

# Agrarian Labour Relations in Zimbabwe after Over a Decade of Land and Agrarian Reform

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April 2013

This paper was produced under the Future Agriculture's Early Career Fellowship Programme in association with the African Institute for Agrarian Studies.

# Table of Contents

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Context of the Study Area.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Land Redistribution and Agrarian Structure.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Agricultural Production Systems and Labour Relations .....</b>	<b>6</b>
4.1	Overview of agricultural production patterns and systems .....	6
4.2	Family farming .....	7
4.3	Sharecropping and labour tenancies in family farms.....	7
4.4	Agrarian labour relations in the middle and large farms.....	8
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Mobilisation and Resistances of Agrarian Labour .....</b>	<b>9</b>
5.1	Overview of sources of labour .....	9
5.2	Farm compounds as sites of labour mobilisation .....	10
5.3	The role of kinship in labour mobilisation .....	11
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Agrarian Labour Wages and Benefits.....</b>	<b>11</b>
6.1	Wages of agricultural labour .....	11
6.2	Access to residential and farming land .....	13
6.3	Other benefits received by farm workers .....	14
<b>7.0</b>	<b>Social and Political Organisation of Labour.....</b>	<b>15</b>
7.1	The farm compound as a site of organisation and resistance .....	15
7.2	Reinforcing identity and belonging through social and cultural mobilisation .....	15
7.3	Integration of farm labourers into community networks.....	16
7.4	Workers committees.....	17
7.5	Specialist labour groups.....	17
<b>8.0</b>	<b>Conclusion.....</b>	<b>17</b>
	<b>References .....</b>	<b>18</b>

## 1.0 Introduction

The assessment of agrarian labour regimes is critical in the understanding of agrarian change as they influence the organisation of agrarian production in rural Africa and the social reproduction of the majority of the populace. The super-exploitation of wage labour in the large scale commercial farms or plantations has received the most research attention (e.g. Gibbon 2011; du Toit and Ally 2003; Rutherford, 2001; Loewenson 1992) in (settler) Africa. This is partly because wage labour in the large farms fits into the formal employment criteria of neo-classical economics (Leavy and White 2003;). A few scholars have however examined the self-employed labour forms and wage labour relations amongst the peasantry (e.g. Sender et al. 2006; Adams 1991). The literature is thus dominated by separate analysis of agrarian labour relations in large scale capitalist farming and the peasantry. The linkages and relationships that exist between these differentiated competing modes of production are therefore missing. Recent redistributive land reforms in Zimbabwe through the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) provides an opportunity to examine the transition of the agrarian labour regime from one based on the dominant land control of a few large scale agriculture to a relatively broad based agrarian structure involving peasants, middle farms and a downsized large scale commercial farm (LSCF) sector. In its focus on one district case study, this paper is an attempt to explore this dynamic, drawing more general conclusions about the importance of understanding labour regimes in the context of rapid agrarian change.

The agrarian labour relations in Zimbabwe were based on a labour reserve system that resulted from the unequal landholdings in which the white minority controlled large tracts of land alienated from the peasantry (Clarke 1977; Arrighi 1970). The peasantry were forced into cheap wage labour markets in the farms, mines and urban industries (Palmer 1977). A peculiar form of labour reserve in the farm compound system was evolved in the LSCFs to guarantee labour supplies (Clarke 1977; Arrighi 1970). The farm compound located on small portions of the farms housed landless full time labour and temporary workers from surrounding Communal Areas. It 'bonded' the agricultural workers to a particular LSCF through a form of labour tenancy that tied the insecure residential tenure rights to farm employment (Moyo 2011; Clarke 1977).

The social relations of the 'master-servant' generated in the LSCFs were characterised by repressive agrarian labour relations (Amanor-Wilks 1995; Neocosmos 1993). The white LSCFs exercised control over labour in both work and off work relations through an autonomous governance system where they resolved disputes as per their own laws. This has been termed 'domestic government' by others (Rutherford 2001). By breaking up the LSCFs into smaller units and conversion to state land which provide relatively less control over labour, the FTLRP raises questions on the fate of the agrarian labour relations structured around land alienation and private property.

The FTLRP initiated in 2000 redistributed LSCFs to a differentiated group of beneficiaries dominated by peasants and working classes. Land redistribution occurred under two resettlement models; namely the A1 – small plots targeting the peasantry and A2 - medium and large sized plots for a new breed of smaller commercial farmers.<sup>ii</sup> This radically altered the unequal agrarian structure to one that was more broadly based (Moyo 2011; Moyo and Yeros 2005).

To appreciate agrarian labour processes that have emerged a series of questions are posed: What are the forms of agrarian labour that characterise different classes of producers within the new agrarian structure? How have these forms of agrarian labour changed over time and in relation to the shifting socio-economic context? How are the different forms of agrarian labour recruited and/or mobilised, by whom and from where? What are material conditions of the agrarian labour and how these have transitioned since 2000? Are there any shifts in the stabilisation of labour supplies which was based on providing workers residency on the former LSCFs in the compounds in exchange for the sale of labour services? How does farm labour organise itself in response to the structural changes and new challenges they face in the social reproduction?

Mainstream research has tended to highlight the physical displacement and job losses of farm workers after 2000 (Magaramombe 2010; JAG/RAU 2008; Hartnack 2005; Sachikonye 2003). This research has also focused on the exclusion of farm workers from land access; without due empirical consideration of the diverse source of access to residential and farming land that exist on the ground. Agricultural production was seen to have 'collapsed' across all commodities (Richardson 2005; Davies 2004; Masiwa and Chipungu, 2004) suggesting that farm labour had declined as a source of employment. The understanding of the differentiated and changing agricultural production patterns that shaped agrarian labour relations were thus missing in this analysis.

The new agrarian labour relations are explored using empirical research in Goromonzi district. The research undertaken by the African Institute for Agrarian Studies (AIAS) since 2002, including a baseline survey in 2006 of 695 landholders and 173 farm workers in Goromonzi is used to illustrate the outcomes prior to economic stabilisation in 2009.<sup>iii</sup> The analysis draws from the results of the survey reported in Moyo et al. (2009) and the data referenced as AIAS (2007). Qualitative surveys in Goromonzi in 2012 are used to trace the dynamic changes to agrarian labour relations as further land redistribution occurred and the macro-economic context and agrarian policies shifted. Data was collected through interviews and observations from farm labourers, landholders, farm compounds, traditional authorities and state officials.

The paper begins by providing a setting of Goromonzi district highlighting some key features that shape agrarian labour relations.<sup>iv</sup> The new agrarian structure that forms the basis of the reconfigured agricultural production systems and labour relations is then analysed.

This allows for the examination of the labour mobilisation patterns among the different classes of producers resulting from agrarian restructuring. The assessment of the material conditions that farm labourers derive from selling labour in various ways and their responses to the challenges they face precede the conclusions.

## 2.0 Context of the study area

This setting of Goromonzi district is key in shaping agrarian labour relations that are in turn influenced by the agricultural production patterns, nearness to markets and high per capita public infrastructures. Goromonzi district is unique from most rural areas given its close proximity to the capital city, Harare. It supplies land for urban expansion. The district is located in Mashonaland East Province, alongside eight other rural districts. The former LSCFs of Goromonzi are surrounded by the Communal Areas of Chikwaka and Chinhamora, and Shangure Small Scale Commercial Farms (SSCFs). Chinyika Communal Lands lay in the heart of the LSCFs. The ownership of LSCFs was much more racially mixed than most districts as blacks owned 33 percent of the farms (MLRR 2012). Around 2002, Goromonzi district was home to 154,262 people, of which 52 percent lived in the Communal Area (CSO 2002).

Three chieftainships operate in Goromonzi district namely; Chinhamora, Chikwaka and Chinyika (Makura-Paradza 2010) and their governance areas now include the former LSCFs (see Murisa 2010; Moyo 2007). Their presence in the former LSCFs is visible through the village heads (sabhuku) in most A1 farms. Another layer of local governance is the 25 smaller administrative units, called wards, which are run by elected councillors.

On the basis of the agro-ecology, the LSCFs were split into two intensive conservation areas (ICAs), Acturus and Bromely in the north and south respectively (Field Interview, District AGRITEX Extension Officer, 16 August 2012). The Acturus ICA is characterised by clay soils that were considered by extension services to be suitable for intensive mixed farming, whilst sandy soils in the Bromely are considered suited for tobacco and cattle ranching (ibid). The Communal Areas and SSCFs are also characterised sandy soils, while Chinyika Communal Lands features rocky outcrops in many areas which make it difficult for cropping (ibid).

The district falls in the high potential agro-ecological region II which receives between 900 and 1200 mm per annum. There are approximately 46 major dams in the former LSCFs of Goromonzi which provided water for irrigation, of which 30 were located in the Acturus ICA (Field Interview, District AGRITEX Extension Officer, 16 August 2012). However, majority of the residents in the Communal Lands are dependent on rain-fed agriculture.

The main economic activity in Goromonzi is agriculture in the Communal Lands and former LSCFs, followed by mining and tourism. Gold mining activities are dominated

by the Acturus Mine which is surrounded by various small mines. Tourism occurs through overnight accommodation, wildlife viewing and hunting in the LSCFs converted from agriculture during ESAP (Moyo 2001).

Goromonzi is served by three major tarred road highways. The Harare-Mutare Road traverses from Harare in the west towards the south-east of the district. The Nyampanda Highway is a major transit point for imports and exports transported through the Beira port in Mozambique. The Shamva Road links Goromonzi to Shamwa district in the north eastern direction.

Numerous social infrastructure including schools, clinic, and rural service centres dotted around Goromonzi are concentrated in the Communal Lands from which most of the farm workers and beneficiaries access them (see Moyo et al. 2009). This explains why farm workers had the poorest educational and health indicators nationally in the 1990s (Tandon 2001). The state has been trying to expand access to social infrastructure in the former LSCFs through the conversion of farm houses into school and health centres (Moyo et al. 2009).

## 3.0 Land redistribution and agrarian structure

Land redistribution in Goromonzi district altered the agrarian structure substantially by providing more land to peasants, urban middle and working classes as experienced elsewhere (see Moyo 2011; Scoones et al. 2010), but its outcomes are however unique in comparison to most districts.

In Goromonzi district, 200 LSCFs (or 77.8 percent) totalling 111,488.95 hectares were redistributed to 2,522 households by 2012 (MLRR 2012). Four distinct farm categories differentiated by the land sizes, tenure type, indications of technical capacity, purpose of production, general labour utilisation patterns and social status now characterise the new agrarian structure (see Moyo 2011; Moyo and Yeros 2005). These include: i) the peasantry; ii) middle farms; iii) large farms; and iv) agro-estates.

The A1 resettlement increased the land owned by the peasantry and the number of farm household to the already existing Communal Areas (Table 1). Their share of land is however relatively less in relation to the national situation where they control 78.6 percent of the land (Moyo 2011: 512). Most of the new peasantry in the A1 sector (61.3 percent) originated from the Communal Areas, while the urbanites (29.2 percent) were the second largest group (AIAS 2007). Former LSCF workers accounted for 6.3 percent of the A1 land beneficiaries (ibid). Close to 5 percent of A1 farmers were 'worker-peasants' as they also sold their labour to the middle and large farms (ibid). The worker-peasants also include 36 percent of the farm workers that farm small plots in the farm compound and rented from different classes of producers, while also selling farm labour (AIAS 2007).

**Table 1: Emerging agrarian structure in Goromonzi district: estimated landholdings (2012)**

Farm categories	Farms/households				Area held (ha)				Average Farm size (ha)	
	2000		2012		2000*		2012*		2000	2012
	No	%	No	%	ha	%	ha	%		
<b>Peasantry</b>										
Communal	19,976	98.6	20,975	88.8	78,066.39	31.0	78,066.39	31.70	3.91	3.72
A1			1,673	7.1			32,437.63	13.17		19.39
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>19,976</b>	<b>98.6</b>	<b>22,648</b>	<b>95.9</b>	<b>78,066.39</b>	<b>31.0</b>	<b>110,504.03</b>	<b>44.87</b>	<b>3.90</b>	<b>11.56</b>
<b>Medium</b>										
Old SSCF	24	0.1	24	0.1	2,068.45	0.8	2,068.45	0.84	86.19	86.19
Small A2			778	3.3			43,645.80	17.72		56.10
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>802</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>2,068.45</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>45,714.25</b>	<b>18.56</b>	<b>86.20</b>	<b>71.30</b>
<b>Large scale</b>										
Large A2			71	0.3			27,206.49	11.05		383.19
LSCF	240	1.2	89	0.4	155,437.00	61.8	43,948.05	17.84	647.65	493.80
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>155,437.00</b>	<b>61.8</b>	<b>71,154.54</b>	<b>28.89</b>	<b>647.70</b>	<b>493.80</b>
<b>Agro-estates</b>										
Corporate	4	0.02	4	0.02	3,605.08	1.4	3,605.08	1.46	901.27	901.27
Parastatal	6	0.03	9	0.04	5,604.70	2.2	7,668.70	3.10	800.65	829.15
Institutions	3	0.01	3	0.01	7,637.79	3.0	7,637.79	3.10	2,545.93	2,545.93
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0.06</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>0.07</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>12,042.59</b>	<b>7.66</b>	<b>1,415.95</b>	<b>1,425.45</b>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>20,253</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>23,626</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>251,619.71</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>246,285.32</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>12.42</b>	<b>10.42</b>

Source: Compiled by author from MLRR data sheets (2012); framework adopted from Moyo and Yeros (2005);

\*Total hectares do not tally due to rounding; some agricultural land in the district has been absorbed into urban residential land and missing data on farm sizes.

The middle farm category has grown substantially in terms of land ownership and number of farm households, more so than any other sector (Table 1). This group comprises the old SSCFs initiated in the 1960s for black farmers and small and medium A2 farms. Urban connections through origin and employment are most prevalent in this sector where 39.3 percent of them originated from, however, Communal Areas provided the bulk of the land beneficiaries (52.4percent) (AIAS 2007).

The large farm sector includes the remaining black and white LSCFs not redistributed during the FTLRP and large A2 farms. Its land ownership in Goromonzi is relatively large as the proportion of LSCFs retained by the FTLRP (22percent) (MLRR 2012) is greater than is found elsewhere (see Moyo 2011). The large farms created through the A2 scheme control less land than the remaining LSCFs (Table 1). Most of the so-called 'elites' were allocated land in the large A2 farms, which tend to have the highest concentration of inherited capital infrastructure (e.g. irrigation) than other farms. Land redistribution in this sector occur through informal leasing out of parcels of their land to other landholders requiring more land, former LSCFs and agribusiness firms. About 27percent of the land beneficiaries in Goromonzi openly declared that they shared land with various people (Moyo et al. 2009: 35).

The composition of the land beneficiaries in Goromonzi is more ethnically diverse than other districts. Only 23.3percent and 15percent of the A1 peasantry and

middle/large A2 farms originated from a Communal Area in Goromonzi respectively (AIAS 2007). The beneficiaries of the middle and large farms in Goromonzi originate from 47 of the 55 districts found nationally (MLRR 2012). In other districts, those from Communal Areas within the district constituted over 36percent and 27percent of the A1 and A2 land recipients respectively (AIAS 2007). This suggests that ethno-regionalism which influenced land allocations in other districts (Moyo 2011) was largely absent in Goromonzi. This was partly influenced by intense competition for land near the city (Utete 2003).

The agro-estates which are highly capitalised and have an element of on-farm agro-industrial processing commands the largest average land size (Table 1). In Goromonzi, these are made of private agribusiness companies, Agricultural and Rural Development Authority state farms, church and trust institutions. The leasing out of parts of the land by small, middle and large farms to foreign entities in exchange for agricultural inputs, as was being planned by a Chinese foreign company in partnership with the army in July 2012, seeks to extend this sector (Field Interviews, Extension Officer, 16 July 2012).

Since the FTLRP redistributed more than 70percent of the land acquired to the middle and large farms and the retained a relatively large base of LSCFs, it excluded other land short and/or landless people. Land shortages are more pronounced in the Communal Areas of Goromonzi as their average landholding is only a fifth

of that found nationally (see Table 1 and Moyo 2011: 512).

The landless and/or land-short people include farm workers who did not benefit from the FTLRP allocations who continue to provide farm labour on full and part time basis, and in other ways.

Most of this labour is resident in the old farm compounds with state protection. The LSCFs had at least 257 farm compounds, which housed an estimated 16,000 farm workers and their families.<sup>vi</sup> An estimated 10,000 workers are still resident within the farm compounds.

## 4.0 Agricultural production systems and labour relations

### 4.1 Overview of agricultural production patterns and systems

The differentiation in farm structure is also reflected in the production systems and labour relations and the key question is the nature of the commodities they produce. Most of the main fifteen agricultural commodities produced in the country including food, oilseeds, export and horticultural crops, as well as livestock (see Moyo 2011) are found in the district. Food crops (maize and small grains) are dominated by the small producers (Table 2). Wheat is predominantly produced by about 50 large farms that have access to irrigation (Table 2; AGRITEX 2011).

Table 2: Crop production trends in Goromonzi district by sector, 2008/09 – 2011/12												
Season	Sector	% of total area under crop										
		Main food						Oil seeds		Key export		
		Maize	Wheat	Sorghum	Rapoko	Dry beans	G/nuts	Soy beans	Sunflower	Cotton	Tobacco	
2008/09	CA	44.3	0.0	47.5	81.4	16.0	40.7	4.8	40.6	86.7	1.6	
	A1	21.2	13.8	24.9	11.6	24.6	29.6	9.6	33.8	13.3	0.1	
	A2	31.5	72.4	27.6	5.6	56.6	22.6	72.1	22.4	0.0	81.3	
	SSCF	0.5			1.4	0.4	2.0	0.2	2.4			
	LSCF	2.5	13.7			2.5	5.0	13.4	0.8		17.0	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
	<b>Total HA</b>	<b>22278</b>	<b>2250</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>285</b>	<b>854</b>	<b>739</b>	<b>2786</b>	<b>379</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>1092</b>	
2009/10	CA	60.7		40.0	67.9	18.3	64.0	2.8	41.7	100.0	0.8	
	A1	11.5	2.4	20.0	29.8	57.0	23.7	4.6	25.7		17.3	
	A2	21.5	93.4	39.2	0.0	23.3	11.5	84.9	32.6		62.7	
	SSCF	0.4		0.8	2.4	0.0	0.8	0.1				
	LSCF	5.9	4.2	0.0	0.0	1.4	0.0	7.6			19.2	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
	<b>Total HA</b>	<b>16278</b>	<b>964</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>421</b>	<b>982</b>	<b>1981</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>1751</b>	
2010/11	CA	57.4	0.0	13.3	91.6	23.6	86.6	3.1	87.9	0.0		
	A1	10.4	3.6	6.7	4.7	25.4	7.7	3.3	12.1	100.0		
	A2	28.6	82.3	0.0	0.0	47.7	4.8	81.3	0.0	0.0		
	SSCF	2.2			3.7	0.0	0.8			0.0		
	LSCF	3.5	14.1	80.0		3.3		12.3				
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	
	<b>Total HA</b>	<b>21052.3</b>	<b>1321.5</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>108.9</b>	<b>635.4</b>	<b>2457.7</b>	<b>2038.6</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>0.5</b>		



Table 2: Crop production trends in Goromonzi district by sector, 2008/09 – 2011/12 ( Cont.)												
Season	Sector	% of total area under crop										
		Main food						Oil seeds		Key export		
		Maize	Wheat	Sorghum	Rapoko	Dry beans	G/nuts	Soy beans	Sunflower	Cotton	Tobacco	
2011/12	CA	41.68		65.16	94.34	13.65	88.27	7.89	55.32	76.92	1.3	
	A1	13.4	1.3		4.4	38.8	9.2	5.2	27.7	23.1	17.5	
	A2	37.9	92.3	13.9	0.0	44.8	1.9	72.6	17.0	0.0	55.0	
	SSCF	2.1			1.3	0.4	0.7	0.2				
	LSCF	5.0	6.3	20.9	0.0	2.3	0.0	14.1	0.0	0.0	26.2	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
	<b>Total HA</b>	<b>16758</b>	<b>611.2</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>159.1</b>	<b>256.5</b>	<b>1683</b>	<b>2551.4</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>1597.72</b>	

Source: ARES Goromonzi Annual Reports.

Soyabean production is dominated by the middle and large farmers, while the peasantry are most active in growing sunflower (Table 2). Specialised crops such as seed maize, seed soyabeans and barley are the preserve of large farms in the Acturus ICA. Tobacco is grown by all the classes of agricultural producers in which the peasantry constitutes the bulk of the grower base, but the middle and large farms contribute the largest share of the areas cropped (Table 2). Few small producers are linked to export horticulture, but they dominate domestic horticulture (AGRITEX 2011).

Livestock production activities include beef, dairy, pigs, goats and poultry production. Large beef herds are found in the middle and large farms, while few cattle are kept mainly for draught power by small producers. Capital intensive dairy is the domain of a few large A2 and LSCFs in the Acturus ICA.

The organisation of the production of these diverse commodities varies amongst different classes of producers. They are organised around the use of family farming, several types of sharecropping, labour tenancies and hired wage labour.

## 4.2 Family farming

Food production for own consumption and surplus sales in the domestic markets amongst the peasantry are organised through the use of self-employed family labour (Chambati 2011; Moyo et al. 2009). The labour is drawn from the nuclear family and sometimes extended family relatives that are co-opted to increase the labour supplies (Moyo et al. 2009). It also includes young children who are allocated tasks such as planting and herding livestock.

The farm wages earned by some of the peasantry from labour sales to middle farms (see section 2.0) are reinvested in family food production. This is reflected by JM an A1 farmer who works as a part time tractor driver for an A2 farmer: 'I don't have the money to utilise on my land, so the money I earn from wages as a tractor driver are used to buy inputs for my own farming activities

and to hire pieceworkers to assist my family' (Field Interview, Kurima Farm, 8 June 2012).<sup>vii</sup>

The larger plot sizes owned by the peasantry in the A1 sector in Goromonzi have meant that many of them also hired in labour (83 percent) to complement the family (AIAS 2007). Hired labour is mostly used for weeding and harvesting, while the majority of the tasks including land preparation, planting, fertilisation and crop scouting are performed by the family. The most common form of hired labour amongst the peasantry is piece workers or *maricho*, as 33 percent of the A1 farmers in Goromonzi hired permanent labour (ibid).

Piecework involves the hiring labour to perform a specific task over short period of time, normally over a day for which a given wage rate is paid. One variant of piecework is task based or *mugwazo* in which the wage rate is tied to completing a certain task such as weeding a particular land area. *Mugwazo* in Goromonzi is standardised for the different farm tasks. For instance, the *mugwazo* for weeding across all the crops is around 0.06 hectares, whilst that for threshing maize is processing 400 kg of grain. Time rated piece work is the other variant which entails working for a specific amount of time (normally an eight and half hour work day).

The time rated tasks are considered by farmers to be sensitive and more difficult to monitor than *mugwazo* (Field Interview, Extension Officer, 6 June 2012). For example the use of piece rates in the planting of maize and fertiliser application can result in workers not applying all the seed into the holes and fertiliser to all the crops in order to complete their tasks in the shortest possible time. Women are preferred for tasks which were considered to require 'care' and 'patience' such as planting of maize seed, while men were used in arduous tasks such as de-stumping fields.

## 4.3 Sharecropping and labour tenancies in family farms

Labour is being redistributed from farm workers and others to small producers through various sharecropping and labour tenancy arrangements in Goromonzi. While

mobilising additional labour, these arrangements also minimised on cash outlays to pay wages and enable access to scarce resources for food and cash crop production. The first type of sharecropping involves extended family relatives who provide farm labour to small producers without receiving a monetary wage, but are given a share of the output. The small producers provide the other agricultural inputs, as well as the residency and food for the relatives. This was seen in MC's A1 farm which produced tobacco and maize on four and two hectares respectively. Two nephews were recruited from the Communal Area to augment nuclear family labour (wife and two adult sons):

'We don't pay them a monthly wage; we can't afford to pay wages monthly. We stay together and eat the same food. At the end of the season depending on the tobacco harvested we give them a share of the crop which share amongst themselves (my three sons and two nephews). In the 2011/12 season, we harvested 30 bales (3000 kg) of tobacco and I gave them 9 bales which I sold on their behalf and gave them the cash. They use this money for their personal requirements such as clothing as I provide them with their food requirements' (Field Interview, MC, Kurima Farm, 2 August 2012).

This is also shaped by the reduction of state subsidies that occurred in 2009. Small producers such as MC who could afford to pay pieceworkers from loans obtained from the state between 2006 and 2008 had their capacity to hire labour reduced. They thus restrict the use of *maricho* to harvesting and curing tobacco which requires 'extra hands' (Field Interview, MC, Kurima Farm, 2 August 2012).

The second type of sharecropping involves resource constrained small producers who are not able to utilise all their land and thus lease to others in return for a share of the crop on a seasonal basis. The lessors only provided the land, while the agricultural inputs and farm labour were supplied by the lessee. The labour mobilised for sharecropping by farm workers was mostly from their families, whilst others such as rural civil servants (e.g. teachers and extension workers) complemented this with daily piece workers. The sharing of output was either predefined by the two parties or at the discretion of the lessee. The discretionary crop shares were normally low. Leasing a hectare of land to another small farmer to grow maize in the 2011/12 season earned the lessee 4 percent of the 3,500 kg harvested (Field Interview, A1 farmer, Kuzvitonga Farm, 8 June 2012), while another reaped 30 kg of potatoes out of a total harvest of 4,500 kg (Field Interview, A1 farmer, Buena Vista Farm, 2 August 2012). These low shares are accepted because they allowed farmers to obtain 'something' and 'kept their land productive and prevented threats of land dispossession by the state' (Field Interviews, Kuzvitonga Farm, 8 June 2012).<sup>viii</sup> The predefined shares were sometimes high as one farm worker gave 40 percent of the tobacco output from the one hectare plot leased to the A1 farmer during

the 2005/06 and 2006/07 seasons (Field Interview, WP, Kuzvitonga Farm, 8 June 2012).

The third type of sharecropping is contract farming in which agribusiness firms provide inputs and technical advice on credit to the small producers to produce mostly cash crops using family labour and sell output to them. Contract farming in Goromonzi is well pronounced in tobacco production.<sup>ix</sup> In three former LSCFs serviced by one extension officer, 55 percent of the tobacco growers were on contracts and they constituted 13 percent of the 260 small producers in these farms (Field Interview, Extension Officer, 12 August 2012). Small producers in contract farming complained of the high input prices charged by contractors which negatively affected their returns to labour. Contract farming thus entailed the super-exploitation of the self-employed labour through low output prices and overpriced inputs, but mobilised scarce inputs. Moreover the risks of production (harvest failure, labour shortages and product quality) are borne by the farmers as contractors demanded their credit advanced irrespective production outcomes.

Seasonal labour tenancy arrangements involve small producers offering former farm workers land for farming in return for labour supplies. The labour tenants share their family labour time between own production on the rented plots and those of small producers. Labour tenancies were observed amongst a few farm workers in the compounds examined. At Kuzvitonga farm compound only one out of the estimated 60 farm workers was renting one hectare of land through a labour tenancy in the 2011/12 season, while this involved 5 percent of the workers at MindaYedu farm compound. Labour tenancies were being shunned by farm workers as small producers had a tendency of offering them land requiring clearing every season, while they use the land they would have cleared in the previous season (Field Interview, PG, Kuzvitonga Farm, 31 July 2012).

#### 4.4 Agrarian labour relations in the middle and large farms

The middle and large farms organised the production of a mix of food and exports commodities around the use of hired full and part time labour. The large farms have the highest number of wage labour per farm household. Such farms were characterised by intensive agricultural production, high levels of capital and machinery endowments, access to credit finance, irrigation facilities and large cropped areas. ZB Tobacco Farm for instance, 360 hectares in extent producing over 50 hectares of tobacco under irrigation since 2004, employed 90 permanent workers and an average of 80 seasonal workers annually. They recruited professional farm managers to oversee the large scale farm operations and supervise the large batches of labour employed. The recruitment of farm managers amongst the A2 farms was limited to 14 percent most whom in the large farm category around 2006 (AIAS 2007). The owner of ZB Tobacco Farm originated from the urban area and worked as a senior agricultural consultant for major bilateral



donors until 2003. Agricultural finance is accessed from contract farming with a large tobacco merchant which has been providing an average credit of US\$500,000 annually since 2009. The credit is secured by a mortgage bond on a low density house owned by the farmer in Harare.

In contrast, middle farms which had high land utilisation rates are associated with the employment of small batches of permanent labour normally below 15. Such farms are exemplified by the case of MN holding 59.5 hectares (of which 30 hectares are arable) on Maguta Farm. The plot currently produces 20 hectares of tobacco, 10 hectares of maize and greenhouse horticultural crops on 0.2 hectares with 10 permanent workers. The crops are combined with a piggery project that grew from a two sow unit in 2006 to a 26 sow unit in 2012. The production activities are hinged on a strong financial resource base from MN's husband's managerial job in town, while the retrenchment package she received from senior bank job in 2006 were critical in the numerous investments made on the farm<sup>8</sup> prior to dollarization. These personal resources were also boosted by cheap subsidised state loans the plot received between 2006 and 2008.

Few permanent workers were hired on the small A2 plots that had low areas cropped. For instance CK, a former peasant from Manicaland Province, hired only two permanent workers on his 51 hectare plot (of which 10 hectares is arable). A total of 6.4 hectares were under cropping during the 2011/12 season to include 3 hectares of tobacco, 3 hectares of maize and 0.4 hectares of tomatoes and onions utilising ox-drawn implements. The cropping enterprises were combined with a beef herd of seven cattle. The plot relies on personal finance to fund production since in 2005. The seasonality of production activities also motivates the maintenance of small numbers of permanent workers.

The nature of part time labour in large farms tends to be qualitatively different to those in the middle farms. While part time labour in the middle farms was mostly *maricho*, the large farms utilised seasonal labourers that were hired on fixed term contracts 'not exceeding eight months or up until a time when there is no work' as per the provisions of the Collective Bargaining Agreement for the Agricultural Industry (CBA) (GoZ1993). The seasonal workers are normally employed between October and May during the peak period of agricultural activities.

The segmentation of farm labourers by their skills and the commodities produced is also a feature of labour relations on large farms. They deploy the CBA in which workers are provided written contracts and classified according to 10 grades ranging from A1 (the lowest grade) to C2 (highest grade) (Field Interview, ZBTobacco Farm, 31 July 2012). In the middle farms, permanent workers did not receive written contracts and worker grading tended to be based on the discretion of the employer. On MN's plot, the workforce was permanently divided into the piggery and field crop section. Each

section was led by a supervisor working with the general hands.

Tobacco contract farming is the dominant form of sharecropping amongst middle and large farms in Goromonzi. By mobilising credit, contract farming increases the capacity to hire and recruit wage labour which is used in these farms. The pricing problems of contract farming are borne by hired labour through the low wages they receive.

The organisation of farming in the former LSCFs has been broadened beyond the reliance on hired labour. It now includes an expanded family farming and the farm class structures are key in the forms of labour used and the production systems adopted.

## 5.0 Mobilisation and resistances of agrarian labour

The FTLRP restructured the labour reserves in the farm compounds through land redistribution and tenure reforms and state policy that allow farm workers to retain farm compounds residency irrespective of their employment. It also extended land access to potential farm labourers from the Communal Areas. The implications of these changes on the mobilisation of labour are thus important in understanding the emergent agrarian labour relations.

### 5.1 Overview of sources of labour

The farm labour supplies in the new farms are no longer only dependent on the farm compound, but now include the families of small producers, urban unemployed and surrounding Communal Areas. The majority of the small producers and their families (80.2percent) in Goromonzi have established themselves permanently in new farms and provide the basis for family farming, while others also sold labour to middle and large farms as noted earlier.

The geographic characteristics of Goromonzi influence the flows of agrarian labour from the Communal Areas and peri-urban areas into the former LSCFs. In the Bromely ICA, Seke Communal Area is a source of labour for farms on southern peripheries such as ZB Tobacco Farm that had 40 seasonal workers which commuted from there daily. The Epworth High Density Suburb supplies farm labour to the farms in the southwest. In the northwest, some wage labour is mobilised from Chinhamora Communal Areas. The former LSCFs in the east receive labour supplies from Chikwaka Communal Area. Chinyika Communal Area supplies farm labour to the former LSCFs that surround it.

Reverse flows of labour also occur from the former LSCFs into the surrounding Communal and urban areas.

Some small producers (6percent) who were allocated land close to their Communal Area homes in Goromonzi commuted between the two places (Moyo et al. 2009: 30). Former farm worker labour also flows into Epworth High Density Suburb through the trade in firewood.

## 5.2 Farm compounds as sites of labour mobilisation

The role of the farm compound as a source of labour has qualitatively changed after the FTLRP, as it now serves multiple employers resettled within the former LSCFs and beyond. Over the last 12 years, six different situations have evolved with regards the farm compound institution. In the first instance, large A2 farms in which beneficiaries were in most cases allocated the whole LSCF inherited all the farm infrastructures (including the farm compound). This situation which can be termed large A2 farm compound resembles more or less the old LSCF in that farm employment is tied to residential rights, except that the farm compound is no longer lying on freehold land but on state leasehold land tenure.

In the large A2 compound at ZB Tobacco Farm all the workers who were resident there were obligated to provide farm wage labour. As enunciated by the landholder '...the policy is very clear, if you don't work on the farm, you must leave the farm compound. We incur a lot of costs for the services we provide in the compound which must benefit the people who work for us. These include: free electricity, transport to the hospital, first aid clinic and pre-school for the workers children' (Field Interview, ZB Tobacco Farm, 31 July 2012). The large farms are able to deploy their political connections and sole control of the farm compound to evict defiant farm labourers.

The second situation involves former LSCFs which were subdivided into numerous A2 plots – the subdivided A2 farm compound. Here the infrastructure is inherited by the land beneficiary in whose plot it lies, but state policy enjoins the middle farms to share the farm compound and other farm infrastructures with those settled on the former LSCF. Unlike in large A2 farms where there is a single employer, multiple potential employers exist for farm labourers in subdivided A2 and A1 farm compounds. This presents farm labourers with a relative degree of freedom of whom to work for.

The land beneficiaries in the A2 subdivided farm compounds seek to compel the farm workers to work for them, but not always with the same success achieved by the large farms. In Maguta, A2 subdivided compound less than 10percent of the former farm labourers were employed on a permanent basis on this former LSCF, whilst the remainder are employed in piecework in multiple sites within and outside the farm. This has been a source of conflict between farm workers and middle farms over labour shortages that arise.

This results in the institution of 'employment audits' in the farm compound to examine where the different

farm labourers are employed through the compilation of lists by middle farms. Such employment audits are common during the rainy season. The audits are done through meetings in the farm compound where farm workers are repeatedly told that they should sell their labour services on the farm since land (including the compounds) belong to the land beneficiaries. After such a meeting on Maguta farm compound in October 2011, 12 farm labourers were targeted for eviction but they refused to leave with support of their colleagues arguing that they had 'nowhere to go since they had no links to the foreign countries where their forefathers were born' (Field Interviews, 2 August 2012). The police enlisted by middle farmers also failed to evict the farm workers. Following advice from another middle farmer, the farm workers sought assistance of Zimbabwe Human Rights Association (ZIMRIGHTS) which successfully obtained peace order at the Goromonzi Magistrate Court which stopped the planned evictions.

The third situation is the A1 farm compound which is in former LSCFs settled by many small producers. The farm compounds were not allocated to any particular land beneficiary and belong to the state. The A1 farmers also try to force farm workers into mandatory labour provision and evict those who refuse to work for them. At Kuzvitonga A1 farm compound, less than 16percent of the farm workers were employed on the farm as permanent workers, whilst the remainder sold their labour in *maricho* to multiple former LSCFs in the 2011/12 season (Field work, June 2012). On the strength of employment audit 30 small producers led by the *sabhuku* evicted five farm workers (or 8percent of the households) who were found not to be selling their labour to them. Residency of the farm workers was only restored through the same route deployed by workers at Maguta Farm.

The fourth situation is the new farm compounds on middle farms. This has been motivated by their failure to compel labour in the old compounds to work for them. The 'control of labour' was a recurrent theme when farmers were asked why they had built their own compounds instead of relying on the already existing labour pool in former compounds:

'We built our own compound so that we have control over the labour. We were having problems with workers we had hired from the farm compound in Maguta Farm. They steal a lot. They have a "hangover" of their previous white employers and they don't respect us as serious employers. The farm workers on this farm are a bunch of lazy people. They are only interested in stealing firewood and selling it in Epworth where there is a ready market.' (Field Interview, MN, Maguta, 31 July 2012).

'Nobody is responsible for the farm workers in the farm compound. This is a problem because no one is controlling them. The workers are now free to do what they want. They just stay in the compound. In fact farm workers should have been removed from the compound because the land is now under

the ownership of a new owner. They charge us higher wage rates compared to other districts that are far away from Harare. They steal our harvest.' (Field Interview, KM, Maguta, 31 July 2012).

The fifth situation is where land beneficiaries are not linked to any old farm compound. This normally occurs on former LSCFs resettled under both A1 and large A2 schemes, where the farm compound was allocated to the large farm. In another instance, the LSCFs retain a portion of the farm and still control the compound. Lastly, are farm compounds that are located on the remaining freehold LSCFs which were not redistributed that continue to operate as before.

### 5.3 The role of kinship in labour mobilisation

Kinship networks have long history in the organisation of work in the Communal Areas (Adams 1991), and former LSCFs (Rutherford 2001; Amanor-Wilks 1995). Recruitment of labour via kinship networks operates at different layers in the new farms including through reciprocal exchanges that were dominated by small producers (41 percent) who had originated from Goromonzi Communal Areas (AIAS 2007).

There is also the direct recruitment of (extended family) relatives to work as paid or unpaid labour. This co-optation occurs through relatives staying permanently with them and temporarily during the rainy season. This is prevalent in the peasantry and middle farms which do not employ huge workforces.

A commonality amongst the relatives recruited to supply farm labour is their poor socio-economic background. In the field sample, these included a young female school drop out from the Communal Areas employed by her aunt (Field Interview, KM, Maguta Farm, 31 July 2012) and orphaned adult males employed by their uncle (Field Interview, MC, Kurima Farm, 2 August 2012).

Intergenerational ties that were observed in LSCF compounds before the FTLRP (Rutherford 2001) are still platforms of labour mobilisation in the new farms. It was common during the interviews to hear that: 'I was born here; my father was also born here. I got to work in this farm and married my wife in this compound. My children also got married in this place and worked on this farm.' The kinship relations also traverse former LSCF boundaries through marriages and employment of kin across neighbouring farm compounds. The migrant workers did not come on their own; they came with their siblings, relatives from the same village or other kinsmen and also sought employment for relatives while on the farm. This evolved the relationships that exist in the compound today. Thus stories such as 'my father came with his brother when they came to look for work in Zimbabwe' and 'I organised employment for my sister' were common. They were also part of the life histories of the locals who came from the surrounding Communal Areas such as

Seke. The farm compound is therefore a site of an interconnected web of kinship through birth and marriages that have occurred over time. Piecework performed in groups such as weeding were mobilised around kinship networks in Goromonzi.

The kinship networks are also still active recruitment and mobilisation of labour through the farm compound, but it now differs in that it serves many employers rather than one employer as in the past. During the peak agricultural periods, farm workers reported that they brought in their relatives to stay with them to perform *maricho* within and outside their former LSCFs. Before 2000, the recruitment of kin which was mediated by the senior farm workers (Tandon 2001; Amanor-Wilks 1995), now involves the *sabhuku* in A1 farms. The *sabhuku* at Kuzvitonga Farm requires farm workers to inform him when they have a visitor who is staying for more than one week.

The mobilisation of labour now entails inter-class struggles and conflicts between farm workers and middle and large farms over control of labour. This has influenced the diversification of the sources of labour, as well as the political organisation of farm labourers as outlined later.

## 6.0 Agrarian labour wages and benefits

The differentiated nature of jobs found within the new agrarian structure which are mobilised from a variety of sources and using several strategies, defines the scope of social reproduction of farm workers. The key issue that requires examination is thus the material conditions that accompany different forms of work performed by agrarian labourers.

### 6.1 Wages of agricultural labour

Circa 2006, 49.5 percent of the farm workers (49.5 percent) in Goromonzi district highlighted poor wages as one of their major problems (AIAS 2007). Wage payments transformed from a combination of cash and kind payments around 2005 to entirely kind payments by 2008 as a result of hyperinflation (Field Interviews, Extension Worker, 6 June 2012). Poor and irregular wage payments remain problematic in the social reproduction of farm workers even after dollarization and are also pervasive across numerous economic sectors in the country.<sup>xi</sup>

Permanent and seasonal farm workers are supposed to receive their wages on a monthly basis. Their conditions of service are covered by the CBA (GoZ 1993). These are negotiated annually since 2009 (quarterly before then) by trade unions and employer representatives before they are gazetted into law by the state. The gazetted minimum monthly wages for permanent and seasonal farm workers have doubled from US\$30 in 2009 to US\$59 in 2012 (LEDRIZ 2012). These wages still rank the lowest

amongst formal sector employees as the other lowest paid worker from the other sectors earns US\$125 (LEDRIZ 2012). Few large farms such as ZB Tobacco utilised collective bargaining agreements in the determination of wages received by farm workers, while middle farms used employers' discretion and negotiations at the farm level. The monthly wages paid to permanent workers in the middle farms in 2012 ranged from US\$40 to US\$100.

The higher discretionary wages were found amongst the middle farms linked to export crops such as tobacco and horticulture and had an array of capital intensive investment (e.g. MN of Maguta), whilst low capital intensity A2 farmers who are focused on maize production and have a poor financial resource base paid the lowest monthly wages to their permanent workers. The wages paid to permanent farm workers in the middle farms considered the segmentation of labour and hierarchy at the work place. For instance on MN's plot the general hands from the piggery section earned US\$75 per month, while those in field crop section received US\$60. The supervisors of the pig and field crop sections earned more, US\$100 and US\$70 respectively.

The extended family relatives employed as permanent workers face a diversity of employment conditions as kinship ties do not necessarily translate to better monetary wages. Offering employment to relatives is sometimes used as a strategy to avoid high farm wages and payment can be made on an irregular basis:

'Relatives are more understanding than workers from the farm compound as they don't demand high wages and we can postpone paying them their wages when the money is not there. It is difficult to do this to a stranger. They will not have any problem with that since we will be providing them food that we eat together and they have a place to stay.' (Field Interview, KM, A2 farmer, 31 July 2012).

Employing relatives is also considered as 'helping struggling relatives.' This is exemplified by the case of JT, an A1 farmer on MindaYedu Farm who recruited his nephew from nearby Epworth High Density Suburb. The informal flea market operated by his nephew in town was not allowing him and his family to make ends meet and was thus offered a work and a place to stay on the farm in 2010. The nephew received wages occasionally until he left the farm in 2011 (Field Interview, JT, MindaYedu Farm, 3 August 2012).

The situation is however different for some relatives who enjoy qualitative better labour rights than non-relative employees. At MN's A2 plot on Maguta, 'trusted' relatives occupied the two supervisory positions and were allocated preferential tasks:

'Relatives are trustworthy; they help us watch over other workers. This curtails thefts of produce on the farm as we have them watching over the other workers. We also give them preferential tasks that require trust. For instance, one of our nephews is

responsible for running the informal butchery and the grinding mill when I am not on the farm. The other workers might not declare all the money collected from these activities when I am not there.' (Field Interview, MN, A2 farmer on Maguta Farm, 31 July 2012).

Piece workers are recognised as contract workers in CBA, but their conditions of service are not covered by this legislation (GoZ 1993). Wages and benefits are supposed to be negotiated between the employer and employee. The implication is that significant sections of agrarian labourers are not covered by the existing labour legislation. Notable is the fact that piecework is outlawed in most sectors except in agriculture (GoZ 2001, 1992).

The wage rates received for piecework in Goromonzi since 2010 ranged from US\$3 to US\$5 per day. In 2009, between US\$1.00 and US\$1.50 was paid per day for piecework. The daily wage rates are differentiated on the basis of the kind of tasks performed and the crops involved. Energy demanding tasks such as weeding for instance commanded higher wage rates of US\$5 per day in comparison to less demanding tasks such as planting which attracted US\$3 per day in maize, soyabeans and tobacco. In tobacco, most of the piecework attracted a daily wage rate of US\$5 in comparison to US\$3 in other crops.

Apparently, the daily wages for piecework are based on agreements to standardise wage payments amongst the small and middle farms in the Bromely ICA to prevent all labour being attracted to the latter. Nonetheless, these standardised piecework wage rates are not normally followed by middle farmers who are not permanently resident on their plots. Some small producers complained that 'cell phone farmers' who live in Harare do not stick to the agreed rates as they offer higher daily rates of up to US\$5 per day for tasks pegged at US\$3 (Field Interviews, Kurima Farm, 2 August 2012). As such they tend to attract labour to their plots during the rainy season leaving the small producers who utilise *maricho* facing shortages.

The farm labourers and agricultural extension officials in Goromonzi suggest that the wage conflicts have intensified since 2009. The new land beneficiaries 'do not want to pay us for our labour services' was a recurrent discussion in the field interviews. In fact, the farm worker trade union, GAPWUZ highlights that their 'biggest challenge' currently is the 'non-payment and underpayment of wages and the unlawful retrenchment [of farm workers]' (The Worker, 1 February 2012).

The Zimbabwe Commercial Farmers Union (ZCFU) which represents middle and large farms attributes the non-payment of wages after 2009 to the loss of Zimbabwe dollar savings after dollarization, reduction of cheap state subsidies and limited private credit (The Sunday Mail, 15 May 2011).

The loss of Zimbabwean dollar savings however seems low, as the quantum of compensation for this is estimated at only US\$6 million nationally by the Ministry of Finance



(The Worker, 1 February 2012). Moreover the economy had transitioned to partial foreign currency trading by July 2008 (Moyo 2011) and barter trade characterised rural areas (Scoones et al. 2010; Moyo et al. 2009). Nonetheless few cases are to be found of farmers who lost out significantly as was the case of KM who liquidated investments made from his retirement package and payment was delayed until January 2009 (Field Interviews, 14 July 2012). With no other source of income KM's two permanent workers left employment after having gone for several months without receiving their wages in 2009.

Failure to access loans for working capital from private financial institutions and the state is a challenge faced by farmers both prior and after dollarization. Less than 4 percent of the farmers in Goromonzi accessed external agricultural finance in 2006 (Moyo et al. 2009:75). After dollarization, the limited savings used for onward lending by private banks are low, while state fiscal resources are constrained by cash budgeting (Lim and Pommerenke 2012). The few middle and large farms that accessed cheap subsidised credit from the state are ones mostly affected by the reduction in public financing:

'We financed workers' wages from the cheap state finance which we can longer access. Loans from private banks are limited and have a punitive interest rate.' (Field Interview, ZB, 2 August 2012).

'Monthly wages in foreign currency are now a burden and we no longer receive cheap loans. We now hire more piece workers when there is more work to do, than to keep a permanent worker whom we have to worry about every month end. We have no commitment to the piece workers.' (Field Interview, MN, A2 farmer on Maguta Farm, 31 July 2012).

Marketing of certain commodities have also affected the capacity of some producers to pay farm wages. Tobacco producers faced problems with Grade B (local buyers) at the auction floors who colluded with Grade A buyers (international buyers) to depress prices in the 2009/10 season. A middle farmer at Maguta who received an average price of US\$0.50 per kg of tobacco was deserted by 70 percent of his permanent workforce between 2009 and 2012 as a result of non-payment of wages (Field Interview, AK, Maguta, 31 July 2012). One of the three workers that remain has only been US\$35 between January and July 2012. Few small and large producers who sold their maize and wheat respectively to GMB faced delayed payments as some in Goromonzi where still to be paid for 2011 deliveries in July 2012. Most farmers sell their grain to private traders after the removal of the monopoly of the GMB in grain marketing in 2009 (see USAID 2012). Even at the height of maize marketing controls circa 2006, 44 percent of the farmers in Goromonzi did not sell to the GMB (AIAS 2007).

With the wages now in real terms, middle and large farms are downsizing their workforces. Large farm such as ZB Tobacco reduced the seasonal labour force from 110 in 2009 to 80 in 2010, whilst middle farmers such as

MN trimmed the permanent labour force from 15 to 10 during the same period. They are also increasingly using labour saving technologies such as herbicides being actively promoted by extension services. Herbicide use reduces the cost of weeding a hectare of maize from US\$120 to US\$11 and the labour requirements from 25 to 3 workers (Field Interviews, District Agricultural Extension Officer, 8 July 2012).

Some farm workers who experienced the non-payment of wages for several months have transitioned to piecework which is considered less risky. The workers can quickly move on to other employers in the case of non-payment of daily wages. KN quit his job as a tractor driver on an A2 farm he had been employed since 2003 after spending three months without receiving wages between August and October 2010:

'I left permanent employment to be involved in piece jobs since these are paid on a daily basis or on completion and you can get money to buy food and pay school fees. Permanent work is problematic because you don't know if you are going to receive your monthly wage.' (Field Interviews, KN, Kurima Farm, 8 August 2012).

The non-payment of wage is differentiated by the types of farms and crops produced. Most of the producers under contract farming (over 60 percent) in crops such as tobacco, seed maize, barley, and export horticulture transitioned into the multi-currency environment whilst they were already enlisted (Moyo and Binswanger 2012) and continue to access credit which provides capacity to pay wages. Some large farms who require skilled labour services such as ZB Tobacco which produces tobacco are also forced to pay over and above the minimum wages (through the attendance allowance) to retain labour. This suggests that wage conflicts are more concentrated in low skill requirement food crops such as the staple maize.

## 6.2 Access to residential and farming land

Access to residential and farming land is one of the key benefits received by farm workers across the different types of farms. In the large farms, permanent and seasonal workers received free accommodation and related services such as electricity in the farm compounds. This was also the case for permanent workers resident in the new farm compounds in the middle farms and those staying at the homesteads of employers. The farmers that do not provide these benefits to permanent and seasonal employees are at law supposed to offer allowance in monetary terms currently pegged at US\$35 for accommodation and US\$10 for lighting (GoZ 2012).

The pieceworkers in subdivided A1 and A2 farm compounds still benefit from free accommodation in the houses they lived prior to the FTLRP. Some farm workers have extended their housing space through the self-allocation of some of the houses vacated by their



colleagues. On MindaYedu farm, the junior workers who were allocated small rooms for themselves and their families moved their children to vacated rooms and have more accommodation space than before. However in some farm compounds, farm workers are being co-opted by land beneficiaries to pay for some services as observed at Maguta Farm, where they were asked to pay between US\$5 and US\$10 per month for electricity between 2009 and 2010. The payments were discontinued when electricity on the farm was disconnected for non-payment.

Following the tradition of the white LSCF, ZB Tobacco farm allocated the 170 farm labourers 13 hectares to share amongst themselves to grow maize, ostensibly to make them 'feel like they have a stake on the farm and build their loyalty' (Field Interviews, 31 July 2012). Workers who occupy the managerial positions on the farm hierarchy are allocated double the size of land than that of the general workforce. In the new A2 farm compounds most workers had no access to land as their employers feared theft of output that could result from this. One middle farmer commented that 'if you give the workers plots to grow their own food they will steal from your harvest and claim that it's from their plots' (Field Interview, A2 farmer, Tapinda Farm, 16 August 2012).

Small plots ranging between 0.04 and 0.5 hectares were being accessed by farm workers in the subdivided A2 and A1 farm compounds at Maguta, MindaYedu and Kuzvitonga Farms. The former senior male workers tended to command larger sizes as they lived in the spacious sections of the farm compound, while the lowly skilled workers (mostly females) who resided in the dormitories at Kuzvitonga and MindaYedu farms had the smallest plots and others had none (Field Interviews, 22 July 2012).

The access to land is sometimes extended to outside of the farm compounds. The farm workers at Maguta, Kuzvitonga and MindaYedu farms constructed vegetable gardens along the dams and rivers in the former LSCFs, while another former senior worker was growing potatoes on land reserved for a school. Thatching grass and firewood for sale and own consumption are being accessed from the grazing lands, as well as sand for brick making (Field Interviews, CM, Kuzvitonga Farm, 17 July 2012).

While access to small plots of land is a common denominator in the different types of compounds, except for the new A2 compounds, autonomy of what to produce in these spaces is differentiated. In the middle and large farms, food crops (mostly maize) and domestic vegetables were the crops commonly grown in the small plots similar to the situation prior to 2000 (Vhurumuku et al. 1998). The farm workers in A1 farm compounds have extended the crops grown to include even cash crops such as tobacco and paprika and keep small livestock (e.g. goats). This is now possible because of the freedom associated with the compounds after the departure of the white LSCFs: 'We are now free. The white farmers are gone and we can do all these things that he didn't allow us to do. The country is now ours; there is

no need to be afraid of each other. The settlers are our fellow black colleagues.' (Field Interview, CM, Kuzvitonga Farm, 16 July 2012). Nonetheless tobacco producers were ordered to stop and targeted for eviction as they were no longer selling labour to small producers as they were making enough money to fend for themselves (Field Interview, WP, Kuzvitonga Farm, 6 June 2012).

The production of tobacco on Kuzvitonga Farm is however continuing on the strength of the peace order they obtained from the courts (see section 5.2). Ignoring 'regulations' not to grow tobacco in subdivided A2 compounds can lead to theft accusations that led to the jailing of one farm worker at Maguta in 2010 over a 'missing' tobacco bale (Field Interviews, AK, Maguta, 2 August 2012).

While maintaining some role in the farm labour markets, farm labourers are emerging into petty commodity producers, sometimes linked to the markets. This has been aided by the extension of land rights of farm workers in the A1 and subdivided A2 farm compounds.

### 6.3 Other benefits received by farm workers

The large farms have continued the welfare programmes found in the former LSCFs. At ZB Tobacco, a pre-school and first aid clinic in the farm compound is available free of charge to the workers and their families.

Intense competition for *maricho* between October and March amongst small and middle farms has resulted in the introduction of various benefits to attract labour. These include offering meals (breakfast and lunch) to pieceworkers during their work day, in addition to their daily wages. This is meant to 'build loyalty of the workers towards the employers'. Those who are not able to provide food were forced to search for cheaper farm labour from outside former LSCFs in neighbouring Epworth High Density Suburb and Seke Communal Lands (Field Interview, JM, Lot 3, Buena Vista, 6 June 2012). Apparently, poor farm labourers from places such as Epworth offer their services at lower rates and accept payment in grain whilst former farm workers demand cash payments. Permanent workers also received a food ration which was normally 20 kg of maize grain per month in most farms and other commodities produced on the farm such as pig offal and vegetables (Field Interview, MN, 31 July 2012).

Benefits such as monthly attendance allowances (US\$10) are being paid in large farms between October and March to avert labour shortages as permanent workers abscond work to gain extra income in *maricho* (Field Interview, ZB Tobacco Farm, 2 August 2012).

The material conditions of farm workers are derived from a broader wage structure that includes monetary wages and other benefits. Quite crucially, they also involve access to land for residential purposes and

farming from which they gain incomes through food production and natural resource exploitation. These processes however entail inter-class struggles and conflicts between workers and the new capitalist farms, which necessitate that farm labourers organise themselves in variety of ways in defence of their social reproduction.

## 7.0 Social and political organisation of labour

The data presented above illustrates the constraints that the differentiated farm labourers face in their social reproduction. The key question is how they respond to these grievances in a context where the restrictions to organise imposed by the residential labour tenancy have been diluted by the FTLRP (Chambati 2011). The organisation of farm labourers is best understood through two dimensions that involve those outside their realm trying to organise them and their independent organisation in pursuit of social reproduction objectives.

### 7.1 The farm compound as a site of organisation and resistance

The farm compound is a site of organising by former and new farm workers for social, cultural and economic purposes. How the workers organise themselves is influenced by the hierarchal order generated in the work relations which differentiates the workers on the basis of skills and seniority at the workplace.

The senior workers which mediated work and off work relations between the black employees and the white employers (Kanyenze 2001; Amanor-Wilks 1995) remain influential in the organisation of labour for different purposes following the FTLRP. The farm compounds examined had a 'compound leader' who was normally a former senior worker. The leader was responsible for resolving conflicts in the farm compound. These existing leadership structures are recognised widely, as they are mandated to inform the *sabhuku* as was the case at Kuzvitonga farm of the conflicts dealt with and refer unresolved disputes. In A2 farms, where there is no traditional authority, the compound leaders are very influential and also undertook some functions of the *sabhuku* such as granting of permission for burial rights in the farm cemetery (Field Interview, AK, Maguta Farm, 31 July 2012).

The institution of the labour residential tenancy by land beneficiaries (see section 5.2) through evictions for refusing to work, implies that the farm compound is a contested space in which workers mobilise themselves to defend their land and residential rights. The farm labour community relies on state policy which has provided a dispensation for them to stay in these places. They use state institutions such as courts to restore residency in the compound and ward off pressure of

eviction threats from land beneficiaries as was done by the farm workers at Maguta and Kuzvitonga farms (see section 5.2). The organisation of resistance is sometimes across the former LSCFs as evictees on Kuzvitonga Farm were alerted of the legal services of ZIMRIGHTS by colleagues at neighbouring Maguta. The court peace order sare being used to consolidate their rights in the compound through for instance resumption of previously restricted cultural practices such as *nyao* dance as discussed below.

### 7.2 Reinforcing identity and belonging through social and cultural mobilisation

The preservation of identity and belonging is a source of social and cultural mobilisation by farm workers. This is expressed in the cultural practices of their countries of origin by migrant workers such as the *nyao* dances of the Nyanja and Chewa people of Malawi, Zambia and Mozambique.

The farm workers at Kuzvitonga Farm of Malawian had their *nyao* society which practiced *nyao* dance as part of their religious rituals every Sunday. The white LSCF supported them as it made it easy for the farmer to mobilise workers during their off day in case of emergency at the farm from the large number of workers that attended the rituals.

The sense of identity and belonging of migrant workers at Kuzvitonga Farm is being threatened by the restriction of this cultural practice by the *sabhuku*. The farm workers were banned from practicing the *nyao* dance in 2003 as it was considered to conflict with the spirit mediums which are part of the cosmology in Zimbabwean peasant societies (Field Interview, Village Head, Kuzvitonga Farm, 16 July 2012). Between 2003 and 2011, the *nyao* society from Kuzvitonga Farm joined the dance group on Maguta A2 farm where there are no *sabhukus* that restrict this cultural practice. During this period the village head gave them permission to play their *nyao* dance during special holidays such as the Heroes Holiday and Independence. Former farm workers have started playing their *nyao* dance in the Kuzvitonga Farm compound in 2011 after they won a peace order from land beneficiaries (see section 5.2) occasionally (once in three months) as a strategy to avoid confrontation with the *sabhuku* and the land beneficiaries.

Burial practices of farm workers resettled in A1 farms have also been transformed through their regulation by the *sabhuku*. Most LSCFs in Goromonzi had a portion of the farm designated as a cemetery for the burial of deceased workers and their families which they continue to use. The farm workers are now required to adhere to the customary norms imported from Communal Areas that are being instituted by the *sabhukus*. On Kuzvitonga Farm, the farm workers are obliged to inform the *sabhuku* in the event of death who in turn grants permission for

the deceased to be buried after the payment of a stipulated fee of US\$5.

The brewing and selling of *kachasu* which was a popular form of socialisation within the farm compounds dominated by migrant workers is also now facing sanctions from traditional local authorities in the A1 farms.<sup>xiii</sup> The *sabhuku* at Kuzvitonga Farm banned the brewing and sales of *kachasu* within the farm compound as it was considered an immoral activity that could also be passed down to the children of land beneficiaries. It is, however, still prevalent in A2 farm compounds as evidenced by the arrest of one farm worker at Maguta farm during the field research for selling the illicit drink. The farm workers from Kuzvitonga Farm are now accessing the brew from their colleagues at Maguta.

### 7.3 Integration of farm labourers into community networks

The farm workers are integrating into wider community in the former LSCFs through various social and economic processes. Familial relations are evolving through inter-marriages between the communities of farm workers and land beneficiaries. Indeed some farm workers in Goromonzi now have *vakukwasha* (sons-in-law) and *varoora* (daughters-in-law) from amongst the land beneficiaries. These familial relations are a source of land for farm workers as noted in the interviews at MindaYedu farm where one of their colleagues had been offered land by his in-laws (Field Interviews, 4 August 2012). They also consolidate the family labour supplies of the land beneficiaries as farm workers sometimes 'help' their in-laws.

Over time friendships have also developed between small producers and farm workers through socialising in the same places including belonging to the same church and drinking beer in the informal bars dotted around the farm compounds visited. They interact in the Parents Teachers Association of the schools their children attend together. The football team at Kuzvitonga Farm now includes players from the families of small producers. This is partly attributed to the decline in the conflicts between the A1 farmers and farm workers that were observed in the earlier phases of the FTLRP (see Chambati and Moyo 2004). Thus one farm worker remarked: 'We are getting used to each other over time and conflicts between us are declining' (Field Interview, MindaYedu Farm, 4 August 2012). These friendship networks also serve economic functions such as mobilisation of farm labour by the new farmers as they directly hire farm worker friends or seek their assistance in recruitment, as well as negotiating land access by farm workers (Field Interview, MindaYedu Farm, 4 August 2012). Others such as PG, a female farm worker at Kuzvitonga Farm accessed the auction floors through her small producer friend as she was not a registered tobacco grower as required by the law (Field Interview, PG, Kuzvitonga Farm, 31 July 2012).

Cooperation is also found through farm workers sharing productive infrastructures in the former LSCFs with small producers. At Kuzvitonga Farm, the farm workers producing tobacco in the Kuzvitonga A1 farm compound shared the barns with small producers despite the restrictions the latter impose on its production by them. This is so because small producers require their skills of farm workers in the repairs and maintenance of the barns which they jointly carry out (Field Interview, WP, Kuzvitonga Farm, 16 June 2012). This saves small producers on paying for wages if they were to hire labour. The farm workers are increasingly recognised as petty commodity producers by state officials and wider community structures as they also receive extension services and benefit from state input schemes (Field Interview, extension officer, 6 June 2012). The extension worker for ward 24 has also provided recommendation letters to several farm workers to register as tobacco growers with the Tobacco Industry Marketing Board (ibid).

Political party mobilisation is also a platform of integration for the land beneficiary and farm worker communities. The Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) is most active in mobilisation of the political constituency in the former LSCFs of Goromonzi. The old and the new farm compounds have been added to the party structures of ZANU PF, alongside the villages of land beneficiaries. The party structures in the middle and large farms are mostly made up of the farm compounds that house the bulk of the population in these areas and senior farm worker occupy leadership positions. The war veterans that led the land occupations dominate the leadership in A1 farms such as Kuzvitonga. Most A2 farmers are not active in these grassroots party political structures (Field Interview, extension worker, 6 July 2012). The farm workers at Kuzvitonga farm indicated that they consistently attended the 'compulsory' party meetings that are convened frequently.

The other major political party, the Movement for Democratic Change-Tsvangirai (MDC-T) which actively mobilised white LSCFs and farm workers during the referendum and land occupations in the early 2000s (see Sadomba 2008) is not as visible as ZANU PF. Its activities are difficult to trace as it is considered a sensitive issue. Farm workers fear being victimised (including eviction threats) and losing out on opportunities such as inputs distribution that take place under the platform of the ZANU PF party structures. Two farm worker youths on Kuzvitonga Farm active in ZANU PF structures were being earmarked for the one hectare land allocations that were being planned by the village committee (Field Interview, Extension Officer, 17 August 2012). The meetings of the MDC-T are organised during the evenings to avoid detection by war veterans (Field Interview, WP, 6 June 2012). The returns from the 2008 elections reflect the presence of the MDC-T as it won 21 percent of council seats in the former LSCFs, while ZANU PF won the rest of the wards (ZESN 2008).

## 7.4 Workers committees

The organising by farm workers also involves setting up their own committees tackle specific issues. These include trade union linked formal workers committee on large farms that organise workers to respond to labour grievances. Such structures were responsible for work strikes experienced in October 2009 over unpaid backdated salary increments in the large farms such as ZB Tobacco Farm. Farm workers on such kind of farms were active members of the farm worker trade union, GAPWUZ and received information on minimum wages. Informal workers committees are also found in the subdivided A1 and A2 farm compounds. These mobilise workers to boycott employers who do not honour agreed wage payments. At Maguta Farm, the former senior farm workers organised the workers through wide information sharing such that:

‘When an employer with a known history of not paying workers comes into the farm compound looking for piece workers, the truck will leave empty as workers refuse to get into the car. Word spreads quickly amongst the former farm workers. It is such employers who are forced to go and seek labour from faraway places such as Seke Communal Lands and Epworth High Density.’ (Field Interviews, AK, Maguta Farm, 13 July 2012).

The committees of farm workers also addressed access to social services issues. For instance, when the farm workers of Maguta Farm were requested to contribute to the farm electricity bill by A2 farmers they formed their own electricity committee which collected monthly payments.

## 7.5 Specialist labour groups

The formation of independent specialist labour groups is another way farm workers organise to resist low formal wages and bargain for more using their skills (see Chambati 2011). Such groups in the Bromely area of Goromonzi were focused on supplying specialist services in tobacco curing, grading and packaging/baling. The groups involve a team of workers that are led by ‘contract masters’ who were former senior farm workers.

The group at Maguta was led by the former foreman of the tobacco section. This group comprised four team members who used to work under the former foreman and were specialised in different aspects in tobacco processing. The members of the groups are accountable to their leader who is in turn accountable to the farmer for the accomplishment of tasks.

The contract master negotiates the task to be performed with farmers and the wages to be paid on behalf of the group. The leader of the group who receives payment on the behalf of the group, gets the larger share of the wages paid. For instance in one of the assignments performed over an eight day period by the group in 2012 to grade 2,000 kg of tobacco for a middle farm, the

contract master received US\$100, and paid the other three members US\$60 each (Field Interview, AK, Maguta Farm, 31 July 2012).

Agrarian labour politics is shaped by the new challenges farm labourers face in the social and economic spheres. The farm labourers respond by deploying their own agency and wider networks in the broader community to defend their social reproduction.

## 8.0 Conclusion

Land redistribution altered the agrarian labour regime by expanding family farming through the peasantry. There are now an increased number of differentiated farming households who compete amongst each other to mobilise wage labour. The labour utilisation patterns have been shaped by the shifting socio-economic context over the last 12 years.

The residential labour tenancy system was weakened by the FTLRP, as well as the dependency relations it generated. This reversed the social and political control former LSCFs had over workers allowing for active mobilisation and resistances to super-exploitation in the capitalist by farm labourers through their formal and informal organisations. The farm compound however remains a contested space and site of resistance over control of labour between farm workers and the new capitalist farms.

The politics of labour entail organising themselves through high wage demanding specialist labour groups and workers committees to resist exploitative working conditions. They are increasingly relying on state institutions such as courts to protect and consolidate their land and socio-cultural rights. A progressive development is the broadening of the scope of work of NGOs beyond the provision of welfare services, to work in defence of farm worker land rights.

While dollarization stabilised the economy, repression of farm wages persisted as land use capacities remained below potential and exploitative agrarian markets inhibit returns to farming. Nonetheless the extension of farm labour benefits through increased access to informal plots and natural resources provide opportunities to buttress their material conditions. The new agrarian labour regime exposed in earlier research (Chambati 2011; Chambati 2009; Chambati and Moyo 2004) has continued to evolve. Access to farming resources which in turn affects labour utilisation patterns continues to fuel class differentiation. Non-wage labour such as sharecropping and labour tenancies are emerging in response to shortages of finance to hire labour. The integration of farm labour and land beneficiary communities through familial relations and other social networks provides prospects for the improved social reproduction of labour. The new form of social patronage based on kinship ties is being extended as more relatives are brought in for farm work to minimise cash outlays on the dollarized farm wages.



The inter-class struggles and social relations between the competing modes of agrarian production relations in Zimbabwe following the land reform illustrate the importance of examining the agrarian labour regimes in their totality. The broad range of farms generated by the FTLRP do not exist in isolation of each other. They compete for the same labour and other agrarian resources in the organisation of production.

## Notes

- i The advice of Sam Moyo and Ian Scoones is greatly acknowledged in the preparation of this paper. The African Institute for Agrarian Studies provided two sets of survey data used in the analysis. Follow up field work was generously funded by the Future Agricultures Consortium. As usual the views expressed are those of the author and not of the institutions and people mentioned above.
- ii In the A1 scheme land allocations range from 5 to 7 arable hectares and 15 hectares of grazing land in wetter regions and 10 arable hectares and at least 30 grazing hectares in the drier regions. The land sizes are larger in the A2 scheme from 20 to 2000 hectares depending on the agro-ecological region.
- iii This was part of a six district survey of different agro-ecological potential settings.
- iv The historical context which provides a basis for assessing the changes to agrarian labour relations generated by the FTLRP is detailed in previous research (see Chambati 2011; Chambati 2009; Chambati and Moyo 2004).
- v The so called elites include senior bureaucrats in the civil and private sector, and senior politicians.
- vi This estimate is based on the average labour force per farm of 47.4 workers in Mashonaland East Province (CSO 2001).
- vii Names of farms and people are pseudonyms.
- viii The local extension officer indicated that since 2005, seven A1 farmers from Kuzvitonga Farm had their offers for land withdrawn by the District Land Committee after three seasons of the land lying fallow (Field Interview, Extension Officer, 8 June 2012).
- ix Nationally since 2010, between 60 percent and 80 percent of the tobacco output is being produced by contract growers (Moyo and Binswanger 2012; Moyo 2011). Out of the 20 companies involved in tobacco contract farming nationally, eight of them are found in Goromonzi district.
- x These included a greenhouse, tractor, water storage tanks, farm compound, electricity and grinding mill.

xi There have been numerous conflicts over wage increases by workers from across the sectors 2009 (see *The Herald*, 29 December 2011).

xii Kachasu is an illegal potent alcohol spirit which is home brewed by a variety of ingredients including fertiliser and sugar cane.

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This Working Paper was written by **Walter Chambati** for the **Future Agricultures Consortium**. The FAC Working Paper series publishes work in progress by FAC members. All papers are technical research papers which have been peer reviewed, and are available in open access format. The series editor is **Beatrice Ouma**. Further information about this series of Working Papers at: [www.future-agricultures.org](http://www.future-agricultures.org)

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