Article

The Agrarian Question in Contemporary Zimbabwe

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Abstract

The reinvestment of rural agrarian surplus is driving capital accumulation in Zimbabwe's countryside, providing a scope to foster national (re-) industrialisation and job creation. Contrary to Bernstein's view, the Agrarian Question on capital remains unresolved in Southern Africa. Even though export finance, accessed through contract farming, provides an impetus for export cash crop production, and the government-mediated command agriculture supports food crop production, the reinvestment of proceeds from the sale of agricultural commodities is now driving capital accumulation. Drawing from empirical data, gathered through surveys and in-depth interviews from Hwedza district and Mvurwi farming area in Mazowe district in Zimbabwe, the findings of this study revealed the pre-eminence of the Agrarian Question, linked to an ongoing agrarian transition in Zimbabwe. This agrarian capital elaborates rural-urban interconnections and economic development, following two decades of de-industrialisation in Zimbabwe.

Keywords: Agrarian Question; agrarian surplus; re-industrialisation; commodity production

Introduction

Zimbabwe implemented an extensive Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP), whose qualitative impact on the Agrarian Question remains scarcely debated. Reflecting on the Agrarian Question is an opportune moment for Zimbabwe, given Bernstein's (1996; 2000; 2002; 2003; 2004; 2006) insights that in the contemporary era, global neo-liberal capitalism has resolved the Agrarian Question of capital, such that land is no longer necessary to ensure industrialisation. Moreover, Bernstein (2004; 2006) adds that the Agrarian Question on capital, which serves as a basis for accumulation and industrialisation on a world scale, notwithstanding that it remains unresolved in the ‘'South’', is no longer relevant. Bernstein (2004, 202) suggests that there “might be a

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(new) Agrarian Question of labour, separated from its historic connection to that of capital", which manifests in the form of struggles for land.

The Agrarian Question in Africa is often hinged on Eurocentric epistemological traditions, based on the classical agrarian transition and capitalist developments that took place in Europe (Amin 1972; Mafeje 1991; Moyo 2007; Shije 2009; 2018). For instance, Bernstein (2006, 450) affirms Marx's (1867/1976) theorisation of capitalist development trajectory, connected to the transformation of the pre-capitalist agrarian social formations of predatory landed property and the peasantry to capitalist social relations of production, which is ''the basis of an unprecedented development of the productive forces in farming.''

The industrialisation thesis underlying logic is that agriculture plays a central role in modern economic development, and that the attainment of capitalist social relations and agrarian surplus[1] define the resolution of the Agrarian Question. There is, therefore, a sense in which the core dimensions of the classic Agrarian Question are the success of agrarian transition in social transformation and technical development of agriculture (Bernstein 2004). Kautsky (1899/1988, 12) concurs with this interpretation, and has earlier posited that it entails ''whether, and how, capital is seizing hold of agriculture, revolutionalising it, making old forms of production and property untenable and creating the necessity for new ones.''

Bernstein (2004, 200; 2006, 449) argues that the ''classic'' Agrarian Question is one of capital, and of labour. He argues that because of contemporary globalisation, as well as the massive development of the productive forces in the centre, the ''classic'' Agrarian Question to the industrialisation process is no longer essential for international capital; nor is in existence for national capitals. In this sense; again, as Bernstein (2006) observes; globalisation, notwithstanding primitive accumulation and class differentiation inherent in capitalist development, may have led to the resolution of the Agrarian Question of capital, leaving out that of labour. Among others, Bernstein's (2015, 455–56) "10 key questions on the agrarian transition'' and the commodification of land and peasant dispossession, the formation of new classes of landed property, accumulation trajectories, the significance of agrarian capital, such as contract farming, the impact of agrarian capital on the industrialisation and the development of the home market are still relevant, 19 years after the implementation of the FTLRP.

The Agrarian Question is, therefore, privileged on alternative formulations and dimensions within the Marxian political economy (Moyo, Jha, and Yeros 2013). For the global ''South'', the Agrarian Question entails industrialisation that is unencumbered by

[1] Agrarian surplus refers to the surplus value obtained from the sale of agricultural produce, in excess of the cost of social reproduction. Whereas Agrarian capital is often referred to as finance capital flowing from international merchants. In this article the term deliberately includes surplus value reinvested in agriculture by the farmers.

European whims and, therefore, incorporates the national question, where accumulation sovereignty, gender equity, regional integration, and environmental sustainability are integral. In Asia and Africa, colonial imperialism scaffolded capitalist development, tied to capitalist monopolists ' tendency to export surplus value through the payment of low wages and export mispricing. Moyo and Yeros (2007) argue that the affirmation of the internationalist impulse is perceived to be above and beyond the state, where the borderless empire is intended to obscure the structural nature of unequal development and the states-system under the centre-periphery divide.

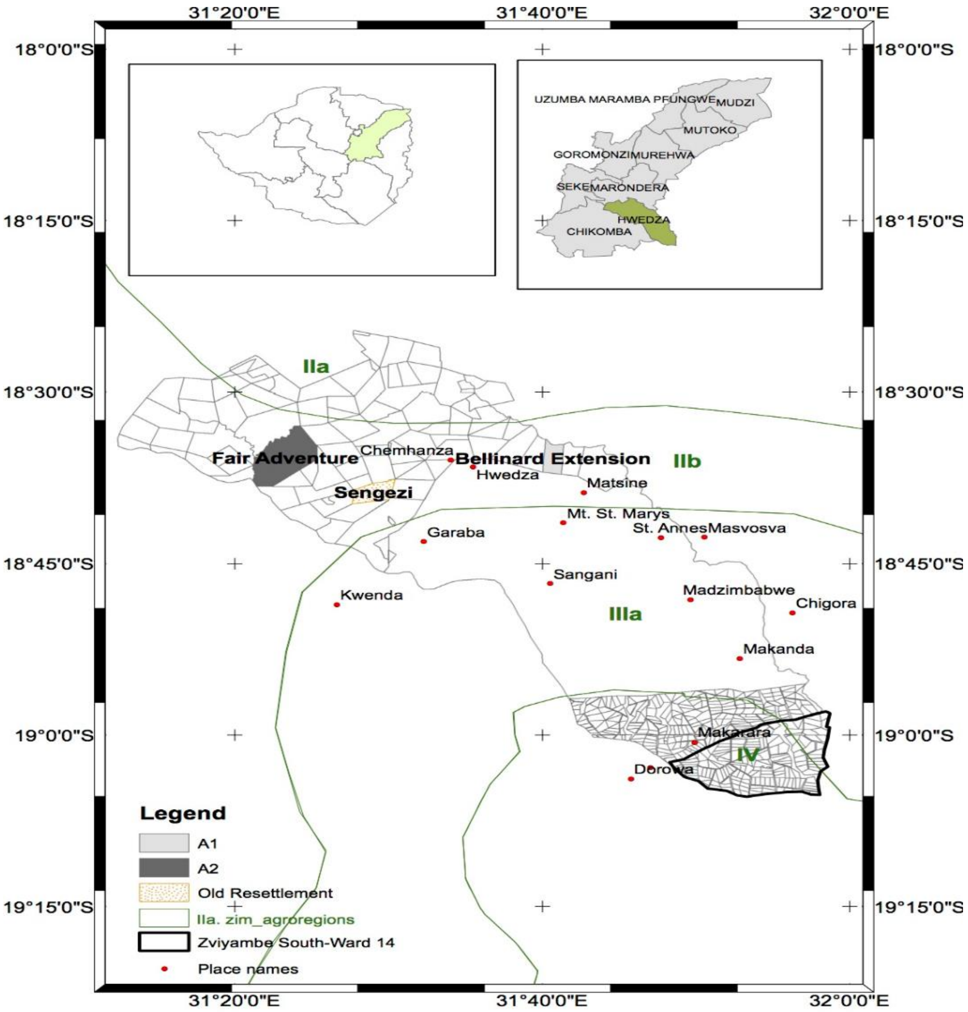
To this end, scholars such as Amin 1972; (Moyo) and Yeros (2007), and Shije (2009) emphasise the link between the Agrarian Question and the national question, both as products of primitive accumulation under imperialism. Moyo (2007) argues that through overproduction in the world industry and agriculture, and financialisation of the capital, the classic Agrarian Question has only partially been resolved. Observations of diversification into the informal sector are merely survival strategies by the peasantry, within the disarticulated home economies (Shije 2009). For Moyo (2004, 1), many countries have not yet industrialised, and the international division of labour in industrial and agricultural production persists. This has led to the persistence of the Agrarian Question.

Mafeje (2003a, 1) laments how agrarian studies in sub-Saharan Africa are to the welter of Eurocentric theoretical construct prejudices, ‘'derived from experiences from other continents; namely Europe, Latin America, and Asia.’' First, the homogenisation and universalising of contexts undermined the indigenous understanding of land tenure systems in sub-Saharan Africa. Second, conditions in Africa differed from those in Europe; for instance, the phenomena of landlordism did not subsist and as such, land rent was non-existent. Mafeje (2003a), therefore, proposes that the Agrarian Question in Africa should concern itself with, firstly, how to modify land tenure systems and modes of social organisation for production to meet the current needs, including the needs of women. Thirdly, the Agrarian Question should address the relationship between the state and the peasants, and therefore, invest agrarian surplus in rural development. The third proposal should look at the implications of the collapse of the large-scale farming development strategy on poverty reduction, and on the environment. Mafeje (2003a), therefore, underlines the need for a political economy approach that would discern the implications of the rural-urban divide on development. This article opportunely re-visits the Agrarian Question in Zimbabwe and relies on emerging evidence 19 years after the implementation of the FTLRP.

According to Bernstein (2004, 210), once capitalist-landed property and agrarian capital have replaced the pre-capitalist landed property, land reform becomes irrelevant. However, he acknowledges the uniqueness of the Zimbabwean case, given its colonial ‘'property relations, production and economic power.’' Over 10 million hectares (ha) of land was transferred from 4 500 large-scale commercial farmers to over 300 000 smallholders under the A1 villagised model and the 22 500 medium-scale farmers under a capitalist A2 model (Moyo 2011) under the programme. Bernstein's (2004) assessment of this reconfiguration coincided with the early post-FTLRP transition period and compels for re-visiting.

Notwithstanding Moyo et al. (2013), the constriction of the minimalistic nature of Bernstein's (2015) approach, re-visiting the themes and questions he raised on the formation of agrarian capitalist land property, agricultural capital and wage labour, through social struggles in the countryside are critical. Critically, and also relevant today is an investigation of the generation of agrarian surplus and its utilisation towards advancing rural-urban interconnections through industrialisation and the development of a home market. Relying on surveys conducted in Mvurwi and Hwedza districts in Zimbabwe, as well as some in-depth interviews, this article assesses the Agrarian Question in Zimbabwe.

The Hwedza district is situated 227 kilometres in the southern part of the Mvurwi farming area in Mazowe district, which is located approximately 100 kilometres north-south of Harare. The 2016 Hwedza district survey involved 230 households and the 2017–2019 Mvurwi Agricultural Policy Research in Africa (APRA) survey involved 310 A1 households. A study was also carried out in Hwedza district, involving four agro-ecological regions (NR IIa, IIb, III, and IV), while in Mvurwi area, the study was carried out in IIb as shown in Map 1a. Twenty in-depth interviews were conducted in each district. The two districts specialise in tobacco, maize, soya and sugar beans, as well as sweet and Irish potatoes production. They were both the sites of the early tobacco production in the early 1900s (Hodder-Williams 1983; Rubert 1998), as well as extensive resettlement under the FTLRP.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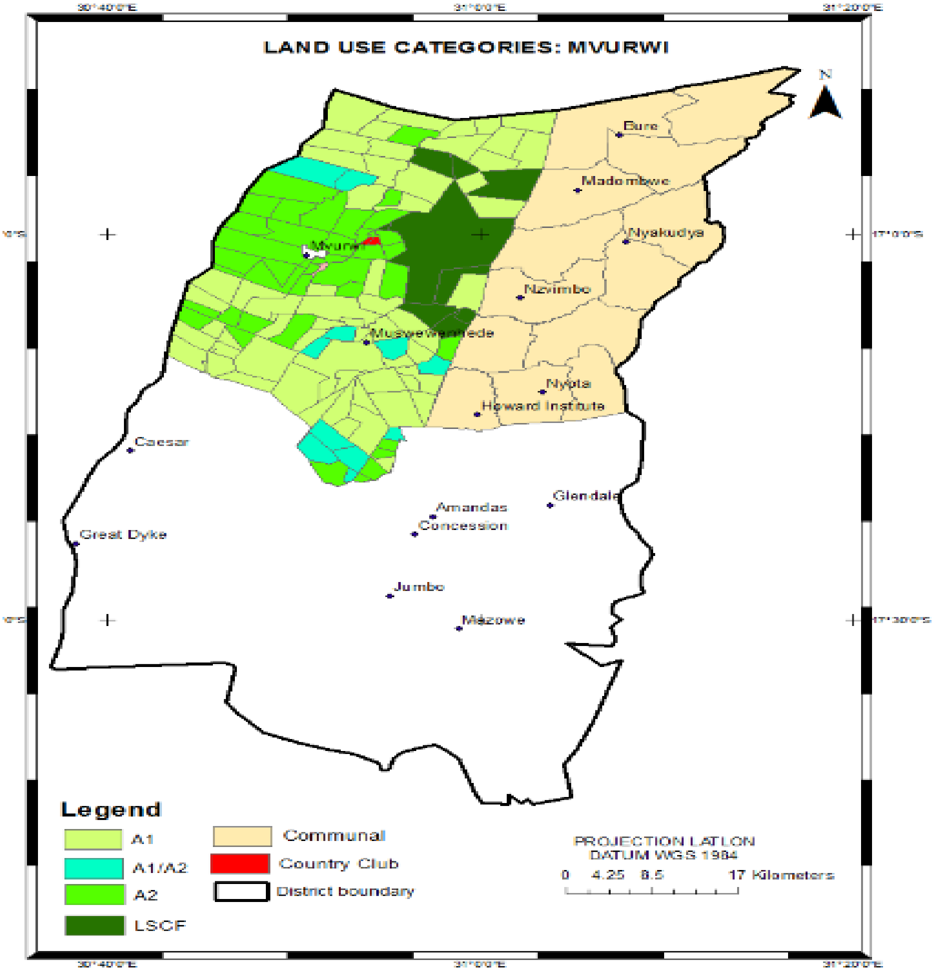


Map 1 and 2: Agro-ecological regions and settlement sectors studied – Hwedza district and Mvurwi farming area

Source: Author (using the data from the Ministry of Lands 2017)

The rest of this article is structured as follows: first is the context and background, highlighting how the implementation of the FTLRP reconfigured agrarian relations, thereby reshaping financing and production patterns in farming. In the next section, the article analyses empirical data on the reinvestment of agricultural surplus in agricultural commodity production. The section also discusses the findings and their implications for the Agrarian Question. The discussions are linked with the broader debate as it pertains to the global South and sub-Saharan Africa. The conclusion is proffered in the next section.

Post-FTLRP Changing Agrarian Relations and the Agrarian Question

At independence in 1980, global geopolitical and economic considerations, as well as the Lancaster house settlement perpetuated skewed land ownership patterns (Bernstein 2004; Moyo 2011; Shonhe 2018; Weiner 1988). Neoliberal economic policies also caused a delay in the resolution of the Agrarian Question (Moyo 2018) and raised concerns over economic risks (Kinsey 1999). Until the promulgation of the 1992 Land Acquisition Act (Chapter 20:10), which prompted the gazetting of 1 471 large-landed properties for compulsory acquisition (Bernstein 2004), the demand for land by war veterans and the rural social movement has not been met, due to state-initiated opposition, often characterised by violence (Moyo 2000; Sadomba 2008). Yet, as Moyo (2004, 1) observes, ‘‘Land reform is a fundamental dimension of the agrarian question, while the agrarian question is a significant dimension of the national question.’'

As such, notwithstanding, resistance from white commercial farmers and their alliance in ‘'the technocratic arm of the state, new business elites, donors and external investors’' (Shonhe 2018), 48 000 CA households had been resettled by 1989 in the first phase of the land reform programme (Cliffe 2000). Between 1990 and 1997, only 20 000 households were resettled (Bernstein 2004)—resulting in greater demand for land by war veterans and the rural population (Sadomba 2008).

The implementation of the FTLRP reversed the skewed land ownership patterns, inherited from colonialism and dominated by ‘'6000 white farmers and a few foreign and nationally-owned agro-industrial estates, alongside 700 000 peasant families and 8000 small-scale black commercial farmers’’ (Moyo 2011, 941). The land was transferred mostly to landless peasants and urban dwellers (Moyo 2011). The transfer of the 10 million hectares of land to the peasantry and middle-scale farmers, as shown in Table 1, has ramifications for the Agrarian Question in Zimbabwe.

Table 1: Estimated landholdings by farmer groups: 1980, 2000 and 2010

Farm categories	Farms/households (000's)						Area held (000 ha)						Average Farm size (ha)		
	1980		2000		2010		1980*		2000*		2010*		1980	2000	2010
	No	%	No	%	No	%	Ha	%	ha	%	Ha	%			
Family farms	700	98	1,125	99	1,321	98	16,400	49	20,067	61	25,826	79	23	18	20
Small/middle commercial farms	8.5	1	8.5	1	30.9	2	1,400	4	1,400	4	4,400	13	165	165	142
Large farms	5.4	1	4.956	0.4	1.371	0.1	13,000	39	8,691.6	27	1,156.9	4	2,407	1,754	844
Agro-Estates	0.296	0.1	0.296	0.02	0.247	0.02	2,567	8	2,567	8	1,494.6	5	8,672	8,672	6,051
Total	714	100	1,139	100	1,353	100	33,367	100	32,726	100	32,878	100	46.7	28.7	24.3

Sources: Moyo (2011) *1: Combines communal, old resettlement and A1 areas. *2: Combines A2 and SSCF areas.

Note: A1 is villagised resettled plots, while A2s are middle-sized resettled capitalist farms

On its own, the land question is a critical dimension of the Agrarian Question, and both are vital for national development and the resolution of the national question (the unresolved issues of land alienation, political exclusion, racial domination, and exclusionary industrialisation) (see Moyo 2007; Yeros 2002). First, while the implementation of the FTLRP partially resolved the land question, its radicalised nature attracted economic sanctions and capital flight, which only made the Agrarian Question more pertinent. In part, this affected the input and output markets for the agricultural sector negatively due to shortages of inputs and the closure of European commodity markets.

Second, social and political contradictions caused by the implementation of heterodox economic policies involving redistributive and neo-liberal policies forestalled the resolution of the Agrarian Question and prolonged the national question after the implementation of the FTLRP, leading Zimbabwe to contend with economic and social crises (Moyo and Yeros 2007). Even though an attempt was made to transfer the means of production to the indigenous population, disarticulated production and circulation of commodities ensured a continued primitive accumulation model.

Arguably, land redistribution and alterations in tenure systems generate shifts in commodity production patterns, capital accumulation processes, and power structures in the countryside (Mafeje 2003b; Moyo 2007). The broadened ownership and production base engender an accumulation model that impacts on the Agrarian Question dissimilar to the trajectory followed in Europe and advanced by Bernstein and others. In spite of primitive accumulation, the peasants are accumulating some assets and gaining food sovereignty.

Marx (1867/1976) earlier proposed a linear progression model, informed by classic developments in England, where primitive accumulation constituted the historical process of separating the producer from the means of production. This earlier view held that some producers were to be "hurled onto the labour-market as free, unprotected and rightless proletarians" (Marx1867/1976, 876). The impact of the FTLRP and the ongoing class formation in rural Zimbabwe disapprove this phenomenon.

Primitive accumulation was premised on the dispossession of land from the yeomanry, reconfiguring relations of production by creating a property-less rural waged labour (Marx 1976). The agricultural wage labour would as such, confront the capitalist tenant-farmers operating beneath the dominant landlord class (Akram and Kay 2010b; Byre 2009). Some scholars considerably criticised this understanding (Kautsky 1988; Lenin 1899/1964). Kautsky (as quoted in Akram-Lodhi and Kay 2010a, 188), argues that "the resolution of the agrarian question could take multiple and diverse forms, rooted in the specific circumstances of particular farming practices, agricultural processes, and the conditions by which surplus labour was extracted from the direct producer."

Fourthly, the agrarian economy became more extroverted, because the newly-settled small- and medium-scale farmers focused on export crop production, as the two case studies have shown. As such, while arguing against a pre-deterministic agrarian transformation in Africa, increased commodification under disarticulated and extroverted agricultural commodity production patterns among the peasantry persisted (see Akram-Lodhi and Kay 2010a). Contract farming, which fronts export capital finance into periphery economies, and undermines the home markets, tends to propel primitive accumulation under these circumstances.

Contract farming is an arrangement where firms and farmers enter into a non-transferable contract that specifies the condition for the production and/or marketing of a commodity (Little and Watts 1994). The contracting firm supplies agricultural inputs, while the farmer agrees to produce crops or rear animals. On the contrary, in the 1980s, contract farming focused on out-grower schemes in sugar and tea-linked plantations (Sachikonye 1989). Contract farming firmed up from 2004 in response to the economy-wide crisis, which wrought credit collapse after 2000 (Mukwereza 2013). Some scholars observed an upsurge in contract farming in relation to cotton and tobacco production (Sachikonye 2016; Poulton and Hanyani-Mlambo 2008), accessed mainly by the peasantry.

In the case of tobacco farming, where contract farming is mostly practised, 84 per cent of the total sales was done through 22 merchants and 70 833 growers in 2017—a vast increase from 59 per cent of crop sales, and 10 contracting merchants in 2007 (Tobacco Industry and Marketing Board [TIMB 2007]). Moreover, tobacco farming saw a shift from large commercial farmers (LSCFs), who produced 97.2 per cent of the crops to the peasantry, who now account for 67.2 per cent of the yield over the same period. The merchants provide farmers with farming inputs such as seed, fertilisers, chemicals, labour finances, tobacco curing fuel, and agronomic technical assistance. The merchants buy the crop, using a different system from the auction floors. In 2017 tobacco earned a total of US$904.4 million in export proceeds (Tobacco Industry and Marketing Board [TIMB] 2017).

In Southern Africa rural agrarian change has led to rural agrarian peasantry’s heightened dependence on the market, accompanied by increased social differentiation, with some producing for the market, possibly becoming pure capitalists, while others produce for auto-consumption under increasing poverty (Moyo 2016). The anticipated peasantry’s elimination and resolution of the Agrarian Question (Marx 1976), where a dominant class coalition of wage-labourers and a rural middle class were to emerge in a pre-determinate capitalist path is, therefore, susceptible to reconsideration. In Mafeje's (2003b, 17) view, the Russian analogy "breaks down completely if it were to be applied to sub-Saharan Africa." First, land redistribution, implemented in some countries, including Zimbabwe and elsewhere in Mexico and the Philippines, and as is being proposed in South Africa and Namibia, means that there is no longer a shortage of land to the magnitude and impact experienced and associated with England and Russian revolutions.

Second, state land tenure patterns in Southern Africa have done away with the landlord-tenant-propertyless relations, which superimposed super-exploitation and poverty in the rural economy elsewhere. The implementation of the FTLRP has seen freehold tenure patterns being replaced by permits for smallholders and 99-year leases for middle-scale farmers. This process has, therefore, altered the landed property regime. Third, the extraction of profits from the periphery to the centre, which supported the agrarian transition in Europe does not exist in the contemporary South. Instead, agricultural production and marketing continue to favour the developed countries as primitive accumulation persists (Shije 2009; Shonhe 2017).

Fourth, for Zimbabwe, the proletarianisation of the rural reserves, through the development of an urban-based industrial sector, has been replaced by the de-industrialisation and informalisation of both the countryside and urban centres (see Mawowa 2013); an antithetical to the semi-proletarianisation thesis posited by some scholars (Kautsky 1988; Lenin 1899/1964; Moyo and Yeros 2005). Lenin (1899/1964) and Kautsky (1988) argue that the emergence of the agrarian capital did not have to rely on the dispossession of peasants as semi-proletarianisation is possible. However, extended petty commodity production by the rural peasantry supplanted formal employment following de-industrialisation.

A fifth argument is raised by Amin (2012), who posits that labour-intensive technologies that accompanied European agrarian transition do not exist in the periphery. Instead, modern technologies, introduced in the Third World countries are much less labour intensive. For instance, the importation of big four-wheel drive tractors for smallholder farming after the implementation of the FTLRP has not achieved maximum utility, because of politicisation and inappropriateness of tractor size. Arguably, as Shonhe (2019) concludes, small land sizes demand small two-wheel drive tractors as they are affordable; but the establishment of irrigation infrastructure would maximise their utility. To this effect, less improvement in productivity results in the expulsion of the labour force from the productive sectors into the informal sectors, including the sectors across national borders.

Sixth, regarding the material conditions, Lenin (1899/1966) observes that the scale of economics, tenancy relations, and debt were key variables for changes in capital accumulation in agriculture. Regarding the scale of economics, Kautsky (1988) and Akram-Lodhi and Kay (2010a, 190) have observed the importance of the actual units of production, such as "farm asset ownership, cropping patterns, access to technology, production, sales, debt, and migration." For Lenin (1899/1964, 68), land size does not determine the scale of operations if it is not considered together with “the method of cultivation, the intensity of agriculture, the method of field cropping, quantities of fertilisers, the use of machinery, the character of livestock farming, etc."

Post the implementation of the FTLRP, capital flight delimited farmers’ access to credit and agricultural funding across settlement models in Zimbabwe (Moyo and Nyoni 2013)—and yet, as Akram-Lodhi and Kay (2010b) suggest, this is critical for rural transformation and the emergence of the agrarian capital. As a result, access to credit for farmers has been low (Moyo et al. 2009; Scoones et al. 2010; Shonhe 2017). Besides, bankers are sceptical of relying on insecure 99-year leases and permits, and the economy-wide crises also impact negatively on access to agricultural finance. As a result, there has been a drop in overall production for most agricultural commodities in the early 2000s (Moyo and Nyoni 2013).

Seventh, for the rich peasants, who depend more on the market for the supply of the production-oriented goods, Lenin's (1899/1964) view was that the supply would increase and this, in turn, will consolidate their capitalisation. These postulations were true for the contexts and cases which Lenin (1899/1964) and Kautsky (1988) analysed—however, the circumstances in contemporary Southern Africa have changed. In respect of Zimbabwe, Shonhe (2018) has observed an increase in middle-scale farmers (66.5%) undergirded by increased reinvestment of income from the sale of agricultural commodities, tobacco contract farming, and off-farm income, mostly from the informal sector.

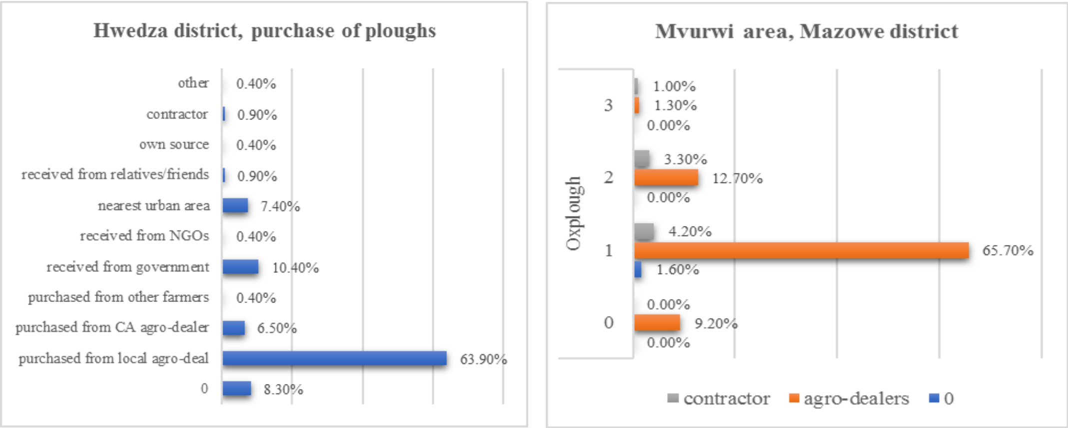
As Amin (2012, 14) argues, the resolution of the Agrarian Question in the developed centres raised a gigantic Question in the peripheries. In other words, in the periphery, the Agrarian Question could only be resolved through the "genocide of half of mankind", and must only be defined as existing imperialist capitalism, now being reduced to abstract capitalism (Amin 2012). Bernstein (1996/1997) and other internationalists advocate for modernisation. A broader view to be relied on to assess the Agrarian Question in the global South and Southern Africa is the one based on Amin's (2012) observation that the new Agrarian Question emanates from the unequal development arising from modernisation. Zimbabwe's FTLRP, therefore, consummated a land ownership pattern, production and marketing trends, with a significant impact on the Agrarian Question in the country. Moyo et al. (2013) emphasise that the new Agrarian Question remains seized with liberation and sovereign industrialisation, and incorporates regional integration, gender relations, and ecology. As argued in the next section, in spite of globalisation, the reinvestment of agricultural surplus income in the rural agrarian economy through informal and formal off-farm activities presents an opportunity for re-industrialisation after years of de-industrialisation; notwithstanding the overall economy-wide crises that the country is currently experiencing. The opportunity for re-industrialisation can potentially spur sovereign development (articulated and inclusive of domestic industrial growth), and therefore, aid the resolution of the national question (see Moyo 2007).

Agrarian Accumulation and Agrarian Question in Zimbabwe

The findings of this study support the classical political argument that the agrarian economy can potentially produce an agricultural surplus income capable of spurring industrialisation, structural transformation, accumulation, and the emergence of capital within and beyond agriculture (see Akram-Lodhi and Kay 2010a, 256). This dynamic dispels the view that the peasantry is disappearing (Hobsbawn 1994), and that the Agrarian Question of capital has now been resolved, as articulated by Bernstein (1996/97; 2000; 2004; 2006; 2009).

Reinvestment of Agricultural Surplus

Ongoing neoliberal agrarian economy workings (see Akram-Lodhi 2007) impact on capital accumulation and alter the terrain upon which the Agrarian Question is either resolved or perpetuated (Akram-Lodhi and Kay 2010b)—given its implications for production and circulation (Byres 1996). The Hwedza survey, conducted by Shonhe in 2016, and the 2017–2019 Africa Policy Research in Agriculture (APRA) survey, conducted in Mvurwi area revealed high levels of agrarian surplus applied towards commodity production by farmers, as shown in Figures 1a and 1b.



Figures 1a and 1b: Sources of financing for farming assets

Source: a) Author, based on the 2016[2] Shonhe Hwedza survey b) Author, Mvurwi APRA survey 2017–19[3]

For instance, with only 10.4 per cent of farmers accessing government support, with 0.9 per cent securing the support through the *Maguta* (Command) contract farming, 88.7 per cent relied on the reinvestment of agricultural income for the purchase of ploughs in 2015 in Hwedza, compared to the one per cent that relies on government funding, and 88.9 per cent that relied on reinvestment of commodity sales income in Mvurwi in 2016. Moreover, the 2014 AIAS Survey has shown that farmers relied mostly on the agrarian income for purchasing fixed assets (at 68.2 per cent across A1, A2 and CA sectors (Moyo et al. 2014)). Comparatively, only 27.3 per cent of agricultural funding came from personal savings across these farming sectors, with a mere 0.8 per cent coming from direct bank credit during the 2011–2013 farming seasons (Moyo et al. 2014).

The economy-wide crisis from 2000 affected government support to farmers in a negative way, and, therefore, inadvertently reducing the scale of corruption patronage associated with farming inputs schemes in Zimbabwe. Following the crisis, farmers had to rely on the income generated from the sale of agricultural commodities to finance agricultural production and farm capital development. Yet, land can only be utilised optimally, provided farmers have access to funding (Akram-Lodhi and Kay 2010a) and remain low across farming models in Hwedza district (Shonhe 2019). Importantly, the

2 The Hwedza survey was conducted in 2016 by Shonhe. The data were collected during the 2013 to 2015 agricultural production and accumulation by farmers in five settlement models and four agro-ecological regions.

3 The APRA survey is the Zimbabwe component of a nine Africa agriculture research project on agricultural commercialisation. It involves a longitudinal study and a broad survey of the Mvurwi farming area in Mazowe district.

high level of farm reinvestment income shows the increasing role of agrarian capital, in spite of globalisation, contrary to Bernstein's views.

Even though contract farming recently gained prominence and has contributed to smallholder farmers' success, mainly in relation to cash crops such as tobacco and sugarcane (Moyo et al. 2014), its impact remains limited, with the spillover effects on food crops such as maize and livestock holdings (Moyo et al. 2014). However, as shown in Table 2, the case studies reveal that a meagre percentage of farmers has had access to contract farming over the years. In Hwedza district, as low as 11.7 per cent had access to contract farming in 2015 (Shonhe 2017); and yet, as shown in Figure 1a, as low as 0.9 per cent of the farmers confirmed that they were accessing farming inputs under this arrangement. According to the A1 farms survey conducted in Mvurwi area, 8.5 per cent of the A1 farmers confirmed that they accessed ploughs, using the proceeds from contract farming. Funding for sugarcane (86%), tobacco (25.2%), and cotton (45.1%) production is generated from contract farming, as the AIAS 2014 survey has shown.

Smallholder farming has increasingly been incorporated into the green revolution inputs and outputs markets, driven mainly by tobacco contract farming. Arguably, based on this observation, foreign currency earnings from tobacco farming are, therefore, now distributed more evenly and to a broader range of smallholder farmers. Yet, contract farming is mainly confined to tobacco farming, as sugarcane and cotton farming has been limited to the dry regions of Masvingo and Manicaland, while cotton farming has been attracting low marketing prices, leading to reduced production. The impact of global capital on agricultural production in Zimbabwe, therefore, remains weak, experiences a shift, and is inconsistent.

The Home Market

Despite the dominance of export crops, there is ongoing diversification and expansion, particularly towards tomatoes and maize, as farmers seek to mitigate the risk associated with swings in tobacco prices. In Hwedza district, even though tobacco sales increased by 535 per cent, maize sales for the interviewed population increased by 38.1 per cent, from US$28,182 in 2013 to US$38,919 in 2015. Tomato sales also increased by 218 per cent from US$16,379 to US$35,658 over the same period. In the Mvurwi area, survey data showed that maize sales increased by a higher percentage (117%) compared to tobacco (55.6%) from the period 2015 to 2017.

Increases in maize production in the 2016/2017 season coincided with the re-introduction of command agriculture established to support the production of food crops for the home market. Even though command agriculture initially benefitted middle-scale A2 farmers, some A1 villagised farmers also participated in this form of farming. Command farming involves the provision of seed, fertilisers, fuel, and herbicides to farmers with access to irrigation infrastructure, through a government-mediated contract farming arrangement, funded through domestic and international capital. The command agriculture scheme supports the production of cotton, soya beans, and maize. With an assured market and viable pricing structure, where the Grain Marketing Board (GMB) buys all the grain crops, and the Cotton Marketing Board (CMB) buys the cotton, the production of these commodities saw an increase since the 2016/2017 agricultural season. These commodities feed directly into domestic agro-industries, expanding the home market and sovereign industrialisation, and; as Mkodzongi (2013) observes, support other forms of off-farm livelihoods.

Tobacco generates an entirely different development trajectory. It is highly integrated into the global commodity markets such as China, the United States of America, South Africa, and Europe. In contrast, the emerging commodities are either sold at the farm gate, locally. Alternatively, farmers transport their produce to the nearest growth points, urban centres, and the surrounding cities. Tomatoes are the most differentially-marketed crops, with their customers ranging from the farm gate, the nearest town, on-farm intermediaries, to local/villagers. The cash crop is emerging as a dominant crop among A2 medium-scale farmers in Hwedza district, which delivers 66.7 per cent of the harvest to Marondera town, 60 km to the North of the area, Murambinda growth point, 50 km to the South of Hwedza district, and Hwedza growth point.

Tomatoes and maize production trends, therefore, bring diversification to cash food crops and the development of a home market as opposed to tobacco, which is exported to external markets. The reinvestment of the agrarian income is used to diversify into other cash and food crops, and to expand the value chains, thus expanding the scope for re-industrialisation in Zimbabwe. As Scoones et al. (2017) has shown, the agrarian surplus is invested in urban development, including off-farm businesses and urban property development. Due to capital flights experienced in the early 2000s, and the post-GNU economic downturn, the agrarian economy has emerged to be a source of capital finance for Zimbabwe's broader developmental imperatives. Critically, the production of cash and food crops for the home markets provides scope for the elimination of the disarticulated economy (see Shije, 2009), through enhanced industrial development.

Bernstein's (2015) question on the role of agrarian capital, including contract farming beyond the countryside is timely. Primarily, rural agrarian surplus, generated initially from contract farming, often finds itself in other crops and sectors of the economy through taxation and investment of profits to contributing towards industrialisation in the urban centres. Besides, most of the small-scale family farmers who are already participating at the higher levels of the commodity value chains (domestically and internationally), the agricultural surplus, which is extracted through lease fees, levies, as well as surplus value are also driving capitalist industrialisation initiatives in rural and urban areas, as shown in the next section.

Expanding Landed Property Class

There is a tendency for Zimbabwe to follow the European model of landlordism. The transition to capitalism within historical materialism reveals that under the feudal system, property relations led to the demise of capitalism (Akram-Lodhi 2010b; Brenner 1977). In England capitalism compelled both landlords and tenants to increase their productivity, be more competitive, specialised and innovative in order to meet the demands of the market and to avoid land dispossessions. Similarly, the reconfiguration property relations in Zimbabwe triggered changes in production patterns and availed new marketing opportunities after 2000, thus reducing the level of propertylessness. The implementation of the FTLRP broadened the propertised masses towards the American path of agrarian accumulation. This finding contradicts Bernstein's (2015, 455) view on the critical issue captured in question 2 regarding land commodification and peasant land dispossession—in the sense that land has been de-commoditised and redistributed to a broader mass of formerly landless rural and urban dwellers.

However, new developments regarding the leasing of land and joint venture (JV) arrangements in Zimbabwe are spurring new property relations (see Brenner 1976) between the landless and the newly-resettled farmers in ways that characterise the old European landlordism property regime. This development presents a new dimension for the agrarian transition and the Agrarian Question in contemporary Zimbabwe.

There has been a renewed scramble for land, involving the former white commercial farmers and some Chinese nationals. Moreover, a total of 352 677 ha of land has either been sold outrightly, or has been contracted under lease/concession agreement by the government, or by resettled farmers since 2008. The leases are differentiated and varied in scale and in respect of players. In some cases, they involve the government and/or government-owned entities, such as the Agricultural Rural Development Authority (ARDA), which is in partnership with big international merchants in large-scale crop production. In some cases, they involve resettled farmers (middle-scale A2 farmers and some Chinese nationals, former white commercial farmers, and Zimbabwean private sector players who lease land for the production of food and cash crops).

In the case of large-scale land grabs, transferred land is being invested mainly into tourism (290 000 ha), allocated to cassava production (40 000 ha), food crop production (18 764 ha) and non-food production crops (3 913 ha). While Chinese capital leads to land grabs, other countries such as the United Arab Emirates, Russia, South Africa, Germany, and Mauritius also participated in the land grabs. For instance, a Zimbabwean company, the Green Fuel, a joint venture between Billy Rautenbach's Macdom Investments and Rating Investments, and the state-controlled Agricultural Rural Development Authority (ARDA) gained access to 50 000 ha of land and dispossessed villagers of their land in Chisumbanje in Manicaland province (Kadzere 2017).

Joint venture (JV) lease arrangements are based on the 99-year leases. There is also a rising tendency for beneficiaries of the FTLRP to be served with letters in cases where JV leases are in place. The land leasing/renting systems disguised as JVs, involving resettled A2 farmers on the one hand, and some Chinese nationals and former white commercial farmers on the other, have established a kind of landlordism similar to the one prevalent in European property relations. In Mvurwi, seven JVs were confirmed and involved an average of 200 ha of land per A2 farm. Payment is mostly determined on the basis of profit sharing or commissions at the end of the season. Some elite private sector individuals have also secured land from A2 and A1 farmers respectively, under similar or slightly varied lease arrangements. Among the A1 farmers, land rentals involve an average of 2 ha of land, mostly used for maize and tobacco farming. Payment is in the form of money, labour supply, and farming inputs support for the landowner. Tobacco, maize, and some export horticultural crops are the primary commodities produced on the farms; and in some cases, under contract farming. This development has resulted in land beneficiaries mutating into landlords, relying on land lease fees, while land control is transferred to international capital, producing for the external market. Thus, a new land rent market is emerging.

Zimbabwe's agrarian transition reveals three learning points:

1. The new scramble for land in Africa in general, and, indeed, in Zimbabwe in particular, is hastening land dispossession and an extroverted economic trajectory of the worst form, where smallholder farmers are ousted from the means of production (Moyo 2011).
2. The land grabs and the resultant land dispossession has led to propertylessness and resettled farmers working for the new owners.
3. Similarly, primitive capital accumulation (extraction of surplus value), advanced through contract farming, has supplanted small- and medium-scale farmers and deprived them of control over the land and production processes, where smallholder farmers have become "disguised" farmworkers for international corporations (Glover and Kusterer 1990), producing tobacco and other export crops (Shonhe 2017). Notwithstanding the relatively better prices offered, the contract agreements are unfavourable to these farmers (Sakata 2016), as surplus value is extracted through unfair trading and decision making is left in the hands of tobacco merchants.

In this regard, the land question, and indeed the Agrarian Question, are being revived along a European trajectory, as earlier observed by Marx (1877/1983). Processes of primitive accumulation ultimately shape the level of agrarian surplus generated and, finally, the rural-urban interconnectedness that spur industrialisation. Under neoliberalism, the ongoing dispossession of land from small and medium-scale farmers, through JV arrangements and leases has re-routed the Agrarian Question towards the

European landlordism path observed by Marx (1964), earlier escaped (Moyo and Yeros 2005), contrary to Bernstein and some internationalist's predictions.

Agrarian Change and Rural-urban Interconnectedness

Agrarian surplus income is crucial in shaping rural and urban interconnectedness, and a key question was raised by Bernstein (2015) on this aspect. Land reform in Zimbabwe has democratised land ownership and broadened the production base, and advocated commodification through participation in export crop production, which included a whole range of off-farm income-earning activities (TIMB 2015; Ministry of Agriculture, Mechanisation and Irrigation Development [MAMID] 2017), generating an agricultural surplus. Against the ongoing background of de-industrialising, in the Mvurwi area a farm packhouse used to process agricultural produce for the export market, has been re-opened.

Moreover, the opening of tobacco merchant floors in Mvurwi denotes the potential for local market accumulation processes, as well as the development of the agro-based industry. Furthermore, the construction industry and services sector have also been vibrant as farmers invest in estates and trade shops in nearby Mvurwi town (Teererai 2017). Bernstein's (2009; 2015) view that the agrarian (global) capital now drives industrialisation and job creation at national economy-wide level does not hold true for Zimbabwe. Instead, for Zimbabwe, as evidence has shown, the agrarian surplus is responsible for agricultural production, with prospects sparring the development of the home market.

Conclusion

Agrarian surplus, reinvested into agricultural commodity production, off-farm service sectors and, potentially, the agro-based manufacturing sector, has the potential to drive Zimbabwe's re-industrialisation, enabling the country to pick up from the ashes of years of economic isolation and economic regression. This emerging dynamic demurs the views by internationalist Marxists who, relying on Eurocentric scholarship and epistemologies, positions globalisation as the ultimate magic that can eliminate the classic Agrarian Question. Even though Bernstein's (2006) view on separating the Agrarian Question of capital and labour is contradicted, in this article we tried to follow his logic of separating the two and conclude that the classical Agrarian Question of capital equally remains unresolved. Moreover, Zimbabwe's de-industrialisation is responsible for levels of unemployment from the 1990s, triggering urban-rural migration after the implementation of the FTLRP, thus creating pressure on the land, and increasing the importance of agriculture in the countryside.

Notwithstanding, the predominance of primitive capital accumulation and the broadened farming sector involved in export and food crop production is accumulating from below, accruing agrarian surplus. Farmers in Zimbabwe's Hwedza and Mazowe districts are reinvesting the agrarian surplus, financing agricultural commodity production for auto-consumption, and selling the excess to the domestic and global commodity markets. The reinvestment of this surplus into productive agricultural assets and farm production has the capacity to spur re-industrialisation and the development of the home market in Zimbabwe. In this sense, the classical Agrarian Question remains unresolved in Zimbabwe, with the reinvestment of sales proceeds from agricultural commodities being central to the ongoing accumulation model. Applying Eurocentric principles and universalising the conceptualisation of the Agrarian Question to the global South, including Southern Africa is hollow and emblematic of academic redundancy.

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