

# The Land Reform Program: An Insight into the Factors Influencing Policy Implementation in Zimbabwe and South Africa

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## ABSTRACT

Land is a part of a nations' heritage and definition of culture. As such governments have taken-action to re-distribute land to the local natives who may have been displaced in the struggle for independence and left without land to call their own. In Zimbabwe and South Africa land redistribution has been done in a bid to close the inequality gap and promote economic activity through agriculture . The Policy adopted to promote this activity was the Land Reform Program and was implemented in Zimbabwe and South Africa. The interest groups identified were the government whose motive was to bridge the inequality gaps , the white farmers who sought to retain land ownership , the liberation war veterans who sought compensation for their contribution towards freedom and finally the peasant native farmers and masses who sought land that they could call their own. The differences in the factors influencing land reform were identified as the pressure from various beneficiaries in both countries .The study has given an insight on the significant factors that pushed for the implementation of the land reform program by applying the interest group theory and comparing the differences thereof.

**Keywords:** Land reform, Interest group, Agriculture production, Policy, Zimbabwe, South Africa.

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### Highlights of this paper

- The interests of various groups of individuals worked hand in hand to drive land reform programs to be initiated. The policy put to place was to satisfy the needs of each group.
- Zimbabwe and South Africa shared a similar colonial history of injustice when it came to resource allocation. As such the need to bridge the inequality gap became of paramount importance.
- Land reform policy implementation should have clear and well defined objectives.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The distribution and ownership of land in Zimbabwe and south Africa remains a mind boggling issue that dates back to the colonial era fueled by inequalities and mis allocation of resources. The acquisition Act of 2002 introduced Zimbabwe's land reform program which redistributed land from white -owned farms and estates, as well as state lands to over 150 000 farmers. This was instituted under 2 modes, the first was the A1 which involved the small- scale plots for growing crops and grazing land to poor peasant farmers and A2 which involved re- allocation of commercial farmers who were skilled and educated to manage land resource and farm production. Land redistribution was a way to eradicate the settler – colonial sour relations which were founded on racial monopoly control over land that limited access to peasants of land-based reproduction and instilled cheap labor supplies. Hence land reallocation turned over tables of racial patterns of land possession amongst black natives and increased the access to land across the different provinces (Grasian & Peter, 2019). The phases in land redistribution in Zimbabwe were preceded by illegal and rather forceful occupations as some white farmers claimed the land to be rightfully theirs and protested on re allocation. By the year 2004 , it is reported that 6214 farms owned by whites which covered a span of 10 million hectares was occupied by 168,671 families through government acquisitions or forceful evictions. Since the implementation of the land reform program in Zimbabwe , land use covers have experienced transformations from large scale farming to small scale farming which also involves mixed crop and livestock production (Simbarashe, Elhadi, & John, 2017). In South - Africa , land dispossession had a great effect on the majority of the population especially blacks in terms of land access and ownership. Several land programs were put into place such as settlement Land Acquisition Grant which gave rights to farm land as a group; Land Redistribution for Agricultural Development which sought to create black large -scale farmers. Land reform program in South Africa took 3 phases, these were; restitution, redistribution and tenure reform. These all had the objective to address the racial imbalances in land- holding , developing the agricultural sector and improving the live- hoods of the poor (Lahiff, 2001). Initiated in 1990s, it was known as the settlement/land Acquisition Grant ( SLAG) and its focus was on poor social groups which included landless, labor tenants and farm workers (Farai, Nkanyiso, & Katlego, 2019). Much research has been done on Land reform programs in Both Zimbabwe and South Africa and it is still an on- going debate. Studies have focused more on the impact and scope of the land reform policy and have even encompassed gender and its relation to land reform. How-ever in this study we will focus on analyzing the differences in the factors leading to Land reform policy implementation we will also apply the group theory as it was highlighted in the pressures leading to Land reform policy. The aim of the study is to highlight the main factors influencing the implementation of the land reform policy In Zimbabwe and South Africa and make a comparison between them.

## 2. CURRENT RESEARCH ON LAND REFORM INFLUENCING FACTORS

Agriculture is the major backbone of most African economies as such Land becomes a major input to facilitate agricultural production and boost economic activity. Scholars such as Mudau, Mukonza, and Ntshangase (2018) carried out a comparative overview of land reform experiences in Zimbabwe and Namibia, and South Africa. They noted that land issues in these countries arose mainly because of inequalities in the control of resources. This had several disadvantages on the socio- economic transformation of many African countries. Zimbabwe was under colonial

rule for over 90 years as such most black natives lost their land. On the other hand South Africa had inequalities stemming from the policies and racial laws of the apartheid era (Shonhe, 2019). Investigated the land reform and the new meaning in rural development in Zimbabwe. In his study, he noted that economic wide crises was a result of the fast track land reform program in Zimbabwe and it reconfigured the financing and marketing of agricultural produce and created a new era of rural development in the economy. Authors such as Jankielsohn and Duvenhage (2017) went on to investigate the radical land reform in South Africa with their approach based on the interests of political parties calling for the end of the willing buyer willing seller regime in land policies whilst on the other hand there were calls on the none compensation approach in land redistribution.

They sought to understand the implications of land reform and made a comparative analysis with regions such as Zimbabwe and China. The study reveals that land reform requires a balance between existing land rights and food security on the other hand as well as land redistribution and historical redress on one side. Land reform has also had impact on the production of some agricultural commodities and one such example is that of tobacco production. According to Ngavara (2020) his study on the impact of fast track land reform program on tobacco production in Zimbabwe, concluded that indeed the land reform had an impact on tobacco sales mainly through the number of tobacco growers. Based on the Chow test, VECM and Vector error granger test method.

### **3. THE NATURE OF PUBLIC POLICY IMPLEMENTATION**

Public Policy Implementation is assumed to occur at two levels which are at macro implementation where the policy propagators formulate a government program and micro implementation where local level actors react to these plans and develop their own plans and implement them. The Top down approach states that implementation starts with public policy objectives and follows a linear fashion as product of a rational public administration model that assumes distinct policy formulation and implementation. On the other hand, bottom up model ignores the behavioral aspect of implementation and the key role of local implementers and rather focuses on the motives and actions of actors involved in public policy implementation. A combination of both these approaches will then occur when interest groups and stake holders come up with a unit of analysis like advocacy coalition groups that share the same beliefs and goals (Abas, 2019). There are various models and methods that are used in policy formulation and development. Several of these have been developed with the aim of simplifying the policy formulation process, implementation and analysis. In the field of public policy there exists several such theories amongst them being; incremental model, rational model, group theory and institutional theory. For the purpose of this study we will highlight how the group theory was brought out in the comparison of the factors leading to Land reform policy implementation.

#### *3.1. Research Aim*

The aim of the study is to analyze and make a comparison of factors influencing Land reform policy implementation between Zimbabwe and South Africa. There are several pressures that influenced the Land reform occurring these range from political, economic and social. The study will make a comparison of these factors and bring to light how the group theory came into play in the analysis as part of the contributing factors. The researcher made use of existing government publications on the subject matter as well as statistics bureau publications and Public policy theory handouts to aid in the analysis.

#### *3.2. Main Factors Influencing Land Reform Policy Implementation*

Land reform can not only be viewed as an economic program whose goal is to spread social and economic justice, but it stems as a political program which is a result of negotiations with the aim to balance interests of the land owners

versus those who are deprived entitlement to the land who make up majority of the population. South Africa and Zimbabwe share a similar history of land deprivation that resulted in political wars against white settlers. Both these countries experienced a series of misallocation of resources stemming from the colonial rule (Kariuki, 2004). These factors that influenced land reform Implementation May be also explained using the group theory.

Group Theory - this idea was proposed by Gaetano Mossaco. This approach seeks to maintain an equilibrium in the society, balancing the interests of various groups. In addition, this model postulates that public policy is a product of group struggle, that is individuals who exhibit similar interests and demands join hands together and form formal or informal groups in order to influence the policies of the government to suit their needs (Ikouniv, 2020).

Table 1 Presents the interest groups as influencers of land reform policy.

Table 1. Indicating the interest groups as influencers of land reform policy.

Interested Parties	Explanation
Government	Main influencer in search of justice from colonial era misallocation of resources
White Farmers	The holders of land title deeds dating back to colonial era- large scale farmers
Local Natives peasant farmers, former freedom fighters.	This group of individuals constitutes the peasant farmers who were seeking to have land under their names and who were displaced during the colonial era

Source: Constructed by researcher 2021.

### 3.2.1. Government / Political Parties

The increase in the need for land re allocation as a means to reduce social imbalances amongst the black poor who reside both in urban and rural areas is a common feature in Zimbabwe and South Africa. As a result the governments took it upon themselves to formulate land policies in response to the pressure for land redistribution. There was a shift from tenure systems to private freehold land tenure systems. The need for land redistribution stemmed from a variety of sources which included war veterans, political parties and community -based associations just to mention a few. In Zimbabwe, The ZANU - PF led government advocated for providing the needy defined as those with no land and over -crowded as well the capable with land as seen by the A1 and A2 allocation schemes . On the other hand, the opposition party MDC promised to re allocate land according need and ability. Both these parties acted in response to the growing demand pressures for land from the locals (Moyo, 2005). In South Africa, the national party government advocated for fair and equal land distribution in a bid to eradicate segregation of land and its unequal distribution. In response, The African national congress (ANC) outlined a land reform program which comprised of three elements which were, restitution, redistribution and tenure reform. This was all done to meet the high demand for land (Hall & Williams, 2003).

### 3.2.2. War Veterans

The government of Zimbabwe launched a resettlement scheme at independence whose aim was to fulfill the promise made to the liberation war veterans who had actively participated in the liberation struggle that upon gaining independence, they would get the land they had long waited for that had been taken by the white settlers. This group of individuals were to be given land as compensation from the government, hence in order to meet the interest of this group, is recorded that by 1991, the government of Zimbabwe had settled about 48 000 families and by 1999 this number rose to 70 000 (Shoko, 2004).

### 3.2.3. White Farmers

In the year 2000, the government of Zimbabwe ruling party took an initiative to forcibly reclaim land from all white owned commercial farms. White farmers who fell victims and were forced to part with lands they had framed

all their lives fought back to retain ownership of what they felt was rightfully theirs. Most of these farmers has bought land after independence in 1980. In order to maintain and keep their lands, they made resorted to law courts , divided part of the lands and allowed black natives to occupy some portions of it and some created strategic alliances with politicians (Gwekwerere, Mutasa, & Chitofiri, 2018). On the Other hand in South Africa, white farmers had close alliances with the governing bodies of South Africa. The commercial agricultural farms benefited from government subsidies and protection from the international competition and labor market policies that helped secure agriculture 's access to a supply of cheap labor. However, these relations were turned upside down when the Afrikans nationalists were replaced by democracy in 1994. The white farmers were removed from political power. This led to the post-apartheid government land reform program with the aim of redistribution and reinstition of land that had been unfairly distributed based on racial status. Some white farmers in rural south Africa created alliances with the governing bodies so that everyone benefits and they do not have to suffer the loss of all their land in the redistribution scheme (Fraser, 2008).

#### *3.2.4. Racial Imbalances in Resource Allocation*

In South Africa, the government's land reform policy arose mainly from the pressure of land misallocation of the black people stemming from the white settlers. Racial classification determined who owned land from 1913 upon the enactment of the Native Land Act. Black people and their families were forced to occupy small pieces of land that were over crowded as they were cheap labor in mines and farms. As a result, land reform programs were initiated as a solution to make it possible for the disadvantaged black locals to buy and own land under the aid of a settlement or Land acquisition grant. Land restitution encompassed the process of giving back land as a compensation to local natives for land rights that had been dismantled because of racially discriminatory laws. Land reform was to unite all people that occupied land under a legal system that had been validated (Zvidenga, 2008). On the other hand, the occupation by colonial settlers in Zimbabwe was the root of land being taken away from Africans and being handed to the white settlers. In addition, the white farmers controlled much of the agricultural sector and benefited more from the political system as compared to the black African small holder farmers who were segregated and discriminated by the political and economic system. In response, in the 1970s, the locals waged armed struggle to end the racist policies and to regain what had been lost through colonial oppression from the British settlers. As such, the ruling party upon independence in 1980 advocated for land redistribution schemes (Nyandoro, 2019).

#### *3.2.5. Economic Issues as Influencers of Land Reform Policy*

The Economic role of land redistribution in Zimbabwe may have been viewed primarily from the benefits of increased agricultural production, satisfaction of human needs and the expansion of the economy. In order for maximum agricultural production in under- utilized or unused commercial farms land must be made to reach its productive potential and give back to the economy. As such, a land reform program was seen as a measure to un cap the productive potential of small holder peasant farmers In Zimbabwe and reduce poverty in rural reserves were the majority of the population was pushed to cluster during the colonial era. Land redistribution was to be an income generating factor for most peasant rural farmers. Further-more increased agricultural production could be a source of earning foreign currency and to serve as capital to expand the industrial sectors (Thomas, 2003). All these factors put together formed the economic basis that influenced the implementation of land reform in Zimbabwe. On the other hand, in South Africa, the economic pressures for land reform stemmed from the need to foster national reconciliation, expand the economy and as a result improve household welfare and reduce poverty amongst the black under privileged (Gonese, Marongwe, Mukora, & Kinsey, 2002). Land as a natural resource is

a source of economic and environmental goods and services that are an aid to the wellbeing of a nations' population. Most individuals in rural South Africa are fully dependent on land for their live-hood. Land reform program was seen as a factor to improve food security, income savings amongst peasant rural farmers through increased farmland to aid in agricultural production, Access to land was also a way to provide employment through small scale farming and in turn expand the national economy (Antwi & Chagwiza, 2018). These were some of the motivating economic factors that influenced the land reform in South Africa.

#### 4. COMPARISON OF THE INFLUENCING FACTORS IN LAND REFORM POLICY IMPLEMENTATION IN ZIMBABWE AND SOUTH AFRICA

There are some notable similarities and differences in the factors that influenced the land reform policy implementation in Zimbabwe and South Africa. Below is a table that summarizes the similarities in influencing factors.

Table 2 presents the Similarities in Land Reform Influencing factors.

Table 2. Similarities in land reform influencing factors.

Factor	Zimbabwe	South Africa
Colonial Injustices	The colonial era came with several issues that worked against local black natives and one of them was the removal of black people from productive agricultural land and misallocation of the resources .	Similarity South African locals faced the same fate. As the apartheid era saw the displacement of many Africans to reserves with poor land for farming, overpopulation and limited resources to support live-hood.
Economic Factors	Agriculture was and is the back bone of the economy. Land redistribution was a way to increase agricultural production amongst small scale farmers through increased farming activities and thus create employment and improve income of peasant farmers.	In the like manner, Land reform was to be a measure to expand the economy through increased agricultural output, reduce poverty and improve the welfare of local Africans.
Interest groups	The government sought to correct colonial injustices in resource allocation and advocated for land redistribution, peasant farmers sought to improve their live-hood and incomes from increased agriculture production stemming from more land being provided.	Likewise, the national government advocated for land redistribution in a bid to eradicate segregation in land allocation and they formulated the re institution, redistribution and re settlement policy, local Africans were seeking to improve their incomes and improve their standard of living as such they advocated for land redistribution.

There are however some notable differences in the factors influencing land reform. The table below summarizes them.

Table 3 presents the Differences in the factors influencing land reform policy.

Table 3. Differences in the factors influencing land reform policy.

Factors	Zimbabwe	South Africa
Pressures from Beneficiaries	The war veterans were to be compensated in the form of land and hence the government sought to purchase farms to award the liberation war heroes.	On the other hand, Land reform was to empower farm workers who now had the chance to become farmers themselves, it also was a way to settle land claims by the people that were forcefully removed from their land during the apartheid era
Political party influences	the ruling party advocated for a reclaim, reinstitute and resettle basis when it came to the land issue and this worked against the white commercial farmers as the state reclaimed most of their land even without their consent through forceful removals from farm. This stirred up sour relations with the international community at large and not all who sought to benefit from reclaimed land benefitted as per their expectations	In contrast, white farmers formed close ties with the ruling national governments and created alliances such that they would not lose all their land in the redistribution scheme. Land was made available on a willing buyer, willing seller basis so everyone had an equal opportunity to purchase and own land.



## 5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The aim of the study was to make an analysis of the influencing factors that drove the implementation of the land reform program in Zimbabwe and South Africa. Based on the discussions given, Zimbabwe and South Africa shared a similar history of resource misallocation as a result of colonial rule and this cost the local natives the access to land and they were forced to abide by the racially segregating laws and policies prevailing prior to independence. Zimbabwe embarked on a land re-distribution program at the cost of white farmers through its reclaim, redistribute and resettle strategy. The justification of this was to promote small scale farmers to be engaged in economic activities and reduce poverty as well as to compensate those that had lost land during the colonial era. However, Land reforms and distributions brought about frustration especially to the white Zimbabwean Commercial farmers who owned vast pieces of land and had them taken away by the government.

On the other-hand, in South Africa Land redistribution was to empower farm laborers who had resorted to cheap labor for survival in large commercial farms such that they would in turn be farmers themselves, in addition land redistribution was to ease pressure on over populated areas where most black Africans had been settled during the colonial period. The notable difference in the influencing factors in both countries were that whilst the land reform implementation stirred up tensions with white farmers in Zimbabwe, in South Africa the white farmers formed alliances with the government and came to negotiations on land apportionment. The Zimbabwean government was faced with pressure from liberation war fighters who sought compensation for their involvement in the struggle for independence whilst in South Africa, the land claims by locals who had lost ancestor land was a notable force behind land redistribution. It should be noted that Land resettlement is a very complex issue and land cannot be re-instated without sufficient infrastructural and post settlement support. As such Land reform policy implementation should have clear and well-defined objectives, if the aim is to promote economic activity and reduce poverty then agricultural productive land should be considered upon re-settlement so as to make the program meaningful.

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