

1.0 Introduction

Africa's land questions, and their role in Africa's social transformation and development remain critical to the discussion of alternative development trajectories. Land research and policy focus attention largely on the social concerns of persistent food insecurity and rural poverty, as well as the escalation of conflicts over land rights. Issues of citizenship as proscribed by contested land rights and belonging are increasingly highlighted (Geschiere and Nyamnjoh, 2000). The increased focus on the land question reflects the failure of development, principally the absorption of growing populations into an industrialising model, and diversified economy. In particular an agrarian transition has so far failed to materialise while the home market remains disarticulated. The land question in Africa also highlights failure to address social justice and equity issues exacerbated by neoliberal reforms, as witnessed by growing trends of unequal control of land and natural resources and persistent poverty (Moyo, 2000, Palmer, 2002).

The escalation since 2000 of the land conflict in Zimbabwe is but one of numerous national struggles for land reforms and reparations which reflect the failure of the state to address the land and development nexus on the continent. The land question in Africa is indeed a by-product of globalised control of land, natural and mineral resources in general, not least as a mirror of the incomplete decolonisation processes in ex-settler colonies, but also because the pursuit of foreign 'investment' in a neoliberal framework has which marginalised the rural poor. Global finance capital is increasingly entangled in conflicts over land, minerals and natural resources in various African rich enclaves, highlighting the external dimension of distorted development.

In essence, the distortion of land property relations, including issues of land concentration and exclusion, the expansion of private landed property, and the deepening of extroverted capitalist relations of agrarian production, in the context of food insecurity, increased food imports (and aid dependence), the continued decline of the value of growing agrarian exports, and the collapse of Africa's nascent agro-industrial base, define the significance of land in the political economy of African development.

This paper examines Africa's land questions, its land reforms and their effects on development. To unravel the roots of land conflicts in Africa requires thorough understanding of the complex social and political contradictions, which have ensued from colonial and post-independence land policies, as well as from Africa's 'development' and capital accumulation trajectories, especially with regard to land rights, land tenure and land use. The failure of neo-liberal (economic and political) regimes in Africa to deliver land reforms which address growing inequality, poverty and development, through market based land reform and the resurgence of popular demands for land reforms (Moyo and Yeros, 2004), underlies the African state's disinclination and emasculation in efforts to address its emergent land questions, under current global political and economic structures.

We argue that Africa's land and agrarian questions have specific historical tendencies and a contemporary expression which is not well articulated partly because of its qualitatively different from experience from other regions of the 'global south'. The plethora of 'new wave' land policies and studies on Africa (see for instance: Toulmin and Quan 2000; Palmer, 2002; World Bank, 2002, EU land policy Guidelines, 2004), has tended to focus on land tenure and 'livelihoods', rather than the larger agrarian question and development. Indeed while some scholars had questioned whether Africa has a significant land question, except in the former settler colonies, given the absence of widespread land expropriation, the unresolved agrarian question is recognised (Mafeje, 1999). This suggests the need to review the effects of the longer term processes of capital accumulation, proletarianisation (see also Arrighi, 1978), as well as the effects of indirect colonial rule on the African land question (see also Hopkins, 1973; Mamdani, 1996).

Empirical evidence indicates emerging trends of rural land concentration alongside expanded 'illegal' land occupations, and a tendency for various rural populations to be marginalised from land by a growing number of agrarian capitalists, elites and state agents. This distributional trend, together with the incipience of specific conflicts over land rights, inheritance and selective exclusion, arises from significant changes in Africa's predominantly customary land tenure systems and gradual land 'marketisation', built upon unequal gender relations and class differentiated access to land and related means of production, in ways which are peculiar to Africa's political economy.

The land question in most of Africa emerges from varied historically specific social formations including the landholding monopolies of semi-feudal social relations and tributary systems in a few countries, settler colonial land expropriation and private property relations in a number of countries, and land concentration and inequality under conditions of differentiated petty commodity production in various regions of customary land tenure relations. While the unequal patterns of land distribution may be more localised and occur on smaller scales in most countries, compared to the settler land questions, existing patterns of large scale land enclosures vis-à-vis struggles for access to land and its secure use, including to reclaim alienated land, suggest that land retains a significant place

in the political economy of development. The land question is less about presumed African atavistic values of attachment to land, but more about the objective marginalisation of African livelihoods, disarticulated development and organised resistance against the loss of land rights.

Moreover, the land question in Africa needs to be examined in the wider context of struggles over land rights "embedded" in the control, by external capital and the state, of extensive lands which harbour minerals and other valuable natural resources. As the exchange value of natural resources expands with growing global markets for tourism, forestry, bio-technology and new minerals, more African land is being concessioned into external control. Civil wars, migration and involuntary displacements and inter-country wars tend also to be symptomatic of increasing conflicts over control and access to such lands and key natural resources by both domestic and external forces. These land conflicts also reflect the particular gender, class and other social cleavages, and the subordinated power relations characteristic of the neo-colonial African state.

The dominance of external financial and development aid institutions in Africa's land policy making processes and markets is organic to most of the emergent land conflicts. Pressures for the growing marketisation of land reflect both external interests in economic liberalisation and foreign access to land and natural resources, as well as the increasing internal class struggles over primitive accumulation by a broadening African indigenous capitalist class. New land policies justify these tendencies of unequal land control, but generate growing conflicts over land allocation and use, across class, gender, nationality and ethnic lines, and have even yielded xenophobia over minority land rights in some countries. Variegated struggles at varying scales and localities over escalating unequal access to and control of land represent a real land question in both rural and urban Africa, in relation to an aborted agrarian transition and maldevelopment.

2.0 Land in the Political Economy of African Development

2.1 Land reform, the agrarian question and national development

A broad consensus has re-emerged in the literature of the 1990s that land reform is a necessary but not sufficient condition for national development. This link between land reform and national development was widely acknowledged in an earlier period of development (1950s–1970s), though implementation was generally limited and contingent on Cold War geopolitics (Yeros, 2003). From the 1980s onwards, under the influence of international finance and neoliberal economics, state-led and interventionist land reform was removed from the development agenda and replaced by a concerted market-based land policy. This policy framework pursued the privatization and commercialization of land and sought to confine land transfers to the market principle. The neoliberal policy framework has had two implications for national development: it abandoned the project of integration of agriculture and industry on a national basis, promoting instead their integration into global markets; and second, it aggravated economic and social insecurity, intensified migration to urban areas, and created a deepening pattern of maldevelopment (Moyo and Yeros, 2005a). With the end of the Cold War, the end of white rule in Southern Africa, the deepening of the development crisis in Africa, and the emergence of various land crisis (e.g. Zimbabwe, Ivory Coast, etc), the re-emergence of rural based movements since the 1990's led to the return of land reform to the development agenda. However, the practice of land reform continues to abide largely by the market principle, while the theory of land reform has not yet articulated a coherent purpose for land reform in national development during the neoliberal era. These trends reflect ideological and political differences, manifested in various forms of organized and sporadic conflicts over land reform.

Land reform is a fundamental dimension of the agrarian question, and the agrarian question is a fundamental dimension of the national question. The classic agrarian question, concerned with the transition from feudal/agrarian society to capitalist/industrial society, has only been partly resolved by the course of development in the postwar period. While capitalist relations of production have displaced feudal-type relations virtually everywhere, a transformed African customary tenure around petty commodity production, not all parts of the world have become industrialized. Indeed, the international division of labour in industrial and agricultural production persists, with only partial transformation in the postwar period. This has been characterised, first, by the deepening integration of Northern economies amongst themselves, and with a small number of new industrial satellites, and, second, by the emergence of new divisions of labour within global industry and agriculture, based on technological capabilities, financial privileges, and mercantilist trade policies.

With the failure to resolve the agrarian question, the national question has itself been compromised. The promise of national self-determination that was born of the struggles against imperialism in the twentieth century has failed to be fulfilled in the last fifty years of development. Indeed, there has even been a retreat on the terms of the national question itself, under the auspices of financial capital, by means of a reactionary liberalisation of economies and an ideology of 'globalisation' claiming the end of national sovereignty and the states-system (Ibid). As the post-war period of global accumulation reaches its limits, characterised by overproduction in world industry and agriculture, and by the financialisation of capital, the national question re-emerges with particular urgency.

The resolution of the national question continues to be dependent on the resolution of the agrarian question. However, the last quarter-century has altered a number of economic and political facts, within countries and between them. Domestically, national capital has largely been absorbed by international capital; in a number of

cases (such as Brazil) rapid agricultural mechanisation has occurred; and national economies have been made dependent on international markets to an ever greater degree. Externally, the international monetary system has abandoned commitments to stable exchange rates, and more so the idea of a fair adjustment mechanism between commercial surplus and deficit states; the key international currency remains under the jurisdiction of a single state (USA); capital controls have been removed and international financial markets have taken full control of national macro-economic policies; and a new system of trade rules and procedures has emerged both to push forward liberalisation and to subordinate developing states to mercantilist trading partners in the North. While regionalism has spread throughout the world in the last twenty, and is a potentially progressive process in practice regional integration has been undermined by the priorities of global integration, rather than the African home market.

Under these conditions, what should be the national development strategy? And what should be the purpose of agrarian reform? In the past, agrarian reform was understood to serve national industrialization, and to this day it continues to have this potential. However, recent African land debates have underplayed the national development potential of agrarian reform, by counterpoising three general views on the purpose of agrarian reform: the 'social', the 'economic', and the 'political'.

The social version of land reform is currently predominant in much of Africa's poverty reduction debates. This argues that the existing African agro-industrial base, which has survived liberalization is sufficient and competitive, and that agricultural export capacity is rewarding but limited by weak foreign investment incentives, and to a lesser degree by northern market distortions. As such any intervention in the agrarian sector should be confined to providing some security to dispossessed and unemployed workers, until employment can be generated elsewhere in the economy. It is also argued that the problem of employment can no longer be dealt with by means of agrarian reform – as had been the formula in the 1950s and 1960s – for this would destroy existing agro-industry. It is also argued that smaller-scale production is inherently unproductive, and needs to be complemented by growing capital intensive large scale farming, and that the growing urbanization trends of the last two decades are irreversible, while reflecting de-agrarianisation and a new urban modernity-which require *de Soto-type* formalization to assign value to ghettoic assets. Current discourses on land reform and poverty reduction tend to be informed by this welfarist perspective of land reform (Ibid).

The economic version of land reform has two main tendencies and a number of different arguments, which are generally agreed on the idea that smaller-scale agriculture could reach a reasonable level of productivity, and that this channel of developmental is necessary, since urbanization is partly reversible. The dominant current in this debate, which emphasizes the 'family farm', essentially proposes the promotion of middle capitalist farms, which utilise wage labour, given its potential to absorb labour. However, this potential would correlate inversely with the level of technological development, and in itself would not guarantee a reliable employment policy in the longer term. While, the middle-sized farm also has the potential of redirecting production to the national market, and hence to synergize dynamically with domestic wages, this however would be contingent on reversing neo-liberal policies, and adopting instead a concerted national development policy framework seeking, the integration of the home market (Ibid).

A related current in this debate sees economic potential in a bifurcated agricultural sector, in which large scale farming specializes in the export of high-value crops, while smaller-scale farming specializes in the domestic provision of wage goods. In this case, the contradictions between small- and large-scale farming in the economic and political process are not likely to attenuate but accentuate, since it would demand a generalized shift in the national policy framework, that would challenge the historical privileges (in terms of credit, services, electricity, irrigation, and marketing infrastructure) enjoyed by the large-scale farming sector.

A second current in this 'economic' version places more hope on large-scale land redistribution, the promotion of collective/associative forms of production, the redirection of agriculture to the home market, and the engendering of inter-sectoral linkages. This current also argues that the benefits of large-scale farming are overestimated, given their historical privileges, social costs, and environmental unsustainability. This argument sees value in a national strategy of partial 'delinking' from the global market, but faces the chronic foreign-exchange dilemma, as well as national and international reaction (Ibid).

The political version of land reform also has two main tendencies, which are not necessarily distinct from economic thinking: the 'micro' and 'macro' tendencies. The micro tendency sees political value in land reform as a means to dissolve non-capitalist relations of production or excessively concentrated power structures where they continue to exist at the local and regional level. Land reform, in this case, should be confined to a targeted local and regional democratisation project, and not to a national project of structural transformation. By contrast, the macro tendency views land reform as a means of dissolving the political power of large agrarian capital that operates in tandem with international capital and has an interest in the maintenance of an extroverted model of accumulation. This tendency sees large-scale land reform as a political precondition for the implementation of a national development policy whose objective is the integration of the home market (Ibid). It finds private landed property as an obstacle to the mobilization of such a national project.

2.2 The African state, land policy and primitive accumulation

The economic and material foundation of the African state rests largely on primary resources extraction and export activities in agriculture, oil and mining, and natural resources (forest, wildlife, biodiversity exploitation), given the low levels of industrial and services sector development. With a few exceptions of countries which have experienced relatively high but capital intensive industrial growth, such as South Africa, the control of land and natural resources and their product markets is a dominant factor in the mainstream processes of capital accumulation and social reproduction. These determine the revenues and resource base of most African states, such that power structures and politics are heavily influenced by control of land, even where mineral rents are critical.

Large tracts of lands in many African countries are controlled by the state, through various property relations. State agencies hold land directly and indirectly, the state has powers over local authorities which control lands under customary tenure, and through its regulatory instruments, it wields powers over statutory lands, particularly leasehold lands, and land markets. State power and political hegemony over national territory and the populations is expressed specifically through powers over the allocation of land and related resources, the regulation of land tenures and land use, and through state structures responsible for the resolution of disputes and conflicts which arise from competing claims over land. Such control is accompanied by extensive state influence over the allocation and use of water and natural resources, and through this and other economic policies, the state directs financial resources and incentives, which influence patterns of land utilization. Thus, African states broker and build power structures and accumulation largely through the control of land and natural resources allocations, land tenure regulations, using various systems of distribution. Land reforms represent potential and actual changes in the extant land resource allocations, regulatory powers and institutions of the state, traditional authorities and emerging forms of capital.

The African state, situated within the context of neo-colonial class formation processes and extorted economic structures, is itself shaped by differentiated internal social forces which define actual political power and accumulation, but these remain subordinated to external capital and markets. Yet the state is central to "primitive accumulation" in general and access to major national socio-economic resources in particular, given the absence of a mature indigenous bourgeoisie dependent on private capital, resources and markets. As such, access to political office can be critical to the direction of accumulation. Weak neo-colonial African states, whether these were formerly settler colonies or not, retain different degrees of "customary" regimes of authority, including some forms akin to remnants of semi-feudal regimes, such as those found in Morocco, Ethiopia and northern Nigeria, and these play a critical role, together with the central and local governments, in the control and allocation of land

The primary contradiction facing neo-liberal "development" strategies and democratic struggles remains the unequally globalised markets. Trade relations are intended to replace state interventions as an instrument of development, for the internal social needs or markets of society within an integrated economy, based on improving resource and technical productivity and returns to labour at levels adequate for basic social reproduction. State interventions for development, tied under increasingly market relations of resource (including land) control have tended to exclude the weakly organised, socially and politically, and favoured domestic elites and foreign capital, through the manipulation of the markets and administrative processes, which govern resources, such as land and water.

The control of land has increasingly become a key source of mobilising power through electoral politics in which capital and class power direct struggles for democratisation and development. Land reforms can be critical sites of electoral political struggles, when class and race power structures in relation to the interests of external capital are unevenly pitched, in the context of unequal land distributions, as the Zimbabwe experience shows. The 1992 Kenya elections outcome for example was grounded in violent strategies of maintaining power by politicians who manipulated long-standing, but latent, inter-ethnic disputes over land, towards physical fights. Thus, the nature and form of control of state power and the ideological groundings of the ruling incumbents can be critical to the form and content of land reforms.

The nature of Africa's current intellectual and policy debates on land, reflect important ideological and political contestations around the definition of its land and agrarian questions, and hence the trajectory of land and agrarian reform that is required to undergird sustainable development, and the role of the state vis-à-vis domestic markets (including agrarian markets- land, labour and capital) and international markets. The neoliberal agenda emphasizes market liberalization within a global hegemonic project, which sub-ordinates the African nation-state accumulation project to global finance capital. The contradictions of this neoliberal trajectory manifest themselves partly in Africa's land and agrarian questions, ineffective land reforms and the mobilization of various social forces around land.

2.3 State-civil society relations, social crisis and land movements

Because of the centrality of access to land in the livelihoods of the majority of Africans, social demand for land reforms expressed in different forms depending on the nature of social forces which articulate them, have grown. Indeed renewed debates about the nature of African peasantries (Mafeje, 1997), and their resilience Bernstein,

2004), and their future (Amin, 2005), suggest that mainstream intellectual discourses on the struggles for land in Africa have tended to under-estimate their political significance, and place of the land question, in discussions on an alternative development path for Africa.

In Africa, numerous civil society groupings associated with the current renaissance of peasant organisations in Africa are predominantly middle class in content with strong international aid linkages. These structures tend to neglect radical land reform strategies and reproduce formal grassroots peasant organisations as appendages of middle class driven development and democratisation agendas. Rural operations of civil society in Africa within a neo-liberal framework have been characterised by demands for funds for small-project 'development' aimed at a few selected beneficiaries (Moyo 2002), leaving a political and social vacuum in the leadership of the land reform agenda (Moyo 2001). Membership of formal rural or farmers political unions tends to be widely differentiated, with leaderships dominated by an elite group of 'capable' farmers whose demands are for larger portions of freehold land (Moyo 1996). These organisations like their counterpart community based organisations, which form mainly under the social control of lineage hierarchies, far from representing the majoritarian peasant demand for redistributive land reforms, have been co-opted into neo-liberal land tenure reformism. The majoritarian land interests, seem however to be more often reflected in 'informal' movements, of a variety of social forces, including those that pursue land occupations, resource poaching and other forms of sabotage.

Land occupation movements such as those in rural and urban Zimbabwe, before and after the country's independence, represent an unofficial or underground social pressure used to force land redistribution onto the policy agenda (Moyo 2001). The 2000-2001 occupations in Zimbabwe, mark the climax of a longer, less public, and dispersed struggle over land in that country, which intensified under adverse economic conditions that were exacerbated by the onset of liberal economic and political reform (Ibid). The dynamics of land reform in this and other contexts are complex and variegated, and can best be understood in political terms—that is, in terms of a protracted struggle of peasants, poor urban workers and other rural groups for access to land, and in terms of the reaction of the dominant landholding class to this struggle, as well as the responses of the state. Land occupations thus reflect a tactic of class struggle and direct collective action (Veltmeyer, 2003).

Land movements are differentiated and adopt different strategies, whose actions many contradict some progressive struggles on issues such as democratisation or land reform. In Africa the tactics of land occupation for example has not been nationally comprehensive, and the absence of apolitical and institutional infrastructure necessary for widespread mobilisation of the African peasantry has been a major bottleneck. This is compounded by the neoliberal ideologies which define the strategies of civil society organisations concerned with land reform.

Research on African social movements, inspired largely by rational choice interest group theoretic frameworks, informs us more on the way in which farmers associations and federations can be utilised in the policy lobby or advocacy agenda's grounded in state neoliberal practises, rather than on radical land struggles. From this we learn more about lobbies for modernisation through increased exports and improved land use practices, and the short term financial and environmental utility of rural change for global markets and ecological stabilisation. This research focus has neglected underground and sporadic land movements and struggles.

However, social movements involved in land struggles are numerous albeit isolated and scattered. Theoretical perspectives which seek widespread social movements rather than incipient processes of organised land struggles, show that high profile as well as the numerous low profile land conflicts of both a spontaneous and engineered genre define Africa's growing land question (Moyo, 2001). In general, even formal farmers organisations and unions which collaborate with the state, are differentiated in their political intent and domestic policy demands (see Khalid, 2002; Abutudu, 2002), given their relationship to capital and state driven land processes, and existing alliances with external social forces. Numerous social movements resist the dominant logic of capitalist development in rural areas and in particular struggle to retain control over land (Lumumba, 2003).

Contemporary African rural movements, especially those that are *organised* – to various degrees, including those that are in the process of organising – and have a *progressive* agrarian reform agenda, have proliferated over the last two decades, but have not in most cases become the nuclei of oppositional politics within their respective states. Nor have they place radical land and agrarian reform at the centre of the development agenda. In contrast, James Petras (1997) argues that a 'third' wave of Left politics in Latin America, comprising of movements has been filling the neoliberal vacuum of the 1990s and that its stronghold has been the countryside (see also Petras and Veltmeyer 2001). African studies on land and/or rural movement, suggest that this vacuum arises because their *social base*, entails a rural-urban mix of small cultivators and proletarians, including urban retrenched and unemployed, and that their leadership remains dominated by middle class urban base elites. Their tactics of direct action, using mainly land occupations and resource poaching in private and public lands are overwhelmed by the welfarist projects of the NGO formation. Their strategy tends to be characterised by autonomy from political parties and the state, with limited pursuit of strategic alliances with trade unions, and other social movements.

The historical context of these movements is the crisis decade of the 1990s, and especially its closing years, the time in which the left began to retrieve and reconstitute itself, without Soviet Union and Cold War. In the context of

the 'anti-globalisation' movement, embodied in the WSF, internationalism and development ideologies have re-imposed themselves at this juncture, alongside a host of new and old debates and divergences on development and imperialism. Yet 'anti-state' and 'anti-politics' has been its dominant current, as espoused by Michael Hardt and Toni Negri (1999) in the United States and Europe and John Holloway (2002) in Mexico, and other intellectuals in Africa, whose work on civil society, conforms to the 'anti-politics', formula, including Patrick Bond (2002a, 2002b, 2002c) in South Africa. In spite of the diversity of the WSF, and its necessary function at the present time for the purpose of global conscientisation and articulation (Monal 2003), these movements articulate an internationalism which underplays the re-mobilisation of the national development project (see Moyo and Yeros, 2005a).

The idea that we live in a 'post-national' world, has been countermanded by the Iraq invasion, which has shown just how important the idea of national sovereignty remains and just how perilous it is to speak of a 'non-state' world (Ibid). The imperialist world which compromised the post-colonial promise of national self-determination has been denied, and this cannot be wished away. The idea of post-nationalism, nonetheless, continues to infiltrate ways of thinking, obscuring imperialism and eurocentrism, demoting the principle of national self-determination remains intact, no matter the extent to which the idea of post-nationalism continues to influence thinking and obscure imperialism and eurocentrism. Promoting the principle of national self-determination, and recognising that national difference and equality in substance are the precondition of internationalism are critical premises of any new social movements. And this demands commitment to the resolution of the agrarian question and the cultural hegemonies which it sustains, nationally and globally.

In this connection, that for all their differences in tactics, strategies, and results, the Zapatista uprising and the Zimbabwe war-veteran-led movements have both been among movements that have laid claim on the most demanding of internationalisms. That the Zimbabwe war veterans movement did not capture the 'imagination' of the left world-wide has less to do with the violence that was associated with it (which is comparable to, and in fact far less than, other political convulsions in Africa, Asia, and Latin America) and more to do with the civilized 'post-national' and 'anti-state' norms of the anti-globalisation movement. Even the LPM in South Africa felt the contradictions of the situation, defending the land occupations in public fora, but without going so far as to produce an official position.

The lack of rigorous class analysis, especially among eurocentrists who propagate vacuous concepts like 'the multitude' (Hardt and Negri 1999), and others who may not subscribe to this, but use broad concepts like 'elite', has obscured the precise the class structure of civil society. This is especially the case in Africa at present, and particularly in relation to Zimbabwe's civil society (Bond 2002a and 2002c), where the 'working-class' proclamations of trade unions and civic organisations are taken at face value and the material basis of the movements (to include sources of funding, alliances, etc.) is not investigated. This relates to the lack of recognition of the semi-proletarianised specificity of peripheral capitalism. There are two notable tendencies, either to 'urbanise' social protest in the familiar way and efface the agrarian question (Bond 2002c), or to 'ruralise' protest, by lumping semi-proletarians into a 'farmer' category that applies universally, to France and the USA, to Zimbabwe, the Philippines, and Brazil. The idea of uniting organisations from centre and periphery into a 'Farmers' International', with the objective of defending 'the peasant way of life', has its obvious limits. The economic and political realities of maldevelopment suggest that organizational priority needs to be given to the unification of peasant-workers across the rural-urban divide, with the objective of defending articulated accumulation.¹

3.0 The Land and Agrarian Question in Africa: how unique?

There are some uniquely African social features which define its land questions and approaches to land reform, including why the dominant emphasis on land tenure reform has evolved.

African land tenure systems

The first, primary difference which Mafeje (2003) emphasizes is the absence, at the advent of African colonisation, of widespread purely feudal political formations based on the specific social relations of production in which land and labour processes are founded on serfdom or its variants under feudal or even semi-feudal landlords (See also Patnaik, 1999, regarding these structures in India). Essentially, the extraction of surplus value from serfs by landlords through ground rents using primitive forms of land rental allotments and through the mandatory provision of different forms of 'bonded' or 'unfree' labour services, sharecropping and other tributary exactions on the peasantry under feudalism, was uncommon in Africa, and not as intense where it obtained. Instead, and again as Mafeje (2003) points out, most rural African societies were structured around lineage based 'communal' structures of political authority and social organisation, in which access to land was founded on recognized and universal usufruct rights allocated to families (both pastoral and sedentary) of members of given lineage groupings (Moyo, 2004). Such land rights also included those eventually allocated to assimilated 'slaves', migrants and settlers, as Mamdani (2001) and others argue.

This means that African 'households' held land and mobilized their labour relations in production processes, relatively autonomously of the ruling lineages and 'chiefs', mainly for their own consumption needs and secondarily

¹ We may add that valuable insights into the principles, applications, and problems of articulated accumulation in the periphery, as well as the lessons they provide for the future, are offered by Samir Amin (1981).

for social or 'communal' projects on a minor scale. Under these conditions, production for trade, generally considered to have been long distant in nature, occurred on a small but increasing scale since colonialism (Moyo, 2004). Amin (1972) has argued that these African social formations had some exploitative elements of tributary social relations of production. These can be adduced from the contributions that households made, from small parts of the household product and labour, to the rulers' and social projects (e.g. the king's fields, granary reserves and so forth). But, the essential issue which distinguishes the African land question from elsewhere is the absence of rural social relations of production based on serfdom, such as land renting and bonded labour, in a context where monopoly over land by a few landlords did not exist. Colonialism extended the extroversion of production and the process of surplus value extraction through the control of markets and 'extra- economic' force, but left the *land and labour relations generically "free"*. The exception to this was in settler Africa (Moyo, 2004).

Secondly, under colonialism, 'indirect rule' modified the organisation of peasant societies through contrived changes to the procedures of customary rule and of leadership and directed peasant production towards generalised petty commodity production, mainly through the control of finance, markets and infrastructures (Moyo, 2004). While migrant labour processes were engineered almost everywhere within limited geographic confines, in settler Africa it accompanied extensive and institutionalized land expropriation, which led to the proletarianisation of large segments of peasant labour, generating large scale landlessness and land shortages, alongside semi-proletarianisation. But even there, a substantial peasantry with relatively autonomous control of reduced land sizes and of restricted labour supplies was maintained, mainly in marginal lands under modified customary authority and tenure systems, in localized variants of indirect rule, which became essentially sub-national ethno-regional enclaves (Bantustans and 'reserves'). Under indirect rule therefore, customary systems of authority with regard to land tenures were thus retained, but adapted to suit the needs of the state to excise some lands and allocate them to specific production schemes or classes, and these allowed lineage leaders larger land endowments (Moyo, 2004).

Thirdly, while the dichotomy which defines the non-settler and settler African land questions, based on large scale historical land alienations, remains, this has increasingly become less acute in some regions of given countries, because, of generalized but locationally narrow forms of land concentration (Moyo, 2004). This concentration has emerged from 'below' and 'above': from below through internal social differentiation and from above through excision of lands allocated to 'elites' using state land administration structures and emerging land markets. This emphasizes the fact that the African neo-colonial state, has been 'activist' in promoting agrarian capitalist change in a manner which has supported land concentration among capitalist farmers and enabled the dominant classes to marginalize peasants and workers from their land rights and livelihood (Moyo, 2004).

On a continental scale, these processes nonetheless suggest that neither large scale land alienation processes or landlessness nor total proletarianisation or bonded forms of rural labour have resulted. They point to a diffuse but significant structure of land concentration and marginalization processes which are socially and politically significant (Moyo, 2004).

Resilient African peasantries, semi-proletarianisation and agrarian reform

The prevalence of semi-proletarianisation (worker-peasants) alongside the retention of large peasantries, or of small cultivators as Mafeje (1997) calls them, means that in general African rural societies retain households with 'independent' landholdings, albeit at a diminishing scale and on increasingly marginalized lands. But critically, their production and land use activities, and relations of production, are restricted by the quality and scale of land available, and by state agrarian policies and markets which extract significant surplus value from them. African land and agrarian reforms ought to redress these land inequities and direct land use towards internally beneficial and articulated 'development' for the transformation of Africa's peasantry (Moyo, 2004) .

The peasantry – the small-scale/family agriculturalists operating within the generalized system of commodity production – does not constitute a class in itself but inherent in it are the antagonistic tendencies of proletarian and proprietor (Moyo and Yeros, 2005).² The ideal-type 'peasant household' reproduces itself as both capital and labour simultaneously and in internal contradiction, but this combination of capital and labour is not spread evenly within the peasantry, for two reasons (Ibid). First, the peasantry is differentiated between the rich, middle, and poor petty-commodity producers, a spectrum that ranges from the capitalist that employs labour-power, beyond the family, to the semi-proletarian that sells it; as such, the middle peasantry is the only category that embodies the ideal-type of petty-bourgeois production, managing neither to hire nor sell labour-power –and which in turn is rare (Ibid). Second, the combination of capital and labour is not spread evenly within a single household either; differentiated by gender and generation, patriarchs will control the means of production, women and children will provide unwaged labour. While this may appear on the surface as a 'different' mode of production, it has been argued convincingly that petty-commodity production is firmly embedded in the capitalist system and in fact is a normal feature of capitalist society, even if subordinate and unstable (Gibbon and Neocosmos, 1985).

² This follows the classical formulations of Kautsky (1899) and Lenin (1899); for more recent expositions along these lines, see de Janvry (1981), Gibbon and Neocosmos (1985), Bernstein (2000), and Yeros (forthcoming).

Under capitalism the peasantry remains in a state of flux,³ within the centre-periphery structure spawned by colonialism, as proletarianisation co-exists with peasantisation and semi-proletarianisation. The form and scale of the actually existing peasantry in Africa is both an empirical and an interpretive problem to be understood from the composition of household income by source, including non-exchangeable sources of sustenance; and from an analysis of household residential patterns, as between town and country (Ibid). It has been argued that under structural adjustment peasants have become 'problematic', insofar as they are 'multi-occupational, straddling urban and rural residences, [and] flooding labour markets' (Bryceson, 2000a). Yet, the African peasantry has evolved in this way for much of the twentieth century.⁴

Structural adjustment has been accompanied by intensified migration. Africa now has notched-up the fastest rate of urbanization in the world (3.5 percent annually) and nearly 40 percent of the population is now urbanised. This fact is often used as proof that the land/agrarian question is losing its relevance. Yet, facts remain to be interpreted. Migration should not be taken to mean full proletarianisation, or permanent urbanisation, but the spreading of risk in highly adverse circumstances. Had this urbanisation been accompanied with industrialisation and job formation, the conclusion could have well been otherwise. But the reality is different: urbanization alongside de-industrialisation and retrenchments. Urbanization takes the predominant form of illegal and unplanned settlement, such that, for example, half the urban population of Kenya and South Africa lives in slums (Moyo forthcoming). It is notable in this connection that migration is not merely one-way, as workers retrenched from mines and farms are also known to seek peasantisation, as recorded in a case study of rural 'squatting' in Zimbabwe (Yeros, forthcoming), or as urbanites enter the land reform process (Moyo forthcoming-b). This situation is mirrored by trends in Latin America which are not substantially different, even if the population there is nearly twice as urbanized, between 60 and 80 percent, and still urbanizing (Moyo and Yeros, 2005).

Intensified migration has been a two-way process here as well, as opposed to secular urbanization, which Kay (2000) terms the 'ruralization of urban areas' and 'urbanization of rural areas', whereby rural and urban workers compete for both jobs, including agricultural jobs, and residential plots in both urban and rural areas. It has also been observed that retrenched workers from mines and industry have joined this struggle and have also sought to become peasants themselves –the most prominent case being in Bolivia where former miners have taken up coca production (Petras, 1997). The semi-proletarianisation thesis is disputed by those who see urbanization and proletarianisation as definitive, and who thereby seek to dismiss agrarian reform as anachronistic,⁵ especially Kay's particular version of semi-proletarianisation, which underestimates the political significance of the countryside and even combines with the 'end of land reform' thesis to write off an alternative pattern of accumulation. The semi-proletarianisation thesis has yet to be overturned either in theory or in practice,⁶ especially given that agrarian change within the contemporary centre-periphery structure does not provide for massive population relocations to the north (Moyo and Yeros, 2004).

The rise of a richer class of peasants alongside the rest who became semi-proletarianised or landless, means that full proletarianisation was generally forestalled, not least by state action and, rural households who hold onto a plot of land and maintain the dual income strategy of petty-commodity production and wage labour (Harriss, 1992; Breman, 2000). Rural non-farm activities and markets proliferated, such that between 30 and 40 percent of household incomes are now derived from off-farm sources (Mooij, 2000). This dual trend of ruralisation of the city and urbanization of the country suggests that 'the informal sector [in the urban economy] is not a stepping stone towards a better and settled urban life, but a temporary abode for labour which can be pushed back to its place of origin when no longer needed' (Breman 2000 cited by Moyo and Yeros, 2005a). The transition to capitalism in the periphery has thus taken place under disarticulated accumulation and subordinately to the accumulation needs of the centre. In consequence, it has not been characterised by an 'American path', as identified by Lenin – that is, a broad-based accumulation by petty-commodity producers 'from below' – but by varied paths (Ibid; see inter alia de Janvry, 1981; and Byres, 1991).

³ The historical fate of the peasantry in the North Atlantic birthplace of capitalism has been that of proletarianisation. Yet, more generally, the direction of change has not admitted of historical determinism, whether of the absolute type (Marx) or of the more cautious (Kautsky, Lenin) (Moyo and Yeros, 2004).

⁴ semi-proletarianisation has a longer, pre-SAP history that is not well acknowledged, and is indeed generalisable to Africa (First 1983, Cohen 1991, Mamdani 1996), and the rest of the periphery

⁵ In Brazil, this debate is heated, given that liberalisation accelerated urbanization, such that 80 percent of the population is now 'urban'. Those who see urbanization as full proletarianisation include *fazendeiros* (large-scale farmers) and the liberal press, as well as academics (**biblio**). Aspects of the thesis have also been disputed by Petras and Veltmeyer (2001), but *not* from a 'proletarianist' perspective.

⁶ It is important to note that the thesis has partly been disputed on conceptual grounds as well. Petras and Veltmeyer add a subjective dimension to their notion of 'peasantry', to include 'propertyless rural workers' whose 'ties to the land are recent and relatively strong' (2001: 101). However felt the ties may be, it need not translate directly into a 'class consciousness', as this is a separate matter contingent on political organization and articulation. It is more likely to be a 'peasant consciousness', in the populist sense, but this need not feed back into class analysis (at least of the classical type).

Where the neoliberal social agenda failed spectacularly in Zimbabwe, large-scale re-peasantisation has taken place outside the control of the World Bank and hence the penalties imposed from the north, but new pattern of 'accumulation from below' has not yet emerged (Yeros, 2002a, Moyo forthcoming-b). These trends, are now 'normal' processes of agrarian change in the African periphery under neoliberalism, where rural populations have been subjected to unfettered market forces, where they have struggled for re-peasantisation among other political and economic ends, and have in effect struggled to reproduce functional dualism largely on their own, with variable success, and different and contingent levels of support from state and non-state agencies (Ibid).

Alongside this semi-proletarianisation process, various social hierarchies derive from gender, generation, race, caste, and ethnicity, have intensified under capitalism and functional dualism (Ibid).⁷ In the contemporary world, disarticulated accumulation and its corollary of semi-proletarianisation provide the structural economic basis for the flourishing of powerful social hierarchies that either fuse with class (e.g. race, caste), or cut across it (gender), and reproduce apparently 'non-capitalist' forms of 'landlordism', even despite the historical culmination of the 'junker path' (Ibid). The synergy between class and race is notable in Zimbabwe, South Africa and Namibia, where both historical domination and the process of resistance have fused class and race discourses (Moyo and Yeros, 2005a).

Land and agrarian question in settler Africa

Thus, fifth factor which distinguishes the African land questions, but which is particularly of relevance to settler Africa, is the legacy of settler colonial land and livestock expropriations which accompanied colonial conquest, and the nature and extent of reparations which are demanded, based on 'living memory' and as an element of resolving the 'national' question (Moyo, 2004). This nationalist land question of sovereign right and of redressing racial and ethnic imbalances in property and economic relations has tended to be under-estimated in spite of the numerous the indigenous land struggles evident today. Land reform programmes in this situation where compensation of current large landholders is considered almost normative, face popular expectations that former colonial masters should pay the 'victims' of current land reform expropriations, if not also the victims of colonial expropriation, who have suffered long term loss (see also Mamdani 2001). Demands for colonial land reparations have been made in Kenya, Zimbabwe and Namibia, as well as historically on a smaller scale in Botswana and Swaziland, as has been the case in other nations with a history of settler colonial land expropriations, such as Australia, Canada and the United States of America. In Latin America the spectre of similar demands is resurgent.

While some countries with historic land problems including various Latin American countries, Japan, Taiwan and so forth, had received financial support for their land reform from former colonial or imperial (USA) powers, especially in the context of cold war political hegemonic efforts, reparations for colonial land losses in Africa have not been adequately addressed (Moyo, 2004). African governments, the Zimbabwe government in particular, allege that racism and protection by international donors of their land owning 'kith and kin' and their capital in Africa is at the centre of the land reform dilemma and of the current political controversy. Current structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) and poverty reduction strategies, which define lending and development assistance on condition of neoliberal economic and governance reform, undermine national capacities to redress these land grievances according to the 'rule of law'. This feature emphasises the colonial and external dimension of Africa's land question and reform processes, and the political controversy of market driven land reform strategies in the context of neoliberal 'globalisation' (Moyo, 2004).

Consequently, demands for agrarian reform in settler Africa have struck at the heart of the dominant national/cultural identities through which the conditions of super-exploitation are reproduced. In Africa however the issues of race and class have been strongly politicised for a longer period (Fanon, 1961; Cabral, 1979),⁸ and armed national liberation struggles against colonialism intensified these. The attainment of majority rule across the continent, within the neo-colonial framework, was characterised by the nurturing of small indigenous extroverted bourgeoisies combined to defend nationally the disarticulated pattern of accumulation, while in southern Africa, neo-colonialism coincided with structural adjustment. National politics have been galvanised by rural and urban class struggles by growing class differentiation among blacks. The latter has given impetus to a new period of inter-capitalist conflict between emergent black bourgeoisies and established capital, both extroverted and both bidding over the land question. The result has been a stark bifurcation of the national question: on the one hand, indigenous capital has confronted settler and foreign capital, transforming the meaning of 'national liberation' in its own terms and hijacking land reform; while on the other hand, the historical realities of class and race persist, characterised by functional dualism within a white supremacist framework, including the racialised landlordisms to which it gives rise (Moyo, 2001; Rutherford, 2001; Yeros, 2002b).

⁷ 'non-capitalist' phenomena was noted by classical theorists: Marx (1976: ch13), (e.g. the trafficking of children in England as a function of industrialisation; and Lenin (1964: 204-206), the persistence of a quasi-feudal labour service in Russia) reflecting the propensity of capitalism to re-create such phenomena in the longer term (Ibid).

⁸ The late politicisation of class and race issues in Latin America is all the more striking, given that Frantz Fanon was born in the French Caribbean island of Martinique. To this day, it remains possible, even for leading intellectuals, to write a history of radical political thought in Latin America without an engagement with Fanon (Löwy 1999).

Therefore, Africa has land questions whose social significance cannot be overstated. Land scarcity, denial of access to natural resources by large landholders and the state, through laws that exclude many, as well as land privatization, all contribute to human distress, poverty, landlessness, homelessness and so forth. In some situations, it is the scarcity of arable land that is at stake (e.g. North Africa), whilst in others (West Africa) it is the system of land administration and conflicts between the state and local communities, and various other social groups (men, migrants, women, urbanites, civil servants, youths and poor households) which is problematic (Amanor, 2003). In former settler colonies it is the challenge of land redistribution and related land struggles, which are dominant.

4.0 Three dimensions of Africa's land and agrarian question

Three land questions therefore dominate the political economy of development in Africa today. These are: the increasing concentration of land control and restricted access to marginalised rural and urban populations; expansion of marketised land transactions and the persistence of land use processes which distort agrarian transition

4.1 The land distribution question: equity and socio-political relations

Land distribution inequalities in Africa vary in their broad character depending on the degree of colonial history, foreign ownership and internal class and ethno-regional differential. Settler land expropriation varied in Africa. It was most extensive in Kenya, South Africa, Zimbabwe and Namibia, and occurred to a lesser extent in Mozambique, Swaziland, Botswana, Tanzania and Zambia. The largest scale of white settler land expropriation occurred in South Africa, where 87% of the land was alienated in the 18th century. After independence white settler populations tended to decrease although the proportion of land held by white minorities has not decreased proportionately. Instead there has been a gradual increase in foreign landholdings in countries such as Mozambique, Zambia and Malawi, in the context of renewed interest by international capital in natural resources based tourism and mining (Moyo, 2005). In Malawi, during the last three years, long-term Asian residents have increasingly been identified as 'foreign' landowners, largely on racial and dual citizenship grounds, given that land policy reforms prohibit foreign land ownership. Absentee land ownership exacerbates feelings against foreign land ownership. In Namibia, corporate ownership of lands hides the influx of foreign landowners, particularly those who are shifting land use from agricultural use to tourism.

Racially based differentiation of economic power and wealth associated with some degree of land control remains a source of land conflicts. Even in some non-settler African countries, small foreign immigrant populations such as the Asians in East Africa tend to become associated with large freehold and leasehold landholdings.

Land distribution problems in non-settler countries occurred initially through rural differentiation processes, which heightened from the 1970s and escalated in the 1990s. The maturation of an African petit bourgeoisie after independence saw new landholding concentrations among retired public servants, professionals, indigenous business people and other urban elites. These social forces emerged from earlier nationalist, political and administrative leaderships, 'traditional' elites, and new post-independence middle class elements whose accumulation treadmill focused on agrarian exports. Such rural differentiation, alongside the growth of poor rural peasantries and semi-proletarian, which 'straddle' the rural and urban divide, explains the demand for land reform policies in favour of elites. Evidence from Kenya, Malawi, Botswana, Mozambique, and Zambia also reveals that rural land inequality has grown in line with structural adjustment programmes (SAPs). Differential access to land and the growth of land concentration has emerged from 'below' and from 'above'.

Colonial land injustices and current land policies have led to increased differentiation in the control of and access to land. Increasingly land ownership patterns are derived from endowments arising from class differentiation strategies, which emerged in the colonial era (Lumumba and Kanyinga, 2003), and have led to growing landlessness. For example, since Kenya's land law grants enormous powers of control of land to the President who holds land in trust for the state, the President tends to grant land to a few individuals and corporate interests. This process has affected the majority of the lands utilized by pastoralists who occupy and use over two thirds of the Kenya landmass (Ibid). Thus from 'above', land allocation and land reform policies have tended to promote land accumulation by the direct official provision and private 'grabbing' of large landholdings to the elite.

From 'below', processes of local agrarian and power differentiation have encouraged local elites to amass larger landholdings amidst growing land scarcities, land shortages and landlessness. This entails widespread comprehensive situations in which local rural agrarian capitalists have emerged and acquired larger than average tracts of land, based on internal social differentiation processes. These include resource accumulation from land 'grabbing', various state resources, the accumulation of petty agricultural savings, wages and remittances, and other non-farm sources. Local land concentration also entails situations in which traditional leaders, elders and primary indigenous settlers have hoarded larger land parcels of better quality. Land tenure reforms tend to formally recognize discriminatory customary tenure rules or to condone their persistent abuse by local elites and local state functionaries, as well introduce statutory tenures for the benefit of these elites. While unequal land holding structures are not as extreme as in the white settler territories, process of land concentration now occur on a significant scale.

Colonial and post-independence land policies also tended to partition national economies into ethno-regional enclaves of unequal growth, where land and resources concentration occurred alongside marginalized regions. Land conflicts take the shape of 'ethnic' struggles among pastoralist groups competing for the control of grazing lands and water supplies, especially during droughts (Flintan and Tamrat, 2002). Such land conflicts escalated following the demarcation of boundaries which fragmented pastoral groups and impeded cross border movements which essentially undermined the viability of customary land and resource-use systems (Ibid). Territorially based ethnic clashes reign over local citizenship as conferring rights to such land. Minority groups have suffered substantially. Land distributional conflicts affecting some ethnic groups, especially minority 'indigenous' groups (such as the San/Bushmen in Botswana; Herero in Namibia; etc) are common in some countries, especially where post-independence land expropriations by the state have facilitated or led to the reallocation of land to local elites and foreign capital.

In some countries, the spatial re-ordering of villages and family was instrumentalised by the colonialists to consolidate ethnic based power structures of their choice, and created a framework within which taxes could be collected, migration regulated and selected land allocation strategies pursued to suite their interests. Thus, many African social or ethnic conflicts over socio-economic dominance are structured by the unequal control over land and natural resources, depending on the histories of land control, farming systems and political structures.

Unequal land distribution also arises from the growing tendencies for land to be concessioned and sold to foreign companies, through investment agreements in agriculture, tourism, forestry and urban land investments. Multinational companies have become a critical force in the unequal control of land, emphasising the importance of the international dimension of the land question.

4.2 Land rights, private property and markets

A major dimension of Africa's land and agrarian question has been the search of colonial and post-independence states and emergent landholding classes, including foreign capital, for the transformation of customary land tenures and property rights into landed property, and the establishment of land markets based on individual freehold and leasehold titles to rural land.

The experience with land tenure reforms is perhaps most documented in west and east Africa. Several countries in West Africa have pursued land registration as a step towards creating land markets (see also Moyo, 2003a). Land tenure policy and legislative reforms escalated in West Africa since the early 1990s, with countries such as Guinea, Mauritania, Guinea Bissau and Burkina Faso introducing the concept of private property in response to such pressures (Delville, 2002). When empirical evidence questioned the relevance of privatisation in promoting security of tenure and the lack of marked differences in investment between customary tenure systems and private property rights, the land tenure policy debate shifted towards 'local rights recognition' (Delville, 2002). The increased commercialisation and expropriation of land as a result of the production of export crops set in motion serious conflicts, increased land pressure and resulted in the growth of land market in Ghana (Amanor, 2003). These tenure reforms essentially veer towards establishing land markets in the long-term.

In East Africa and the Horn, post independence land tenure reforms have ranged from individualisation and privatisation, as represented by Kenya, to the collectivist approach to land reform represented by Tanzania and Ethiopia, while Kenya, Burundi and the Comoros converted indigenous land tenures into private ownership (Moyo, 2003b). . Most countries in East Africa have provided some legal recognition to indigenous customary land tenure (Bruce, 1996). Tanzania, Ethiopia and Eritrea abolished private ownership and sought to replace indigenous tenure systems with alternative community based tenure reforms. In north Africa tenure reforms took ascendance from the 1970's, with an incomplete process of registration and certification of ownership in Tunisia and Morocco. The process of privatisation of state and collectively owned lands has also been slow, as has the emergence of land markets.

This Africa-wide trend in the 1970s and 1980s towards individualisation and titling of customary lands was sponsored by donors who were convinced of the superiority of private property rights (Basset, 1993; Platteau, 1996). When these schemes failed to gain social and political acceptance in the 1990s, the World Bank argued that, as population pressure increased, societies would spontaneously evolve new property relations and land markets, and that the task of African governments would be to formalise such evolving property relations through titling (Moyo, 2003b). However, contrary to the claim of recognising local land rights, the establishment of land titles and registers has also facilitated a new wave of land alienation and investment by domestic and foreign entrepreneurs. As elsewhere in Africa, land registration in South Africa's communal areas can be expected to increase transaction costs of land, with more resources being spent on registration and administration than on productive use of the land, as well as to exclude the poor and to fuel disputes over inheritance, exclusion of women and conflicts over village level common land.

In general, land conflicts in much of Africa, based on attempts to market land through assigning exclusive land rights to individuals, have led to conflictual relationship over the power of the state to allocate land vis-à-vis that of customary law authorities (Mathieu, 1996). Control over land allocation and concession procedures in post-independent African states, tends however to be increasingly delegated to 'elected' or appointed rural councils,

leading to conflicts between formal law and customary land rights e.g. in Ivory Coast and Burkina Faso (Delville, 1999), and in Ethiopia (Submariam, 1996). But although the state has taken over the absolute right of land allocation, these local authorities usually remain legitimate in the eyes of the community and continue to enjoy considerable political power (Ibid) over land management systems. The right of eminent domain and the power to allocate land rights are fundamental to customary systems and the power of local authorities, hence pre-colonial states used their right of conquest to allocate land to their clients or servants (Ibid).

In many African countries a dual legal system which presides over land conflict management and adjudication has been the source of many conflicts and contradiction over land rights (see Tsikata, 1991; Shivji, 1998; Lastarria-Cornhiel 2002). Customary law in land matters in southern Africa, for example applies mainly to indigenous Africans, while the formal legal system is reserved for white settler land markets (see also Mamdani, 1996). African countries with ethnic groups that practice different customary legal systems may or may not recognise the dominant systems of customary adjudication. In those countries with significant Muslim populations (such as in Nigeria, Tanzania and Sudan) their adoption of Islamic family laws in predominantly Muslim regions contradicts the customary laws and received legislation on land that applies to other regions with different legal traditions (Lastarria-Cornhiel, 2002).

Many communities resent the heavier presence of administrators (besides the traditional leaders) in customary systems of tenure than is found in freehold tenure regimes, perceiving it as based upon restricting (and in some cases criminalising) use of natural resources and imposing land-use policies, which the local people may not like. The fact that individuals under freehold tenure, including on plantation estates, tend to have more rights to the management of their land creates the problem of the assumed superiority or inferiority of the different forms of tenure, when in fact these problems are based on the form of land administration.

Thus tenure inequities are reinforced by the fact that the expropriation of land for 'commercial' and 'social' development is usually carried out by central state institutions, which in the name of development and national interest, allocates land to state projects and private commercial interests, to the exclusion of the poor (Amanor, 2003). When this expropriation is opposed by rural people, the legal channels open for them to readdress their concerns are limited, since the state has created the legal framework through which it initiates the process of expropriation (Ibid). This is usually carried out by unrepresentative land bodies including chiefs, elders, and others in leadership positions at Ward level (Shivji, 1998; Amanor, 2002; Murombedzi, 1999). While chiefs are often the partners of the state in expropriating farm land, they are recognised by the state as the legitimate representatives of the people, such that their role in the mediation of land conflicts is usually overshadowed by transmitting government orders to the rural people and ensuring compliance with policies (Amano, 2003). Their powers are omnibus and not separated as would be required in theory by liberal political systems.

4.3 Extroverted agrarian development, distorted home markets

A long standing land question in Africa is the manner in which development policies, including economic, incentives and public allocations, have directed the use of land in ways, which are not beneficial for national development and which favour distorted accumulation by a small elite and foreign capital (Moyo, 2004). The productive purposes of land use, including the types of commodities produced and their trade and domestic benefits, and the levels of productivity promoted by these policies, has tended to remain extroverted.

Land use policies currently under-value land, largely by allocating land and related resources to commodities with poor returns and domestic linkages. This external co-optation by neoliberal policies has led to the demise of African agriculture, expanded food insecurity and, food import and aid dependence, and the inability of agriculture to accumulate investible resources and finance itself, without resorting to external debt entrapment. This pattern reinforces the limited agricultural transformation, hence the failed agrarian transition and agro-industrial growth, and the tendency for state resource allocations to discriminate against the poor and the weak (Moyo, 2004).

The trend towards expanding land use patterns for exports have led, not only to the loss of local livelihoods (pastoralism and peasant cropping systems) but also to increased conflicts over the control of land and gradual processes of land alienation (Moyo, 2004). One controversial trend emanating from SAP liberalisation land use policies is the conversion of farming land to exclusively wildlife and nature based land uses through the consolidation of large scale farms into even larger scale "conservancies". These land uses are justified as being the most environmentally, socially and economically sustainable management of land and natural resources in fragile areas. But these conservancies add to the previous exclusion of peasants from substantial lands by the state in the name of attracting national, regional and international capital in the tourism, forestry and biotechnology sectors. They remove the visibility of the human face of individual land ownership from the struggles over land and shift these to abstract legal entities of ubiquitous domicile, justified through putatively benign environmental theologies (Moyo, 2000). Thus the socio-economic face of rural differentiation through large scale land ownership and use for external markets is transformed into remote public and private shareholding structures, which extol modern common property management regimes and decry 'traditional' communal tenures.

Tourism, environmentalism and related markets have thus created a new land frontier in African states in which various "stakeholders" at the local, district, provincial, national and international level, involving private, state, NGO

and community actors are engaged in land struggles for the exploration and preservation of new forms of biodiversity and methods of their economic and social exploitation (Moyo, 2000). This preferential allocation of state resources to land uses aimed at the reproduction of nature in state lands, and in parks and forests, emphasises their short term commercial and macro-economic value to the state, elites and foreign capital, rather than their interest in rural poverty reduction. Land use policies and regulations tend to be based on the view that large sized farms are critical for agricultural export growth and that small producers should focus on production for own consumption and domestic markets. Except perhaps in west and northeast Africa in most of Africa, relatively larger landholdings under freehold or leasehold tenure, are supported by the state, because of their perceived superiority, towards the production of agricultural produce for exports. But, almost all the coffee exports in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, and Ethiopia are grown by smallholders on customary land. The same is true for tea, beans and various horticultural productions in Kenya. In addition, there are many smallholder cocoa farmers in West Africa and smallholder cotton farmers in west, east and southern Africa. Yet the evidence suggests that the smallholder production of food for own consumption has become critical for the food security and sustainable livelihoods of the majority of Africa's people.

Much scholarship on Africa tends to consider national internal agrarian policy deficiencies to be the key cause of Africa's agricultural and rural problems. Yet, the most striking result of the African agricultural performance over the last three decades is the growing rural income distribution inequalities and broader social differentiation (Ghai and Radwan, 1983) consequent upon the expansion of rural markets and of negative global economic integration. In historical perspective, these interpretations of the causes of the agrarian crisis reflect poorly on the African nationalist agenda, because it has delivered neither industrial development nor stability and because it has generated greater social conflict over land and natural resources and agrarian resources.

These shifts in African land use patterns have always been a highly contested phenomenon dimension of its agrarian question. Land use policies increasingly uphold a moral and socio-economic value in which allocating prime land to extroverted cropping, livestock and wildlife and tourism uses is considered of greater utility than the developmental utility of land for national economic integration and to satisfy the home market as defined by the land needs of the majority of human rural and urban poor. Thus a few individual large landholders and the animals themselves are privileged. The general tendency therefore is to exclude the peasantry from vast tracts of land and natural resources, based upon the argument that such lands are too marginal for intensive crop and livestock farming and that rather than invest in such land it should be left to natural uses such as wildlife (Moyo, 2000). Policies and regulations which directly and indirectly orient land use towards minority capitalist classes and external markets have thus become a major site of contestation, and define a common land questions facing Africa. The preferential allocation of state resources to the reproduction of nature in state lands, parks and forests tends to emphasise the short term commercial and macro-economic value to the small national agrarian and foreign capital, rather than towards a broader transformation of rural and agricultural productivity. Land use policies which focus on commercialising agricultural production have also tended to drive unequal land tenure reforms.

In most of Africa, land-use regulations and planning frameworks have been an ideological tool for maintaining the unequal distribution of land and inequitable security of tenure. The regulation of land-use, usually rationalised on the basis of the need to protect legitimate public interest, is often unevenly applied to different tenure systems, and through this to different classes of landowners and land-use systems. Land use regulation is often unfairly and inequitably applied towards the peasantry. In analysing the various forms and types of regulations governing land-use it is important to go beyond the stated formal rationale of sustainable development, and to uncover the origins and value systems implicit in such regulations. In many cases, the imposition of land use regulations is intended to protect the interests of emerging agrarian capitalists rather than the national or public interest of the poor peasantry. In other cases, the regulations may, in theory, protect the public interest but, because of unequal land distribution, the impact of such regulations might be to deny the excluded peasantry of their legitimate rights to state support.

The question is whether these new generations of land use policies and regulation promote efficiency in the utilisation of land and labour resources, and thus improve national welfare in general. The persistence of under-utilisation, low land productivity and external land use orientation suggest that land use and related policies have been an obstacle to agricultural transformation. New trends of land use and productivity in Africa reflect new forms of control over land ownership, its land use and production content and the benefits derived from these. Understanding how these land use contradictions in relation to unequal land distribution undermine Africa's agrarian transition and development in a context of persistent semi-proletarianisation and the resilience of African peasantries, is critical.

5.0 The African Land Reforms and Land Struggles

African land reforms since decolonization have varied, partly according to the legacy of colonial land labour relation and agrarian change, but also in relation to anti-colonial struggles and post- independence land policy trajectories, and the specific patterns of disarticulated accumulation.

5.1 Redistributive land reforms

African redistributive land reforms would be expected to differ physically from their Asian and Latin American counterparts mainly because the form of land redistribution required involves restoring lands which are physically controlled by large landholders through the resettlement of displaced peasants and alienated semi-proletarians, and the enlargement of peasant land areas using repossessed contiguous lands. This approach would differ from the Asian reforms in which land renting peasants are allocated land rights mainly by re-allocating them the 'title' to independently hold the land they formerly rented, and/or by upgrading the conditions under which they rent lands from feudal or semi-feudal landlords. While, to some degree, the upgrading and re-assigning of tenure rights to land users is relevant in relevant parts of Africa where land rentals and sharecropping have emerged (especially in west Africa), this form of redistributive tenure reforms, of the 'land to the tiller' genre, is more relevant on a large scale outside the continent.

Redistributive land reforms are needed in southern Africa and those parts of east and north Africa that have highly unequal land distribution alongside landlessness and shortages. In these territories however, limited redistributive land reforms had been attempted since the late 1950s, while since the 1980's gradualistic market based land reforms were initiated in southern Africa. Land reform was only 'radicalized' recently under conflicted conditions in Zimbabwe. The need for redistributive land reforms would also be expected in other countries, where localized and regional enclaves of land concentration have emerged, through gradual and piecemeal expropriation by the colonial and post-independence state.

African redistributive land reforms involve restoring lands controlled by large landholders through the resettlement of displaced peasants and alienated semi-proletarians, and the enlargement of peasant land areas using repossessed contiguous lands (Moyo, 2004). Some of the stated objectives of land redistribution in Africa include: to decongest overpopulated areas; to expand the base of productive agriculture; to rehabilitate people displaced by war; to resettle squatters, the destitute, the landless; to promote equitable distribution of agricultural land; and to de-racialise or expand indigenous commercial agriculture. These are underpinned by the aim of addressing historical injustices of colonial land expropriation and to assert the right of access by 'indigenes'. Land redistribution has tended to be severely circumscribed by market-oriented approaches to land acquisition and the legal challenge by large land owners of the land expropriation mechanism, while the negotiated voluntary transfer of land has not occurred on a significant scale (Moyo, 2004). In East Africa redistributive reforms were mainly pursued in Kenya and Ethiopia.

Redistributive land reform processes in Africa span the 40 year history of national liberation, but the experiences vary according to the land questions faced Africa in each country. Whereas different socio-economic and political specificities determine the nature of land reforms carried out the gradual shifts in the nature of national liberation struggles among the countries since the 1960's, tended to reflect changing ideological and political mobilisation of the social forces engaged in resistance to imperial rule, and the distinct land reform strategies used. The literature on redistributive land reforms in Africa, and their actual implementation in recent times is heavily biased towards the southern African experiences since the 1980s, hence our main focus on that region here. For example, land reform experiences in the Southern African region exhibit a changing divide between radical nationalist-cum-socialist redistributive land reforms and liberal approaches (Moyo, 2004). Where national liberation was decisively concluded, such as in Mozambique and Angola, the land distribution question appears to have been broadly resolved, although new sites of localised land concentration have emerged. Where liberation was relatively partially concluded, as in the main settler territories of Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa, negotiated settlements left both the national question and land question relatively unresolved. In particular the racial dimensions of the national question were not adequately addressed, as structures of wealth, income and land distribution remained intact, and protected by liberal democratic constitutions and market principles.

The 'radical' land reforms entailed the nationalization of colonial, foreign and settler landholdings as pursued in Zambia during the early 1970s, and in Mozambique and Angola from the mid-1970's. Whereas Zambia and Mozambique had pursued 'socialistic' land and agrarian reforms based upon developing largely state marketing systems and land settlement and use reorganization (villagisation and rural development in Tanzania and resettlement and integrated rural development in Zambia), Mozambique pursued land nationalization with more intensive attempts at socialistic transformation, using state and cooperative farms. Angola which started off mired in civil war did not pursue further significant land reform after land nationalisation (Ibid). Civil war in the lusophone territories, fuelled by South African destabilization and their relative international isolation, however contained radical agrarian reforms there and 'post-conflict' land tenure reforms re-introduced some land concentration.

In contradistinction to this, more liberal strategies of land reform were adopted in the colonial 'protectorates', which predominantly faced indirect colonial rule accompanied by minor degrees of white settlerism alongside colonial cheap labour migrant systems (e.g. Botswana, Swaziland, Lesotho and Malawi) (Ibid). Here land reform involved a limited degree of expropriation of settler lands, accompanied by market related compensation with some colonial finance, as was the case in Swaziland and Botswana. The expropriated land was 'indigenized' as large farms, with limited foreign and white minority dominated large scale land ownership and estate farming remaining, alongside the emergence of state farms and resilient peasant and pastoral agrarian structures. Liberal approaches to land

reform consisted mainly of limited market led land redistribution efforts and attempts to modernize peasant agriculture, within a contradictory context of imbalanced public resources allocations, focusing on the large scale indigenized and state capitalist farming sub-sector, and agricultural export markets (Ibid).

Zimbabwe and Namibia since the 1980's used the liberal "state centred and market based" approach to land transfers. Land was acquired by the state for redistribution on a willing-seller-willing-buyer basis, meaning that land identification and supply was market-driven. The governments identified the demand for land and, where possible, matched it with this private supply. These programmes were slow in redistributing land, except during the very early years in Zimbabwe when this approach was accompanied by extensive land occupations on abandoned white lands. The use of compulsory land acquisition by the state with or without compensation for land and improvements was pursued mainly in the early independence periods, when expropriations with varying levels of compensation were adopted in Zambia, and since the 1990s mainly in Zimbabwe. This approach involves direct intervention by government in the identification and acquisition of land.

Another liberal approach to land redistribution, tried to a limited degree in both South Africa and Zimbabwe, is the market assisted land reform approach, espoused by the World Bank. This land reform approach is meant to be led by beneficiaries with support from the state, private sector and NGOs within a market framework. Very little land has been redistributed through this approach so far, and this is mainly in South Africa. This approach is to be implemented in Malawi from 2004, using a World Bank grant, in the context of the usual macro-economic policy conditionalities. Finally, a community-led land self-provisioning (Moyo, 2000) strategy has been followed in Zimbabwe, mainly in the form of "illegal" land occupations by potential beneficiaries. This approach has tended to be either state facilitated and formalized, or repressed by the state at various points in time (Alexander, 2003; Marongwe, 2003; Moyo, 1995).

These various approaches to land redistribution increasingly tend to be used in combination, although the market based approach has remained dominant. Recent donor support to land reform tends to favour the market assisted approach to land reform, which is intended to provide an alternative to the pursuit of compulsory acquisition on a large scale or to pure willing-seller-willing-buyer approaches. However, most African countries facing demands for land reform may require strong state intervention in land markets given the legacy of inequitable social capital and the control of financial markets, and the limited redistributive outcomes.

These land and agrarian reforms outcomes have all however led to sites of intensified land concentration, steady growth of agrarian social differentiation based on capitalist accumulation, labour exploitation and rural marginalization, and a bi-modal agrarian structure which has become entrenched at different scales throughout the continent. Overtime neo-liberal land reforms have tended to fuel renewed land struggles, whose conduct confronts issues of democratic change, as the Zimbabwean 'dissidence' on land reform shows. An overriding land question therefore is that little progress has been achieved in the implementation of redistributive land reform, while greater effort has been placed on land tenurial and land use regulatory reforms.

5.2 Land tenure reforms and land struggles

Redistributive land reform in Africa should be accompanied by 'progressive' land tenure reforms to counter the general tenure insecurities and land grabbing processes, which have been ushered in and facilitated by regressive state-led land tenure reforms over the last 50 years. Current resistance to land marketisation and 'individualisation' schemes, as well as to the manipulative reform of land administration structures, through the adaptation of customary tenure procedures and institutions, via new efforts to decentralise and reform land governance systems, encapsulates the type of contradictions which confront progressive land tenure reform (Moyo, 2004).

But the land tenure reform requirements of Africa also include institutional reforms which can defend the poor against potential land losses as well as accommodate those excluded (e.g. women, minorities, settlers) from increasingly scarce arable lands. Such tenure reforms would also need to be able to prevent and resolve conflicts over competing claims over land rights and ensure the fair administration of land rights and land use regulations. Whether the land tenure reforms required would include the ability to 'transact' (rent and sell) and mortgage peasant lands, especially in the absence of measures to prevent land alienation and concentration, is as politically contentious as its feasibility is questionable (Moyo, 2004).

The role of the African state in promoting equitable access to land through redistributive reforms has been limited. Tenure reforms have instead increased land concentration. Existing African legal frameworks and institutions for managing land allocation and land use or dispute resolution tend to protect the interests of those with disproportionately larger land rights including those property rights derived from past expropriation, rather than the interests of the victims of these inequities.

Because the literature on Africa's land reforms focuses on land tenure problems, it tends to identify weak land administration systems and the need for their reform as the main issue of concern (Quan, 2000; Adams, 2000), rather than the redistribution issue. Land administration reforms tend to be proposed within a neoliberal conception of good governance, focusing on the decentralisation and democratisation of land institutions, to enhance land

administrative efficiencies, broad based representativity of local structures of land control and civil society participation in land administration, within a framework of introducing formal and statutory law in the land management systems. The main purpose of these proposed land governance system reform is to develop 'secure land tenure' regimes, implicitly to make the institutions benign to market processes.

However most African governments have yet to allocate the resources and build the capacities required to create these new systems of land administration (Palmer, 2002). Decentralised land reform implementation processes have failed to take-off, largely due to a lack of both financial resources and technical capacities, as well as the lack of political will (Ibid). There is no doubt however that, African land management institutions pose vexing problems, and that these constitute an important aspect of the land question. The institutional frameworks for land administration are exceedingly complex and fractured (Shivji, 1998; Palmer, 2002). There are numerous competing agencies involved in land administration, including line ministries and central government departments, several large parastatals as well as urban and rural local authorities and traditional leaders (Moyo 1995). The responsibilities of these different agencies in different aspects of land administration, within the different land tenure areas tends to overlap, and create confusion and conflict amongst the various players, thus posing difficulties for the creation of integrated and comprehensive land administration processes (Shivji, 1998).

A truly democratic approach to land administrative reform would require that the following basic principles of democracy be the guiding criterion for resolution of land administrative problems: equity, efficiency, accountability, transparency, legitimacy, and participation (Shivji et al, 1998). The concentration of administrative powers in national authorities with regard to the allocation and use of land and natural resources tends to be the main contest. Popular demands for transparency reflect protest over corrupt land and resource allocations, especially the tendency for state officials and political leaders to dominate the licenses, leases and concessions. The land administration institutions also tend to be inaccessible and unrepresentative of local interests (Ibid).

In many countries land administration remains highly centralised and there is poor representation and the institutions which adjudicate land issues at the local level are widely dispersed (Shivji et al, 1998). At best, weak land administration systems tend to be created at the local level, a situation which tends to perpetuate centralised land administration powers over customary land tenure regimes. Furthermore as Amanor (2003), argues within rural West Africa there are limited channels for addressing land grievances and demands for land tenure reform. Rural popular organisation tends to be weak outside of the 'community organisations' and structures, which are dominated by lineage elders, a framework which has been reinforced by the state, and these 'community organisations' prevent rural demands from being placed in a broader horizon beyond the community (Ibid). Within this 'community development' framework it is difficult to present demands other than the local parochial interests of the settlement.

Thus, since the territorial distribution of local "traditional" authorities are generally based upon lineage/clan social structures with particular ethnic identities, land conflicts tended therefore to assume an explicit or implicit 'ethnicised' character. Colonial administrations in Africa universally created administrative and political districts around 'tribal' chiefdoms, which in many cases contrived regional centres of ethnically based chiefly authority over groups which had in fact been autonomous, and thus generated conflicted land administration structures.

Success in developing local land management structures is scarce. In countries such as South Africa, Mozambique, Uganda and Tanzania, the new tenure laws and policies make room for individuals, groups of people, associations and communities to register as legal entities that can own land in their own right. (Palmer, 2000). The key issue with regard to land administration is the extent to which official regulations apply to different forms of tenure.

Land policies have also tended to focus on the development of land administration structures that are expected to take the lead in implementing tenure reforms. Dispute resolution processes are increasingly being provided for in the emerging land policy documents, although their effectiveness is questionable. But, as Amanor (2003) argues, recent land administration and adjudication reforms have had limited results in Africa.

These land tenure institutional reforms, are generally costly, and current financial resources allocations to them are limited. Yet the preoccupation with formal land tenure reforms, has tended to mean that most official land policies neglect redistributive aspects such as improving access to land, water, nature parks, forests and woodland resources by the poor, while efforts to improve environmental security, alleviate poverty, and improve land and labour productivity tend to focus on small-scale 'in situ' palliatives in marginalised peasant lands.

5.3 Social movements, land rights and struggle

Rural land movements have tended to be relegated to informal politics, while giving prominence to more organised middle class civic groups and policy organisations that typically advocate market-based methods of land reform and liberal civic and political rights issues.

This raises contradictory tendencies in the ideologies and foci of land movements, between those who struggle for access to social (land and broader resource redistribution) rights and those focused on political (civic and human)

rights. Thus, most civil society organisations, which are generally one-issue oriented in their advocacy, have tended to be those with structuralist (redistributionist) or proceduralist (governance) perspectives of social and economic change, even though, in reality, both issues need to be addressed in calibrated combination. Over the years, the formal demand for radical or merely extensive land reform has tended to be submerged, especially in recent struggles for democratisation, by the proceduralist thrust of civil society activism, much of which is ensconced within a neo-liberal framework.

This is reinforced by the fact that the balance of external aid, for example in Zimbabwe and elsewhere, has tilted in the last five years towards the support of governance activism. While such support is necessary, this trend has highlighted mainly the issues of human rights and electoral transgressions by the state, to the detriment of the redress of structural and social rights issues. Exceptions are food aid, HIV/Aids and health, which defy the dichotomy and tend to be considered as basic humanitarian support.

Civil society discourses on land reform, therefore, to the extent that these go beyond rule of law issues, have been focused on a critique of methods of land acquisition and allocation, without offering alternatives to land market acquisition and expropriation instruments, and without mobilising the more deserving beneficiaries towards direct action on land.

In general, demands for radical land and agrarian reform in Africa, was led under colonial rule by the liberation movements and in the 1970s, was pursued by means of armed struggle (Chitiyi, 2000). In the independence period, civil society land advocacy has been constrained by predominantly middle class, social welfarist and neo-liberal developmentalist values, which are, in turn, dependent on international aid. Radical for land reform continue to be predominantly demand by former liberation movements', war veterans' associations, the scattered efforts of traditional leaders and spirit mediums, and the few emerging but narrowly based 'leftist' civil society organisations.

As we have seen in South Africa, a small left leaning political parties and NGO groups have supported the formation of a significant Landless People's Movement (LPM), although which demands extensive land reform. However, the contradictions of middle class intellectual leadership of the landless peoples' structures, and the trans-class and nationalist nature of the interests in land, have become evident in the slow maturation of a nation-wide radical land reform advocacy agenda. The Landless Peoples Movement demand for land redistribution with an explicit threat to boycott the ANC in elections, has had the effect of bringing greater urgency to that government's land reform initiatives. The scarcity of land in Malawi has resulted in the encroachment onto private land, gazetted forests, national parks and other protected areas that border high land pressure zones and, in some cases, such actions have turned violent (Kanyongolo, 2005).

Indigenisation or affirmative action lobbies, seeking the construction of a broader agrarian capitalist class, some with ethno-regional and gender foci, have on the other hand re-focused the land reform agenda, towards the de-racialization of the ownership base of commercial farmland in settler Africa and of a bi-modal large-small farmer agrarian structure. Thus, a dual but essentially nationalist approach to land reform advocacy by aspirant large farmers and poor peasants now dominates the formal or official land reform agenda in Africa.

This has shifted policy discourses on the criteria for access to land, refocusing the redistribution vision from the 'landless' and 'insecure' towards the 'capable' and presumed 'efficient' indigenous agrarian capitalists, within the terms of the neo-liberal global development paradigm, using regional mobilisations.

In Botswana some civil society land reform advocacy tends however to be mobilised within a social and human rights framework of 'defending' the land rights of 'indigenous' ethnic and marginalized minority groups, particularly the Basarwa. Increasingly the land struggles in Botswana involve ethnic minorities challenging the dominant paradigm of the nation-state and nation building, which is constructed through the diffusion of the values of the majority culture of the dominant Tswana groups (Ibid). For example, the minority *Basarwa*, often referred to as remote area dwellers, in terms of their spatial position and political power, have historically been a servile underclass exploited by dominant Tswana groups, and other so-called minority groups as cattle herders and labourers (Molomo, 2003). Removed from the major urban centres and, gaining limited government rural development and infrastructural facilities, they were recently moved out of the large area in northern Botswana called Central Kalahari Game Reserve (CKGR), in a manner which subverted their land rights and natural resources based livelihoods, in order to expand the national tourist industry.

Ethno-regional land movements are also increasingly seeking to attract state attention to land reform issues in their districts of origin. Ethno-regional land movements of the San in South Africa, Namibia and Botswana demand restoration of their land. Land struggles in Botswana involve ethnic minorities and NGOs challenging the dominant paradigm of the nation-state, which is constructed through the values of the majority culture of the dominant Tswana groups (Molomo, 2003), demanding the reversal of Basarwa land alienation and social disruption. A trans-national land and social rights movement of the San ethnic formations in South Africa, Botswana and Namibia has also emerged with the support of NGOs from these and other western countries. Similarly pastoralist movements have emerged in east Africa.

With a few exceptions, such as the Land Campaign in Mozambique, which succeeded in making rural communities aware of their new rights under the law and how to go about legally establishing them (Negrao 1999), much of the new national land policies which result from NGO lobby, tend to mostly reflect mainstream state interests. New civil society advocacy has also sought to unravel the landholdings of agrarian capitalists in Kenya, although their demands for radical redistribution are muted. The common approach used to guide such interests, includes expert panels, task forces, investigating teams, or comprehensive commissions of inquiry, which involve quick consultation processes and reports which often provide material for the state's independent land policy decisions (Moyo, 2004).

In Zimbabwe, recent rural land occupations reflect a diverse range of social forces that demand land reform, including the rural landless, former refugees, war veterans, the rural poor, the youth, former commercial farm workers, women's groups and the urban poor and black elite (Moyo, 2004). While social movements which demand land reforms cannot be idealised, various progressive and retrogressive struggles for land reform suggest that their importance cannot be underestimated.

The re-emergence of radical land reform in Zimbabwe since the mid-1990s, and the re-launching in 1997 of the resettlement programme, coincided with the demise of its structural adjustment programme and marks the dramatic change in the dialectical political and economic relations between the peasantry and the state *vis-à-vis* urban constituencies. Poor economic results and the failure of the state, both during and at the end of the economic structural adjustment programme (ESAP) in 1996, to raise consistent external support from the international financial institutions (IFIs) meant that the state could not live up to its development promise. Land reform as an instrument for the fundamental restructuring of the economy and accumulation strategy became the only real integral and broadly legitimate resource that could be used for both trans-class accumulation and survival as part of the indigenisation thrust of nationalist ideology. This complex process has been rather simplistically defined as a crisis of nationalism and liberation consensus (Raftopoulos, 2003)

6.0 Conclusions

The fundamental issue of concern is whether the strategies of emerging African land movements have the potential to influence radical land reform, in the classical and historical sense of addressing the agrarian question. This requires a structural rather than an eclectic analysis of Africa's agrarian questions, including the social and class interests and strategies of emerging social movements (Rahmato, 1991; Veltmeyer, 1997; Moyo, 2003), and the emergence of an alternative African development vision, unfettered by neoliberalism.

The African state has neither promoted equitable access to land through redistributive reforms nor progressive land tenure reforms. Instead increased land concentration has increased. Existing legal frameworks and institutions for managing land reform tend to protect the interests of those with disproportionately larger land rights including those property rights derived from colonial expropriation, rather than the interests expanding the productive capacities of the poor. African "customary law," and customary land rights, have been manipulated to advance land concentration throughout the continent, including in those countries which had large segments of their lands alienated under private property tenure regimes.

The impacts of unequal land distribution and tenure insecurity on poverty has tended to receive minimal consideration in official land reform programmes, although the exclusion of various social categories of vulnerable populations from sustainable land based livelihoods has become a critical feature of Africa's land question. Natural resources (common resources such as forests, water, and land) remain important to the livelihoods of the majority of the population, just as much as supportive agrarian policies and access to farming resources are necessary for effective land use among the marginalised. For those who do not yet have any land, the officially perceived lack of ability to use land properly tends to lead to exclusion from land reform processes. Whereas many peasant households which suffer from various resource limitations, including debilitating diseases, face constraints to the use of their land due to inappropriate agrarian and land use policies, public resources continue to be focused on emerging capitalist farmers. For those who do have access to land, limited and declining skills and labour, along with depletion of financial and reproductive assets, which accompany social vulnerability, tend to undermine their ability to make use of land and natural resources.

The moral and social considerations of 'poverty reduction' in land reforms, as well as the wider class based land interests of land-short peasants and semi-proletarians, tend to conflict with the short term agricultural productionist emphasis of developing larger scale capitalist farming, in most land reforms. The constraints to land use faced by the poorest families and their land losses tend to be ignored by the neoliberal framework of state led 'development' projects and market based land reforms. Official 'poverty reduction' strategies underplay the role of land and agrarian reform in development. This suggests that without social pressures from 'below', through land movements, the land reform agenda's of the marginalised might for long be neglected.

8.0 References

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