the officials involved in the villagization program, it was clear that the opposite was true, i.e., programs were more important than people. The second point that can be made from the above exchange is that the latter's version of development differed significantly from that of the peasant. Writers on "development" projects in Africa have noted that the relationship between bureaucrats and peasants is generally top-heavy, with the former formulating the policies, and the peasants merely responding to these initiatives.⁷⁴ It is perhaps against this basic but fundamental difference of definitions and priorities that opposition to villagization must be understood.

Villagisation and resistance to it is not a novelty in postcolonial Africa. It had been tried in neighboring Zambia as village regrouping programs and in Tanzania's *ujamaa* policy, whose failures, due largely to resistance from rural communities, have already been thoroughly documented.⁷⁵ Research work in other parts of Zimbabwe where the villagization program was attempted reported acts of resistance to the plans of relocation of homesteads and consolidation of villages.⁷⁶ Villagers displayed a whole range of resistance tactics including physical attacks on state officials who came to peg the new homes; the removal of pegs from home fields and residential yards; and the use of the media to convey grievances to higher levels. Villagers also angrily confronted councilors at village meetings whom they accused for not properly consulting the "project beneficiaries" over aspects of

the project. Expressions of resistance sometimes took on innovative forms including making officials the objects of witchcraft, boycotting meetings and so on. The outcome of peasant resistance was that the implementation of the program was either suspended or postponed indefinitely.⁷⁷

It would, however, be grossly inaccurate to generalize opposition to the program. In Gokwe there was some ambivalence on the part of large livestock owners regarding the program. Some of them supported villagization because they genuinely believed that it was the only way to reserve the grazing areas that were increasingly being threatened by “hoards of illegal settlers.” They also believed that they would benefit disproportionately from the proposed grazing schemes. One relatively wealthy informant said he supported the program “100 percent because we do not have grazing area. We use cattle for ploughing and we need grazing area and this program supports that idea.”⁷⁸ Another informant indicated that support for the program among residents in his village was probably even: 50-50. “Those with cattle want it in order to be assured of grazing land. Those without cattle don’t care,” he declared.⁷⁹ “I welcome the program in order to have adequate grazing area. I will be the number one to accept it because I have a big forest area for grazing area which I want reserved,” responded another informant.⁸⁰

In Svisvi communal area, the residents were so disturbed by large-scale illegal settlements and the lack of grazing area that they appointed a delegation in 1991 to hold an urgent meeting with the district administrator to ask for the villagization program in their area. They argued that because of lack of grazing as a result of people being settled in the grazing area “our cattle have become terribly thin due to lack of grazing and if the situation prevails for another two months, hundreds of cattle will die.”⁸¹ To make matters worse, the people who had illegally been settled in the grazing area since 1988 did not want to see cattle near their homesteads and fields. A boy had been beaten to death the previous year in the area after he had driven cattle in someone’s field due to lack of grazing.⁸² The death of eleven cattle due to poisoning in grazing lands added to the pressure to send the delegation to request for villagization. Veterinary officers put the cause of death as “chemical poisoning.” Svisvi residents accused people settled in the grazing area of poisoning the cattle, presumably because they had eaten from their fields. Svisvi generally became the home of intense grazing disputes, which led the delegation to demand villagization urgently before “all our cattle are poisoned.”⁸³ In Sai communal lands, the people also “opted for villagization” on the understanding that it was “expected to speed-up development projects in the area. Farmers resolved that for purposes of accelerated development, grazing and arable land had to be clearly demarcated.” They believed that “it was Government intention to provide services as roads, water, electricity and others, but these would not be implemented without planned boundaries.”⁸⁴

Landless households of local origin supported the program in the hope that the standardization of land holdings would bring about equitable redistribution of land. Some supported the program because they felt village heads were taking the law into their hands by allocating land in grazing and other forbidden areas. One informant reported that village heads were notorious for defying government laws by allowing people to plough anywhere, even in grazing areas, as long as they were given money.⁸⁵ Such informants fully supported the idea that laws pertaining to land allocation should come from the government and should be observed by everyone and strictly adhered to. There were complaints from many informants that village heads were allocating land in defiance of government laws. Such people supported the program in the sincere hope that it would bring some sanity and

perhaps equality in the allocation of land. These sentiments were expressed mostly by people who thought that village heads were biased in favor of their friends and relatives to whom they allocated large and better quality pieces of land. To these people therefore, with villagization, in which “unbiased” government officials allocated land, an area previously owned by one person could easily accommodate more people, which would help in easing land shortages.⁸⁶

Many villagers expressed mixed feelings about the program because they did not know exactly what it entailed and what benefits, if any, they would derive from the program because it was never fully explained to them.⁸⁷ For many households, the complex pattern of getting access to land through land grabbing, outright purchase, renting, borrowing, marriages, and inheritance that characterized land access in the frontier region of Gokwe, would be drastically affected by the government’s proposal to standardize plots. Even though the standardization of plots was likely to benefit young household heads to secure permanent access to fields, some large landholders were likely to oppose the standardization of landholdings for this would disturb the patronage-client relationship through which landless households had been able to access.⁸⁸ Village heads who benefited from the sale of land to new settlers objected to being moved into villages for this would spell the loss of power to allocate land, particularly to new immigrants who were more than willing to part with cash in exchange for a piece of land. Allocation of land to immigrants by village heads became an economic as well as a political strategy in the sense that village heads received substantial payments for the allocation of land. It was a political strategy in that it served to increase the strength of the lineage. Grazing and forest areas were sold and allocated to immigrants as a way of pre-empting the claims of neighboring lineages upon the same territory.⁸⁹

Some village heads became notorious for selling land for these reasons. Mtanhaurwa, a village head of Mtanhaurwa village under Chief Njelele, voiced concern about his people being “pushed into villages.”⁹⁰ He was well known for selling land and had previously been in trouble with the Council for illegally selling land. In a letter to the DA, one anonymous resident complained about the activities of the village head: “The grazing area is gone. The village head is selling land. He used to sell at \$50, but now he is charging \$1,000 or even \$2,000. Is it allowed to sell the soil? Help us please before we damage each other with axes and spears. If you do not sort out this problem we are starting a war.”⁹¹ In another letter, an anonymous writer complained that: “Is the village head allowed to sell land? . . . The village head sold land in the grazing area to people retrenched from work at ZISCO because of ESAP. All the grazing area is gone. The fields are sold to those with money for as much as \$1,000, or \$1,500, \$2,000.”⁹²

The illegal activities of this village head became the subject of much correspondence between the Council, the district administrator’s office, and the ward councilor as well as the police. When he was summoned to the Council offices he denounced the chief and councilor of the area and declared that the land belonged to him to do as he pleased. He did not turn up for the meetings called for by the Council and was taken to the police station where he was later released. He refused to pay the \$150 land dispute service charge that the Council charged for attending to land dispute matters.⁹³ One informant expressed bitter opposition to the whole villagization program and accused the council of being dominated by commercial farmers “who are taking advantage of the communal councilors’ lack of education to further their own interests.” The informant continued with regard to the land reorganization concept: “As far as I am concerned this is just another ploy to divert attention

from the need to designate more land for the communal people who are already overcrowded, reorganize themselves while some people still hold on to vast tracts of land.”⁹⁴

Councilors and VIDCOs were obliged to implement and enforce villagization, but their structures were weak and faced challenges from “traditional” institutions of village heads, headmen and chiefs. The association of councilors and VIDCOs with unpopular “development” programs further undermined their credibility in the eyes of villagers while the credibility of traditional leaders was enhanced because they identified themselves with the interests of villagers most of who opposed the program. Moore’s observations in the Eastern Highlands apply here. His informants told him that the general feeling there was that the village heads were responsible for the allocation of land and that the involvement of “outsiders” in the allocation of villagization land was way out of step with the “traditional” practice. Village heads were supposed to allocate land because they were more informed and familiar with the boundaries of their territories and also knew all the inhabitants of the villages.⁹⁵ In contrast, council members who received a government salary were perceived as imposing law on the land. One informant even indicted the government for not following the “proper African culture” and for embracing the white man’s culture of pegging fields. Rather than choosing their own sites for settlement, settlers were assigned them in the villagization program. Moore’s observations in the Eastern Highlands resettlement scheme apply here as well. He noted that: “When officials pegged fields, as they did during centralization, the NLHA, and in the resettlement and villagisation schemes, they fixed villagers to a single holding. Two forms of freedom were denied: settlers’ selection of their own site and the cultivation of multiple fields spatially separated.”⁹⁶

In general, in those areas where there was implementation of some sort, the program had a disastrous effect and it ran the same risk as the LHA of generating resentment and resistance and of being ignored and unenforceable in practice. The program involved complex physical exercises, disruptive movement of people on the ground, and the massive dislocation of production in the short run, and the disruption of community patterns of life.⁹⁷ Instead of lessening land disputes and environmental degradation, the program was likely to aggravate tensions among rural communities. For the program to succeed it was important for the planners to extract commitments from politicians and officials and agreements from the people regarding support for the key aspects of the plan, and this would limit potential adverse consequences. Such agreements were, however, likely to be disputed. As the debates on the pros and cons of the villagization raged on, land disputes and land degradation continued to plague the district largely as a result of increased immigration and resultant land shortages.

By January 1997, the situation in the district as a whole was sufficiently worrying to warrant the provincial governor’s intervention. He wrote to the DA that: “This office is taking cognizance of the problems affecting the status and welfare of the people in your district. We have received a number of reports about the problems in many of your wards . . . I am looking for at least a whole month to spend in . . . Gokwe to ensure that there shall be no recurrence of such problems in future.”⁹⁸ One wonders what sort of solutions the governor had in mind and how he intended to solve the complex land dispute problem in the district within a month. What is clear however is that 1997 was significant for the country because land invasions on a national level began in earnest in that year. Whatever the governor had in mind was overtaken by these events of a momentous nature. The year witnessed what Alexander calls “shifts in the nature of authority over the land as it [the land issue] was so radically unsettled once again.”⁹⁹ According to her, “A closely orchestrated

process of remaking the state took place in which the land stood center stage."¹⁰⁰ Efforts by the state since independence, including interventions in communal area land use, i.e. villagization, had failed in redressing the land demands of the rural populace and in providing a basis for state building including.¹⁰¹

A number of political and economic challenges forced the ZANU(PF) government to end the status quo that had prevailed up until then. One was the birth of a new opposition party, Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) launched out of an urban based trade union movement which began to challenge the political dominance of ZANU(PF). The new political opposition threatened the ruling party and in response the government sought to revalue the "land question" and to seek new means of state building. The other challenge was that in late 1997, the government was also forced to yield to the demands of veterans of the 1970s guerilla war for large sums of unbudgeted payments as compensation for their role in the liberation war. This fiscal expense together with the Zimbabwean army's involvement in the civil war in the Republic of Congo in 1998 increased the budget deficit, which led the government to default on its loan payment. As a result, the IMF withheld financial support and additional aid.¹⁰² These major two financial commitments placed a huge burden on the economy.

In November 1997, the government used its power under the Land Acquisition Act to designate 1,471 farms for compulsory acquisition. This was followed by a spate of occupations of commercial farms, a development that spread countrywide up to 2000. Communal and resettlement areas residents as well as farm workers were largely involved in these occupations.¹⁰³ The land occupations were a clear testimony that existing land reform and resettlement program had failed and that the residents in both communal and resettlement areas had become increasingly impatient over their land grievances. They saw the government as indifferent to their land problem. Scholars are generally agreed that the land occupations during this period differed significantly from previous ones in that they were motivated more by political than by social, moral, or economic considerations.¹⁰⁴

The land occupations started in February 2000, soon after a referendum had rejected the government's proposed Draft Constitution. The main opposition MDC and civil organizations had campaigned against the draft. The opposition performed well in parliamentary elections, which were held in June. These two political events shaped the dynamics of the land occupations. Developments from then onwards overtook the villagization program, whose momentum was already waning, as the government focused on the fast track land program that was to define the future agrarian transformation of the country.

Conclusion

The article has critically examined the rationales behind the post- independent Zimbabwean state introducing consolidated villages in the communal areas from the mid-1980s, yet such programs proved unpopular during the colonial period and were rejected by the rural populace. The article noted the striking parallels between colonial and post-colonial land-use reforms and proceeded to explain why this has been the case. It has also been observed that among other things the reasons for land use reforms range from the desire by the postcolonial state to assert its authority over the rural population to the aesthetic dimension of having faith in the representation of order. Scholars have argued that it is not only

political control that drives states to introduce such programs, but also a sincere belief in supposedly “modern” “scientific” land-use practices.

A central focus has been to examine how village communities in Gokwe South District reacted to the villagization program. The paper is critical of assertions by some scholars who have suggested that such programs end up buttressing bureaucratic state power. On the contrary, my research indicated a much more nuanced pattern of responses from the Gokwe rural communities, which varied from “acceptance” of the program based on a narrow understanding to outright rejection. More important for this article is that villagization opened up some spaces for the rural communities to critique and comment on the post-colonial government. Cumulatively, these varied responses forced the eventual abandonment of the program. However, the program was completely overshadowed by the land invasions, which began in earnest in 1997 and dominated the Zimbabwean landscape for the greater part of the first decade of the twenty-first century.

Notes

- 1 Gokwe has been chosen for a number of reasons. First, I carried out extensive field work between 1996 and 1997 for my PhD and have previously published some work on Gokwe (see Nyambara 2001a, 2001b, and 20002). Second, Gokwe has an interesting and unique colonial and post-colonial history of immigration, which made the land issue very critical. It was perhaps one of the few regions of the country that was not occupied by white settlers for a long time after 1890 because of its unattractive geography. It is hot, dry, tsetse-infested, and malarial.
- 2 Literature on centralization schemes in colonial Zimbabwe include Kramer 1998; Munro 1998; Bessant 1987; and Palmer 1977.
- 3 This study benefitted enormously from insights of Robins’ study (1988) of similar issues in the Gwaranyemba Communal Area of Matabeleland.
- 4 Munro 1998, p. 281.
- 5 Ferguson 1994; Escobar 1995.
- 6 Ferguson 1994, p. 254.
- 7 Robins 1988; see the abstract.
- 8 See Nyambara 2001, 2002b.
- 9 For additional information on massive retrenchment from formal employment as a result of ESAP, see Pangeti 1995.
- 10 Mutizwa-Mangiza 1992, p. 113; Government of Zimbabwe CSO 1984, pp. 75-6.
- 11 See Nyambara 2001.
- 12 “Disaster Looms in Gokwe,” *Herald*, 28 January 1997.
- 13 *Ibid.*
- 14 *Ibid.*
- 15 “Gokwe peasant farmers do not know what environmental degradation is all about,” *Cheziya-Gokwe Post*, vol. 6 no. 8 (July 1992).
- 16 Interview with Mr. Goto, Gokwe Agricultural Extension Office, Gokwe Center, 26 October 1997.
- 17 “Land degradation is threatening Gokwe,” *Herald*, 2 September 1997.
- 18 Interview with the DA of Gokwe South District, Gokwe Center, 24 October 1997.

- 19 See for instance, Gokwe Rural Council: XC/173/31, Disputes and Complaints, Provincial Governor, Midlands to DA, 9 December 1996; Gokwe Rural District Council Office, Anonymous to DA, 3 October 1995.
- 20 Gokwe Rural Council, J. J. Ndhlovu to DA, Gokwe South District, 9 July 1995.
- 21 Sebungwe Regional Study, 1982, cited in de Swardt 1984.
- 22 Bromley and Jones 1966.
- 23 Gokwe South Residents to DA, no date (DA's stamp indicates he received it on 13 June 1995); capital letters are in the original.
- 24 Gokwe South Residents to DA, 13 June 1995.
- 25 Leach and Mearns 1996, p. 4.
- 26 Gokwe Rural District Council Office, Gokwe, Minutes of 4th Meeting of Council Natural Resources and Resettlement, January 1994.
- 27 Gokwe Rural District Council Office, Gokwe, Minutes of 16th Meeting, 17 October 1996.
- 28 Cousins 1987, pp. 20-21.
- 29 See Gasper 1990; Cousins 1987, pp. 20-21.
- 30 Alexander 2000, p. 137, citing Palmer 1977.
- 31 Government of Zimbabwe 1981, 1982a.
- 32 Government of Zimbabwe 1981, para. 687.
- 33 Government of Zimbabwe 1982, para. 270.
- 34 Cited in Alexander 1994, p. 332.
- 35 See, for instance Bush and Cliffe, 1984; Potts and Mutambirwa 1990.
- 36 Masst 1996; Mandivamba et al. 2006.
- 37 Government of Zimbabwe 1986.
- 38 Government of Zimbabwe 1982, p. 23, cited in Drinkwater 1987, p. 89.
- 39 For example, see Moyo 1995; Bratton 1987; Weiner 1989; Palmer 1990.
- 40 Whitsun Foundation 1983; World Bank 1986.
- 41 Ibid., p. 288.
- 42 Munro 1998, p. 260.
- 43 Beinart 2000, p. 275.
- 44 Munro 1998, p. 261.
- 45 Agritex 1988. See also Alexander 1994, pp. 340-42.
- 46 Alexander 2006, p. 121.
- 47 Agritex, pp. 6-7.
- 48 Cheziya-Gokwe District Council, Natural Resources Board Workshop, 6 November 1991.
- 49 Cited in Alexander 1988, p. 340.
- 50 Interview with Mrs. Chinho, Executive Officer, GSRDC, Gokwe Center, 17 August 1997.
- 51 Ibid.
- 52 Agritex, p. 6. The relationship between the new local government structures and the rural communities has been explored by many scholars; see for instance. Mutizwa-Mangiza 1990, pp. 423-35; Murombedzi 1990. Gasper 1991, pp. 7-50; Brand 1991, pp. 79-96.
- 53 Alexander 2006, p. 164.
- 54 See Marongwe 2002, p. 58.
- 55 "DAs find difficulty in relating to new rural district councillors," *The Sunday Mail*, 21

- January 1996.
- 56 "MPs Question the role of DAs," *Herald*, 29 August 1997.
- 57 Ibid.
- 58 Personal interview with DA, Gokwe Center, 24 October 1997.
- 59 Personal Interview with Michael Masaga, Chief Executive Officer, Gokwe Rural District Council. 23 October 1997.
- 60 Agritex, pp. 6-7. In this position paper, Agritex enumerates some constraints and problems in implementing the program.
- 61 Gokwe Rural District Council: Minutes of the 4th Meeting of the Gokwe Rural District Council Natural Resources Board and Resettlement, 20 January 1994.
- 62 "Villagisation Programme Disregarded", *Cheziya-Gokwe Post*, vol. 1, no. 21, February 1989.
- 63 "River-bank Cultivation Problem," in *Cheziya-Gokwe Post*, vol. 1, no. 21, February 1989.
- 64 Personal interviews with Frank Madwala, Nelson Madwala, Doraushe, Gokwe, 18 April 1997; Erasmus Madziwa, Marungu, 22 July 1997; Jorum Kufandada, Mazalahedwa, Gokwe, 21 April 1997.
- 65 Government of Zimbabwe 1994, p. 38.
- 66 These were common problems often mentioned by rural communities wherever villagization was introduced. See for instance, Robins 1988.
- 67 Brand 1994, pp. 67-68.
- 68 Cited in Ranger 1993, p. 379.
- 69 Ibid.
- 70 Agritex 1988, p.1.
- 71 Gasper 1990, p. 20.
- 72 Ibid.
- 73 Moris 1981, p. 122.
- 74 See writings on *Ujamaa*, for instance Fortmann 1990, p. 287.
- 75 For village regrouping see Kay 1967. There is a large body of literature on *Ujamaa*. See for example, von Freyhold 1979; Hyden 1980; Coulson 1982; Fortmann 1990. A more recent critical analysis of *Ujamaa* is that of Scott 1998, pp. 223-61.
- 76 See, for instance, research work by Drinkwater 1991; Alexander 2006; Cousin 1987; Derman 1992; Robins 1988; Moore 2005; Spierenburg 2004.
- 77 Robins 1988, pp. 273, 290-91; Spierenburg 2004.
- 78 Personal interview with Madhumbu, Marungu, 30 October 1997.
- 79 Personal interview with Calvin Chipoperwa, Councilor, Marungu, 31 October 1997.
- 80 Personal interview with Jordan Mutero, Marungu, 29 October 1997.
- 81 "Grazing: ten men delegation to meet Gokwe DA," *Cheziya-Gokwe Post*, vol. 8, no. 4, 1990.
- 82 Ibid.; see also a heading like "Boy beaten to death over stray cattle," *Cheziya-Gokwe Post*, vol. 7, no. 9, 1990.
- 83 "Eleven Svisvi cattle die of poisoning," *Cheziya-Gokwe Post*, vol 8, no. 5, February 1991.
- 84 "Sai Farmers Opt for villagization," *Cheziya-Gokwe Post*, Vol. 7, no.1, 1990.
- 85 Personal interview with Tawonesa Fakasi, Gokwe, 17 July 1997.
- 86 Personal interview with Norman Jore, Marungu, 20 July 1997.
- 87 Many informants expressed ignorance about the program: Personal interviews with

- Abe Mafa, Marungu , 21 July 1997; Mrs. Mabenga, Marungu, 21 July 1997; Molly Dube, Mudzongwe, 19 July 1997.
- 88 These methods of accessing land in Gokwe are dealt with in detail elsewhere by the author. See Nyambara 2001; 2002.
- 89 For similar cases from other parts of Africa see, Hecht 1985.
- 90 Personal interview with John Mtanhaurwa, Mutanhaurwa village, Gokwe, 23 October 1997.
- 91 Gokwe Rural Council: Anonymous to DA November 1994.
- 92 Gokwe Rural Council: Anonymous to DA November 1994.
- 93 Gokwe Rural Council: Anonymous to DA November 1994.
- 94 Personal interview with DA, Gokwe, 24 October 1997.
- 95 Moore 2005, p. 262.
- 96 Ibid.
- 97 Cliffe 1988, p.14.
- 98 Gokwe South Rural Council: XC/173/31/: Disputes and Complaints, Provincial Governor, Midlands Province to DA, 27 January 1997.
- 99 Alexander 2006, p. 180.
- 100 Ibid.
- 101 Ibid., pp. 180-81.
- 102 Moyo et al. 2008, p. 14.
- 103 Marongwe in Hammar et al. 2003, p. 163.
- 104 Ibid., p. 165.

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