

**A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF LAND, LABOUR AND GENDER IN A
COMMUNAL AREA AND FAST TRACK FARM IN ZVIMBA RURAL
DISTRICT, ZIMBABWE**

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
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Abstract

This thesis provides a comparative analysis of gender, land, and labour between two different types of farming sites in rural Zimbabwe, namely long-established communal areas and the more recent A1 fast track land reform resettlement areas. More specifically, the focus is on Kanzou Village and Stratford fast track resettlement farm respectively, located in Zvimba District in Mashonaland West Province. The study focuses on the period from the year 2000, the year in which the fast track resettlement programme was launched by the government. The thesis examines in particular the status and experience of women with regard to land acquisition, access and security as well as the division of labour (including assets, inputs and labour-time) in the spheres of production (i.e., agriculture) and social reproduction (i.e., the domestic sphere). This includes highlighting the power relations existing between men and women in both spheres, in the light of prevailing systems of patriarchy. Analytically, the thesis is framed in terms of feminism, drawing upon the complementary insights of Third World feminism and socialist feminism. In seeking to capture the perspectives and practices of men and women in the two sites, the fieldwork for the study entails a qualitative methodology.

The findings of the research demonstrate the existence and relevance of patriarchal systems with respect to land and labour in Kanzou Village and Stratford fast track farm, with key commonalities appearing across the two sites with reference to the multiple ways in which women are disadvantaged and disempowered. Therefore, gender bias and inequality in land and labour are exhibited by the fact that men have, for instance, easier access to land, less involvement in labouring activities, control over a higher proportion of household income and a disproportionate level of power in the household. At the same time, there are certain differences between Kanzou Village and Stratford fast track farm around questions of gender, land and labour, but these are differences in degree rather than kind. Perhaps more important in explaining the differences between the two sites, and indeed differences within each site, are other variables. These variables include marital status, form or marriage (for example, customary or civil marriages), age and gender. By considering these variables as well, the thesis shows the importance of unpacking the notion of 'woman' to reveal the variegated and differential experiences of different categories of women in rural Zimbabwe.

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to:

My loving husband, Dr. Amos Chinomona

My late mother, Ms. Priscilla Chirume (*Rest in Peace*)

My late in-laws, Mr. Stephen and Mrs. Egness Chinomona (*Rest in Peace*)

My grandmother, Mrs. Charity Chirume

My two beautiful children, Kutenda and Kuvimbanashe Chinomona

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But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ – 1 Corinthians 15:57.

MBIRI KUNAJESU!

Author's Declaration

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work has not previously published at this, or any other, University.

All sources are acknowledged as References.

List of Acronyms

AWC	Association of Women's Clubs
BSAC	British South Africa Company
CITE	Centre for Innovation and Technology
CLBs	Communal Land Boards
CLRA	Communal Land Reform Act
DA	District Administrator
DUAT	<i>Direito de Uso e Aproveitamento da Terra</i>
ESAP	Economic Structural Adjustment Policy
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
FTRA(s)	Fast Track Resettlement Area (s)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GMB	Grain Marketing Board
LAA	Land Acquisition Act
LAA	Land Apportionment Act
LAC	Land Advisory Committees
LDCs	Least Developed Countries
LRRPI	Land Reform and Resettlement Programme Phase I
LRRPII	Land Reform and Resettlement Programme Phase II
LSCFs	Large Scale Commercial Farms
LUAC	Land Use and Allocation Committee
NAPO	Natives Adultery Punishment Ordinance
NLHA	Native Land Husbandry Act
NLUA	National Land Use Act
REP	Rural Electrification Programme
RTGS	Real-Time Gross Settlement
TTLs	Tribal Trust Lands
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
VIDCOs	Village Development Committees
WADCOs	Village Development Committees
ZRD	Zvimba Rural District

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This study examines the lives of rural women in Zimbabwe by pursuing a comparative analysis of gender, land access and division of labour, in the context of patriarchal relations, between long-established communal areas and more recent AI fast track resettlement areas in Zvimba Rural District. The district is in Natural or Agro-Ecological Region II in Mashonaland West Province, which typically receives significant rainfall (between 700 millimetres to just over 1000 millimetres of rainfall is the average annually) (Masarakufa, 2020). Agriculture is the primary source of livelihood, and maize, cotton and groundnuts are the key crops grown.

The period covered for the study is from the year 2000, when the Zimbabwean government introduced the fast-track land reform programme across the countryside. Communal areas, formerly called Native Reserves and later Tribal Trust Lands, existed before the independence of Zimbabwe in 1980, and AI farms were established under fast track. AI farms tend to replicate the communal model of rural settlement in that they both consist of self-contained plots and villages with small arable fields near homesteads and communal grazing designed for small-scale livestock production. However, AI farmers possess at least six hectares of land for cropping, while communal area plots are considerably smaller (Scoones et al., 2010). The particular focus in Zvimba is Kanzou communal area and Stratford AI resettlement area.

Typically, rural women in Zimbabwe are disadvantaged vis-à-vis men because of local systems of patriarchy, as manifested for instance in terms of secondary rights to land and carrying the burden of agricultural labour. Deeply connected to this are power dynamics within the private sphere (as a critical dimension of patriarchy), whereby men tend to dominate household decision-making around agricultural and other productive activities. As well, women are burdened with domestic and care labour. At the same time, the category of 'woman' needs to be disaggregated in terms of marital status in particular, as this is a crucial variable for rural women in Zimbabwe regarding land access and labouring activities.

This study is framed in terms of patriarchy (Cronin, 2007), which is defined as “a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women” (Walby, 1990: 20). Patriarchy reflects the subordinated, marginalised and disadvantaged position of women in social (including rural) institutions (Akikibofori, 2013) in both the public and domestic spheres. It takes on different forms over time and space, and particular categories of women are often positioned differently in a patriarchal system, as constituted by a range of laws, regulations, customs, practices, and discourses (Arora, 2014; Gosselin, 2010). In this regard, it becomes important to identify and

examine the specific systems of patriarchy in Zvimba District and how women (and men) of different marital statuses are incorporated into these systems in terms of land access, labouring activities and homestead-based decision-making. Patriarchy, like all systems of domination, is not a total, unified and all-domineering system, with women occupying spaces within patriarchy which allow for at least negotiated resistance.

1.2 Contextual Background

Historically, during the colonial era, communal areas emerged as deprived socio-economic spaces for Africans in the context of aggressive land dispossession and concentration by white settlers (Mutopo, 2011; Moyo and Kawewe, 2002). Statistically, approximately 5,000 white farmers acquired 49 million acres of land, while 1.1 million Africans were settled on 29 million acres in the increasingly congested Native Reserves/Tribal Trust Lands (Nyandoro, 2012). Over time, the colonial Rhodesian state also introduced a decentralised and institutionalised system of despotic authorities in communal areas based on a reconfigured and deeply patriarchal chieftainship system (Moyo, 1994).

After independence, various laws were amended by the new Zimbabwean government to formally deracialise land ownership and establish land equity along racial lines (Palmer, 1990). But this did not lead to any significant changes in relation to the ongoing dominance of white agriculture. Additionally, a democratic system of governance (involving district councils) was introduced into communal areas in the 1980s, with councils granted the power to allocate land instead of chiefs (Moyo, 1994). By the late 1990s, though, many of the powers of chiefs were officially restored. Over the first decade of independence, the government invested heavily in communal areas by providing agricultural inputs such as fertilisers, veterinary services, and irrigation equipment (Dore, 2009). This support did contribute to an increase in communal agricultural production, though the increases were quite uneven (Eicher and Rukuni, 1994; Dore, 2009). Further, in the 1990s, a structural adjustment programme led to a decline in communal area support.

One way to alleviate pressure in the heavily congested communal areas and improve rural livelihoods involved the advent of a land redistribution and resettlement programme from the early 1980s (Moyo and Chambati, 2013). However, the resettlement policy during the first two decades was based in large part on market-led reform (Moyo and Chambati, 2013), at first derived from the Lancaster House independence negotiation pact and then, later, due to the 1990s' structural adjustment programme (Chilunjika and Uwizeyimana, 2015). In this respect, white landholders could voluntarily relinquish their land through market-based purchases by the government at market-determined prices. By the late 1990s, because of the limited redistribution which had taken place, the government seriously considered compulsory acquisition with 'fair' compensation as the way

forward (De Villiers, 2003; Hanlon et al., 2013). The limited land redistribution which did occur by the year 2000 resulted in what is now called the 'old' resettlement areas (with fast-track resettlement areas labelled as the 'new' areas) (Masiwa, 2004).

Arising in the context of nationwide land occupations from early 2000, the fast-track programme has involved the compulsory acquisition of (mainly white-owned) land without compensation (Makura-Paradza, 2010; Scoones et al., 2010). Under fast track, seven million hectares of land was transferred, including for small-scale farming (the A1 model) and larger-scale, commercial farming (the A2 model) (Moyo and Chambati, 2010; Utete, 2003). Undoubtedly, fast track has had many negative economic, social, and political consequences including, for many years, a massive overall decline in agricultural production and an implosion of the national economy, leading to an increase in urban unemployment (Goebel, 2005) and the displacement of large numbers of farm labourers from the former white farms (Buckle, 2002). Significant restructuring of agricultural production also has taken place over the past two decades, with small-scale farmers for instance becoming heavily involved in tobacco production, a crop traditionally grown on white farms.

Gendered discourses and practices around access, possession and control of land prevailed in both pre-colonial and colonial Zimbabwe (Toro, 2016; Gaidzanwa, 2011). In pre-colonial Zimbabwean society, access and rights to land were governed by customary law (Schmidt, 1990; Mafa et al., 2015). In addition, men were recognised holders of land and women's entitlement to land came through marriage (Gaidzanwa, 2011; Mvududu, 2000). This arrangement continued in many ways under colonial conditions, with the colonially-reconfigured chieftainship system taking on an even more pronounced patriarchal form. Simultaneously, women under colonialism constituted about 60 per cent of the population of communal areas (because of the absence of male migrants) and undertook the bulk of agricultural work. Further, women headed 40 per cent of communal households either on a de facto or de jure basis (Utete, 2003). Divorced and widowed women in particular had difficulty maintaining even limited access to land throughout their lives, as they resided after marriage in the home areas of their husbands, who had paid *lobola* for them (Mafa et al., 2015). Often, it was only widowed and divorced women with children who were granted ongoing access to land under Rhodesian colonialism.

In 1980, the independence government committed itself to improving the status of women, at least in terms of their legal status, including through laws around marriage and inheritance (Goebel, 2005), which enhanced the overall citizenship position of women. Still, the implications of this for rural women was not particularly visible given the existence of deeply-entrenched local systems of rural patriarchy (Goebel, 2005) in relation to land and labour (Mutondoro et al., 2016) in both the communal and the early resettlement areas up until 1999 (Gudhlanga, 2010). In general, from 1980

to 1999, women's minimal access to land and excessive labouring tasks remained a key problem for communal and resettled women (Mafa et al., 2015). Women in these areas continued to concentrate on labour-intensive agricultural activities and time-consuming domestic work (Moyo and Kawewe, 2002).

In the old resettlement areas, men tended to have a more permanent presence than in communal areas as they were expected to be dedicated farmers. In this context, an in-depth study in Chiweshe communal areas established that men (even when absent) still had significant control over land use and household decision-making (Steen, 2011). Further, in the case of communal areas, the Traditional Leaders Act of 1998 enhanced the status of the chieftainship system, with chiefs upholding patriarchal values and practices. Early resettlement areas were under the control of state-appointed resettlement officers. In these areas, women were sometimes able to improve their access to land. For example, a widow could change the resettlement permit to be in her name alone after the husband's death and thereby control the homestead and fields (Goebel, 2005). But, in the main, women's land rights were still mediated through men, with rural households remaining deeply patriarchal (Gudhlanga, 2010). Because of this, Mushunje (2001) argues that land discrimination based on gender became increasingly important after independence compared to the historically privileged racial basis of land deprivation, though race remained a key signifier of land inequalities.

The land and labour situation on A1 fast track farms post-2000 do not necessarily entail an improvement for women compared to communal areas or early resettlement areas, and fast track restructuring even had indirect consequences for communal area women. Women in communal areas, who often managed communal homesteads on a day-to-day de facto basis and bore the brunt of arduous agricultural activities, were greatly affected by fast track because, for instance, urban remittances from men dwindled due to loss of urban-based employment (Goebel, 2005). Many women in communal areas, at least where possible, began to engage in informal economic activities as a possible survivalist strategy.

According to the prevailing literature, fast track appears to have had mixed outcomes for women on A1 farms, including with reference to land access (Goebel, 2005). Under fast track, only 20 per cent of A1 plots were granted to women (Mafa et al., 2015). Further, many women who benefited from A1 land allocations in their own right were connected to the ruling party or government (Utete, 2003), thereby marginalising more legitimate female claimants. Officially, married women could have their name (along with their husband) on the A1 land permit, but husbands often resisted this. Similar to communal areas, married women remain in practice as secondary holders of land (Goebel, 2005; Mutopo, 2011). De jure female-headed households, such as those headed by widows, benefited as permits of occupation, compared to communal areas, could more easily be changed to

cite the name of the female head (Mafa et al., 2015). However, such households face challenges such as a lack of capital and other resources. For example, at A1 farms in Goromonzi and Vungu-Gweru districts, only men (and not women) were assisted with irrigation equipment (Mazhawidza and Manjengwa, 2011). There is some evidence that – at household level – A1 farmers are producing substantial volumes of crops (Scoones et al., 2010), at least in relation to communal farmers, and that new livelihood opportunities (farming and otherwise) have opened for women on A1 farms. This is despite the fact that the patriarchal-based chieftainship system was soon extended onto A1 farms (Mushunje, 2001), though it has an uneven presence even today.

Women normally must assert and negotiate their land and agricultural rights with homestead men and village headmen on A1 fast track farms. In this sense, in seeking to be recognised and advance their livelihood concerns, women on A1 farms (as in communal areas) have to manoeuvre with intent within the limited space afforded by local patriarchal systems (Goebel, 2005).

1.3 Problem Statement

As will be shown more clearly, there are numerous studies of gender and land in Zimbabwe but, typically, these studies focus either on resettlement areas or communal areas. This current study seeks to go beyond these studies by offering a comparative analysis of land, gender and labour in communal areas and A1 fast track farms by way of a case study in Zvimba District. Livelihoods on A1 farms, similar to communal areas, depend quite extensively upon crop and animal farming. But gendered analyses of crop and animal farming (and other livelihood activities) in these two rural spaces are required to enhance our understanding of the lives and livelihoods of rural women, and to determine whether or not fast track in any way entails an advance for rural women in terms of land and agricultural activities. As suggested, the current evidence is uneven and inconclusive. There is some evidence which suggests that localised agrarian economies have emerged in and around contiguous A1 farms and that diverse informal economic activities undertaken by women are central to these (Babbitt et al., 2015; Ngundu, 2010). However, as in communal areas, women apparently continue to carry the bulk of domestic chores on A1 farms, including fetching water and firewood (Devita et al., 2014) and taking care of children and the elderly.

In this context, comparative studies such as this one become central to offering fuller and clearer insights into the differentiated character of gendered land and labour regimes across different agrarian spaces in contemporary Zimbabwe. To assist in this comparative analysis, a feminist theoretical framing will be set out in chapter two.

1.4 Research Questions

The research questions emerged from the review of the pertinent literature (detailed in chapters 3 and 4). The main research question is:

In what ways and to what extent do the experiences of women in rural Zvimba District (in Zimbabwe) vary across A1 fast track farms and communal areas with specific reference to land and labour issues?

The following are the subsidiary research questions, in relation to each of the two sites:

- a) What situation exists for women with regard to their land acquisition, access and security?;
- b) What situation exists for women with regard to their agricultural labour, including assets, inputs, production and other livelihood practices?;
- c) How are the division of labour and decision-making processes practiced within the sphere of (agricultural) production?
- d) How are the division of labour and decision-making processes practiced within the sphere of social reproduction (the domestic sphere)?

Addressing these questions involves a focus on gender, that is, to consider the relationship between women and men with regard to land and labour issues, including decision-making processes.

1.5 Research Objectives

The main objective of the thesis is to:

Provide a comparative analysis of gender, land, and labour, particularly in relation to women, between communal areas and A1 fast track farms in Zvimba Rural District, Zimbabwe.

The specific research sites are Kanzou Village, a communal area, and the Stratford A1 resettlement area. The subsidiary objectives, with reference to both research sites, are:

- a) To examine the position of women with regard to land acquisition, access and security;
- b) To examine the position of women with regard to agricultural labour, including assets, inputs, production and other livelihood practices;
- c) To examine the division of labour and decision-making processes within the sphere of (agricultural) production; and
- d) To examine the division of labour and decision-making processes in the sphere of social reproduction (the domestic sphere).

To reiterate, this entails a focus on gender and not simply women, a point which emerges from the feminist theoretical framing for the thesis (chapter 2).

1.6 Research Methodology

This section discusses the research methodology adopted for this study, including the research paradigm and design as well as the data collection and data analysis methods. A research design is particularly important as it refers to the clearly defined approach within which the study is actioned (Burns and Grove, 2003) or the plan on how a researcher is going to answer the key research question and address the main research objective (Saunders et al., 2016). In this respect, Yin (1994) describes a research design as a bridge for the implementation of the research process and the pursuance of the research questions/objectives. This study entailed a case study research design with a strong comparative dimension across two nearby research sites: Kanzou Village and Stratford fast track resettlement area (FTRA). Qualitative methods were employed in collecting and analysing data to explore, identify, and understand the social realities of the gender, land access, and division of labour in the two areas, with a particular focus on the experiences of women. The specific methods used to collect data were semi-structured interviews, Focus Group Discussions, and observations.

1.6.1 Research Paradigms – Adopting the Critical Paradigm

In social research, a research paradigm “is the set of common beliefs and agreements shared between scientists about how problems should be understood and addressed” (Kuhn, 1970: 45). The term ‘paradigm’ was first introduced in Thomas Kuhn’s (1970) book, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Shah et al., 2013), and it was first used to discuss what a community of specialists believe in regarding the nature of reality and knowledge (Kaushik and Walsh, 2019). Paradigms consist of assumptions or claims about knowledge and how to acquire it as well as what constitutes the physical and social world (Friedrich et al., 2017). A paradigm consists of four components – ontology, epistemology, methodology and methods (Scotland, 2012) – though particular research methods are not necessarily linked to specific ontological and epistemological commitments.

Importantly, a research paradigm answers ontological questions about what constitutes reality, what entities exist and their interactions with each other (Johannesson and Perjons, 2014). In addition, a paradigm addresses epistemological questions about the nature and forms of knowledge and how knowledge is created, acquired, communicated, and validated (Rehman and Alharthi, 2016). Because of this, it answers methodological questions about legitimate ways of investigating reality (Johannesson and Perjons, 2014). A methodology informs, but does not determine, the choice of a particular method (Cohen et al., 2018), with methods being the specific techniques or procedures used to collect and analyse qualitative or quantitative data.

According to Scotland (2012), there are three forms of paradigms within the social sciences, which are the scientific (linked to positivism), interpretive, and critical paradigms. The scientific

paradigm assumes that objects exist independent of the knower, while the interpretive paradigm assumes that social reality is constituted or conditioned at least by human experiences and subjectivity (Sale et al., 2002). The critical paradigm highlights the significance of social structures and how these, through their conditioning powers, generate the world as experienced. This thesis, while sensitive to (and indeed highlighting) human experiences, practices and agency (as per interpretivism – or constructivism), leans heavily on the critical paradigm. This will become clear as well when discussing feminist theory in chapter two, as the feminist theoretical framing adopted, including its focus on patriarchal structures, is consistent with a critical research paradigm (DeCarlo, 2018; Asghar, 2013; Shah et al., 2013).

As Bhavnani et al. (2014: 166) note, this paradigm is “firmly grounded within an understanding of social structures (social inequalities), power relationships (power inequalities), and the agency of human beings (an engagement with the fact that human beings actively think about their worlds)”. In this sense, it incorporates the significance of human subjectivity as an ontological reality (Bronner, 2017), but with a strong focus on the ontological status of social structures and the power relations and inequalities embedded in them (Johannesson and Perjons, 2014; Asghar, 2013). The critical paradigm tends to embody a pronounced transformative agenda in seeking to contribute to undercutting power-laden structures (including systems of patriarchy).

1.6.2 Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches

In most instances, there is a debate on whether to employ a quantitative or qualitative approach (Tracy, 2020). It is important for a researcher to consider and compare the two approaches in relation to her epistemological, ontological, and theoretical commitments, to ensure that the approach(es) adopted align with the commitments (Yilmaz, 2013).

Quantitative research mainly uses numeric data, which is usually analysed using a range of statistical and graphical techniques whereas qualitative research uses mainly non-numeric data but there is an option of combining the two research approaches into a mixed-method research (Saunders et al., 2016; Lapan et al., 2012). In terms of research philosophy, quantitative research is generally (but not necessarily) associated with positivism, especially when used with predetermined and highly structured data collection techniques, whereas qualitative research is often associated with an interpretive or critical paradigm (Saunders et al., 2016). An interpretive philosophy entails researchers making sense of the subjective and socially-constructed meanings conveyed about the phenomenon under study (Lapan, et al., 2012), and a critical paradigm focuses heavily on structural conditioning. Unlike quantitative studies which are concerned with generalisation, prediction, and cause-effect relationships through deductive reasoning, qualitative studies are more concerned with process,

context, interpretation, meaning or understanding. Because of the dual emphasis in this study on structures and subjectivities, and the conditioning (not casual) effects of structural arrangements, there is a strong reliance on a qualitative approach.

Thus, as the focus of the study is on the lived social realities of rural people in terms of land access, division of labour and gender relations, qualitative research is the most appropriate approach to understand and analyse the focus of this research (Merriam, 2009). In this sense, the approach selected was shaped by the character of the research focus and specifically the research questions/objectives detailed earlier. As Marshall (1996: 522) brings to the fore, “the choice between quantitative and qualitative research methods should be determined by the research question, not by the preference of the researcher”. Hence, qualitative research is interested in understanding social meanings and interpreting social experiences, with an emphasis on their conditioning by social structures. For this thesis, the researcher examined the perspectives and practices of both women and men in the studied rural areas and how these are shaped by structural arrangements (notably patriarchal systems and discourses).

Sample sizes of quantitative research are usually larger than the ones for qualitative research because qualitative research focuses on gathering in-depth information about the case under study, rather than the focus on representativeness done by quantitative research. Unlike quantitative researchers who seem to be ‘detached’ from what they are researching to avoid bias, qualitative researchers tend to be ‘immersed’ in the whole research process because it involves studying real people in natural settings (Marshall, 1996). Tracy (2020) also attests to this and states that one key difference between qualitative and quantitative research is the role played by the researcher. In quantitative research, the research instrument is separate from the researcher controlling the instrument whereas, with qualitative research, the researcher is (in a sense) the instrument. Hence, in qualitative research, the researcher is supposed to develop a reasonably close, empathic relationship with the research participants (Yilmaz, 2013; Easterby-Smith et al., 2012).

1.6.3 Qualitative Case Study Design

Creswell (2007:73) offers the following useful definition of a case study design and highlights qualitative research in the process:

Case study research is a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g., observations, interviews, audio-visual material, and documents and reports), and reports a case description and case-based themes.

In line with this definition, a qualitative case study design was chosen for this thesis, with Zvimba as the main case study area and two areas in Zvimba (Kanzou Village and Stratford FTRA) as specific sub-cases – as a basis for a comparative analysis of land access, division of labour and gender relations. This involved defining and restricting the case, or what is called ‘delimiting the case’ (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016) to allow for a feasible and manageable study.

Case studies investigate complex social phenomena in a real-world context, such as the cases which this research is investigating, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not entirely clear (Schwandt and Gates, 2018; Flick, 2009). As Yin (2014:4) notes, “a case study allows investigators to focus on a ‘case’ and retain a holistic ... perspective”. There is a spatial and historical context to the gendered relations existing in both rural case study sites (as detailed in chapters three and four), but this context is embedded if only indirectly in the study sites as structural tracings. This study investigates the real-world perspectives and practices of women and men in rural areas in terms the gender relations, division of labour as well as land access and pinpoints these tracings in the process. Thus, a qualitative case study is the design of choice for this research as the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection (through interviews, Focus Group Discussions, and observations) and it seeks to offer a robust and holistic as well as richly-descriptive and analytical account of the lives of rural women and men in Zvimba (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016; Zainal, 2007; Crowe, et al., 2011).

Creswell (2007) distinguishes between three types of case studies: the single instrumental case study, the collective or multiple case study, and the intrinsic case study. In a single instrumental case study, the researcher focuses on an issue or concern, and then uses one bounded case to illustrate the issue. In a collective case study, the researcher also selects one issue or concern but uses multiple case studies to illustrate the issue. Lastly, in an intrinsic case study, the focus is on the case itself because it presents an unusual or unique situation. Given the three types of case studies and their definitions, this study fits into the multiple case study approach as the researcher is using Kanzou Village and Stratford FTRA as case studies for comparison. Considering that the study offers a comparative analysis of land, labour and gender across A1 farms and communal areas, and that this type of analysis is uncommon in the Zimbabwean literature, there was an exploratory case study element to it in the sense of gaining new (i.e., comparative) insights (Streubert and Carpenter, 1999; Burns and Groove, 2001).

The use of case studies is relevant to research questions that ask about ‘how’ and ‘why’ (Marshall, 1996). For example, in this study, the researcher is asking ‘how’ land is accessed or acquired and ‘why in that particular way’. Moreover, the study is asking ‘how’ people in the two study areas divide labour within and outside households and ‘why’ it is done in such a way. Zainal

(2007) encourages the use of case studies in qualitative research for pursuing these questions, as this facilitates an understanding of the sheer complexities of real-life situations (which cannot be unpacked using quantitative-based experimental or survey research).

1.6.4 Sampling

Before detailing the research methods used in this section, I first discuss the study population and the sampling used for accessing this population. The study population incorporated all the households in the communal areas village of Kanzou and the A1 fast track farm of Stratford, with a specific focus on the heads of households (either male or female) and the spouses of heads of household (all over the age of 18). The criteria for inclusion in the study more fully was as follows:

- Household head (either male or female)
- Spouse to the head of household
- Over 18 years
- Has access to land
- Have stayed in the areas for more than 5 years
- Willing to participate in the study

The exclusion criteria were as follows:

- Child-headed households
- No access to land
- Have stayed in the area for under 5 years
- Under 18
- Refused consent

Tracy (2020:82) defines sampling as “choosing people to interview and also choosing a specific location, times of days, various events, and activities to observe during fieldwork”. It is not possible to collect all types of evidence from all those falling within a study population (Taherdoost, 2016), and hence sampling is used for purposes of collecting evidence which somehow represents the wider population while also maximising efficiency of the research fieldwork. In qualitative (like quantitative) research, sample selection affects greatly the ultimate quality of the research evidence (Coyne, 1997). Simultaneously, as Tracy (2020) shows, researchers need to purposefully choose to collect evidence or data which fits within the parameters of the study’s research questions and objectives.

The first stage in the sampling process is defining the ‘target’ population which, in this case, are women and men living in the communal and fast track areas of Zimbabwe. After defining the so-called target population, the second stage is to choose a sampling frame or frames. A sampling frame

is an accessible section of the ‘target’ (or study) population from which a sample can be drawn. In the first instance, the sampling frame were the two rural study sites and specifically women and men above the age of 40 living in Kanzou Village and Stratford FTRA in Zvimba. It is then necessary, as part of the sampling process, to choose a sample from the sampling frame using a well-defined sampling technique (such as probability or non-probability sampling).

Probability (random) sampling and non-probability (non-random) sampling are the two main types of sampling. For this study, non-probability sampling techniques involving purposive (judgemental) sampling as well as snowball sampling were used to collect evidence for this study (Easterby-Smith et al., 2002:41; Taherdoost, 2016). In the first instance, purposive sampling was used to identify and select the two study areas (Kanzou Village and Stratford FTRA) from which the study participants would be drawn. I needed one communal area and one A1 fast track area for the comparative analysis, and Kanzou Village and Stratford FTRA were chosen in large part because of relative ease of access to these two sites. I grew up in Kanzou Village and was thus familiar with the area and its culture. I chose nearby Stratford as the fast-track site because I knew local gatekeepers who could facilitate access to potential research participants on this A1 farm. In addition, no studies have been conducted about the theme of land, labour, and gender in these two rural sites, yet my historical connection to the area made me aware that this theme was pertinent to the two study sites in ways which required a fieldwork-based understanding. Also, the fact that some Stratford A1 farmers came from Kanzou Village heightened the possibility of identifying similarities and differences between communal and A1 farms in relation to land, labour, and gender.

In the two study sites, 40 men and women (above 40 years of age) of all marital statuses were selected (20 for each site) non-randomly for interviews. In addition, the researcher interviewed the Village Heads in the two study sites as key informants (selected on a purposive basis), making a total of 42 in-depth interviewees. Three focus group discussions were conducted in each study area, making a total of six. Each group consisted of between 6 and 8 people, selected through non-probability sampling: one group with women, one with men, and one mixed, making a total of 40 focus group participants for the two sites. According to Roberts (1997:79), purposive sampling is a commonly used procedure for focus group interviews. Of the 40 people who had initially taken part in the in-depth interviews, eight could not participate in the focus groups due to other commitments; therefore, eight new people were recruited.

In Kanzou village, I used purposive sampling only because I was familiar with the place (as indicated). I knew the people to approach in the village, including those who would fit into the parameters of the study. In the case of Stratford, beyond purposive sampling, I also drew upon snowball sampling. At Stratford, one of the primary school teachers approached a few villagers she

knew in the area about my intention to conduct research. After my appointment with these villagers, I asked them to identify more people they thought met my selection criteria. The villagers would then bring these others at an agreed time for interviews. In pursuing this, I accumulated further information-rich cases.

Regarding the sample size (of 40), there is always a question about how many interviewees are 'enough'. Different researchers have different opinions about how many participants are sufficient for a non-random sample. For example, Saunders et al. (2012) suggest that, for qualitative studies, 12 in-depth interviews are enough for a homogenous grouping of people, while up to 20 interviewees might be necessary for a more heterogeneous group. For in-depth qualitative studies, Johnson and Christensen (2004) suggest 6 to 12 people, Krueger (2000) talk of 6 to 9 people, and Morgan (1997) speak of 6 to 10 people. This implies that samples for qualitative studies tend to be quite small, as intensiveness rather than extensiveness is prioritised.

Ultimately, Saunders et al. (2006) argue that there are no fixed rules on how big the sample size should be in non-probability sampling for qualitative studies. Guided by Tracy (2020), who argues that 'enough' depends on a researcher's interests and goals (even though data saturation comes in as the gold standard), a total of 42 in-depth interviews were conducted (40 with villagers and 2 with key informants) and six focus groups (comprising 40, including 32 villagers who were interviewed). Saunders et al. (2012) do suggest, however, that a larger sample size becomes important for a comparative analysis as the groups compared are treated in part as separate homogeneous populations. Hence, I selected 40 participants for this comparative study.

Data saturation is "reached when there is enough information to replicate the study, the ability to obtain additional new information has been attained, and when further coding is no longer feasible" (Fusch and Ness, 2015: 1413). As per the rules of data saturation (Mason, 2010), there was no new, fresh, and important information emerging from the interviews by the time I reached the 40 interviews, and hence I decided to discontinue data collection (Saunders et al., 2016). Indeed, no new data began to emerge after 12 in-depth interviews in Kanzou Village. This is similar to the experiences of Guest et al. (2006) as cited in Guest et al. (2013), with their dataset saturated after only 12 interviews. In the case of Stratford, there was no new information after 15 interviews. In both cases, I had reached data saturation before the stipulated number of 20 interviews in each site. But, I was able to use the remaining interviews to confirm and verify the evidence collected in earlier interviews as well as to reflect upon whether the form and depth of evidence being collected was sufficient for answering the key and subsidiary research questions for the study (Flick, 2009) –which I assessed was the case. Hence, data saturation was central to this thesis in recognition that it greatly enhances the quality of research and the validity of the research evidence. Data triangulation (in-depth

interviews, focus groups and observations) also contributed to ensuring data saturation (Fusch and Ness, 2015).

1.6.5 Data Collection Methods

Data were collected using in-depth semi-structured interviews (including key informant interviews), focus group discussions, and observations. The data collection happened during challenging time of Covid-19, which brought about many uncertainties and affected the process of data collection. Some participants were not eager to meet with me because I was coming from South Africa to undertake the fieldwork, where the Covid-19 cases were rising daily. However, this did not affect the overall ability to engage productively with research subjects in the two study sites.

1.6.5.1 Research Process

Access to sites to conduct research needs to be undertaken in an open and transparent manner for the study to be moral and ethical. Hence, it is important to engage site gatekeepers who control access to a study site. In order for me to be authorised to carry out my data collection, the process started in December 2019 when I approached the District Administrator's office (DA) notifying them about my intention to conduct a research study in Zvimba District. The DA guided me regarding the process of conducting research in the district because researching on land is a sensitive topic in Zimbabwe which needs clearance from government officials. The DA instructed me to send him an email with my research proposal, interview schedule, a letter from Rhodes University stating that I am a registered PhD student, and a letter from the supervisor attached to it. After doing so, it took a while to get a response, which meant that I was unable to conduct any field work as soon as initially planned. I got a response in mid-2020 but the DA in charge had changed, and the new DA had no clue of what I was referring to, so I had to redo the process again and finally I received a positive response via email, reading, "permission to conduct Academic Research in Zvimba is hereby granted. You should therefore restrict your data collection in Kanzou and Stratford areas as per your request letter." The DA directed me to contact the Office of the Provincial Administrator in the Ministry of Local Government, Public Works and National Housing, and Ministry of State for Provincial Affairs in Mashonaland West Province, whose offices are located in Chinhoyi.

I approached both offices via an email, but I could not get a response for close to three months. The Acting Provincial Development Coordinator later responded to my email on behalf of the Provincial Administrator clearing me to conduct my research (See Appendix F). I decided to use a phone number that was on the website to contact the Ministry of State and they instructed me to come in person and explain what I need permission for and how I intend to go about collecting data. I

travelled to Chinhoyi in early December 2020 and visited the offices where I met with the personal assistant to the Provincial Director in the Ministry of State, and she interviewed me. I showed her the letter I had received from the DA and the email from the office of Provincial Administrator in the Ministry of Local Government, Public Works and National Housing as well as documents to support that I am a Rhodes University student. She then phoned me later that day to return the following day to collect the clearance letter. I collected the clearance letter and she stated that I must not open the letter, as it must be opened by the gatekeepers. In addition, I asked her if I need permission from any other authorities besides their ministries and the DA and she advised that the letters are suffice for the Village Heads to grant me permission.

I then proceeded to Stratford to meet with the Village Head, introduced myself and my research assistant and explained my intention in the area, and he granted me permission to go ahead with my data collection. I also contacted the School Head at Stratford Primary to request permission to use one of her classroom blocks for my interviews and focus groups. The School Head agreed but cautioned me about observing all the Covid-19 regulations when I was meeting with the research participants. My research assistant and I began with the in-depth interviews, then the focus group discussions commenced after we were done with the interviews. I conducted the focus groups on my own to ensure that I get the participants engaged in lively discussions. After I finished my data collection in Stratford, I proceeded to Kanzou Village and spoke to the Village Head (who is a neighbour of my family) and he granted my research assistant and I permission to commence our data collection in the village, after presenting all the documentation to him. All the data collection happened in the month of December 2020.

I involved a research assistant so that I could do as many interviews as I could within the month to avoid being locked in Zimbabwe since lockdown regulations were changing depending on how the infections were spiking. To illustrate, the day after I arrived back in South Africa, it went back into a Level 3 lockdown that restricted movement in and out of the country. A few days later, on 2 January 2021, Zimbabwe introduced harsher lockdown restrictions, which also restricted movement. These restrictions would have affected my data collection if I had not engaged a research assistant in my data collection process. Reasons given by the Minister of Health in Zimbabwe to introduce the harsher lockdown restriction were the spike in Covid-19 cases in the last week of 2020 whereby new cases were growing by more than 10% in that week alone.

In both study sites, interviews were conducted first before the focus groups because participants who were interviewed were also asked to take part in the focus groups in order for them to have an opportunity to question one another or comment on each others' experiences, something that cannot be done in individual interviews.

1.6.5.2 Research Assistant

The researcher collected data with the assistance of a research assistant, in the case of the interviews with the 40 villagers. The research assistant had experience with collecting data as she is the holder of an Honours degree. The researcher held an interactive and lively briefing session with the research assistant to discuss the aims of the research and what to expect from the fieldwork interviews, encouraging her to ask questions about matters she did not fully understand. In addition, the researcher asked the research assistant for any ideas that might enhance the interview process for her, as well as articulating any concerns of her. The researcher encouraged the research assistant to familiarise herself fully with the interview guide, including its structure and detailed contents, since the interview guide was central to the fieldwork. This worked as a form of training of the research assistant. The interview guide helps to keep the interview focused on the desired topics of investigation, which is especially useful when there is a research assistant. The research assistant and the researcher had a meeting after our first set of interviews to check if we were on the same page and to discuss feedback around the relevance of the collected evidence for addressing the thesis objectives. We continued doing this on a regular basis. In undertaking fieldwork under my guidance, the research assistant signed a confidentiality form (Appendix E). The research assistant conducted 10 (6 females and 4 males) interviews in Stratford and 8 (3 males and 5 female) interviews in Kanzou Village. The research assistant made it easier for me to collect all my data with the limited time that the researcher had. As suggested by Stevano and Diane (2019:5), “if the researcher plans to conduct a high number of interviews in a given amount of time, then working with a research assistant can help reach the target”.

1.6.5.3 In-Depth Interviews

The purpose of data collection in the case of qualitative research is to provide evidence about the experiences, practices, and perspectives of those being studied. The evidence is usually in the form of narrative and descriptive accounts that people give regarding their past and present lives, which are then analysed by the researcher – including through understanding the broader context in which they live their lives (Polkinghorne, 2005). The key difference between general everyday stories told by people every day and research-based interviews is that interviews are conducted in a rigorous way to ensure reliability and validity of the data (Patton, 2015). Interviews can be structured, semi-structured or unstructured. This study used in-depth individual semi-structured interviews that allow for a ‘conversation with a purpose’ to happen. Ritchie and Lewis (2003) state that they are five key features of such interviews, including: they combine structure and flexibility, are interactive in character, and involve probing to achieve a level of depth to the evidence collected.

The role of the interviewer is crucial to the process. Kvale (1996) gives two metaphorical examples of the roles of an interviewer in the interview process – as a miner or a traveller. On the one hand, the interviewer, as a miner, digs and unearths the valuable metals, which means that the interviewer should dig up and out data and meanings from participants' experiences in, as far as possible, an unobtrusive manner. On the other hand, the interviewer, as a traveller, is on a journey and will need to be able to tell a comprehensive story when they return (or complete the interviews). Both two dimensions of the interviewing process were considered when conducting the interviews for this study. Through the semi-structured in-depth interview method, the researcher for this study sought to acquire rich and inclusive accounts of the participants' experiences regarding the land access, division of labour and gender relations in rural Zvimba. Some of the themes covered in the interview schedule were the agricultural activities, non-agricultural activities, agricultural production, domestic reproduction present in the two study areas. The interview schedule is Appendix A.

The researcher was cognisant of the importance of building rapport with the participants. Rapport is the ability to connect with others in a way that creates a positive climate of trust and understanding (Knight, 2009; Johnson and Christensen, 2004; Dicocco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006). On the A1 farm studied, the interview participants quite readily opened to the researcher because the researcher and her research assistant were introduced by one of the staff members at Stratford Primary School whom they trusted. In the case of Kanzou Village in the communal area, the researcher had grown up in the village, and rapport was established even more readily. In this respect, McGrath et al. (2019) affirm that, if an interviewer already knows his or her respondents, then it may be easier to build a trusting relationship. This was particularly important for this study, given that there may be some sensitivity around speaking openly about local gendered relations. Overall, the interview process was friendly, as recommended by Johnson and Christensen (2004), and it was conducted professionally despite the researcher knowing some of the participants in Kanzou Village. The researcher and research assistant were active listeners during the interview process, probing the participants whenever greater clarity was needed from the interviewee.

The interviews ranged from 35 minutes to an hour, depending on the engagement between the interviewer and the interviewee, which is consistent with arguments in the literature about the ideal length of interviews (Gray, 2009). However, these interviews were conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic, which posed a limit on the time that people can share a particular space. The interviews in Stratford FTRA were conducted inside a classroom to ensure privacy, hence the time in that space had to be limited. During the fieldwork period as well, there was a spike in Covid-19 numbers in Zimbabwe. The participants granted consent by signing a consent form (see Appendix D), which was read and explained to them before they signed. The researcher and the assistant tape-recorded the

interviews with the consent of the interviewees. In addition to recording, the researcher took notes. The interview guide was prepared in English and translated into Shona for those participants who did not understand English, for example, participants with no education and those with only primary level education. Hence, the interviews were conducted in both Shona and English. The ones that were in Shona were translated into English during transcription to use as direct quotes in the empirical chapters.

1.6.5.4 Key Informant Interviews

Key informants, according to Patton (2015: 430), “inform our inquiry when we tap into their knowledge, experience, and expertise”. The key informant interviews for this study were restricted to the village heads in the two sites. Information gathered in these key informant interviews included the ways in which rural leadership and the government more broadly are handling land issues and the challenges that villagers are facing in accessing land for farming. The researcher aimed to interview more key informants, but they were not available during the time of the interviews for various reasons. For example, the District Administrator (DA) was on leave during the period of data collection and the Chief was not available due to other commitments which he was not at liberty to disclose. Hence, only the two village heads were interviewed to share their thoughts and insights around land access, division of labour and gender relations in their respective sites. The issues raised regarding the interviews with the villagers, such as the matter of trust and rapport, were also central to these key informant interviews. Interviews with the key informants took between 40 minutes to 1 hour (see Appendix C for the key informant schedule).

1.6.5.5 Focus Group Discussions

Subsequent to the in-depth semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions were undertaken, in part to explore further (in a group setting) many of the key thematic points arising from the one-on-one interviews about land access, division of labour and gender relations in the two sites. Focus groups are small, structured groups with selected participants, led by a moderator (Litosseliti, 2003; Morgan, 2008). In this case, the researcher acted as a moderator, and the research assistant was not involved in conducting focus group discussions. The researcher used a guide or schedule (see Appendix B) for the group-based discussions, entailing questions which stimulated participants’ discussion (Braun and Clarke, 2013). The themes on the schedule included land access and use, division of labour in the household and outside the household, and control and ownership of assets.

The researcher intervened in the discussions on a minimal basis in order to enhance the interactive character of the focus groups, all the time though ensuring that the discussions remained

focused on the key issues for the study, as encouraged by Litosseliti (2003) and Braun and Clarke (2013) for example. Focus groups were used to contribute to revealing the social structure and dynamics of land access, division of labour and gender relations in the two areas and to provide a reasonably in-depth understanding of the context and social fabric of the community within which practices exist and perspectives arise (Patton and Cochran, 2002). The formation of different types of groups (all male, all female and mixed) was important in this regard. The one-gender groups provided a level of comfort and freedom for participants to express their views on land access, and division of labour, which was crucial for female villagers as males tended to dominate conversation in the mixed groups – of course, this alone was significant to understanding the character of gendered relations, particularly in the local public sphere. At the same time, the researcher tried to maintain a balance by encouraging the quieter participants to speak and the talkative ones to give others a chance. This was though more difficult in the mixed focus groups.

The researcher asked the 40 interviewees if they were willing to participate in the focus groups on a volunteer basis. Those who agreed (32 in total) were then given a time and place to meet with the researcher and other participants. All the participants who promised to participate honoured their promises. The eight (5 in Kanzou Village and 3 in Stratford FTRA) who were not available referred me to other suitable candidates for the focus groups. For conducting the focus groups, the meeting days were determined by the participants being available on a particular day. Since this was a busy time for villagers in the fields, the only free days available were Thursdays and Sundays because, on Thursdays, people are not allowed to work in their fields (called *chisi* in Shona culture) and, on Sundays, people do not work in their fields for religious reasons.

The focus group discussions lasted between one and a half to two hours, and they were audio-recorded after consent was given to the researcher to record by all group participants. The focus group discussions were conducted in Shona to accommodate everyone. The Kanzou Village Head assisted with identifying a place for the focus groups to take place. He suggested that we meet at the place they usually meet for their village meetings. This was conducive for holding the groups because the Village Head had an established rapport with the people in his village. In Stratford FTRA, the School Head offered one classroom to hold the focus group discussions. The researcher rearranged the classroom furniture so that participants would sit at a round table but observe social distancing since it was the time of the Covid-19 pandemic. The idea of conducting focus groups in a classroom is supported by Cameron (2005: 165) who suggests that “rooms of local community centres, libraries, churches, schools and so on are usually ideal”. Photo 1 shows the classroom used for focus groups in Stratford FTRA.



Photo 1: A classroom used for the focus groups

Source: Fieldwork.

Participants signed consent forms before the focus groups commenced, to indicate their voluntary participation in the focus group discussions. Before the discussions commenced, the researcher gave an overview of the research and its objectives to the participants, the approximate duration of the discussion, and summarised how the focus group operates and unfolds. As participants were discussing their thoughts, the researcher was taking notes about who was speaking, in what order, and a few lines on what they spoke about. This was to help during the transcription process

1.6.5.6 Observations

The researcher's third form of data collection was observations, to enhance data triangulation. Qualitative observations in the field involve the researcher taking field notes on the practices and activities of individuals and collectives at the research site (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). They involve "the systematic viewing, recording, description, analysis, and interpretation of behaviour" (Saunders et al., 2016: 354). Mack et al. (2005: 14) state that "observing and participating are integral to understanding the breadth and complexities of the human experience". Observations assist researchers in understanding the complexities of real-life situations, including uncovering practices about which research subjects may not be fully aware and identifying any discrepancies between what research subjects say they do and what they actually do (Patton and Cochran, 2002). Observations can either be overt or covert with the former involving the researcher revealing her identity to those being observed, and the latter concealing her identity. Furthermore, there are four types of observations: complete participation, complete observation, observer-as-participant, and participant-as-observer (Saunders et al., 2016). Complete participation and complete observation typically involve concealing identity whereas observer-as-participant and participant-as-observer entail revealing identity. The researcher in this study was an observer-as-participant because her main role

was observing participants who already knew her purpose of visit (Saunders et al., 2016). As someone who grew up in rural areas, it was not difficult for me to engage in their daily agricultural and other activities, for example, hoe ploughing. Participants in particular in Kanzou Village welcomed me into their everyday spaces and routines.

Guided by the objective of the study, the researcher observed land-use patterns, specific labouring tasks in which different members of households were engaged (both domestic and productive), the relationship between wives and husbands and parents and children, and the general disposition and demeanour of villagers during the day as they went about their daily activities. All relevant observations were recorded in a field notebook with time and date noted. In addition, the researcher made notes of what was being discussed during informal conversations. While notes were jotted down during actual observation (in the morning and afternoon), in the evening I would sit down and expand on the notes, including reflecting on what was observed and heard.

1.7 Ethical Considerations

During the process of designing, planning, and implementing a research project, it is crucial to consider ethical issues that might surface during the project and plan on how to address them. Research ethics are concerned with providing guidance to researchers in particular disciplines as to how they should carry out their work in a morally defensible manner (King, 2018), and they incorporate procedural ethics and ethics in practice (Guillemin and Gillam, 2004). Procedural ethics refer to the process of seeking approval from the relevant ethics committee to conduct research on human subjects, while ethics in practice highlight the ethical issues that arise or might arise as the researcher conducts the research. Of importance in both dimensions is the role and actions of the researcher. As Weis and Creswell (2006) and Hatch (2002) point out, researchers must establish respectful relationships with research subjects, be sensitive to vulnerable populations in the context of imbalanced power relations and avoid bringing about the risk of harm to research subjects (Hatch, 2002).

1.7.1 Procedural Permission

Creswell (2013) states that academic researchers should obtain procedural permission at three levels: from individuals who oversee sites being researched (typically labelled as gatekeepers); from people (research subjects) providing the data; and from university-based ethics committees. I obtained permission to conduct this study from the gatekeepers in Zvimba Rural District. These gatekeepers were the Ministry of Lands, Provincial Administrator, District Administrator, and Village heads. I also obtained permission from the Sociology Department Ethics Sub-Committee and the Rhodes

University Ethical Standards Committee (RUESC) to conduct the research. Permission was granted by the gatekeepers after the researcher had sent to them her interview guides, consent forms (to be signed by research subjects), a letter from Rhodes University, and a letter from the academic supervisor. As noted earlier, I also obtained permission from the research participants at the start of the fieldwork whom I asked to sign a consent form.

1.7.2 Autonomy, Informed Consent, Anonymity and Confidentiality

One major ethical principle that informs judgements in research is the need to respect the autonomy of the research participants (Marvasti, 2004), such that it is necessary that participation in a research project be voluntary. In this research, participants voluntarily participated, and no monetary rewards were offered. They made an overt decision to participate, based on the provision of information given to them by the researcher about the study: hence, informed consent existed (including in written form). In addition, all participants were over the age of 18 and were competent to give consent on their own behalf. The research subjects were not required to answer questions about which they were uncomfortable, and they could withdraw from the study at any time even after signing the consent form. After assessing potential risks associated with this study, the researcher discovered that issues around land can be emotional. Therefore, participants were assured that the researcher does not intend to cause any emotional harm but, if this were to happen, a counsellor will be called in to assist. No one reported any form of harm during the whole data collection process.

The researcher made her intention and the overall objective of the study clear when she made initial contact with the participants (and the gatekeepers). She also made it explicit to the participants what was expected of them during the interviews and focus groups, and that data emerging from the study was for academic purposes only and would be uploaded as a thesis onto the university website for anyone to access. The researcher indicated that she would make a copy of the thesis available to the participants if they wish to read it. All aspects of the research process discussed were articulated in Shona, and the consent form (in English) was also read by the researcher and translated into Shona for the participants to fully understand its contents and what they were being asked to sign and consent to.

Researchers are expected to indicate how anonymity and confidentiality will be managed throughout the data collection process because guarding research participants' privacy is important in research (Marvasti, 2004). Ensuring anonymity may be defined as not linking a participant with any data generated by or about her (Grove et al., 2013). Confidentiality in research means that any identifiable information about participants collected during the data collection process will not be disclosed and participants' identities will be protected (Wiles, 2013), as revealing participants'

identities might harm them (Marvasti, 2004) as well as destroy the trust they have in researchers (Burns et al., 2013). The link between confidentiality and anonymity is that “anonymity is the way in which confidentiality is operationalised” (Wiles et al., 2006: 417). Hence, fictional names (pseudonyms) (Ogden, 2008) are used instead of actual names of the participants in this study, but participants’ ages are retained as they are necessary to the analysis.

Overall, ethical considerations in this study were guided by the code of ethics which states that researchers should avoid bringing about harm (non-maleficence) and rather promote private or public good (beneficence). By using pseudonyms, the researcher ensured that no one would know the identity of the participants except for the researcher and the research assistant. However, there were a few participants who wanted to be identified, thinking that the research will attract donors to their community. One of the men in the A1 farm said, “*zvino ukasaisa zita rangu mwanangu vanobatsira vano-zoziva sei kuti ndini ndinoda rubatsiro*”, translated as “if you do not identify me, how will the donors know that I need assistance?”. The researcher had to explain or reiterate that there is no monetary benefit coming from this research, but it is for academic purposes only. Finally, audiotapes were deleted after the research was completed to avoid unauthorised access to the data.

1.8 Data Analysis

Data analysis is “a process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data” (Marshall and Rossman, 1999:150) whereas data interpretation is attaching meaning and significance to the analysis. As I was engaged in the data analysis process, I was continually reflecting on the four questions that Hair Jr et al. (2019:311) highlighted should be asked when analysing qualitative data:

- What themes and common patterns are emerging that relate to the research objectives?
- How are these themes and patterns related to the focus of the research?
- Are there examples of responses that are inconsistent with the typical patterns and themes?
- Do the patterns or themes indicate that additional data, perhaps in a new area, needs to be collected? (If yes, then proceed to collect that data.)

For the researcher to bring meaning to the data that was collected in the two research sites, thematic analysis was employed. Thematic analysis is a commonly-used method of analysing qualitative data, and Braun and Clarke (2017: 297) define it as “a method for identifying, analysing, and interpreting patterns of meanings (themes) within qualitative data”. In this respect, Maguire and Delahunt (2017) argue that a solid and effective thematic analysis involves more than just summarising data, as it interprets and makes sense of the data collected.

Braun and Clarke (2006) outline six phases that researchers must embrace to produce a thematic analysis. Combined, these phases ensure that researchers familiarise themselves with the data, sufficiently prepare the data for analysis, reduce data into codes, search for themes, and interpret the findings in a meaningful way vis-à-vis the research objectives.

Phase 1: Familiarising myself with the data. This step requires the researcher to be fully immersed and actively involved in the data, by first transcribing the interviews, and then reading (and re-reading) the transcripts and/or listening to the recordings. Transcripts aid the researcher to familiarise herself with the recorded data and familiarising with the data (Makofane and Shirindi, 2018). I first listened to each of the recordings at least twice. Afterwards, I transcribed the interviews using the English language. Interviews recorded in Shona were translated into English as I was transcribing, because the excerpts included in this thesis had to be in English and doing so also saved me time. I engaged in the repeated reading of the data (transcripts) and listening to the audios as I was searching for meanings and patterns as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006). I also took notes of the data that I thought would be useful for coding, using research questions and objectives as guidelines. This phase provided the basis for deeper analysis.

Phase 2: Generating initial codes. After familiarising myself with the data, the researcher embarked on the second stage, that is, highlighting sections of the text and coming up with codes to describe the patterns which were emerging. This included identifying similar phrases present in the data and noting them. In this ‘initial coding’ stage, each code represented an interesting idea or feeling expressed in a part of the text which was in line with the research objectives. Codes are more numerous and specific than themes, but they lead to thematic categories. I ensured that the codes identified could answer the research objectives on land access, division of labour and gender relations.

Phase 3: Searching for themes. This stage involved sorting different codes that were identified across the data sets into broader themes and making sense of them. Several codes were combined to form a theme while others formed sub-themes. The codes which were irrelevant to forming the themes were discarded at this stage. For example, all codes to do with how the participants access land, for example, through inheritance, fast track reform or renting were classified under the land access theme.

Phase 4: Reviewing themes. Phase 4 involved the refinement of identified themes. This entails a more in-depth review of the initially-identified themes whereby the researcher questions whether to combine, refine, separate, or discard the initial themes, possibly resulting in the removal of unnecessary themes with insufficient data, or collapsing and separating themes (Braun and Clarke, 2006). This ensured that data within the refined themes cohered together meaningfully and there was a clear and identifiable distinction between themes. Moreover, a thematic map was developed during this stage. During this phase, the researcher also made a comparison between the data sets and the

themes to ensure that the themes are an actual representation of the data, as guided by the theoretical framework and research objectives of the study. By the end of this phase, I had a solid comprehension of the key themes, how they fit together, and the overall story they tell about the data.

Phase 5: Defining and naming themes. During this phase, the researcher further ‘defined and refined’ the themes within the data. In doing so, the researcher provided theme names and clear working definitions that capture the fundamental components of each theme in a concise and punchy manner. In addition, the themes (which form the basis of the empirical chapters of the thesis) were named with the objectives of the study and the theoretical framework informing the study in mind.

Phase 6: Producing the report. The final phase involves writing up the analysis of the data and interpreting it in the process – in a way that convinces the reader of the merit and validity of the analysis and interpretation. It is important to provide a clear, concise, coherent, logical and interesting account of the lives of the research subjects within and across themes for readers to understand the research report fully (in this case, a PhD thesis). It is hoped that the reader, in the case of this thesis, is able to grasp the intricacies of the lives of women and men in the two case studies in relation to key themes around land access, division of labour and gender relations in rural Zimbabwe using a feminist perspective.

1.9 Quality Criteria

The researcher was fully aware of the importance of quality assurance, therefore she employed various methods that enhanced the trustworthiness of the findings. Tracy (2010) proposes eight “Big-Tent” criteria for excellent qualitative research and argues that high-quality qualitative research is marked by: (a) worthy topic, (b) rich rigour, (c) sincerity (d) credibility, (e) resonance, (f) significant contribution, (g) ethics, and (h) meaningful coherence. Looking closely, many of the measures of quality set forth by Tracy (2010) fit within the most common standards for determining rigour in qualitative research. In this context, Lincoln and Guba (1985) speak of the following in relation to qualitative research: a) credibility (in preference to internal validity for quantitative research); b) transferability (in preference to external validity/generalisability); c) dependability (in preference to reliability); and d) confirmability (in preference to objectivity). I discuss these four issues in turn.

Credibility refers to the value and believability of the research findings, such that it equates to internal validity in quantitative research. There are various ways for ensuring credibility in a study. Credibility is improved for instance when researchers describe and interpret their experience as researchers, or when triangulation of different research methods and data sources forms part of the study (Patton, 1999). Methods triangulation is the process of comparing the accuracy of results produced using various data collection methods such as semi-structured interviews, focus groups and

observation in the case of this thesis. Moreover, the researcher provides verbatim quotations from the fieldwork data to illustrate and support interpretations (Hammarberg et al., 2016). Self-awareness during the data collection process is also significant as it provides a basis for reflection (Koch, 2006). To increase self-awareness, I took fieldnotes and reflected upon these in the evening when writing them up more fully.

Transferability, of research findings in the study undertaken to other similar settings, is a criterion for considering external validity, and this is particularly important for those researchers who want to draw upon existing work in pursuing their own research. To facilitate transferability, a researcher must provide a rich and thick description of the research participants and research process. In this current study, as detailed in this chapter, there is an in-depth presentation of all dimensions of the research process; as well, in the empirical chapters, a full and solid overview of the research sites and subjects is provided. I consider these accounts as containing sufficient information for other researchers to make judgements on whether to apply the findings of this research to other situations and contexts.

Dependability is concerned with whether a researcher would obtain the same research results and findings if she were to conduct the research a second time, and hence it refers to reliability in quantitative research. In other words, dependability relates to data stability over time and under diverse conditions (Kemperaj and Chavan, 2013). An “inquiry audit”, as Lincoln and Guba (1985) describe it, is one measure that can help to enhance dependability in qualitative research. It means allowing a reviewer (who was not involved in the research project under consideration) to examine both the research study’s processes and outcomes. As such, for this thesis, dependability will be met by sending it for examination by examiners who were not part of the research process (i.e., to establish dependability) (Satyendra and Patnaik, 2014; Shenton, 2004).

Finally, confirmability speaks to the data’s objectivity or neutrality, or the probability of two or more separate individuals agreeing on the data’s quality, validity, or significance (Kemperaj and Chavan, 2013). Because of this, it is similar to objectivity in quantitative research. Shenton (2004) argues that the use of triangulation in research, as for this thesis, promotes confirmability. Confirmability was also met in this study by keeping a reflexive journal during the research process in order to take notes and engage in daily introspections about the study. The researcher was also aware of her own biases, beliefs, and presuppositions that she might bring into the study, and sought to bracket or control these.

1.10 Significance of the Study

This study contributes to feminist scholarship about land, labour and gender relations in rural Africa generally and Zimbabwe more specifically. It does so by focusing on the notion of patriarchy, not only as a structured system of gender domination and inequality, but as a set of discourses, practices and experiences lived by and through rural women. Of particular importance in this regard is the argument made by Tsikata (2009), admittedly over a decade ago, that “land tenure and labour regimes are *interdependent* in their contribution to [rural] livelihood activities and outcomes” (Tsikata, 2009:13, my emphasis). As she highlights, land and labour are typically studied separately, but it is not possible to understand the one fully without studying the other simultaneously, certainly when it comes to gender relations. The problem raised by Tsikata (2009) continues to this day in some form. This study, as brought out in the research questions and objectives, offers an integrated understanding of land and labour and how these realms of life are structured in gendered ways – hence, the study’s significance.

The thesis is also significant in two other ways. First of all, even when land and labour are studied simultaneously in Zimbabwe, there are few attempts to offer a comparative analysis across communal areas and resettlement areas (including fast track areas) (Chakona, 2012; Mutopo et al., 2014). In focusing on Kanzou Village and Stratford FTRA, the thesis does just that. Secondly, the thesis argues for a feminist framework in such a way as to show the overlap and compatibility between a ‘Northern theory’ and a ‘Southern theory’ - that is, between Socialist Feminism and Third World Feminism. It thus demonstrates the possibility of conversations and exchanges between the diverse array of feminisms which exist globally.

1.11 Thesis Outline

The thesis consists of ten chapters. Chapters 2 to 4 are the contextual chapters. Chapter 2 sets out the theoretical framework for the study, Chapter 3 examines land, labour and gender in Africa, and chapter 4 land, labour and gender in Zimbabwe more specifically. The following five chapters (5 to 9) are the empirical chapters. Chapter 5 provides an introductory overview to the two case study sites, and each of the following four chapters discuss one of the four subsidiary objectives for the thesis: respectively land and gender (Chapter 6), labour and gender (Chapter 7), decision-making along gender lines in the sphere of agricultural production (Chapter 8), and decision-making along gender lines in the domestic sphere (Chapter 9). The final chapter, chapter 10, offers an integrated overview of the thesis, including the ways in which the thesis addresses the main and subsidiary objectives.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMING OF LAND, LABOUR AND GENDER

2.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the theoretical framework that was adopted as the lens for this study. The subordination of women both in the private and public space exists in the most part because of patriarchy, which is engraved in a diverse array of legal, social, cultural, political, and economic practices, and leads to gender-based power imbalances and inequalities. As Agarwal (2016:61) argues, the “system of patriarchy, more often than not, creates obstacles for women’s growth and development ... in their careers, society and personal life”. When discussing patriarchy in this thesis, I privilege the term ‘subordination’ (or ‘domination’) rather than ‘oppression’, because the latter term tends to imply an evil intent on the part of the dominant (Sultana, 2011). It is my understanding that men, as they engage in patriarchal domination over women, are not necessarily malicious as they quite often are simply undertaking practices which, from their perspective, is the norm and the normal. This does not mean though that the patriarchal system as such is not oppressive in disabling women’s capacity to pursue dignified lives (hooks, 1984).

The existence of gender subordination also includes the possibility of voluntary acceptance (consent) by women of their subordinate status, or at least compliance in exchange for certain protections and privilege. In this context, besides being a deeply-embedded system and a set of recurrent practices, patriarchy also entails discourses which legitimise patriarchy. Long-established cultural ideas, as transmitted through socialisation, are typically central to discursive claims about the unequal position of men and women in society, including the ways in which men’s association with occupying the position of household head become almost naturalised.

In the first section of this chapter, I detail how patriarchy acts as a barrier for rural women in Zimbabwe, in the case of both land and labour issues. In the following two sections (2.3 and 2.4), I then speak about gender and land, and gender and labour, respectively in relation to Africa more broadly. In this context, in the balance of the chapter, I outline feminist theory and argue for the significance of Socialist feminism and Third World feminism for analytically framing this study.

2.2 Patriarchy: A Barrier for Rural Shona Women in Zimbabwe

Patriarchy is prevalent across the breadth of Zimbabwean society, both past and present. Though there may be different localised systems of patriarchy in rural Zimbabwe, no doubt there are systemic commonalities across small-scale farming communities in Shona society. In this respect, patriarchy is crucial to how Shona women experience life in rural Zimbabwe, as it is a determining factor in

relation to land access, the division of labour and gender relations – the central focus of this thesis. In Zimbabwe, for instance, women’s rural agricultural labouring is mainly labouring to survive and it plays a crucial role in the development of the economy and society (Ossome and Naidu, 2021) but it is not recorded in the official calculations of Gross Domestic Product.

There are multiple definitions of patriarchy amongst scholars, but this study adopts the broad definition of patriarchy by Walby (1990:20), who speaks of it as “a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women”. This system cuts across all institutional spheres of society, including in relation to the distinction often made between the public and private spheres, and between spheres of (economic) production and (social) reproduction. The private sphere or realm of social reproduction refers to the domestic sphere, whereas the public sphere incorporates the economy, polity, and other institutional fields. Walby (1990:20) captures the multiple places where patriarchy exists and women experience subordination by referring to “the patriarchal mode of production, patriarchal relations in paid work, patriarchal relations in the state, male violence, patriarchal relations in sex, and patriarchal relations in cultural institutions”. Cross-cutting all of these sites is the presence and significance of ways of living and being which become ingrained in the ways in which both men and women view the world and themselves.

Traditionally, in Shona-speaking rural Zimbabwe, women are immersed within patriarchal arrangements under the control of men, whether husbands or senior males (Chuma and Ncube, 2010; Zinyemba, 2013). Importantly, hooks (1984) identify motherhood and childrearing (or the domestic sphere) as the locus of women’s oppression. In this sphere in rural Zimbabwe, culturally-infused socialisation of the girl child and boy child in terms of gendered differences mean that patriarchal practices take shape in and through the family. Patriarchal practices in Shona culture also divide labouring activities along gender lines, as girls perform house-chores while boys tend to undertake work outside of the homestead and, specifically, those tasks associated with things considered as intrinsic to the male order (for example, herding cattle). These gender differences exist because culture dictates that girls will be compliant wives and mothers, and boys – as local Shona patriarchs – future husbands and fathers (*baba vemangwana*) (Mangena, 2009). Kambarami (2006: 3) thus notes that, in Shona culture, “Shona males are socialised, at an early age, to view themselves as breadwinners and heads of households whilst females are taught to be obedient and submissive housekeepers”, resulting in women’s subordination to, and dependence on, men. Women are expected to acquire those qualities consistent with a relationship of dependence on men, such as gentleness, passivity, submission and striving to please men constantly (Arndt, 2002a).

In terms of power relations, Shona culture gives overall preference to the boy child over the girl child, even if the boy child is younger than the girl. In circumstances where the boy is the

firstborn, he automatically becomes the (designated) head of household in the absence of the father or after the father passes on (Tagutanazvo and Dzingirai, 2022). This prioritising of the boy child over the girl child in the family structure is an initial and primary source of female subordination because, in some instances, boys even acquire education at the expense of girls. In their study on 4,427 Zimbabwean women of reproductive age, Lasong et al. (2020) for example, found that women in rural areas are highly likely not to attain a higher education and they end up marrying without any employable skills. Women then become unemployed housewives who depend on husbands for their upkeep and may end up suffering domestic abuse as well. In this context, girls may be expected to stay at home where they ‘belong’ (Kambarami, 2006) rather than pursue education (Tagwirei, 2013). Depriving girls of education limits the possibility for women to pursue lives and livelihoods autonomously from men (Chirimuuta, 2006). Even if girls enter school and can acquire a decent education, once they leave education as young women they are supposed to surrender to culture and get married, otherwise they might receive the derogatory label of “unmarriageable” (Chirimuuta, 2006) or being unsuitable as a wife.

However, marriage is sacred in the Shona culture, and there is an expectation if not requirement for every woman to become married and produce children (Mundenda and van Eck, 2021). This is a cultural fiat existing more broadly in Africa. In her study on Cameroon and northern Nigerian culture, for example, Tegomoh (2002) found that women were taught from a very young age about the importance of marriage. In the sites studied, marriage was central to women’s social status and even to their community acceptance, to the extent that unmarried women were insulted and stigmatised. The whole process of marriage in Shona culture is regularly interpreted as deeply patriarchal, if only because of the *lobola* practice (payment of bride-price) as initiated by men, whether the husband and his family patriarchs or the senior male in the house of the wife – which means that men tightly control the process (Dube, 2011). Also, when men pay *lobola*, there is a tacit agreement that children born from the union belong to the father. The children inherit the father’s surname, totem, and citizenship (Kambarami, 2006), such that a child can only use the mother’s surname if the mother is a single parent.

In pre-colonial Zimbabwe within Shona culture, after losing a husband, a widowed woman was expected to marry her late husband’s brother, and failure to comply resulted in the husband’s family sending her back to her parents’ home. However, if a husband became widowed, he was given his late wife’s virgin young sister to marry. The young sister was never consulted, and she would comply simply because culture dictates it so (Kambarami, 2006). Many of these earlier marital practices no longer exist or are rarely witnessed. But, it is certainly the case that the cultural milieu in rural communities still plays a pivotal role in the ongoing subordination of women (including

married women) because of the power and control mechanisms embedded in the culture that allows gender inequality to thrive (Dube 2011). As a result, Mangena (2009) claims that even the humanistic philosophy of *hunhu* within Shona culture perpetuates patriarchy. This is because the philosophy of *hunhu* forces women for instance to accept unreservedly and take care of their extended family. In this sense, *hunhu* (or *ubuntu*) means respect for the extended family, namely, a woman should share all forms of support that she gets from her husband with the extended family, without expecting anything in return (Mangena, 2009).

Turning to the public sphere in Zimbabwe, both the economy and polity, there is significant gender inequality which is manifested in specific ways. In the world of work, women in Zimbabwe face difficulties in entering the formal economy and in ‘climbing the corporate ladder’. In a study dating back to the 1990s, Parpart (1995) found that only 35 per cent of the waged labour force in the country were women. Additionally, the women partaking in waged labour had low-paying and insecure work. In the past (notably in the 1980s), women tended to dominate the informal economy in urban areas, but men are increasingly involved because of the significant downturn in the Zimbabwean economy since the turn of the century.

These economic challenges for women are replicated in the political sphere. A 2020 report by the Women’s Academy for Leadership and Political Excellence (WALPE) together with Deaf Zimbabwe Trust (DZT) and Mutasa Youth Forum (MYF), about minimal female participation in leadership positions in Mutasa District, identified patriarchy as the biggest stumbling block. Further, women are not fully represented at national level in political structures. For example, the study by Dube (2011) shows that women occupy only 12 per cent of the seats in the Zimbabwean parliament, though the percentage increased to 26 per cent in cabinet in 2023 (Wanjiru, 2023).

In rural areas, historically in communal areas and increasingly in resettlement areas, the male-dominated chieftainship system tends to dominate rural politics – setting the overall tone for the gendered structuring of rural spaces. Crucially, a gendered labour regime exists in both the private and public spheres in rural Zimbabwe. For Walby (1990), women are the producing class, engaged in domestic labour, while husbands are the expropriating class – a point which is perhaps even more pertinent to the expropriation of women’s agricultural labour by men. Further, women’s domestic work is typically not classified as ‘work’, such that there is no form of remuneration attached to it, leaving women dependent on their husbands. Women in rural areas are restricted in terms of viable livelihood activities, and they often become mere agricultural labourers under the subordination of the family patriarch. Insofar as rural Shona men control the crops cultivated in the main fields of the household, women also become reliant upon the local patriarch. In general, in addition to domestic labour, rural Shona women toil in the crop fields, leading to a double burden of work.

Chambati's (2022) study in Goromonzi and Kwekwe notes that A1 fast track farms and communal areas relied more on unpaid family labour than do A2 farms, with 60% of farmers in A2 farms relying solely on hired labour. For A2 farms in both areas, however, there were gender inequalities in the farm wage labour force – with 68 per cent of the permanent workers in Goromonzi being men and 84 per cent in the case of Kwekwe. Just like any other sub-Saharan countries, women dominated the hired casual labour force in the two study areas (Chambati, 2022). In a prior study, Chambati (2017) also found that women tended to be relegated to irregular part-time labour.

The gendered division of labour is closely connected to the questions of assets and land in particular. In relation to assets owned (or at least controlled) at the household level, most of the valuable assets, such as land and other productive resources, are controlled by men, and they are inherited from one man to another across generations (Dube, 2019). The patriarchal content of inheritance allows for the dispossession of rural women from land in sub-Saharan Africa (including Zimbabwe) (Saka and Adebisi, 2021). In the case of losing a husband, widowed women are sometimes stripped of their belongings and forced to leave their homes by their husbands' relatives (Federici, 2011). Further, as put succinctly by Sultana (2011: 9), "even where women have the legal right to inherit such assets, a whole array of customary practices, emotional pressures, social sanctions and sometimes, plain violence, prevent them from acquiring actual control over them". Customary practices often block women from inheriting assets (at least major assets) even in cases where the woman has contributed (at least) an equal share of work to acquire or maintain assets (Arndt, 2002b; Ringson, 2019). Thus, women's dependence on men and their weak rights to farming resources contributes significantly to their inability to control and access land.

Land as a fixed asset is the foundational basis for generating rural livelihoods, a pivotal element to household wealth in rural areas, and normally a determinant of the wealth of a household. However, in both communal and A1 resettlement areas in Zimbabwe, customary land-use practices guide the possession and use of land – ownership amongst small-scale farmers in both areas does not exist, as the land is state-owned. In communal areas dating back to the colonial period, women have had no direct access to primary land use rights, as these rights have been mediated by and through men. Many studies report that, in the A1 areas, women did not receive their fair share of land (Yingi, 2019) and, further, land possession and usage in many ways simply replicates what exists in communal areas.

Though female-empowering legislation which promotes gender equality now exists in Zimbabwe, at least to some extent, the civil liberties of women are not necessarily respected when it comes to contestations between the civil order and the customary order in rural areas. For a long time, customary law in Zimbabwe has superseded civil law rights and the rights of women as citizens

emanating from this, including from the constitution – as if women existed outside the parameters of the law (Landman and Sibiziwe, 2020). At times, Shona custom and tradition, which encourages and justifies the subordination of women within a household, continues unabated because men think or know that they are above and beyond the law even if they violate women’s rights. Even though the general law and the Constitution of Zimbabwe guarantee gender equality, the patriarchal-cultural interpretation of the law favours discrimination based on gender. This exists because custom has been institutionalised as an “authentic cultural system which is appropriate to African women” (McFadden, 2005).

From this discussion, it is clear that patriarchy, including in Shona society, is an all-embracing system incorporating practices and discourses which constitutes the basis for the subordination of women by men. The patriarchal nature of rural Shona society has shaped and perpetuated gender inequality to the extent of allowing male domination and female subordination to be perpetuated through culture and socialisation over time. This does not imply that patriarchy is a static and undynamic system as it is subject to variation both spatially and temporally. This indeed is the focus of the thesis, that is, to consider any variation across communal areas and A1 fast track areas in contemporary Zimbabwe in relation specifically to land, labour and gender.

2.3 Land and Gender

In this context, I now look more specifically at gender and land (in this section) and gender and labour (in Section 2.4), before discussing feminist theory more explicitly. As indicated, land is central to patriarchal societies such as Shona society, whereby it generates and sustains inequalities while also being a site of contestation. In Zimbabwe, there is a long tradition of struggle for land along racial lines dating back to colonial history, but the patriarchal character of land tenure systems – which give primary rights to hold land to men and make women secondary holders – are also a source of tension. Customary tenure arrangements, which exist in both communal and A1 fast track areas, are controversial in this regard.

Institutions such as the World Bank and the United Nations, as well as numerous non-governmental organisations (NGOs), emphasise the need to highlight and recognise women’s rights to land; however, customary practices inhibit this from happening (Collins, 2019; Federici, 2011). A case in point is that of a recent study conducted in Domboshava, Zimbabwe by Ingwani (2021), which found that outdated policies around customary land tenure and entrenched customary practices are causing imbalances in land access between men and women. A study in South Africa by Mubecua and Nojiyeza (2022) found that, even with the presence of numerous policies put in place to promote an equal distribution of land regardless of gender, customary laws hinder mostly women rather than

men from accessing land. In Uganda, entrenched customary law seems to be undermining all the efforts made by women advocacy groups towards women's land rights (Naybor, 2014). In the case of Zimbabwe, Pindiriri (2021) suggests the need for very specific gender-centric policies that target customary arrangements in order to address gender inequality in land possession and control in Zimbabwe. In a similar vein, Munemo et al. (2022) call for a review of customary laws, including the Communal Land Act, to facilitate the undermining of patriarchal institutions in Zimbabwe that limit and outright deny women access to land. It is quite clear that the question of women's connection to land and communal tenure has for some time been a central issue in feminist politics in Africa and the world over (Federici, 2011).

A large body of feminist work has emerged around the question of land and gender in Africa and beyond, focusing in particular on the situation of women with regard to their possession of, access to and control of land. For example, feminist scholar Agarwal (1994) argues that rural women typically lack direct and secure land tenure. This problem is complex and multi-layered, and it demonstrates the deeply embedded character of systems of patriarchy. For Agarwal (1994), the establishment and maintenance of women's individual land rights require going beyond legal rights and undoing the cultural foundations of patriarchal practices around land. In this context, "both traditional and modern institutions: caste or clan, councils, village elected bodies, state bureaucracies at all levels, and so on" (Agarwal, 1994: 14) are all arenas in which the gender imbalance in control of land exists. Thus, in terms of land and gender, it becomes critical to pay particular attention to power relations at various scales, from the household and community to the national and global (Prüg et al., 2021).

Other feminists such as Jackson (2003), Widman (2014), Collins (2019) and Tirivangasi et al. (2023) reinforce such arguments. For instance, Jackson (2003) speaks about how the lack of land rights limits agricultural extension support and agricultural productivity for women. In a study in Sanyati (Zimbabwe), Tirivangasi et al. (2023) explore the gendered politics of smallholder agriculture and they demonstrate how women are heavily burdened by the need to feed their families – they do not have land ownership rights, which limits access to credit and extension services. A study by Widman (2014) focusing on gender differences in land rights in Madagascar found that men as head of households had primary ownership of land at the expense of women's land rights, due to lack of mechanisms in place to govern the joint ownership of land. Because of this, a joint certification of common property that belongs to married couples was proposed and implemented, which also promoted civil marriage and sought the legal right to equal inheritance as a way of promoting women's formal rights to land in the country. Collins (2019) cautions though on the drive to increase women's access to land in the face of land markets as, in the face of local patriarchal systems, they

are most vulnerable to the detrimental effects of market forces. Further, Hull and Whittal (2021) highlight that guaranteeing equitable access to land for women is a fundamental human rights issue.

In Uganda, according to Busingye (2020: 152), “rights to land and hence soil is based on two principles: *jus soli* (soil rights based on birth right citizenship) and *jus sanguinis* (soil rights based on right of blood or familial lineage).” The study found that land tenure systems in Uganda are patriarchal and discriminate against people viewed as weak or of foreign descent, and women fall into that category. This relates to the broader issue of projects of belonging and ‘othering’, whereby women are denied land rights in some parts of Africa (for example, Kenya) because they are labelled as ‘outsiders’ without the right to claim land as they marry-in to the family of the husband (Federici, 2011).

Power relations are central to configuring women’s limited rights to land. As well, this relates to how gender intersects with other systems of domination grounded in, for instance, social class, race, ethnicity, and age. Local elites, and mainly patriarchs, are often involved in the provision and alienation of land, to the detriment of women in many instances (Collins, 2019). The study by Widman (2014) in Madagascar found that the land tenure reform process, involving the issuing of joint certificates of common property (including land) to married couples was problematic. This was due to the elite and corrupt capture of land, with certificate holders not being the owners of the land in some instances. Corruption and land capture were exposing women to a higher risk of facing dispossession after the change of land ownership, exacerbating gender inequalities. Another study conducted in northern Ghana by Vercillo (2022) also found women to be vulnerable after land dispossession due to social disparities in resource entitlement.

Access to rural land by women is affected by different state policies at play in different countries. For example, Prüg et al. (2021) argue that gender-blind development policies reinforce patriarchy and land as they conceptualise households as homogeneous and devoid of power relations. Such policies also fail to recognise women’s reproductive labour, a point discussed more fully later. For now, it can be noted that women’s responsibility for reproductive labour reduces their mobility and increases their time poverty and labour deficits (Prüg et al., 2021). When it comes to women’s access to important resources such as land, Razavi (2003) warns against ‘downloading’ all-purpose gender-and-development analytical frameworks and blindly reproducing policy prescriptions which fail to address the specificities of particular groups of women in particular places. Nevertheless, for most countries on the African continent, serious attention needs to be given to both customary and statutory laws in a way which recognises women’s value as related to land as a way to rectify gender imbalances in control of land use and ownership rights (Naybor, 2014). This is a necessary but not

sufficient condition for enhancing women's rights to land given the prevalence of long-established and deep-seated cultural practices.

2.4 Labour and Gender

Reproductive labour is “the work of managing a household, cooking, cleaning, keeping home, clothing and domestic equipment in good repair, and caring for family members and friends and neighbours” (Bakker, 1999: 85). It is unpaid household and care work which has been undertaken by women historically (Arslan, 2022) for purposes of reproducing labour power (Duffy, 2007) in the context of households in which the husband is invariably considered the head (i.e. family patriarch). So-called productive labour is that which is undertaken outside of the domestic sphere and, in the case of rural spaces, this would include agricultural labour for crop and livelihood production for both home consumption and market sales (Paltasingh and Lingam, 2014). In this regard, unhired family labour amongst small-scale farmers is productive labour, though not directly remunerated. While in urban spaces, productive labour was associated in the past with men (selling their labour power on the market), productive labour in rural areas has always had a strong female component (i.e. women as agricultural labourers). Both the productive and reproductive labour of women is central to this thesis, but the concept of reproductive labour has always been linked in feminist thought to the analysis of the gendered division of labour and its role in perpetuating women's subordination (Duffy, 2007; Huws, 2019; Balka and Wagner, 2021).

In the similar vein, Fuchs (2018) states that reproductive work is a super-exploited form of productive labour that generates or at least realises surplus value in the absence of a wage. However, women's (reproductive) work is ‘invisible’ and, in most cases, not recognised as work let alone productive work; and, in the formal labour market, women are typically integrated into it in adverse and subordinate ways (Chant and Pedwell, 2008; Mackett, 2021). Indeed, as Mackett (2021:2) highlights, the reproductive labour of women contributes to their “vulnerability in the labour market.” The unrecognition and devaluation of women's work, whether in the productive or reproductive sphere, has existed for an extended period.

This is certainly the case in rural Africa where women shoulder the double burden of labour (both productive and so-called unproductive labour) (Bryceson, 2020). Rural women spend up to three hours more per day than men cooking and two to ten hours caring for the children and the elderly (Ferguson, 2020). They work longer hours than men, while also participating in crop production, caring for animals, marketing goods and petty trade on top of their reproductive activities (Benería, 1979). Overall, rural men and women's productive work is valued and rewarded differently (Mazhazha-Nyandoro and Sambureni, 2022). Five decades ago, Boserup (1970) discussed the

centrality of female labour in African systems in her book *Woman's Role in Economic Development*, and she argued then that the gap between male and female labour contributions in farming was in fact widening. A more recent study by the World Bank and ONE Campaign in six sub-Saharan countries in 2014 reported similar trends (Goldberg and Foo, 2014). Bryceson (2018), in a report on eight west, east and southern African countries (Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia, Malawi, Uganda, Mali and Rwanda) ascertains that even though women's crop plots receive more family labour inputs (notably women's labour), they experienced low productivity because men had easier and better access to essential agricultural inputs for increasing production. Female-headed households, compared to male-headed houses, are also prone to have less labour power available for agricultural activities (Djurfelt, 2018).

Women across the globe engage in domestic labour almost every single day, and this affects their capacity to enter the formal labour market as well as the forms of employment and types of jobs available to them. Insofar as they work outside of the domestic sphere, they need to balance the demands of productive and reproductive labour. Clearly, as Paltasingh and Lingam (2014) argue, domestic labour is patriarchal in character (with men consuming the use value generated by women's labour) – and its gendered configuration tends to be more pronounced in rural spaces because of the cultural milieu. More so, for women in rural areas, there is a blurred line between productive and reproductive work in that they engage in productive tasks such as crop production, animal care, and petty trade while simultaneously engaging in the tasks of food preparation, collecting firewood and carrying water among other duties (Paltasingh and Lingam, 2014).

Agricultural labour is often a major limiting factor to the productivity of farming systems in Africa, and hence there is a call to mechanise agriculture to increase productivity (Baudron et al., 2019) mechanisation has the potential to minimise the labour demands placed on women. Adisa's (2020) study on a northern Niger-based solar energy irrigation project found that the implementation of solar-powered sustainable irrigation mitigated the impacts of climate variability but it also empowered women involved in rice farming through enabling their participation. Costs were the main barrier to accessing solar pumps for Nigerien women. As a result, solar-pump payments were spread over a lengthy period to make access easier for women. Access to the solar pumps reduced the amount of labour women had to spend irrigating their crops. Similar Africa-based studies, such as by Amusan and Olutola (2017) and Van Dijk and Nkwana (2021), demonstrate that 'women-friendly' technologies boost women's agricultural productivity and reduce the labour burden on women.

2.5 Feminism

In a study on land, labour, gender and livelihoods in sub-Saharan Africa, Tsikata (2009:25) argues that the “feminist critiques of mainstream analyses of livelihoods form a good starting point to address the issue of the interconnections between land and labour relations in gendered livelihoods”. She highlighted, amongst other issues, the disproportionate burden of care work on women as well as gender inequalities in the control of resources, issues which are central to this study. Like Tsikata (2009), I also argue that turning to feminist theory is central to analysing land, labour, and gender in my rural research sites in Zimbabwe. In particular, in what follows, I seek to show the relevance of socialist feminism and Third World feminism as an analytical framing for my study.

To analyse and address the power imbalances and forms of inequality existing between men and women, diverse theories have been developed by feminists. Generally, as articulated by Achifusi (1987:40), feminism is:

Directed at changing existing power relations between women and men in society. The power relations structure all areas of life, the family, education and welfare, the worlds of works and politics, culture, and leisure. They determine who does what and for who, what we are and what we might become.

Similarly, Hawkesworth and Disch (2016: 2) argue that

Feminist theory has flourished as a mode of critical theory that illuminates the limitations of popular assumptions about sex, race, sexuality, and gender and offers insights into the social production of complex hierarchies of [gender] difference.

Feminism entails a diverse array of specific theories which shows signs of both divergence and convergence. The status and specifics of patriarchy (i.e. gender domination) and how it relates to other axes of subordination (notably class and race) are key areas of contestation within feminism (Nkealah, 2006). Because of this, there is no one feminism (Schrupp, 2017; Dery, 2020). It thus becomes necessary to identify, choose and justify the use of a particular feminist theoretical framing most suitable to illustrate the patriarchal system existing in rural Zimbabwe: here I argue for a combination of Third World feminism and socialist feminist theory.

2.5.1 Waves of Feminism

The history of Western feminism falls into three broad phases, referred to as “waves”. The first wave of feminism took place in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, especially in Europe and the United States (Krolokke and Sorensen, 2006; Rampton, 2008). The first wave’s focus was on voting rights for women (Wood, 2009) and opening up opportunities for women in the public sphere. In this respect, the suffrage movement began when Lucrecia Mott and Elizabeth Stanton led a convention at Seneca Falls in New York in 1848, outlining the movement’s ideology and political

strategies (Iannello, 2010; Reger, 2007; Schrupp, 2017). The first wave contributed to the abolishment of slavery, educational reform, and prison reform among other issues and, by the end of it, women had won the right to vote (Mangan, 2019; Van Der Tuin, 2016). First-wave feminism is often labelled as liberal feminism in that it focuses on the individual empowerment of women in relation to formal equality (Plain and Sellers, 2007; Tyson, 2006), such as equal rights for women in terms of education and employment (Walby, 1990).

The second wave of feminism began in the 1960s and continued into the 1990s. Simone de Beauvoir's 1949 publication, *The Second Sex*, and Betty Friedan's 1963 publication, *The 30 Feminine Mystique*, laid much of the analytical groundwork for the second wave. The second wave focused on the workplace, sexuality, the family, and reproductive rights (Jayawardena and Zakaria, 2016; Sharma, 2019; Krollokke and Sorensen, 2006). Second-wave feminists went beyond the mere push for formal equality by, for instance, arguing that feminists "must demand full economic equality [of achievement] for women, rather than simple economic survival" (Cudd and Andreasen, 2005:7). Additionally, in drawing the connections between the political order and the personal lives of women, second wave feminists had a strong focus on the sphere of social reproduction (in the domestic sphere). The second wave has strong links with radical feminism, which argues that patriarchy and sexism are the fundamental elements that constitute and intensify women's oppression. Gender subordination (patriarchy) is seen as having its own conditions of existence such that it is not reducible to other axes of domination, including class domination.

During the second wave of feminism, and alongside radical feminism, both Marxist and socialist feminism were also influential. Marxist feminism tended to reduce gender subordination to class domination, while socialist feminists were more prepared to accept that, as axes of domination, gender and class mutually conditioned each other. Both Marxist and socialist feminists, from a structuralist perspective, examined the interconnections between the sphere of production and sphere of reproduction and how, combined, these two spheres were marked by patriarchal relations (Mann and Huffman, 2005). Socialist feminism will be discussed below as it contributes directly to the theoretical framework for this study.

The third wave of feminism began at the end of the 1980s as a direct reaction to second-wave feminism and was informed to a degree by post-colonial and post-modernist theory. Associated with the work of Rebecca Walker, the third wave concentrated on the diversity amongst women, including highlighting the lives of women of colour and queer women as well as the intersection between gender and race. It originated from African American feminist thought and argues that gender and race, as well as ethnicity, sexuality, ability status, and class are interconnected axes of oppression and privilege (Henry, 2004; Tong and Botts, 2018). In terms of the three most common forms of

subordination analysed (class, race and gender), no particular axis of subordination is universally determinant for third wave feminism. This is contrary to the claims of radical feminism and Marxist feminism. It is more consistent with socialist feminism but, compared to socialist feminism, third wave feminism has a far greater sensitivity to the question of race and how race mediates the effects of gender on the lives of women (and men).

2.5.2 Socialist Feminist Theory

I have discussed the different strands of feminism above and how they argue against gender-based power imbalances and inequality in their different forms. Now, I am going to discuss socialist feminism as one of the two key feminist frameworks of this study. In Zimbabwe, studies on land, labour and gender have mainly been studied using African feminist theories (for example, Zvokuomba and Batisai, 2022; Gudhlanga, 2016) – as complementary to, if not versions of, Third World feminism, which is discussed below. Socialist feminism arose in the 1960s and 1970s (second wave) alongside a broader resurgence in Marxist theory, and it focused mainly on the interconnectivity between patriarchy and capitalism as mutually dependent systems (Young, 1980; Mitchell, 1974; Gordon, 2013). No doubt, it was inspired by both the Marxist feminism argument on the role of capitalism in women's oppression and radical feminists' theory of the role of gender and patriarchy in the oppression of women.

As Eisenstein (1979) states, capitalism and patriarchy are at the core of women's oppression but this oppression existed before capitalism and continues into post-capitalist societies. In this sense, patriarchy takes on particular forms historically. Therefore, it is crucial to understand the present relationship between the class-based system of capitalism and patriarchy. Eisenstein (1979) spoke of 'capitalist patriarchy' to define the relationship between capitalism and patriarchy – i.e., a capitalist-based patriarchy. Socialist feminism argues that women's oppression stems from their position as wage-labourers (productive labour) in the capitalist economy as well as their position in the patriarchal gender-sex hierarchy (both structurally and ideologically), for example, as mothers, caregivers, and domestic labourers (Eisenstein, 1979; Armstrong, 2020; Gordon, 2013). In this context, it focuses on women and their dual roles in production and reproduction (Onicescu and Giles, 2013). This entails a consideration of intersectionality (class and gender) and the ways in which these two axes of power intersect and reinforce one another.

Because of this, as Hartsock (1995:261) brings to the fore, Marxist feminism fails to recognise "the importance of women's nonpaid domestic labours", such that "socialist feminists shift attention to the prevailing institutions of procreation – motherhood and sexuality". All women as women are subjected to patriarchal relations (including within the domestic sphere), but socialist feminists also

highlight the class inequalities between women. In other words, women's experience of patriarchy is mediated by their class position (Lober, 1997; Nienaber and Moraka, 2016; Dang et al., 2022). Hence, socialist feminists aim to analyse gender relations and their operationalisation and maintenance within capitalist patriarchy (or patriarchal capitalism) through gender roles and ideologies and they show how these are produced and reproduced not only through economics, but also in culture, politics, and family. Overall, then, capitalist patriarchies are preserved through various institutions and relations of power (Rubin, 1975).

Silvia Federici (2004), a well-known socialist feminist, argues that, during the period of the so-called European Enlightenment and the various processes of enclosure contained within it, women over time became repositioned moving from the productive sphere to the sphere of reproduction. This led to women's deepening dependence on men as breadwinners. This legacy of early capitalism formed the historical basis for the economic subjugation of women even today (Federici, 2012). Along with other second-wave feminists (for example, Mararosa Dalla Costa and Selma James), Federici became involved in the 'wages for housework' campaign which articulated a criticism of the male-breadwinner model, calling attention to the value of women's work in the household and urging women to engage as well in paid labour outside of the household. Additionally, in writing about rural Africa, Federici (2012) examined the ways in which marginalised (under-class) women from peasant and semi-proletarianised households are subjected to patriarchal demands around both productive and domestic labour. The emphasis by socialist feminists on the articulation of class and gender, which exist in variegated forms according to spatial and temporal variation, makes their theory of direct relevance to the case studies contained in this thesis about gender, land, and labour.

2.5.3 Third World Feminism

Third World Feminism examines the lives of women in the Third World (or global South), with a particular focus on women of colour (Herr, 2014). It complements socialist feminism because, in addition to a consideration of gender and class, it focuses on race and how racial identities mediate and configure the experiences of women. The intersection of race, gender and class is crucial for examining the land-based and labour conditions and experiences of women in rural Zimbabwe. As the colonial period was ending, feminists in Latin America, Africa and south-east Asia among others felt the need to express their dissatisfaction with mainstream Western Feminism discourse, particularly versions of Western white feminism blind to the significance of race (and even to class in the case of many middle-class white feminists). Therefore, these Third World feminists started speaking for themselves from (and about) their own specific socio-historical histories and cultures (Spivak, 1999). Similar criticisms were arising at the same time from within the 'global North',

notably among Afro-American scholars in relation to the lives of women of colour in the United States. The result was that of women of colour in the global North were labelled as Third World women as well, insofar as they lived marginalised and subordinated lives similar to those of women in the Third World.

Third World feminism rejects the false universalisms of white feminism which fail to unpack and identify the variegated lives of women (including along racial fault-lines) and which tend to depict Third World women as oppressed and requiring the assistance of supposedly liberated white women (Herr, 2014). These thoughts became particularly clear in the work of Indian scholar Chandra Mohanty and her powerful critique of other feminists' misrepresentations of Third World women. Mohanty (1991) in her work, *Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses*, argues that women around the world are different—they have different interests, experiences, and perspectives, and they should be viewed and understood as such. Therefore, Third World feminists must “carefully examine and analyse Third World women’s oppression and resistance on the ground in their historical specificity by paying attention to intersections of gender, race, class, ethnicity, and nation pertaining to their locations” (Mohanty 1991:2-3). In a later piece, she argues that the “analysis of the location of Third-World women in the new international division of labour must draw upon the histories of colonialism and race, gender and patriarchy, and sexual and familial figurations” (Mohanty 1997:29).

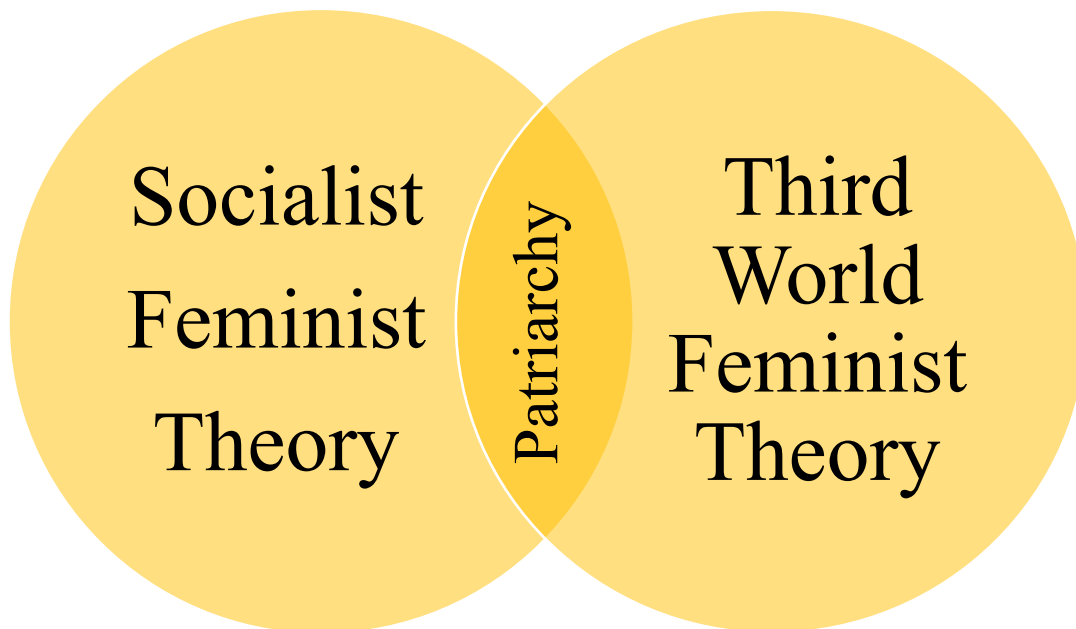
Third World countries, especially in Africa, have roots of inequality arising from colonialism, which institutionalised ideologies and practices around class, race, and gender as a way of ruling over people. Patriarchal practices were upheld to serve the economic interests of white landowners and the colonial state in the case of settler societies like colonial Zimbabwe, and black rural patriarchs also sought to control the bodies and mobility of women. Even at the end of colonialism, the legacy of rural women’s subordination and marginalisation persists. In broadly considering rural women in Zimbabwe today, it must be recognised that the still-existing racially-and colonially-constructed communal area system (transposed now onto AI farms) involved a collaboration between colonial officials and local chiefs in controlling the spatial and social movement of black women, including their access to land and their burdens of labour (Federici, 2004).

2.5.4 Arguing the Choice: Socialist and Third World Feminist Theories

Both social feminism and Third World feminism, as exemplified in the works of Federici and Mohanty respectively, highlight intersectionality – with social feminism particularly sensitive to gender and class and Third World sensitive especially to race. Both theories, and the theories they represent, are sensitive to the lives of marginalised rural women and, as theories which complement

each other, they provide an important basis for examining gender, land, and labour issues within the rural context of Zimbabwe. Importantly, they allow for an analysis of the different dimensions of patriarchy regarding both land and labour, which is central to this thesis. The theories overlap, therefore, in their focus on patriarchal systems, practices and ideologies, including with reference to both the productive and unproductive spheres (see Figure 1). This entails a study not just of women but also of men. Hence, in this study, men’s voices are acknowledged because men play a crucial role in maintaining and mediating forms of patriarchal inequality –they are the gatekeepers of oppressive structures and social systems (Rubaya, 2021). The two theoretical frameworks also will assist in giving a voice to rural women in order for them to liberate themselves from being silenced by patriarchy and culture for decades.

Figure 1: Connection Between Patriarchy, Socialist Feminism, and Third World Feminism



Combined, these theories are sensitive to difference. This is important because political structures, social structures, family structures, cultural milieus, and socio-economic conditions intermesh in fluid ways to configure particular forms of patriarchy in particular places at specific times. Though the two research sites for this thesis (one A1 farm, and one communal area) are studied over a common time-period, they have their own histories and conditions of existence which likely lead to unique patriarchal situations –but not at the expense of patriarchal commonalities. As guided by the socialist feminist and Third World feminist theories, then, this study seeks to understand the

specificities of each of the two research sites (Kanzou Village and Stratford FTRA), while recognising that systems of patriarchy across rural Zimbabwean spaces tend to resonate with each other through shared characteristics pertaining to land, labour and gender.

Both the socialist and Third World feminist frameworks will assist to dissect the centrality of women to domestic and agricultural labour and the gender-based land practices that are structured by localised patriarchal arrangements. These feminist theoretical framings will be used in a manner which allows the empirical evidence to breathe, such that they will loosely and flexibly guide the research and analysis.

2.6 Conclusion

Considering the specific focus of this thesis, namely, land, labour, and gender in communal and fast track areas in Zimbabwe, this chapter first sought to highlight the general significance of patriarchy in rural Zimbabwe in terms of generating and sustaining gender-based systems of domination and inequality. On this basis, the chapter then went on to discuss feminist theory as a basis for understanding and explaining systems of patriarchy. It discussed in particular the two theories (Socialist Feminist and Third World Feminist) which, combined, inform this study because of their analytical capacity to identify and detail how patriarchy affects the status of women in rural Zimbabwe regarding land and labour issues and, by extension, women in Stratford FTRA and Kanzou Village – as the thesis seeks to show. In this context, the following two chapters offer literature reviews regarding land, labour and gender – first in Africa generally and then in Zimbabwe specifically.

CHAPTER 3: LAND, LABOUR AND GENDER IN AFRICA

3.1. Introduction

Any study on land access, division of labour and gender relations in rural Zimbabwe needs to be located within a broader social context, namely, land, labour, and gender in nations on the African continent more generally. Land has always been a contentious issue in Africa from the early recorded history of the region until today. Countries like Nigeria, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Côte d'Ivoire, Cameroon and elsewhere have experienced significant conflict over land (Akinola, 2019). Access to land has been a centre of debate on the continent because of, for instance, rapid population growth, environmental degradation, and slow rates of economic development, with small-scale farming in communal area-like arrangements crucial to millions of lives across large swathes of the continent (Berry, 2002). There remain customary laws for administering land throughout the continent, and some of these customary legal systems are heavily influenced by colonial reconfigurations of custom.

At the same time, there have been different types of land reform initiated under post-colonial conditions, including tenure reform and land redistribution. As Bob (2010:56) argues, “[I]and reform in Africa is generally undertaken to address political, social and economic imperatives and is deemed to be central to addressing past injustices in land access and allocation as well as contributing to local and national security”. While various types of land reforms emerged in post-colonial Africa, it is also the case that most African countries adopted and maintained the legal systems of their former colonisers (Consortium, 2010). Examples of these include Lusophone countries (such as Angola and Mozambique) adopting Portuguese civil law, and Francophone countries (including Madagascar and Mauritius) taking over the Torrens title systems (Khama and Seleka, 2016).

In addition to questions around land in post-colonial Africa, whether ongoing customary arrangements in communal areas or land reform programmes, labour relations are also central to the African countryside. Embedded in land relations are labour relations in terms of both productive and reproductive labour, with family labour being crucial for small-scale farming.

Important to land, as well as labour, systems in Africa is the question of gender. In this context, this chapter discusses land, labour and gender in Africa, giving examples from a number of African countries. In doing so, it raises issues and themes pertinent to the comparative case study set out in later chapters. The chapter that follows focuses more specifically on land, labour and gender in Zimbabwe.

3.2. Land Ownership-Access and Gender in Communal Areas

In most rural areas in Africa, land access/ownership is crucial for income generation, accessing credit, and transferring wealth to younger generations. Therefore, any inequalities in land ownership tend to go hand in hand with inequalities in economic opportunities (Hasanbasri et al., 2022).

Agriculture is the main economic driver in most African countries (Biteye, 2016; Mukasa et al., 2017). Land access takes on different forms in different countries in Africa depending upon each country's history and politics concerning land and its administration. However, there are a few common issues regarding land ownership and access in communal areas in most African countries. Firstly, land is governed using various laws, but the dual tenure system is common, whereby some land is governed by customary tenure while other land is under statutory tenure. Secondly, the allocation of land is mainly to the head of the household, who in most cases is a male (married women access land through their husbands), and cultural practices with a patriarchal dimension dominate land management. For example, inheritance laws disadvantage women and favour males within a family. Thirdly, women occupy marginal positions in relations of land ownership and access. These points will be tied together in the following discussion as they are deeply interconnected.

Gender plays a crucial role in constructing men and women's relationship to land (Nadasen, 2012). According to Giddas (2018) as cited in Simelane (2020), less than 13% of African women between the ages of 20 and 49 have sole ownership of land compared with 36% of African men; and, in some African countries, fewer than 10% of women have sole ownership of land. Simelane (2020) argues as well that even though many African countries boast of an improvement to land access by women in recent years, this does not beget ownership as access is mediated through men. A study by Hasanbasri et al. (2022) revealed that in Ethiopia, Tanzania and Malawi, women lack full decision-making power when it comes to accessing land. In Tanzania, 77% women and 4% men had no rights to bequeath land.

Even though most countries have introduced legislations to combat gender inequality in land allocation, women's independent access to, and ownership of, land is clearly still limited. Therefore, the position of women in communal areas (CAs) (as state land) has led several African countries such as Tanzania, Mozambique, Malawi, Zambia, and Botswana to embark on land reforms to ensure the equitable and efficient allocation and use of land by both men and women.

3.2.1 Customary and Civil Laws

One common trend in most African countries is the heavy reliance upon customary and cultural practices (Ndulo, 2011), which may conflict with other legislation and practices (notably, civil legislation and practices). In most African countries, women's access to land (whether through civil-statutory or customary-law land rights) is more limited when compared to that of men (FAO, 2002; Roberts, 2021). There also seems to be a discrepancy in what (often progressive) civil-statutory laws stipulate versus what takes place on the ground in relation to customary laws and their application, when it comes to the distribution of land between men and women in Africa. Statutory-civil laws, which might defend women's rights, are also viewed to be complex and costly to realise as compared to customary laws that are low cost and flexible (Ali et al., 2014); hence people, especially in the rural settings, choose to make the customary laws dominant for their convenience.

There is no doubt, though, that African government have sought to reform what takes place on the ground regarding land ownership and access for women. Nigeria passed the National Land Use Act (LUA) of 1978 as a way to promote equal rights of access to land for both men and women. The Land Use Act 1978 tackled issues of land inequality through three strategies: the investment of proprietary rights in land in the state; the granting of user rights in land to individuals; and the use of an administrative system rather than the market system in the allocation of land rights (Aluko and Amidu, 2006). The Land Use and Allocation Committee (LUAC) and Land Advisory Committees (LAAC) were appointed to work together to ensure the proper application of the law. Namibia also passed several policies that promoted gender equality soon after independence. The laws include the Married Persons Equality Act 1 of 1996, the Affirmative Action (Employment) Act 29 of 1998, the Combating of Rape Act 8 of 2000, the Communal Land Reform Act 5 of 2002, the Combating of Domestic Violence Act 4 of 2003 and the Maintenance Act 9 of 2003 (Werner, 2008).

But there is not a linear process between legislative reform and implementation, as the following examples show. In the case of Namibia, the government, through the Communal Land Reform Act No. 5 of 2002, emphasised the protection of women, the respect of women's rights and equal access to land along gender lines (Akawa, 2014) but this is different from what is happening in practice. Girma (2016) engaged in research about gender, communal land, and land reform in Namibia, focusing on Kavango East and the Oshana Region. Since the introduction of the Communal Land Reform Act (CLRA) in the Oshana region in 2003, Communal Land Boards (CLBs) had facilitated the inclusion of women in communal land governance. As a result, women held 38% of positions on the Boards in the Oshage region at the time of Girma's research. However, Girma (2016) also argues that, even though Namibia introduced progressive gender laws, women still lacked customary rights to land while others had limited tenure security. Mwetulundila (2021) likewise

attests that it is difficult for women to own land under the customary law in Namibia due to the engraved belief that women should not own land because of their gender, which is a common trend in African countries.

Evidence from three other countries in the region show similar trends. In Mozambique, laws such as the 1997 Land Law confirm the constitutional principle that women and men have equal rights to occupy, use, and inherit land. However, men have greater access to the most valuable and productive land (Quan et al., 2022). According to Santpoort et al. (2021), in 2015, only 20% of the DUAT (*Direito de Uso e Aproveitamento da Terra* – or “right to use and exploit land”) were registered to women while the rest (80%) were registered to men. The South African constitution upholds equality to land between men and women, but women find themselves discriminated against in both customary and statutory tenure systems. Women usually do not possess independent land rights, as their rights are tied to men, thus land tenure involves a situation whereby women generally access land through their relationships with male relatives (Mokgope, 2000). In an early review, Weideman (2006) argues that land tenure policies were not significantly addressing the question of gender equality. Though the issue of gender equality has certainly received attention in documents such as the Land Reform Gender Policy (Mzwakali, 2019; Walker, 2003), there remain major shortfalls regarding land access for women in the communal areas of South Africa (Mzwakali, 2019). The situation in nearby Malawi might be more gender equitable. Malawi introduced the 2002 National Land Policy which recognises the importance of tenure security for all citizens and a 2016 law which stipulates women’s customary land rights. Yet, Malawian women are still discriminated against, even those in matrilineal homes, despite the introduction of these legislations. At the same time, some matrilineal homes give more land rights to women than in patrilineal homes. According to Santpoort et al., (2021:6), “although far from equal, national statistics show that relatively more women own land in Malawi than in most other countries in sub-Saharan Africa”.

The points raised so far can be more fully explored in relation to Zambia. Attempts in Zambia to overcome inequalities in land access in terms of gender are apparent in constitutional changes. The 1991 Constitution, amended in 1996, prohibits gender-based discrimination. The constitution came under further review from 2003, with a draft made public in May 2012. The draft had a Bill of Rights which made provisions for protecting the land rights of disadvantaged people in Zambian society (Spichinger and Kabala, 2014). This draft recognised customary law but indicated that the latter must be consistent with the Constitution; otherwise, it would be considered as null and void. In addition, to promote gender equality, Article 51 stated that: “Women and men have an equal right to inherit, have access to, own, use, administer and control land and other property, and that they have equal rights during and at the dissolution of the marriage” (GRZ 2012: 30, Art. 51 as cited in Spichinger

and Kabala, 2014:13). As well, the 2016 draft Land Policy stipulated that a minimum of 30% of available land in Zambia should be set aside for women and other disadvantaged groups.

However, several studies about Zambia have shown that efforts to provide equitable access to land and strengthen land tenure for the most marginalised groups, including women, are yet to be fully realised (Spichiger and Kabala, 2014). A study conducted by Kapihya (2017) in one of Zambia's 288 chiefdoms (Sandwe Chiefdom of the Nsenga tribe of Petauke District in the Eastern Province) on the gendered dynamics of customary land allocation and management concluded that land administration in Zambia remains complex and confused due to the ongoing dominance of traditional customs that hinder change. This is taking place despite Zambia having a dual tenure system. Despite the constitutional and land policy stances, there are clear shortcomings. For example, the extent of women's rights would depend on whether one is in an uxorilocal marriage (where the husband settles in the wife's village) or a virilocal marriage (where the wife settles in the husband's village), with their rights weaker in the latter case. As well, widowed women in Zambia experience land-grabbing by male relatives, leaving the women as destitute. Kimani (2008) reports that more than one-third of widows in Zambia lost access to land after the passing of a husband or because of divorce. In such cases, women might lose their rights to use land, and end up returning to their homes, as virilocal marriages tend to dominate in rural Zambia (Mutangadura, 2004). However, this possibility depends on the strength of the relationship with the husband's families and clan (Villa, 2017). With uxorilocal marriages, where the husband moves to live in the wife's village, the widow will retain the land or part of it as she wishes (Machina, 2002; Nsama, 2006).

Even though there has been progress in promoting gender equality in rural Zambia, the equity arguments about gender contained in the land policy and other documents are not being translated into actual land practices in communal spaces. In trying to address at least some of these challenges, the Minister of Lands and Natural Resources (Jean Kapata) launched a new policy in 2021 to govern the administration of land. This policy aims to increase land tenure security for women, youth, and people with disabilities. It further states that the aim is to allocate 50% of land to women to ensure equality with men. The results of the implementation of this new policy are still yet to be seen.

3.2.2. Customary Law and Inheritance

In this context, I now turn to inheritance of land specifically and highlight how it both reflects and reproduces gender inequalities in land access and ownership in Africa. It is estimated that 90% of land in contemporary Southern Africa is under customary tenure which guides practices around land possession, access, use and transfer (Murata et al., 2022). Customary land tenure is embedded in the community itself and is under the control of chiefs or land priests or a clan head (Ghebru and

Lambrecht, 2017), which means that it is not dictated by the state or state law (Wily, 2011). Of particular importance in this respect is inheritance and its relation to land rights and land access. According to some literature (for example, Dancer, 2017), inheritance (whether through a will, lineal descent, or religious norms) is the main way in which land is transferred in rural Africa. Inheritance of land follows matrilineal or patrilineal rules, depending on ethnicity.

Customary laws play a huge role in how women have access to land on the African continent. In governing most African countries' land distribution and tenure arrangements, customary laws sometimes exclude women from access to property (land). Girma (2021) thus argues that the chances of women being allocated land through inheritance are slim because of norms related to ancestral land, patrilocal residence, patrilineal inheritance, and intra-household wealth distribution. Mwetulundila (2021) found in the case of Namibia that inheritance appeared to be the easiest means for women to obtain land, easier than obtaining land from the authorities: 92% of the cases where women obtained land was through inheritance. However, Mwetulundila (2021) also found that the inherited land is usually controlled by male relatives who put women in subordinate positions vis-à-vis the land. Abubakari et al. (2019) acknowledge the existence of a plurality of inheritance laws deriving from statutory and non-statutory sources in Africa. But, similar to Girma (2021), they argue that the non-statutory customary practices overpower the statutory when it comes to the transference of physical assets (such as land) within families. In addition, women's land inheritance is said to be under threat due to the increased commodification and commercialisation of customary land in Africa (Paradza, 2021). What follows is a discussion of customary laws in general and how they impact inheritance and women's access to land, including case studies in Africa for illustrative purposes.

In African rural communities, women are often considered as temporary residents because they leave to get married and they are considered outsiders in those families into which they get married. A good example is that of women in Nigeria, who face discrimination because they are deemed to be temporary members of a family; therefore, they do not have inheritance rights to land (Achinewhu-Nworgu et al., 2014). Because a widow lacks the right to the deceased husband's land, a son or a male family member is the one who will have to ensure that the widow has access to the land. Further, female children have the last say in inheritance issues in Nigeria after boy children. In an almost similar case, in Botswana and Lesotho, the older son becomes the heir after his father's death, and the wife may stay at the homestead at the mercy of her in-laws. Women in Benin are treated as perpetual minors; therefore, daughters and widows struggle to challenge the way inheritance is administered (Paradza, 2021).

The study by Sow (2011) in the Democratic Republic of Congo concurs that women face difficulties to access land via inheritance. Therefore, women's acquisition of land is a taboo and is viewed as a transgression of social norms and infringement of the customary laws (Sow, 2014). In instances where widows can own land belonging to their late husband, they face opposition from the husband's family and the family only afford them use rights. The widows in this case cannot sell the land. This then brings about conflict between the customary law and statutory law as the latter affords the widow the right to full ownership of her husband's property. Sow (2014) further states that there is a minority of women who receive land from their fathers through inheritance, but they usually receive small, less fertile, and non-productive pieces of land which they are not allowed to sell. Women are badly affected by the lack of knowledge on the possibility of joint estate systems when it comes to inheritance.

Abubakari et al. (2019) in their study in Ghana, show that for customary inheritance practices, in patrilineal inheritance, property is passed from father to son, or to brothers in instances where there are no sons. Also, the eldest successor can manage property on behalf of others. Interestingly, females are afforded only use rights to land during inheritance because they are considered to be non-members of the patrilineage (Abubakari et al., 2019). In cases where there are no male successors, one daughter stays at home to deliver a male child, who will become a successor. Widows in patrilineal families are only given use rights to the husband's land because the widows are not members of the lineage. This acts as a way to protect the land from being sold or transferred by the widow. At the same time, there is sub-national variations. Hence, in regions that practice matrilineal inheritance practices, land is passed down through female lines. Opposite to the patrilineal practices, males are considered as non-members in the matrilineage inheritance system, therefore, they do not benefit. Male children inherit only use rights from their maternal uncles. Further, in the Ewe ethnic group in Ghana, customary law provides women with a social safety net after losing a spouse. The man who inherits the deceased's land must take care of the wife or wives of the deceased and the children just like the deceased would do, which means he also "inherits" the responsibility to provide for all who depended on the property for their livelihood (Richardson, 2004).

Paradza's (2021) study in Lesotho likewise found patriarchy and custom to be dominating how land is inherited. However, there are some noticeable temporal shifts, with children being involved in inheritance without gender being considered a key factor. Female returnees from failed marriages also have a chance to receive a share of the inheritance. Widows in Lesotho, according to Paradza (2021: 187), "are increasingly more assertive and proactive than popularly believed". This includes knowing their rights and struggling for what belongs to them after they lose their spouse. Additionally, widows get assistance from community-based support groups when they wish to claim

their deceased spouse's land. However, there are still instances, even though now less, whereby relatives use patriarchal power, social networks, bribery, and corruption to grab land and property from the widow. Paradza's (2021) study highlights the importance of knowledge about rights, the existence of wills and land registration for widows to avoid losing property after a spouse dies.

An analysis conducted by Thamaga-Chitja et al. (2010) in rural KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa illustrates the key points arising about the prevalence of customary law and how it affects inheritance. Their study focused on the challenges to land-based livelihoods faced by women affected by statutory and customary land laws and practices, and it highlighted a dependence of women on men in terms of land ownership. User rights to the communal land belonged to those in the traditional authority, and land ownership was through the head of the household or a relative. Roles and responsibilities in terms of land management in the study areas were gender-based. Men had the ownership role; they owned more extensive land than women. Women in the study stated contentment not necessarily with the way land ownership was arranged in the area but, intriguingly, because customary law barred them from complaining. Displaying dissatisfaction with customary laws is a sign of being rebellious, therefore, women agree to the setting of laws to avoid being disobedient and to save their standing in society. Due to culture, it is a taboo for women to complain and they are conditioned to accept inequalities existing between men and women in terms of inequalities in land ownership.

According to Thamaga-Chitja et al. (2010), the disjuncture between progressive statutory laws on gender equity on the one hand, and customary laws and practices on the other, causes institutionally-based gender biases, leading to weak access to land by women. As well, of the minority of women owning land, only 28,3% obtained the land through inheritance, that is, after the death of a husband. The remainder of the women-owned land was inherited through the 'disappearance' of the husbands, who left for urban life.

The main theme arising from these case studies in Africa about customary and statutory law as well as inheritance arrangements (sections 3.2.1 and 3.2.2) is that local patriarchal systems are still dominant in African societies and, together, they act as barriers to women's unfettered rights to access and control of land. When it comes to inheritance specifically, women are usually excluded and sent back to their families while male relatives take over the rights to land. Any tensions existing between civil-statutory laws and customary laws seem to favour the latter, reflecting the power of local patriarchs in rural spaces. The matter of land access for women also needs to be considered in relation to marital status.

3.2.3. Marital Status and Land Access

It has been deemed as common knowledge that women's only way to access land is through a relationship with a male person, be it a husband, brother or even a son. Women's rights to own land are blocked by a combination of statutory and customary laws that favour male property ownership (Mutangadura, 2004). Without land rights, women's economic and physical security is jeopardised. Marital status is widely recognised as a key determinant of women's access to land. There are numerous studies that highlight the role of marital status regarding the access or acquisition of land by women. In this discussion, we examine a few studies conducted in Africa and the findings thereof to explore marital status norms around land access and the extent to which they might have changed over time. At times, women of a certain marital status may find it less troublesome to access land directly.

Musa et al.'s (2021) study on women's land rights under Chief Moloto and Chief Mathebula in Limpopo Province, South Africa revealed that marital status played a huge role in the attainment of land. Widowed women under Chief Moloto are expected to live out the rules set by Chief Moloto and they have to seek approval from the deceased husband's family before remarrying. In Chief Mathebula's village, married women accessed land through their husbands and are treated only as 'spouses' and not as joint owners of the land. In addition, married women were prohibited from registering land in their names while still married. It was only single women who had the privilege of registering land in their name without restrictions if they had reached the age of 25. Women below the age of 25 were not allowed to register land in their names. The most vulnerable group were divorced women who were expected to leave the homestead-land after divorce, which is not surprising given that women do not register land in their names. Musa et al. (2021) bring to the fore the entrenchment of patriarchal norms in these study areas as hindering women's access to land.

In the same light, Kaarhus and Dondeyne (2015) conducted a study in Mchele, located in the central Mozambican province of Manica in the period between 2007 and 2013, to investigate the rights and use of land by 21 women in the area aged between 18 and 47 years. The researchers found that women studied obtained land from their husbands through marriage, and more than half of the women had moved into this area with their husbands who had land allocated to them by the *mambo* of the area. Most of the women (12 out of 21) were in polygamous marriages. Several of the interviewees in polygamous marriages were unsatisfied with the situation and wanted to leave, but they feared the loss of land access if they left. Women in the study area depended mostly on men to sustain a living hence staying in polygamous marriages was advantageous, compared to divorce. Widows interviewed in the study stated that women's rights to access land becomes deeply contested after a male spouse's death. Moreover, the main barrier to women's access to land in Mchele was the

traditional patrilineal norms which discriminated against women and recognised mainly men's rights to land, with little difference it seems in terms of marital status.

In Ethiopia, women are recognised as the ones who perform a variety of critical activities in farming, but they are not recognised as farmers. The findings by Badstue et al. (2020) in a study in eight villages in three regions of Ethiopia demonstrate this, with married women's access to land being through their husbands. Only a very small number of married women in the study area had their own land titles or joint ownership. Married women were outnumbered by single women in terms of possessing land titles as, proportionally, more single women had titles. Divorced women have to negotiate with the former husband's family for a piece of land, which is sometimes contested, and they regularly end up being overpowered by the husband's family in terms of who gains access. In the main, widowed women are forced to remarry within the husband's family so that the latter maintains control over the land. However, some widowed women developed a strategy to protect their access to land by passing it to their male children. In this way, the in-laws were not able to take over the land.

In the Oshana region in Namibia, married men are the only ones who are able to benefit from communal land, while married women's rights are not recognised. Even though married women were in a stronger socio-economic position than single unmarried women regarding applying for land through the authorities, married women encountered higher social resistance when applying for land because of the married status. In addition, women in polygamous marriages were not recognised by the Communal Land Reform Act. There have been improvements though in access to land by widows, but widows only receive long-term protection regarding land access if they do not remarry. When they remarried, they would then lose the land because traditional authorities repossessed land that lay idle for three years. Also, unmarried women (whether single or divorced) faced financial challenges, which excluded them from registering for communal land (Girma, 2016). Overall, women of all marital statuses in the Oshana region experienced gender-based land access and ownership barriers. In the Kavango region, there was a difference—single or married women could acquire land customarily from their kinship group or request land from the traditional authorities. However, married or co-habiting women were vulnerable upon separating from their husbands as typically they would need to vacate the in-laws' land. As well, in Kavango, widows are afforded the right to remain on the land they shared with their husbands after their husband's death (Girma, 2016).

In rural Malawi, which mainly follows matrilineal principles, women tend to have greater access to land compared to other countries in the region. But a study by Mutangadura (2004) revealed that men were still in large part in control of land in Malawi. Mutangadura (2004) notes that Malawi matrilineal marriages are divided into '*chitengwa*' or virilocal marriages and '*chikwamini*' or

uxorilocal marriages (Mutangadura, 2004). In ‘*chitengwa*’ marriages, women would go to stay with their husbands so, when the husband dies, the wife loses her land rights, whereas, in ‘*chikwamini*’ marriages, the husband goes to stay with the wife’s family. He loses land rights after the passing of his wife. This means that women lose land rights in both patrilineal and ‘*chitengwa*’ marriages, while men only lose land rights in ‘*chikwamini*’ marriages (Mutangadura, 2004). Even though there is such a marriage system as ‘*chikwamini*’ in Malawi, women are still vulnerable because land is controlled by male figures within the family, such as fathers, brothers, and uncles.

In summary, it is clear that rural women in Africa in general struggle to access or own land by the virtue of being a woman. This is the case with women from different marriage categories and irrespective of the type of lineage system in place, though there is some variation – for example, older widowed women may be more respected than younger single women in terms of the willingness on the part of local patriarchs to grant them land, and married women (because of their subordinate status to husbands – as the authentic farmer) might be disadvantaged compared to women from other marital categories. Patriarchal cultural discourses and practices seem to be central to marginalising women regarding land ownership and access, even though gender-progressive civil-statutory laws are firmly established.

Similar challenges exist for women with reference to the gendered division of labour, as patriarchal power relations are embedded in both land and labour relations. I turn to this now.

3.3 Gendered Division of Labour

According to Sikod (2007: 60), “the gender division of labour in households is the main economic strategy used to meet family basic needs for shelter, food, health, procreation and education”. While this may be true, it is also the case that the gendered labour division is often a manifestation of unequal power relations at household level. The division of labour in rural Africa tends to have a pronounced gender basis to it which is a historically-established, socio-cultural construction—whereby certain household activities are ascribed, almost naturally, to women only (e.g. cooking, cleaning) and others to men only (e.g. tending cattle). Women are mainly responsible for homestead (domestic) duties but, in addition, they perform a very significant portion of the agricultural labour in small-scale family farming – to which they are assigned, insofar as they reside with a husband or senior male. In cases where women are responsible for ensuring the planting and harvesting of specific crops, these are typically consumption-crops while men have control over cash crops which are sold on the market when possible (Cousins et al., 2019). This is a manifestation of the lack of gender equality in ownership, access, and control over productive resources such as land (Gebre et al., 2019).

In their investigation of the domestic work experience of rural women in Nigeria, Osinuga et al. (2021) found that it was primarily women's duty to perform multiple domestic tasks everyday within their households, both at the homestead (such as cooking) and away from the homestead (for example, collecting water). In addition, women (who had a high stress appraisal score) reported not having time for leisure activities to ease the stress because of the many household responsibilities and additional agricultural labour duties. Similarly, Arora (2015) states that women's so-called leisure time is always taken up by other activities that they do while resting, such as braiding hair. Rural women have the double burden of both domestic and agricultural labouring, but even their agricultural labour input might be more significant than men. Gerbe et al. (2019) found this to be the case regarding differences in maize production in labour hours amongst men and women in their study in rural Ethiopia, attributing this to the gendered division of labour and dominant cultural views.

Hyde et al. (2020) state that, overall, women work longer hours on average than men. The gendered division of labour, which is itself intrinsically troublesome in that women are seen as synonymous with the performance of domestic duties, thus leads to an additional problem for women – the sheer volume of hours they are expected to labour, and on land which they likely to not own or possess. For example, a study by Rugumamu (1997) on household tasks in the semi-arid Tanzanian area of BhiSokoni provides evidence of a deeply problematic gendered division of labour, as women spent considerably more time (1,842 hrs/annum) doing household chores than did men (492 hrs/annum). Kwigizile et al. (2022), in their study of differential expenditure of time in productive and reproductive work in Morogoro District (also in Tanzania), found that of the 323 interviewed women and their male partners, women were spending more hours a day in reproductive roles (an average of 3.02 hours for women versus 1.82 hours on average for men). While men tended to spend more hours than women labouring in the fields, women's reproductive labour was very strenuous and arduous because of the lack of basic technology, with firewood and water requiring collection.

Similar studies on time spent on reproductive and productive roles conducted by Habimana (2017) in Rwanda found that women devote 25 more hours than men per week to domestic chores. In rural Guinea as well, women undertake an average of 25.6 hours per week to domestic work compared to men's 7.2 hours (Hyde et al., 2020). Bishop-Sambrook (2016) argues that women in rural areas work up to 16 hours per day or even longer, engaging in many tasks simultaneously. In Malawi, women spend on average 9.1 hours per week in reproductive activities as compared to 1.1 hours a week for men (Njuki, 2017). A study by Arora (2015) conducted in two rural districts in Mozambique found that women work more hours per day on primary activities (for example, fetching firewood and water, childcare, and food processing) than men. At the same time, men have more leisure time per day averaging 7.92 hours as compared to women's average of 2.99 hours. Women's

total labour hours per day are almost twice as much as men, demonstrating clearly the inequalities existing in the area. Data from a survey conducted by Charmes (2006) in the five sub-Saharan countries of Benin, Mauritius, South Africa, Madagascar, and Ghana indicate similar patterns of women being involved in more domestic and care work than men.

Medagbe et al. (2020) acknowledge that women play a significant role in rice farming in their countries of study (Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Madagascar and Sierra Leone). At the same time, the study found male farmers to be spending more time in rice production than women in Côte d'Ivoire, Madagascar, and Sierra Leone; and spending more time in other agricultural activities in Côte d'Ivoire and in non-agricultural activities in Burkina Faso and Madagascar. However, in Sierra Leone, women spent more time in other agricultural activities than men. While men tended to labour more than women in agricultural activities, women in their study performed more reproductive activities than men. They spent on average 3 to 4 hours per day engaging in those unpaid activities. This study demonstrates that women need to engage in trade-offs, namely, substituting their leisure time for reproductive activities, specifically, parboiling of rice.

3.4. Conclusion

Land and labour processes in rural Africa, as this chapter demonstrates, are strongly gendered. While there has been some legislative progress for women with respect to gender equality around land and labour issues, this has not been translated into equivalent progress in the daily lives of rural women. Enforcement of legislative reforms lag behind policy-instituted legislative initiatives, with patriarchy as a cultural system remaining firmly embedded across the African countryside. Hence, women continue to be disadvantaged, especially considering the existence of a duality in legislation and institutional structures governing rural spaces. Statutory laws are often overridden by customary laws, including with reference to land allocation and inheritance practices. In addition, women continue to face inequalities in the division of labour at household level because they carry the dual burden of productive and reproductive labour. Men typically disassociate themselves from reproductive labour because it is deemed to be women's work, yet women perform valuable agricultural labour simultaneously. However, some studies indicate that rural women in Africa do not question the ways in which patriarchy structures their lives, including their central role in the domestic sphere. The next chapter examines these issues with respect to Zimbabwe in particular.

CHAPTER 4: LAND, LABOUR AND GENDER IN ZIMBABWE

4.1. Introduction

Access to land along gender lines is an important issue globally because the ways in which men and women access land is different, as is their rights around and over land (Archambault and Zoomers, 2015). In the case of Zimbabwe, existing studies demonstrate that land, besides having a pronounced racial configuration, is also structured along gender lines, dating back to pre-colonial times, through the colonial period and then into the post-colony (Chakona, 2012; Mutopo, 2011; Thobejane and Murisa, 2015). This gendering of land is of great importance, as land is a key source of rural wealth, a status symbol, and a marker of power between men and women (FAO, 2002). It also plays a crucial role in access to present and future opportunities with reference to economic and nutritional security (Toro, 2016; Prosterman and Hanstad, 2006). Individuals might be socially and economically included or excluded because of their landholding status, especially in rural areas (Quan, 2006). In addition to all this, land has great cultural, ancestral and religious significance.

The fact that women risk exclusion and marginalisation in relation to land is deeply troublesome, given that they are heavily involved in agricultural labouring activities and bear the responsibility for domestic and caring duties. Further, when women are marginalised in terms of land possession and access, levels of poverty increase because access to land sustain women and their families (Quan, 2006). Because of this, Cater (2003) views enhanced land access for women as a key basis for empowering women, as there tends to be a strong relationship between women's land access and equity outcomes, including across generations.

In this context, this chapter on land and gender in Zimbabwe has both a temporal and thematic focus. On the one hand, the chapter offers a historical narrative around land and gender in Zimbabwe, including questions around the gendered division of labour, from pre-colonial times to post-fast track Zimbabwe. On the other hand, the chapter brings to the fore key themes around gender, land and labour in Zimbabwe which in large part cut across historical periods. The focus is primarily on Shona women in the countryside, because the research site for the thesis falls within a Shona agrarian history. The chapter starts off with the historical periodisation, and specifically an examination of land and gender in pre-colonial Zimbabwe.

4.2. Land in Pre-Colonial Zimbabwe

Pre-colonial Zimbabwe has been explained in terms of the rise and fall of empires (Mlambo and Raftopoulos, 2009), with empires such as Great Zimbabwe, Mapungumbwe, Manyika, Torwa, Mutapa, Rozwi, and Ndebele (Beach, 1980) being ruled by 'Big men'. In this era, the economy was mainly based on cattle herding, with a highly centralised political and social system (Jacobs, 1995). Additionally, many de-centralised chiefdoms existed in particular places at specific times. Mazarire (2009:35) notes that "cattle occupied a central place in their economies because they were important indicators of wealth and a means of maintaining clients". Hence, some male cattle-owners turned their wealth into power. At the same time, cattle were central to appeasing ancestral spirits, performing rituals, and being part of bridewealth.

Pre-colonial societies in Zimbabwe focused on subsistence production on large pieces of land using hoes, with the household being the main unit of production and consumption (Jacobs, 1983). In the cultures from which today's Shona people arose, men were prepared for inheritance (including land) within families, creating a patrilineal lineage (Peters and Peters, 1998; Schmidt, 1991; Visram, 1994) called *chizvarwa* (Shenje-Peyton, 1996). Seniority in the patrilineage system, as well as kinship and inheritance, played an important role in how local communities and villages were organised. In particular, the eldest male member of the family was appointed to head a particular *chizvarwa* as a 'headman', exercising control over all others, including giving away women for marriage.

Chiefs and male elders served as leaders who offered consultation regarding important matters. Land was not individually owned, and chiefs had the authority to allocate land. In some instances, they would pass the authority to the headmen, who would then pass it on to the male members of the family (Jacobs, 1983; Shumba, 2011). As well as allocating land, a chief had the power to re-allocate a portion of a landholding if he judged that a family head no longer needed as much land as he had previously (for example, if the life cycle of the family had changed, leaving fewer members of the family in residence) (Jacobs, 1983). There were also cases where chiefs would grant permission for land to be passed to men of a different patrilineal lineage even though there were women present in their families.

4.2.1. Women and Land

According to Shaw (2015), Shona women in pre-colonial society rarely interacted with men or women outside of their kin group, such that women made few long-lasting relationships outside their kin networks. In some cases where a married woman was found interacting with a man beside her husband, the man would be fined for seducing someone's wife and would pay a damage payment to the woman's father or husband. Overall, *lobola* (or bridewealth) payment was a way to prevent

intermarriages within families – this means that a bride’s family would refuse a lobola payment if there was a close link between the groom’s and the bride’s families (Shenje-Payne, 1996).

Bridewealth/*lobola* is a marriage contract between a potential husband’s family and a future wife’s family and has been practised for centuries in most parts of Africa, including Zimbabwe. It has always acted as a guarantee, or form of security, to the bride’s family for losing their daughter to the husband’s family (Visram, 1994), with cattle typically being paid to the bride’s family (Cheteni et al., 2019). In instances where men were unable to pay a bride price to marry a wife because they were poor, they would spend a number of years performing a bride service at the would-be in-laws’ place (Kesby, 1999).

Even though the paying of *lobola* was a well-established and well-accepted cultural practice, Cheater (1986) argues that it, in effect, excluded a woman from direct control of the means of production through transferring her labour rights and reproductive ability from her own family to her husband’s family. In this sense, Cheater (1986) equates the position of women in pre-colonial Zimbabwe to a class of labour in industrial systems of production whereby women become productive and domestic labourers. It is undoubtedly true that women’s reproductive roles were very important as it was believed that the more wives a man had; the more sons women could sire to make it easier for a man to establish a lineage. Peter and Peters (1998) in fact claim that women were pressured to bear sons, who would become heirs of the land subsequent to the death of the father.

Just like having many sons, then, having many wives increased the chances of men heading their own lineage community. In this way, men in pre-colonial times entered polygamous marriages for their own benefit in terms of power and status. According to (Kesby, 1999: 29) “lineage patriarchs who could produce or assemble a large number of dependents were politically and economically powerful and territorial expansionists”. Certainly, establishing a patrilineage facilitated access to more land since control over land was vested in a ruler as the leading member of a lineage (Mazarire, 2003). Oddly though, and because of this, bearing sons and working hard in the fields did give women some level of status in pre-colonial Zimbabwe (Jacobs, 1983).

Women’s access to land in pre-colonial Zimbabwe was dependent on female obligations or duties within the gendered division of labour (Peters and Peters, 1998), with agricultural production being organised based on a strict gendered division of labour (Jacobs, 1983; Toro, 2016). Kahn and Llobera (1981) refer to the dominance of male elders and headmen and their control of access to the means of production (notably, land) as a (patrilineal) ‘lineage mode of production’. Men exercised authority, both in the homestead and in the fields. As Jacobs (1995: 244) highlights, “strong gender divisions existed within the pre-colonial Shona and Ndebele societies”. Beyond providing labour for

the husband's field, women also performed other tasks that the mother-in-law wanted to be performed (Peters and Peters, 1998).

Even though women did the bulk of farm labour throughout their lives, they would access land indirectly through usufruct rights granted by male members of the family, either as wives or daughters (Visram, 1994; Peters and Peters, 1998). This meant that men, as the controllers of land, would grant women access to land and its use if their relationship still stood (Jacobs, 1983). For example, wives would have the right to a *tseu* (a small piece of land) as allocated by their husbands, and daughters would have access to land before marriage. The culturally defined plots or *tseu*, were located within the vicinity of the homestead, to which the woman was closely tied (Pasura, 2010). At most times, the tasks set by mothers-in-law took precedence over any work that wives would have wanted to do for themselves, for example, working in their *tseu*.

Moreover, women did not possess rights to their husbands' herds of cattle. Women might acquire cattle through payment for work completed in their *tseu*, through working as herbalists, beer brewers or midwives, or as a bride price from a son-in-law (Jacobs, 1983; Peters and Peters, 1998). As well, women would control the bride price that they received from the sons-in-law as *mombe yeumai* (the cattle of motherhood) and the cattle acted as a source of wealth for women in the pre-colonial era (Pasura, 2010), and as an investment (Cheater, 1986). In the case of divorce, women would leave everything behind and go back to their homes of origin; but, if a woman was widowed, she would still be permitted to have access to land for crop production (Pasura, 2010; Shumba, 2011). Divorced women could also lose custody of their children after a divorce. Children would remain with their paternal side of the family once they were able to take care of themselves (Jacobs, 1992). This means that women faced not only exclusion from the means of production but also customary rights to the custody of their children.

According to Gray and Kevane (1999), women were 'owners of crops' and not 'owners of land' because land was not individually owned. While this is the case, there were crops that were specifically known as 'women's crops' such as groundnuts (Jacobs, 1983; Jacobs, 2002; Pasura, 2010; Shumba, 2011) that were grown in the *tseu*. Doss (2001) defines women's crops as crops over which women have comparatively high levels of decision-making powers regarding the various steps in production. 'Women's crops' were generally food crops for the family (Jacobs, 2002; Pasura, 2010). Significantly, women's fields tended to be well managed and normally produced a good harvest even in times of drought (Pasura, 2010).

Women in both monogamous and polygamous marriages would use products from their *tseu* to supplement the husband's produce, barter trade for woven baskets or use to entertain guests (Peters and Peters, 1998). Sometimes, however, men would use surplus produce from the wives' fields to

marry another wife or to buy livestock (Jacobs, 1983; Jacobs, 1992). In this context, as indicated, polygamous marriages were common, and men would opt for polygamous marriages to gain social influence as well as material wealth (Kesby, 1999). Also, within polygamous marriages, the first wife would exercise power over the other wives because her labour contributed to the husband having the capacity to marry other women (Visram, 1994). A case in point is a study conducted by Mazarire (2003) amongst the Mhari of Chivi, Masvingo Province in Zimbabwe. The study found that there was 'house politics' within the polygamous marriages of the elite. Each house was identified by a mother. One of the examples given by Mazarire (2003) was of Tavengegweyi who had five sons and two daughters with his first wife vaChifedza. He also had other wives that he married into this polygamous marriage and others that he inherited from his late family members. VaChifedza by virtue of being the first wife was ranked highest, most important, and most powerful followed by the women he married and lastly the women he inherited. In this instance, the status of the women corresponded directly with the status of their sons in the political hierarchy.

Generally, women were regarded as key 'managers' in their lineage as they were responsible for the caring, nurturing, and feeding of present and future lineage members (Visram, 1994). In other words, women were responsible for domestic work within the homestead, besides their agricultural labouring and *tseu* work activities. In this sense, what we now speak of as the 'private sphere' was characterised by the presence of women. But, even in this space, women were bound to the instructions of male members of the household. Women also were not allowed in 'public spaces' because these spaces belonged to men. Men would make decisions in a *dare*, and women were not welcome there. Indeed, the *dare* was usually strategically located away from homesteads, in part to ensure that women and children do not eavesdrop on conversations taking place at the *dare* (Ncube and Tomaselli, 2019). Furthermore, women did not have power and authority to make key decisions both within the household (homestead and fields) and the community, even in the absence of their husbands. If a woman was to make crucial decisions without consulting her husband, according to Goebel (2005), the husband might beat his wife upon his return.

All this shows that, during the pre-colonial era, women's rights were tied to the roles they played within the family (for instance, as wives, producers, mothers) and for the rural economy. But, there were hierarchies that existed amongst women in the pre-colonial era. For example, a newly married wife "had almost no authority in her husband's home, by the time she had acquired grandchildren, she had normally become a force to be reckoned with in most if not all matters affecting both her natal family (as *tete*) and her husband's family (as mother-in-law)" (Cheater, 1986: 67). Women who had reached menopause were given an 'honorary male' title in village society, having abandoned domestic responsibilities (which was the work of younger women) and acquired

personal property (Cheater, 1986); nevertheless, their influence remained in the private space. Even with the 'honorary' title, elderly women, as well with women in general, were not allowed at the *dare* or other important gatherings dominated by men but they played the most interesting role of spirit mediumship (Cheater, 1986; Vengesai, 2019). This is despite the fact that local spirit mediums, as central to spirituality in many parts of pre-colonial Zimbabwe, were often women.

Cheater (1986) notes that women's power, as female spirit mediums, was often associated with rain, land and fertility. An example of an influential woman spirit medium is Nehanda Nyakasikana, who lived at the time of the colonial conquest in the 1890s (Gudhlanga, 2013). However, it is likely that the most dominant medium spirits were male. Apart from spirit mediums (whose performances were very public), research by Gudhlanga (2013) suggests that women also became incorporated into combat regiments during the Monomotapa period; furthermore, there were female chiefs (such as in the Manyika area) and village headwomen in certain instances (Gudhlanga, 2013; Cheater, 1986). These examples though are just exceptions to the rule of male dominance within the public sphere.

In summary, in pre-colonial Zimbabwe, women's interaction was limited mainly to men within their kinship group such that men who were found interacting with women outside their kinship group would be fined. With regard to marriage, *lobola* had to be paid as a form of security to the bride's family for losing their daughter. Bride price tended though to reduce women to productive and domestic labourers. Because sons were considered important within families, men often married more wives to increase the chances of male children, who would then become heirs of the family's land. In order for women to access land, they did so indirectly through usufruct rights granted by male members of the family, either as wives or daughters. The piece of land that women were allocated was called a *tseu* and was located close to the homestead. Women would grow 'women crops' in their *tseu*, which they would sometimes use to supplement the husband's produce, barter trade for woven baskets or use to entertain guests. Women only acquired cattle through their daughter's brideprice or as a payment for services rendered to other people. Overall, men were in total control of the family's land and cattle. Women were relegated to private spaces and men were also in charge of the public spaces such as the *dare*. Hierarchies existed amongst women within the private spheres, with older women granted an honorary title whereas newly married wives would not have any authority.

4.3. Land in Colonial Zimbabwe

This section discusses developments pertaining to land and gender during Zimbabwe's colonial period. As a white settler colony, Zimbabwe became part of the British empire in 1890 and acquired its independence in 1980. Initially, this entailed rulership by the British South Africa Company (BSAC), with the BSAC under Cecil Rhodes receiving a Royal Charter of Incorporation in 1889 from Great Britain to expropriate land from Africans in favour of European settlers (Nyandoro, 2019) – initially, the search was for minerals to rival the Rand in South Africa. The Rudd and Lippert concession, arising from agreements with the Matabeleland King, King Lobengula, were central to this (Phimister, 1974). The Royal Charter gave permission to British nationals to occupy and exercise authority over the land and, in 1894, the permits of occupation were converted into title deeds (Tshuma, 1998).

The BSAC expected rich gold fields in colonial Zimbabwe (i.e., Rhodesia) but the colony lacked rich mineral deposits (Jacobs, 1983; Pwiti and Ndor, 1999). The lack of rich gold fields in Rhodesia led to the settlers focusing increasingly on the development of agriculture. It was not long before the BSAC sought to ensure sufficient black (or African) labour on the emerging white farms and mines, and in European households, including through compulsion (for instance, by way of hut taxes) (Musemwa, 2009). Compulsion was required because rural blacks were able to produce sufficient crops to sustain their households, and even to sell in the white colonial economy. As White farming grew, the expropriation of land became necessary as well as the forced resettlement of black households into what became known as Native Reserves. By 1902, three-quarters of African land was appropriated (Jacobs, 1992; Shumba, 2011). Large tracts of (now) white land were not necessarily farmed initially, with vast numbers of Africans living on these lands as virtual squatters. By the end of Company rule in 1923, when Rhodesia gained self-governing status, it had become clear that no African would be granted title to rural land in the colony (Nyandoro, 2019).

4.3.1. Native Reserves/Tribal Trust Lands

Native Reserves were created by the Native Reserves Council of 1898, for Africans only. They are central to this thesis, as the post-colonial communal areas emerged out of the colonial Reserves. The Gwai and Shangani Native Reserves were the first reserves to be created under provisions of the Matabeleland Order-in-Council of July 18, 1894 – involving dual processes of expropriation and resettlement of African farmers (Harts-Broekhuis and Huisman, 2001). In these reserves, black people could occupy land but not possess it on a freehold basis. These were ruled under a separate Native Affairs department, with white Native and District Commissioners appointed as overseers of the reserves, undermining the powers of chiefs in the process. They possessed wide powers, including

to limit the number of livestock that black farmers could own, and the size of land they planted for crops, imposing an array of taxes on blacks for stipulated offences (Gaidzanwa, 2020). In addition, while African mobility generally was now deemed illegitimate without formal clearance from a District Commissioner, it became unlawful for women in particular to seek such permission without first acquiring her (male) guardian's consent (Kesby, 1999). African men in reserves at times sought work in the growing towns of Rhodesia, as well as the white mines and farms, but women tended to remain trapped within the Reserves. African women in the reserves suffered under the control of both the white (male) settler and senior African men in reserves, as they were expected to manage the rural homes and take care of the family while men migrated to work. The departure of African women into the white towns threatened the authority of African patriarchs in the reserves, as it meant the loss of control over their mobility, body, and sexuality.

Africans had rights to use and occupy the reserves, but the legal title was vested in the colonial state (Tshuma, 1998). This translated into state control over the agricultural activities of reserve farmers. For example, Virginia tobacco farming was only allowed to be undertaken by white farmers while black farmers grew Turkish tobacco meant for local consumption. Any black farmers attempting to grow Virginia tobacco would be arrested because the white farmers' union had criminalised black farmers' production of this high-grade, export tobacco (Gaidzanwa, 2020). This was also part of the broader plan to minimise reserve production and productivity, thereby ensuring a steady stream of male labourers for the white economy. The process of providing labour to the settlers was administered by the Native Commissioners or '*mudzwiti*' who would avail people to work for no pay.

The separation and partitioning of white and black (reserve) land became increasingly formalised in the early decades of the 20th century, including through the Land Apportionment Act (LAA) of 1930/31. The LAA required Africans living outside the Native reserves, on crown land designated as European land, forest areas, unassigned areas and alienated land, to relocate to the reserves (Nyandoro, 2019). Half of the land area of the colony (about 19.7 million hectares) was given to 50,000 white settlers, with the African people settled on the rest of the land, much of which was infertile relatively speaking. The Shona and Ndebele people were by far the majority of the colonial population, but they were forcefully moved onto 22.4% of the land in the marginal reserves (Pwiti and Ngoro, 1999; Shumba, 2011). Of course, there were also rural Africans living and working on the expanding white settler farms, though a large proportion of farm labour came from Malawi and Mozambique.

The settlers tried to facilitate limited capitalist agricultural development amongst colonial Africans by introducing the Native Purchase Areas in the 1930s (Peters and Peters, 1998), which occupied 8 per cent of the land (Jacobs, 1992). The Native Purchase Areas, according to Scoones et al. (2018: 600), “were designed as compensation for the fact that, because land was divided between ‘native’ and ‘European’ use, Africans were not allowed purchasing land elsewhere”. Comparatively wealthier African male peasants were targeted to purchase this sometimes poor quality, unproductive land in remote areas (often along the borders of reserves) but they did not have freehold title. Meanwhile, there was a growing awareness by the white settler state that agricultural production in the reserves was becoming increasingly problematic, in large part because of land degradation. This led to the setting up of the Native Production and Trade Commission in 1944 which recommended the introduction of Native husbandry legislation to counteract this tendency.

Rhodesia faced major rural challenges, including food shortages which led to importing of foodstuffs, pressure from Europeans to remove Native Africans from their land and shortages of labour on European farms due to the low wages offered to Africans (Goredema and Nyawo, 2015). In this context, the Native Land Husbandry Act (NLHA) was put in place (Esterhuysen, 2004). Amongst other intentions, the NLHA sought to replace the old communal tenure system with individual land ownership (Gaidzanwa, 1994; Nyambara, 2001; Worby, 2001), guaranteeing individual security of tenure (Sibanda, 1990) (Chimhowu and Woodhouse, 2008). The provisions of the NLHA prevented land fragmentation by making it impossible though for a person to sell or give away a portion of their holding (Garbett, 2018). In addition, the NLHA intended to promote good husbandry practices such as through destocking. For destocking to be accelerated, some African farmers were forced to sell their cattle and punitive measures were introduced for those who refused to sell their cattle. Importantly, the act also tried to alter the land-use practices of Reserve Africans by encouraging land conservation (Nyambara, 2001; Gaidzanwa, 1994), a kind of conservation farming which involved labour intensive activities, including the construction of contour ridges.

Reserve households typically had their own plot for cropping as well as sharing common grazing land for livestock. They were now required to obtain a ‘farming permit’ and ‘grazing permit’ for them to be able to cultivate the land and graze livestock (Tshuma, 1998). Without such a permit, cultivating the land or grazing animals was illegal. Because the settler state wanted to minimise the extent of land degradation, Africans could own only 5 heads of cattle and eight hectares of land (Peters and Peters, 1998) for a typical family (mother, father, and children). Polygamists were allocated a third of the standard plot area for each additional wife providing that their total holding did not exceed three times the standard area. The eligibility criteria used for farming and grazing rights were specified to be “males over the age of 21, married males, widowers, widows, female divorcees, and

spinsters over the age of 25” (Garbett, 2018:191). But, widows, married women with no dependent children, and spinsters over the age of 25 were only eligible for rights to one-third of the standard area. All rights were registered by the Native Commissioner and expired upon death, so that a farmer needed to appoint a successor approved by the Native Commissioner.

The attempts to introduce individual land ownership only managed to “secure individual land ownership for 200,000 of the over 350,000 households in the native reserves, leaving at least 150,000 landless households” (Mbiba, 2001: 429). In the end, African farmers, and not the settler state, were held responsible for the deterioration of production in the reserves, and reserve farmers thus needed to modernise their agricultural production methodologies as stipulated by the NLHA. Even though the NLHA was short-lived, its technical conception of land use remained a powerful influence on government planning and supplied the model for post-independence settlement schemes (Kinsey, 2004, 2005). The provisions of the NLHA were suspended in 1961 after African people in rural areas expressed their deep resentment towards it, which arose in the context of the birth of mass nationalism in Rhodesia in the latter half of the 1950s.

In 1962, the ultra-conservative Rhodesian Front led by Ian Smith won the settler elections and it later introduced the Land Tenure Act of 1969 – its aim was to ingrain further the division of land between whites and blacks, including ongoing processes of evictions and resettlement to the relatively infertile, dry, and unproductive reserve land. The case of Chief Tangwena and his people fighting evictions at this time is illustrative of the rising discontent, with the settlers bringing a court order to evict the Tangwena people. The High Court ruled in favour of Chief Tangwena and his people, but the settlers violently forced them off their land (Mafa et al., 2015). At the same time, the name of the reserves was changed by the colonial state to Tribal Trust Lands.

By the early 1970s, a guerrilla war had emerged against Smith’s colonial state. There was a last ditch effort by the Smith government and the Abel Muzowera-led internal settlement government to address the land question, by for instance redistributing land and deracialising the land-tenure laws. But, this was too little, too late. The war led to the Lancaster House negotiations and Agreement (1979), which formed the basis for Zimbabwe’s independence in 1980 and the election of Robert Mugabe as prime minister (Salmon, 2019). The new post-colonial government agreed to a market-led land reform programme (willing seller-willing buyer) over a ten-year period, until 1990.

4.3.2. Women in the Reserves

Women experienced a subordinate position in the reserve economy and in reserve households, with land access during the colonial period granted to the male head of households (Peters and Peters, 1998). Even though some married women were de facto heads of households because their husbands were away for extended periods of time as migrant labourers, they still failed to have any land registered in their names (Cheater, 1986). Therefore, women were deprived of direct access to land for subsistence farming and cash cropping. Only men were recognised, and their rights upheld by the settler state, even though women were the main farmers because of the large-scale absence of men (Jacobs, 1992). Gaidzanwa (1994) cites a study conducted in the Mangwende Tribal area which found that only 16 per cent of women qualified for land rights. As well, the landholdings they held were one-third the size of men's landholdings. Those women in polygamous marriages were at most risk of not having any access to land because of the multiple claims to land within a polygamous household.

Overall, women either in a monogamous or polygamous marriage, just like in the pre-colonial era, had only secondary rights to land as land was registered in the name of the husband (Cheater, 1986). Young and unmarried women in particular rarely received any direct land allocation in the Native reserves (Peters and Peters, 1998). In addition, land shortages in the reserves during the colonial period posed a threat even to the usufruct rights of women, rights which they had acquired in pre-colonial times.

The colonial labour system left reserve women, mostly married women as de facto heads, with an increased burden in terms of domestic care and agricultural activities because mainly young and old men remained in the reserves. Women remained locked within the reserves, with remittances from male migrants being of some significance to the reserve household economy. The settler colonialists knew that if women were to join their husbands, they (the settlers) would be forced to increase wages and provide accommodation for urban African families, so they supported the insistence of reserve patriarchs that African wives should be confined to rural spaces (Schmidt, 1991; Moyo and Kawewe, 2002). Women were in the same category as the elderly, children and young men as people who were largely prevented from seeking employment, therefore they were left to manage reserve households (Jacobs, 1992), supported by intermittent urban-to-rural remittances.

It is estimated that women worked 16-18 hours a day performing their customary tasks in the gendered division of labour, as well as those agricultural tasks normally assigned to their absent husbands, such as ploughing (Shumba, 2011). In this sense, rural women during the colonial era engaged in unpaid work in the homestead and fields (Hochschild and Machung, 2012), as a double burden. Shumba (2011:236) thus argues that women "provide 70% of the labour in farming as well

as play a significant role as the primary managers of their homes where they spent about 49% of their time on agricultural activities for their families' subsistence and 25% of their time on domestic chores". Gudhlanga (2013) attest to this finding and states that colonialism bracketed rural African women into the role of mother and wife – and despite not being considered as farmers, as this was a male designation, they performed all the functions of the male farmer in the latter's absence.

The agricultural field was the main source of livelihoods in reserves through growing subsistence crops, particularly given that men's remittances were not enough to support reserve families (Moyo and Kawewe, 2002). The accommodation available for urban black labourers was not suitable for family men and was part of the colonial policy to ensure that women remained in the reserves (separated from their husbands). The reserves were envisaged by the settler state as a means of subsidising the very low wages paid to the urban black workforce (including on the mines). Hence, "throughout the colonial period, the wages paid, housing provided, and rations issued to African men were based on employers' assumptions about what a single man needed to survive; it was assumed that families left behind could fend for themselves and possibly even supplement the workers' food" (Schmidt, 1991: 733). This placed a very high burden of responsibility on reserve wives (and women broadly) as their labouring efforts had to supplement their husbands' wages. Over time, though, male-generated wages became increasingly important in sustaining the reserve economy, causing a notable shift from household dependence on reserve food production to reliance on urban wages. For Schmidt (1991), this led to a deterioration in women's social status in the reserves, as women's labour was relegated to a position of subsidising their husbands' wages (and not vice versa).

4.3.3. Broader Gendered Effects of Colonialism

During the colonial era, the settler colonialists introduced pass laws to control the movement of Africans (Pasura, 2010). According to (Barnes, 1997:59), "the pass laws were used for nothing less than control of the economic options of working". The passes carried information such as the places where the carrier is permitted to work and stay, and his amount of earnings (Barnes, 1997). Passes were thus a control mechanism which minimised the freedom of the African population, especially African men. However, African rural women were exempted from the pass laws. In as much as African women could move around without documentation, they were confined to reserve areas mainly. It is only in the 1970s that women started being affected by the pass laws.

Barnes (1997) outlines three reasons why women were exempted from the pass laws. First of all, wage labour was reserved almost exclusively for African men; secondly, women had permanent minority status (i.e., they were treated as minors) which already limited their mobility; and, thirdly, the settler state had no capacity to administer the pass law system with reference to women. Certainly,

as indicated already, the colonial state sought to confine women to rural areas. The Natives Registration Act of 1936 was one piece of legislation for this purpose, but it failed to restrict women's mobility because its application had loopholes. The Act included provisions aimed at restricting women's freedom of movement; it did not, though, bring in compulsory registration procedures or even travelling passes for African women (Barnes, 1997). While the presence of married women in urban Rhodesia became increasingly acceptable (certainly by the 1950s), single African women in urban spaces were considered as a threat as they were deemed immoral and loose (Kesby, 1999). The movement of single women from the reserves also represented a loss of control by rural African patriarchs.

Rhodesian colonialism both continued and reconfigured already-existing gender-based relations (i.e., those existing in pre-colonial times). Hence, men and women experienced the effects of colonialism differently (Jacobs, 1983; Mgugu and Chimonyo, 2004) in that, for example, the pass system was gendered based on the overlapping dichotomies: male/female, productive/unproductive and public/private (Pasura, 2010). Because of this, the colonial policies adopted in relation to the African reserves were particularly harsh on women (Jacobs, 1983). Africans placed in Reserves had their livelihoods undercut, as the imposition of European rule involved the stripping of assets such as land and livestock. This left African women in particular with a troublesome Reserve existence. This was part of the colonial strategy of disabling African agriculture so that it did not compete with white agriculture and inhibit the latter's development. As Moyo and Kawewe (2002:166) argue, "as soon as colonial capital established a foothold in a specific subsector [such as agriculture], an equivalent indigenous subsector which had either been there in pre-colonial times or had arisen in response to market opportunities after subjugation was first made illegal then progressively suppressed". This also took place in relation to the brewing and production of alcohol which, historically, was the preserve of African women. Overall, compared to African men, women were most affected by the laws and policies of the colonial government, including concerning property ownership.

As a general tendency, women became subject to oppression by both their husbands and the colonial state, and they were treated as minors and third-class citizens in society (Jacobs, 1983). African men controlled and benefited from any property owned, with even African women seemingly treated as men's property. The customary law arrangements for African marriages under colonialism thus placed women under the tutelage of men. Colonial state practices magnified the problem because the Rhodesian state failed to protect African women against the mistreatment they suffered under the headship of men.

The colonial officials' quest to control women and confine them within the household brought about laws such as the Natives Adultery Punishment Ordinance (NAPO) in 1916 (Gaidzanwa, 1994). The NAPO was put in place as an answer to the concerns of married men and male elders (for example, the Chief of Gorormonzi), who were pleading for movement restrictions for females, including girls who ran away from home to escape arranged marriages and married women who were defining new lives for themselves in the mines and towns of the colony (Barnes, 1992). The aim of the law was to criminalise adulterous relationships between married African women and African men with a penalty of either a year imprisonment with tough labour or 100 British pounds (Schmidt, 1991). Even though both men and women were subject to the penalty, it was in large part targeted mainly at women. It was believed that the adulterous activities of married women were holding back married African men from being away from the reserves for extended periods for work purposes in the colonial economy. Criminalising adultery was meant to ensure that African men felt secure leaving their wives behind and going to work.

However, there were some women who decided that they had suffered enough in the reserve areas, and they wanted to escape. Many of these women ran away from their homes to go to the mines where they fell in love with foreign migrant labourers, who earned higher wages than many local Africans (Schmidt, 1991). The migrant labourers offered a better life for African women as compared to the way they were suffering in the reserves; hence, women would temporarily disappear to the mines. A case in point is that of a woman in Kurehwa, Mtoko, who left her home for Hartley and, during divorce proceedings, she cited abuse from her husband as the reason why she was running away from her Native husband to stay with migrant labourers (Barnes, 1992).

Apart from escaping their homes to be with migrant labourers, African women also escaped to the European mission stations where they chose to endure strict rules rather than suffer in the rural areas (Gaidzanwa, 1994). Most women who escaped to the mission stations were mistreated by their reserve husbands or were marginalised junior wives in a polygamous marriage. For example, Schmidt (1991) narrates an elder chief's sixth wife who went to seek refuge at the mission together with her five children. This went contrary to the traditional law barring women from the custody of their children by virtue of *lobola* payment. The Shona custom granted fathers the right to custody of children after separation because they paid bridewealth. The European mission stations became a haven for women who were escaping from abusive husbands, forced marriages, and unwanted marriages. Also, several women opted to become nuns instead, because they could not handle being wives of men they did not like (Schmidt, 1991).

In summary, in similar ways to the pre-colonial era, African women in the colonial period were in a subordinate position regarding access to (and control over) land, as land was granted by the

settler state to the male head of household. Young and unmarried women were rarely allocated land. Married women were responsible for domestic care duties and also laboured agriculturally in the fields possessed by men and were sometimes de facto heads if their husbands were employed elsewhere. As well, African patriarchs in the colonially-established reserves sought to control the outward movement of women to maintain control over their bodies. In general, African women were treated as minors during this period, being landless and labouring both domestically and agriculturally.

4.4. Land and Gender in Post-Colonial Zimbabwe (1980-2000)

In April 1980, Zimbabwe attained its independence from the settler colonialists and the new government was led by Robert Mugabe's ZANU-PF party. Two distinct forms of agricultural production emerged after independence, though they simply replicated the colonial agrarian system: the former Tribal Trust Lands (TTL) became known as Communal Areas and the large-scale commercial farms continued to exist under white ownership (Amin, 1992; De Villiers, 2003). Communal Area villagers mainly used the land for home-consumption and relied primarily on household labour whereas large-scale white farms relied on significant numbers of low-paid African labourers and produced for both the local and export markets. At the same time, aspiring members of the black bourgeoisie began to acquire large tracts of commercial agricultural land (Moyo, 2004), including those in alliance with the ruling party. Overall, Zimbabwe inherited a highly skewed and unequal land structure, including on racial grounds. About 6,000 white farmers retained 39% of the land, amounting to 15.5 million hectares of prime agro-ecological farmland, while one million black households remained consigned to 41.4 per cent of the land, or 16.4 million hectares of marginal land (De Villiers, 2003; Moyo, 2004). Land was an important signifier of the anti-colonial struggle, and the new government was expected to address the racial imbalance in land expeditiously and meaningfully.

4.4.1. First and Second Phase of the Land Reform and Resettlement Programme (LRRP): 1980 – 1999

Soon after independence, the Government of Zimbabwe indeed embarked on land redistribution measures, and this became embodied in the first phase of the Land Reform and Resettlement Programme Phase I (LRRP1) – which lasted until the late 1990s. The LRRP1 was supposed to address historical inequalities in land possession, relieve overpopulation in the reserves (now communal areas), create livelihood opportunities for poor and landless farmers, and bring abandoned and underutilised land back to production (Pasura, 2010; Peters and Peters, 1998; Moyo, 2014). In doing

this, the government would be acting in line with the central objectives of the guerrilla-war-based liberation struggle, which was played out in rural spaces. Thus, in redistributing land, this phase would focus on developing the communal areas through the provision of infrastructure and other socio-economic services to amend the plight of the villagers who supported the guerrillas and were negatively affected during and by the war of liberation (Masiwa and Chipungu, 2004).

Notably, though, one of the defining characteristics of the initial land reform programme was its basis in market-led reform, namely, the willing seller-willing buyer principle. This was one of the key agreements made at the Lancaster House negotiations in 1979 which led to independence. It was a compromise made by the guerrilla-based nationalist parties (and by Mugabe himself), to last a period of ten years only (during the 1980s) (Harts-Broekhuis and Huisman, 2001; Lahiff, 2005). This agreement stated that the state had the liberty to purchase agricultural land which came onto the open land market, and at a market price (Lahiff, 2005; Manganga, 2007; Utete, 2003). Later on, the Zimbabwean government introduced legislation stipulating that it should be given the right-of-first refusal for any land entering the market for sale. The British Government had promised to assist financially the Zimbabwean government during the process, but this promise was not honoured entirely (De Villiers, 2003). This became a hurdle for the government because it lacked financial resources to purchase significant swathes of land at a time when it was also seeking to rehabilitate and develop communal areas including by way of agricultural infrastructure (Chilunjika and Uwizeyimana, 2015). The government relied simply on land that was being offered willingly by the former white settlers, and it had no role in determining the market-based land prices.

The Zimbabwean government targeted to settle 162,000 families as well as acquire 8.3 million hectares of white-owned land between 1982 and 1985 (Masiwa and Chipungu, 2004). Realistically, only 60,000 families were settled between 1980 and 1985, and a further 10,000 were settled between 1985 and 1990 – indicating a marked failure to resolve the land imbalance problem by failing to meet targets. There are also claims that political and economic elites within and linked to ZANU-PF used their access to power to ‘purchase’ tracts of land in ways which went beyond the procedural processes embedded in the formal land reform programme. According to De Villiers (2003: 16), “the expiry of the Lancaster House Constitution [in 1990] gave the post-independence government the first real opportunity to deal with the land issue and other constitutional matters in its own way”, in large part because the willing buyer-willing seller model expired.

Regrettably, though, the Zimbabwean government was at that time negotiating funding agreements with the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, which led to the implementation of the Economic Structural Adjustment Policy (ESAP) from 1991 (a standard structural adjustment programme). This meant that the willing buyer-willing seller model remained in place. In fact,

increasingly, land redistribution and resettlement were characterised by economic goals and market-orientated criteria, with a deepening emphasis on resettling only those farmers who could show possibilities of agricultural productivity. Previously, in the 1980s, the landless were prioritised when it came to access to redistributed farms.

Simultaneously, new legislation was introduced, in particular the Land Acquisition Act (LAA) 3 of 1992, which allowed the government to compulsorily acquire land (Worby, 2001). The act was introduced after ongoing accusations by the Zimbabwean government that the British government had never lived up to their part of the Lancaster House Agreement, in which it would fund a major part of the land reform programme. The 1992 act allowed for compulsory acquisition but with fair compensation to the landowners (Chilunjika and Uwizeyimana, 2015), whether that land was lying idle or commercially productive. It pointed to the necessity of appointing a Compensation Committee to determine a price tag for the acquired rural land. To evict the white farmers, the Government would inform them through a written notice (usually a one-year notice) so that the farm owner stopped improving or disposing of the land.

However, in the end, the Act was not used by the government in any significant manner, considering the focus on market-led reform under structural adjustment. As well, there were other problems, such as corruption by officials, lack of resources, rise in land prices and constitutional constraints among other things (Masiwa and Chipungu, 2004). The landowners also took to the courts to challenge the prices offered by the government for agricultural land, as these prices were well below market value. Oddly, during this period, the Zimbabwean government allocated relatively small amounts of funding to the land redistribution budget, which tends to imply that it did not take land redistribution seriously, at least up until the mid-1990s. It was only in 1997 that the government began to list large number of white farms for compulsory acquisition, although most of those designated for acquisition were never acquired because of successful legal challenges by farmers.

Overall, up until the late 1990s, land redistribution processed and materialised very slowly. The amount of land redistributed in the Phase 1 LRRP indicates that the Zimbabwean Government was way below its 1980 targets of land redistribution, having transferred just over 3.5 million hectares of land to about 75,000 black families (De Villiers, 2003), compared to the target of 162,000. About 93 percent of the beneficiaries were resettled according to Model A (Pazvakavambwa and Hungwe, 2009). However, less than 3,000 farm workers benefited, officially, from these land transfers (Moyo et al., 2000). According to Pazvakavambwa and Hungwe (2009:149), “after 17 years of independence, the land redistribution programme failed to address the land question in the country” and there was a general despondency and disappointment over the pace of land acquisition and resettlement (Sifile et al. 2021).

In the period between June 1998 and 2000, the government introduced the second phase of the LRPP (the LRRP II), with the government negotiating the character and pace of the resettlement programme with donors (de Satge, 2021). During this phase, an approximate only 168,264 hectares of land were allocated to about 4,697 families. The initial target for land redistribution in this phase was 5 million hectares and settling 91,000 families (Marongwe, n.d.). The LRRP II, however, did not receive the expected level of funding from donors and it was soon overtaken by events, in particular by the land occupation movement which arose in early 2000 and led to the fast track land reform programme (Runganga et al., 2022).

4.4.2 Gender and Land Redistribution

Women were not prioritised in the land redistribution process. Manjengwa and Mazhawidza (2009) attest to this by stating that land reform up until the late 1990s propagated patriarchal land policies that favoured men over women. The LRRP Phase 1 failed to acknowledge women and include them in the resettlement programme, certainly as compared to Phase 2 that recognised somewhat women's specific needs for land. Even though one of the aims of the second phase of the LRRP was gender-sensitivity in allocating land, both phases have been deemed as gender-blind types of land reform (Gaidzanwa, 1988; UNDP, 2002). It was at the donor's conference in 1998 where it was approved that women should be afforded 20% of land; however, it was not adopted into formal policy (Manjengwa and Mazhadziwa, 2009).

Peters and Peters (1998) state that resettlement laws did in fact encourage land resettlement permits to be in both the husband and wife's names but, in practice, there were few cases where women's names appeared. Land was thus being allocated to the heads of households, who in most instances were men under the Model A small-scale resettlement scheme. Married women could potentially become primary land holders after the death of their husbands—yet the prevalence of customary tenure practices made this almost impossible. Unlike Model A, Model B (which comprised of commercial farming) included women, especially widows, in the redistribution of land and married women were afforded land to grow their own crops and control them. The downside was that women remained without secure land tenure so they would lose land upon divorce or being widowed.

Just like in the colonial era, land reform from the 1980s ignored the needs of women as farmers who required land also. Therefore, women continued as agricultural labourers rather than farmers, indicating a significant gender bias towards men (Peters and Peters, 1998). Only 2 per cent of those who received Resettlement Areas permits were women, and the rest (98 per cent) were men. Moreover, those few women who would have acquired land permits tended to lose them upon divorce. However, widowed women would keep the land, but they were required to provide evidence of their

capability to till the land singlehandedly (Peters and Peters, 1998). Also, widowed women would be allocated half the land size of men in the Resettlement Areas. Even though such women had cattle (*mombe yeumai/inkomo yohlanga*), they struggled to graze the cattle or use the cattle as a guarantee for loans or as credit-security. Typically, men would receive government-sponsored credit while women could not (Kachingwe, 1986). Usufruct rights to land were simply not enough for women to receive the same government-sponsored credit as men.

The subsistence agriculture that resettlement women undertook required intensive support, equipment, and inputs but, because of their status as women, they could not easily access agricultural assistance, serving to exacerbate the gendered character of rural poverty in Zimbabwe. The Government had assigned the Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rural Development to assist with imparting knowledge to women in terms of land rights and cropping methods available for them so that they might be able to combine subsistence agriculture with small-scale cash production. But there was not any serious recognition and acknowledgement of the barriers that hindered women's progress when it came to agricultural production on resettlement farms. For instance, women faced problems in terms of marketing their products, especially perishables, and they did not have any meaningful market knowledge or skills (Kachingwe, 1986). Women were also barred from holding leadership positions on farms, such that their concerns and interests were not voiced. Even efforts to enrol women into agricultural training colleges became problematic because they were stereotyped as labourers and not farmers. Only men, as authentic farmers, would benefit from agricultural training and other forms of agricultural assistance.

What happened from the year 2000 on redistributed farms will be discussed later. For now, I turn to developments in the communal areas up until the year 2000.

4.4.3. Land and Power in the Communal Areas (1980-2000)

Communal areas in Zimbabwe were previously labour reserves during the colonial period, that is, they were meant to provide social security in old age, and to house women and children while men migrated to towns, farms, or mines to work. The Communal Land Act (1982) nullified the Tribal Trust Land Act (1979), and tribal trust land was renamed communal land. Power to allocate land in the communal areas was given to the rural district councils instead of chiefs (Sato, 2021). Through the District Councils Act (1980), village development committees (VIDCOs) and ward development committees (WADCOs) were formed to be representative bodies for the residents in communal areas. The VIDCOs and WADCOs were dissolved in the late 1990s and, through the Traditional Leaders Act (1999), power to allocate land was given back to the chiefs, working together with the rural district councils. Hence, in 2002, the Communal Land Act (1982) was amended with authority being

given to the rural district council in consultation with the chiefs as per the Traditional Leaders Act (Sato, 2021).

Thus, post-1980, but over time, the communal areas became subject to new forms of governance, particularly democratic governance. Democratic governance became to exist alongside local rural development committees set up early on by the central state as well as a revitalised chieftainship structure (particularly from the 1990s) – in addition to ZANU-PF structures, at least in the Mashonaland provinces. This array of local power structures created significant confusion and indeed conflict involving both duplication of responsibilities and lack of coordination. This became true especially in relation to the new democratic structures and the traditional chieftainship structures, including in relation to land governance.

For instance, Ncube (2011) conducted a study of Zimbabwean communal area leadership within the period 1980-1998 and highlighted how Zimbabwe's local government was structured to include Provincial Development Committees, Rural District Development Committees, WADCOs and, at the lowest level, VIDCOs. These different civic political institutions were intended to generate a decentralised local government system. However, there is ambiguity around the respective powers of the WADCOs and VIDCOs, with the issue of land being paramount. As well, these decentralised elected development committees were enacted while chiefs lost most of their historical powers (at least compared to pre-colonial times, as they were under the tight control of state officials under colonialism).

For a number of years, the ruling party failed to recognise formally the importance of the chieftainship system in the communal areas, yet communal area villagers continued to recognise the traditional leadership over the elected development committee leadership (Chigwata, 2016; Ncube, 2011). A study by Andersson (1999) in Save Communal Land reinforces this point. In Save, the people under Chief Nyashanu supported and accepted his leadership, and not the authority of the WADCOs and VIDCOs. The local villagers could simply ignore any orders that were not coming from the traditional leaders. To the people of Save, the Chiefs and Headmen had the final say in resolving land disputes, even though they had no legal grounds for addressing these disputes.

Beyond this, the Zimbabwean government took other measures to restructure and decentralise power to local levels throughout the countryside. The restructuring process entailed creating new state ministries, introducing new legislation that formalised local government structures and then putting local participatory organisational structures in place (Ncube, 2011), including in communal areas. The District Councils Act of 1980 was the foundational document for this, as it enabled the reconstitution and consolidation of over 220 previously fragmented colonial African councils into 55 district councils. The District Councils soon became the drivers of development in the communal

lands together with the District Administrator acting as facilitators of planning, development, and coordination (Chigwata, 2015). Traditional leaders functioned as *ex officio* members of the council, but their previous major roles such as land allocation were delegated to the District Councils. Also, traditional leaders no longer held the power to preside over village civil cases, as these powers were granted to community courts.

As Chigwata (2015: 448) puts it, “traditional leaders were stripped of some of their powers because they were considered to have supported the exploitation of black Africans by collaborating with the colonial government”. Insofar as the ruling party believed that chiefs acted as collaborators, it was likely noted as a general trend, as there were a number of chiefs widely known who fought against the colonial regime. Up until the mid-1990s, all the laws that were passed post-independence side-lined traditional leaders. However, slowly but surely, chiefs sought to have their powers restored and be recognised officially by the Zimbabwean government. This resulted in the government shifting its policy stance in the late 1990s to accommodate the traditional leadership (Makahamadze et al., 2009). Thus, the Traditional Leaders Act of 1998 was introduced which recognised the institution of traditional leadership as an important governance structure in communal areas, with chiefs receiving a range of benefits in the form of cars, houses, and many other incentives from the government.

Some of the functions restored for the traditional leaders included land allocation in communal areas and presiding over civil and criminal cases there. The 1998 Act also provided for the formation of the Council of Chiefs and Provincial Assemblies of Chiefs, platforms where the national government would consult with chiefs regarding governance of the communal areas. From the year 2000, chiefs acted as an important political ally of the ruling party in generated a rural support base.

4.4.4 Gender in Communal Areas

Apart from the restructuring of local power structures, the period between 1980-2000 in Zimbabwe was marked by ongoing gender inequality and patriarchy in the communal areas, that is a continuation of the colonial era in many ways (Kachingwe, 1986).

The introduction of the Legal Age of Majority Act (LAMA) in 1982, which recognised women as fully grown adults at the age of 18 (Adams, 1991; Mgugu and Chimonyo, 2004) provoked outrage in traditional quarters as rural men who were used to controlling their wives and daughters suddenly found that they could no longer be assured of this (Essof, 2013). Parpart (1995) highlights that this legislation granted women full jural rights, rights that they did not have previously. In addition to the LAMA, other laws were passed to improve the status of women, including laws focusing on labour, matrimony, and maintenance (Mgugu and Chimonyo, 2004). The 1990s were also marked by an urge to provide rights to women as full rights-bearing citizens of Zimbabwe just

like men. By 1995, there were over 25 registered women's organisations in Zimbabwe working together to address various challenges that women were facing both in the rural and urban areas (including women's access to land). In 1998, as well, the government of Zimbabwe appointed a Ministry of Gender to monitor and mainstream gender in all government ministries. However, gender-sensitive legislation was not enough to eradicate practices of discrimination against women in Zimbabwe, given that patriarchal practices had become entrenched throughout Zimbabwean society. For example, the year 1993 saw the introduction of a clean-up campaign to tackle women's prostitution by picking up any suspected prostitute from the streets, hotels, cinemas and even their homes, only to be released after producing marriage certificates or proof of employment.

Hence, control over the labour, mobility and bodies of women, particularly African women, remained central to post-colonial Zimbabwe, as was clear from the communal areas where local systems of patriarchy flourished. Land rights for women in communal areas continued to be conferred upon marriage. These rights were afforded to a family unit and not to individuals. Moreover, women had secondary rights to land while men had primary rights, with women's rights demonstrated through the existence of *tseu*. Women were limited, however, on the crops that they could grow. For example, groundnuts and *rapoko* were mainly known as 'women's crops' since pre-independence (Kachingwe, 1986) and this remained the case. There were, though, some female-headed households with successful communal area farming operations who, like their productive male counterparts, hired labour rather than using only family labour.

A number of studies demonstrate the gendered character of the communal areas during the first two decades of independence. A study by Kachingwe (1986) summarises women's role in agricultural production and food security, highlighting the lack of land rights, as well as sufficient support, inputs, and credit, for women to empower themselves. Women in effect were confined to the domestic sphere and undertook the bulk of subsistence-based agricultural labour. This was despite the official efforts of the government to uplift women through various kinds of income-generating projects. Indeed, Hungwe (2006) argues that, after independence, even those women who were part of the liberation struggle (including as guerrillas) were expected to resume traditional domestic duties such as childcare and housework (Hungwe, 2006). Women who failed to recognise the gendered boundaries of post-colonial society, including in relation to the division of labour, were labelled as 'unrespectable'. This shows that there was gender division of labour in post-colonial Zimbabwe. This means that 'respectable' married women in communal areas would be dependent on their husbands for household sustenance. Further, a 'respectable' woman leaves the public space for men while she concentrates on the private space of the household, as Marowa (2010) similarly argues.

Peters and Peters (1998), in their study, found that inter-household relationships were a barrier to women's access to government support for agriculture in communal areas. Husbands were unhappy insofar as their wives received assistance; for this reason, husbands did not support them, and wives failed to succeed in farming their *tseu*. Further, Rural Housing Programme loans were made available to land-permit holders only (husbands), who would be the sole owners of the homestead once the repayments were transacted. This happened regardless of women labouring in cash crop production to assist with the repayment of the loans. In fact, women's unpaid labour in the field was the backbone of men's ability to pay back the housing loans, and this was conditioned by the gender inequality in terms of property ownership (Adams, 1991a). As Jaka and Shava (2018: 5) aptly put it, women would "spend most of their time working on unpaid chores and lack[ed] opportunities such as access to resources, to make their time a lot more productive". In this sense, women were producers of surplus value extracted by senior males in communal areas (Kachingwe, 1986).

Adams (1991b) conducted a study in the communal areas of Masvingo Province in the late 1980s to explore rural socio-economic differentiation and why wage labour is hired and supplied. The study showed that women often engaged in off-farm wage labour, more so than men, but this was primarily low-paying casual labour (such as at nearby commercial farms) – these women might include members of male-headed households. However, *de jure* female-headed households were more likely to have members engaged in casual labour compared to male-headed households. These female-headed households had members undertaking daily paid temporary labour to meet their immediate consumption needs. At the same time, *de facto* female-headed households were more inclined to hire permanent labour compared to male-headed households, mainly because these female-headed households received remittances from husbands working in the urban areas. Whether communal area residents worked off-farm or were employed within these areas, Adams (1991b) found that both permanent and casual work entailed a gendered division of labour. As well, women workers preferred to be paid in kind if possible, rather than cash, as this ensured that they had control over their remuneration – if paid in cash, their husbands might still insist on accessing it.

To conclude briefly, patriarchal relations continued into post-independence Zimbabwe in the communal areas, as well as on resettlement farms, despite official pronouncements and legislation seeking to bring about gender equality. Men remained local owners of land and controlled access to it, while a pronounced gender division of labour remained. However, there was some variability in this regard, including in relation to household headship (either male or female) as well as marital status, such that the notion of rural women needs to be disaggregated in recognition of heterogeneity.

In the next two sections, the focus turns to the post-2000 period, including in communal areas and on the new, fast track, redistributed-land farms, showing the gendered structuring of these rural spaces.

4.5. Gender and Fast Track, Post-2000

The first phase of the Zimbabwe's land reform programme ended in 1997 and, at the time, the government was busy crafting the second phase. A number of policy documents were produced, but the implementation of the second phase was disrupted by the emergence of land occupations particularly from the year 2000 – out of which the fast-track land reform programme emerged.

The compulsory acquisition of white-owned land without compensation, known as the Fast-Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) (or *jambanja* or Third Chimurenga), was carried out from June 2000 and continued for some years. The FTLRP, which continues to configure agrarian spaces across the countryside, is the context within which my analysis of land access, division of labour is taking place. While fast track undercut the white commercial farming sector, it left the communal areas intact, thereby allowing for this comparative examination of fast track and communal lands in relation to gender. The FTLRP, which replaced the second phase and in effect became a third phase, was by far the most radical phase of land reform since Zimbabwe's independence (Moyo and Chambati, 2013) – at least in terms of addressing racial inequalities in land. According to Sibanda and Maposa (2014:55) “the [fast track] land reform programme is a monumental agrarian revolution in Zimbabwe, and its repercussions have been largely paradoxical to the extent that they have sent shockwaves in Africa and beyond”.

The FTLRP became linked to the early Land Acquisition Act of 1992, which, as indicated, legally allowed for compulsory acquisition of productive agricultural land for resettlement purposes. In 2002, the government amended the Land Acquisition Act with the aim of speeding up the land reform process. Additionally, it placed Britain under the obligation to pay compensation for agricultural land compulsorily acquired for resettlement and, thus, simultaneously to relieve Zimbabwe from paying any compensation for such land (Chitsike, 2003); though the Zimbabwean state claimed it would be pay for farm-improvements. Because the land occupations leading up to fast track were violent-prone (Chiweshe, 2015), and fast track went contrary to market-led reform, relations between the Zimbabwean and British governments became increasingly strained and no British funds were availed for fast track (Utete, 2003).

The ruling ZANU-PF party tended to use the farm invasions as a political basis on which to counter the growing influence of a new opposition party – the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) – established in 1999. The MDC had massive support amongst white farmers and the farmers

encouraged their black labourers to support the MDC as well. The land occupations, which ZANU-PF did not stop, was a way of mobilising rural support (including in the communal areas) and punishing its political foes, the white farmers, ‘their’ workers, and other supporters of MDC. The Government eventually formalised the FTLRP through the Land Acquisition Act of 2002, which allowed for compulsory purchase without paying for the value of the land (Cliffe et al., 2011). Fast track no doubt deracialised the countryside, though its effects on gender relations (discussed later) remains open to debate. Like other commentators, Moyo and Chiwewe (2003:8) acknowledge that the FTLRP had both exclusionary and inclusionary tendencies, arguing that it “increased access to farm infrastructures and natural resources which were previously dominated by a racial minority and partially reconstituted gender and ethno-regional dimensions of land and resource control, although it also led to some exclusion, especially of farm workers”. Officially, the President of Zimbabwe announced the end of the fast-track resettlement programme in August 2002, citing that they want to concentrate on making the new farmers productive.

The government designed two models for the FTLRP. Model A2 was designed to establish small- to medium-sized commercial farms operated by black indigenous farmers (A2 farms) (Cliffe et al., 2011; Zikhali, 2010). In principle, the tenure arrangements within the FTLRP entail permits for Model A2 beneficiaries and possibly a 99-year lease. Model A1 was meant to resettle people from the overcrowded communal farm areas onto the acquired farms as small-scale farmers. This study, in terms of the fast-track research site, focuses on the A1 model.

Model A1 farms consist of an individual smallholding for residence, homestead garden and field crop cultivation, together with a common grazing area (Cliffe et al., 2011); in this sense, they replicate the land tenure arrangements of the communal areas. A1 farms mainly engage in subsistence agriculture and they comprise the bulk of the resettlement programme (Zikhali, 2010). The Model A1 farmers hold permits that do not specify the duration of validity and, in instances where one violates the conditions of the permit, the permit might be revoked (Mutema, 2003).

The A1 land reform exercise directly benefited 140,000 families, mainly those from communal areas but also urban working-class people (Moyo and Yeros, 2009). More specifically, the A1 model benefited ordinary citizens, civil servants, farm workers, war veterans, ex-political prisoners, and detainees, as well as some members of the rural rich and political elite. In terms of land size, a Ruzivo Trust survey in 2004 found that 84.3 per cent of beneficiaries on A1 farms obtained between 3 and 10 hectares for cropping, which is considerably larger than what exists in communal areas; further, the fast-track land is more productive. Scoones and Wolmer (2003) provide similar details, noting the variation across the country in terms of cropping hectareage. An input loan scheme of US\$16 million was established for the A1 farmers before the start of the rainy season in November

2000. In addition, President Mugabe allocated a further US\$21 million at the end of 2000 to finance resettlement. This involved the introduction of soft financing schemes for inputs like seed and fertiliser to the newly resettled farmers (Thomas, 2003).

Moyo's (2011) research, which focuses on questions around inclusion and exclusion in the fast-track land allocation process, including with respect to race, gender, ethnicity, and nationality, indicates that fast track became more sensitive to the importance of explicitly targeting women for land redistribution. In large part, this was because of the significant land advocacy around gender by women's advocacy groups such as Women's Land Lobby Group. Pasura (2010) likewise brings this to the fore. There was a gender quota set by the government, with women expected to receive 20 percent of the allocations. However, less than 20 percent of the total land allocated went to female-headed households (Chiweshe, 2015), despite the heavy reliance of rural women on land access for livelihoods (Mgugu and Chimonyo, 2004). Moyo (2011) goes on to stress, though, that the percentage of women accessing land through the A1 fast track model is more than the percentage in the first phase of resettlement (up until the late 1990s) and in communal areas at any point in their history (Moyo, 2011).

The fast-track process, including the land occupations, which underpinned it, somehow exposed and brought to the fore how patriarchal structures structure the lives of women in the communal areas, as well as fast track sites. Men attached to communal areas would sometimes send their wives to go and occupy land on their behalf, but they would subsequently arrange to have the A1 permit put in their names as head of the household. As Moyo (2011:504) argues, "gendered land access inequities [for fast track] mostly originated at the point when women who were applying for land faced bureaucratic bottlenecks in a male dominated beneficiary selection process, and because women lacked adequate information on selection procedures". At the same time, to emphasise the patriarchal challenges for women in communal areas, many single and divorced women, as well as junior wives in polygamous relations, occupied land on white farms to gain access to land, as they were being denied land access in the communal areas of origin – and some became A1 permit holders.

Regarding the post-settlement experience under fast track, there are now numerous studies about land tenure and agricultural productivity in A1 farms. Mutopo (2011), for instance, examined farmers in the A1 Resettlement Area in Mellville, who felt insecure because they did not have title deeds, but only permits of occupation, to their land. They feared being evicted from the land because of a lack of proof of land ownership. Mandizadza (2010) conducted an almost similar study in Athlone farm, Murehwa District, to explore how far, and in what ways, the lives of A1 beneficiaries had changed since they were resettled. In conducting interviews with 27 households, the study found that farmers were producing enough food for their families and extended families. On top of that, the

farmers would exchange their crops for labour in the nearby communal areas. Farmers in Athlone would hire from the nearby communal areas labour to till, weed, and harvest their crops and pay them using grain and small stock (Mandizadza, 2010).

As well, Zikhali (2010) conducted a study in Mazowe District, Mashonaland Central Province to investigate local perceptions of land tenure security and agricultural productivity. The researcher administered 213 surveys to communal households and 152 A1 beneficiaries. From the findings, data showed that farmers in the communal areas felt much more land tenure secure as compared to farmers in the resettlement areas (Zikhali, 2010). However, the farmers in the resettlement areas were more productive than the ones in communal areas. Zikhali (2010) cites the availability of agricultural inputs and paid labour as the reasons for more productivity in the resettlement areas as compared to communal areas where farmers depend on household labour. Also, in Zikhali's (2010) study, farmers in the resettlement areas were somewhat sceptical to improve their acquired land (because of perceived tenure insecurity) as compared to the farmers in the communal areas who had confidence in improving their land.

4.6 Gender and Communal Areas, Post-2000

The resettlement programmes during the first decades of independence were designed in part to decongest the communal areas but, because of the limited land redistribution undertaken, overcrowding in the areas remained. The agricultural support programmes during the same period, while enhancing production, during the early years of independence especially, did not ensure a meaningful transition away from subsistence-based to market-focused production (Scoones, 2019). The fast-track programme, as a much more substantial resettlement programme, did provide for some decongestion. At the same time, the government's agricultural assistance programmes from the year 2000 tended to focus primarily on fast-track farms, taking attention away from the communal areas.

In relation to gender, the agricultural systems and settlements in communal areas continue along the lines of what existed prior to fast track. Land remains vested in the state and not individuals or communities, with men though having a firm foothold when it comes to controlling and accessing land (Goodwin, 2013), in large part due to the strength of customary leadership, norms and practices. The control of land in communal households is still very much articulated in gender terms (Mutami, 2015). Even though women are left in charge of the communal household and agricultural activities when the husband is away, including for extended periods when men migrate to the urban areas, the husband continues to control the use of the land even in absentia.

In this vein, Ndlovu and Mjimba (2021) found that currently most households in Umzingwane were female headed (on a de facto basis) because husbands were migrating to neighbouring countries;

however, men remain head of households and ultimately the main decision-makers. In the end, women still acquire land through their male relatives (father, brother, husband) and they still struggle to inherit land within their families. A study conducted by Scoones (2019) in Mwenezi, Chivi and Gutu communal areas reveals that, apart from Gutu North, in about 40%-50% of households, women had access to land in their own right as part of a marriage bargain. In addition, a study by Kurebwa (2013) found that 72% of the female interviewees in Madondo Communal Lands in Gutu gained access to agricultural land through marriage, while 75.7% of the women did not have any control over agricultural land. This is despite the national constitution of Zimbabwe stating that women must have access to resources, including land, on an equal footing with men (Afrobarometer, 2017). Patriarchal cultures and traditions, as well as lack of credit and poverty, are some of the ongoing constraints faced by women in the communal areas in accessing land, according to Kurebwa (2013). Beyond the household as well, women tend to be marginalised. A case in point is that of women of Marange Irrigation Scheme in Marange communal land where women were marginally represented in the village development committees and irrigation committees (Simango, 2015).

There are some advances for women in communal areas. For instance, in terms of access to assets, Ndlovu and Mjimba (2021) in their study in Umzingwane District communal areas highlight that 41% of the interviewed women owned cattle, though men (59%) are more likely to be cattle owners. As another example, in Kondo, Mahachi and Munyokowere villages in Chipinge District, women applaud their traditional leaders for standing up for women in land inheritance issues (Zamchiya et al., 2021). The interviewed women mentioned that traditional leaders now choose widows to inherit land and property rather than a son, as was commonly done in the past. Both single women and divorced women were in fact allocated land by the village head. In addition, women in these villages in Chipinge form part of the traditional courts in order for there to be a balanced view on village matters. However, Zamchiya et al. (2021) claim that patriarchy is still pervasive because men still block women without children from accessing land.

4.7. Women in Post-2000 Communal Areas and A1 Farms: Some Preliminary Thoughts

The last two sections discussed briefly post-2000 developments in rural Zimbabwe with reference to gender: firstly, the fast-track land reform programme and, secondly, communal areas. Separately, this section discusses land, labour, and gender more fully in relation to A1 fast track farms and communal areas (post-2000). In doing so, I in effect offer a preliminary comparative analysis central to the thesis topic, drawing upon the available literature, to frame the case studies, which follow in the ensuing chapters. Many Zimbabwean researchers (Chiweshe, 2015; Mutopo, 2011; Chakona, 2011; Pasura, 2010) agree that land redistribution in Zimbabwe, including fast track, has reconfigured gendered

relations around land and labour in ways which continue to marginalise women while, simultaneously, patriarchal relations remain embedded in communal areas. As Mgugu and Chimonyo (2004) note more broadly, most countries in Africa including Zimbabwe have had land-based gender inequality entrenched in them from pre-colonial times until today.

In both communal areas (CAs) and A1 farms, women encounter problems that are linked to patriarchy, women's subservient status, traditional gender roles and societal gender roles (Mutema, 2003). Mutema's (2003) study for instance compared two communal areas (Zimuto and Chiendambuya Communal Areas), two resettlement areas (Chinyika and Gutu Resettlement Schemes) and one small-scale commercial area (Mushagashe) in 2001/2002. It was concluded that women occupied a marginal position in terms of land rights in all three tenure categories studied. In exploring the relationship between power and gender, Pasura (2010) argues that the institution of the rural village (and the households constituting it), which prevails in both CAs and A1 farms, is deeply patriarchal and that it structures the lives of women daily, marginalising them in the process (including in relation to land access and labour tasks). It is no surprise that, in 2020, women within the Heal Zimbabwe Virtual platforms called for an amendment to the Communal Lands Act citing that, in most cases, women only have limited access to land and, further, they do not have control over the utilisation of the land. This further cripples women's economic activities. It is argued further that most conflicts around land stem from the inability of men to recognise women as equal owners of land (Heal Zimbabwe Trust, 2020).

In the following section (4.7.1), I focus on land and women, and in 4.7.2, I examine labour and gender – in both cases, drawing upon literature relevant to A1 farms and CAs.

4.7.1. Land Tenure Security and Land Rights for Women

In this section, I first discuss tenure security in communal areas and A1 farms generally, and then move more specifically to the question of women, gender and land tenure. Tenure security or security of tenure refers to the formal/statutory and customary recognition of land rights (Chimhowu, 2019). According to Keovilignavong and Suhardiman (2020:3), “[I]and tenure security concerns not only how to secure rights to access, use and own land but also how these access and ownership rights are protected and enforced”. A person or household is said to have tenure security when there are legal or customary rights to the land on a continuous basis, free from imposition or interference from outside sources; and when the person or household is able to reap the benefits of labour and capital invested in the land, as well as to transfer the land to another holder (Keovilignavong and Suhardiman, 2020). Farmers are only likely to make medium- to long-term land improvements to land if they have secure tenure, otherwise they may not benefit from the investments.

The customary tenure (Communal Areas) and the state-based permissive system (A1 resettlement areas) are two key forms of tenure in rural Zimbabwe today. In both cases, the land is state land and, as such, the land has no title and cannot be traded (at least legally). For instance, land in communal areas is “administered under the communal land tenure system, which provides usufruct property rights over the use of land” (Ingwani, 2021: 2), and this system also governs how land can be used, acquired, held, and disposed according to customary law. Communal land ownership in Zimbabwe is thus bestowed with the state and administered through chiefs and village heads; however, in practice, this land is passed through family and lineage inheritance (Mazwi and Mudimu, 2022). In the case of fast-track farms, a study conducted by Svodziwa (2020) in Ward 4 and 6 of Bubi District in Matabeleland South in Zimbabwe found that 80% of the participants in the A1 farms felt more secure than 20% of the participants. The difference was attributed to the former being in possession of offer letters (permits) whereas the latter did not have offer letters. However, those without offer letters felt that their presence at the A1 farms warrants them permanence; therefore, even though there are no formal processes to prove their occupation at the farms, they feel that their stay there will guarantee them tenure.

In the A1 (and A2) resettlement areas, there are transfer rights, but these are not rights-to-sell. Therefore, Statutory Instrument 53 of 2014 Sect. 7. (1) states that “subject to this section, a permit holder shall not – (a) cede, assign, hypothecate or otherwise alienate or sublet in whole or in part, or donate or dispose of his or her allocated land or any of his or her rights, interests or obligations under his or her permit, or place any other person in possession of the allocated land”. The transfer rights amongst A1 resettlement area permit holders consist of land leasing only, even though at times the government denies these leasing rights to the farmers. A study by Ossome and Naidu (2021) argue that about 18 percent of A1 beneficiaries retained their communal area plots because of tenure insecurity.

Tenure security is often dichotomised conceptually between freehold title and permits of occupation, with the former involving ownership and possession, and the latter entailing merely possession. Those with freehold tenure (title deeds) have complete transfer rights whereas those in possession of a permit have use rights. There are significant debates, including in relation to Zimbabwe, about whether use rights alone are sufficient as a basis for tenure security and ensuring agrarian development. For instance, Dube and Guveya (2013) studied Chipinge District in Manicaland Province in order to identify and understand forms and scales of investment, input use and productivity under both freehold and use-permits and they concluded that farmers under freehold tenure are much more likely to make long-term investments (including in plantation crops) and access

credit than those with use-rights only. The supposed disadvantages for use-rights holders, if correct, would be applicable to both communal areas and A1 farms given that the land tenure system in both are fundamentally the same.

Communal areas continue to occupy approximately 42% of the total land area in Zimbabwe (Chimbindi, 2018) and approximately 81.3% of the land is under customary tenure (Moyo, 2013). The Communal Areas Act gives power to the State President to determine questions around the occupation and utilisation of CAs. Within the communal areas, the Rural District Councils and chiefs in some instances are responsible for allocating land on behalf of the state. Individual households are afforded rights of usufruct in terms of possession and usage of the land (Mutema, 2003). Typically, rights of usufruct are passed on as an inheritance after the death of the original owner. In a similar way, because fast track land is state land, A1 farmers have permits of occupation like their communal area counterparts. Freehold title, thus, is not an option in either agrarian site, leading to queries around the degree of tenure security in both sites.

At the same time, security of tenure is divisible, multi-dimensional and associated with five different sets of rights (i.e., baskets of rights), namely, access rights, user rights, transfer rights, exclusion rights, and enforcement rights. The basket of rights constitutes the breadth of tenure security and the time-period covered in accessing the given rights is considered as the duration of the tenure security (Mazwi and Mudimu, 2022). Access rights allow farmers to be on the land, while user rights allow farmers to grow crops, keep livestock, make permanent improvements, and harvest tree-products and fruits. Transfer rights permit farmers to sell, rent, gift, or bequeath land; exclusion rights allow farmers to exclude others from using their land; and enforcement rights refer to the legal, institutional, customary, and administrative provisions to guarantee rights (Rukuni, 2012; Doss and Meinzen-Dick, 2020). A single household or person can hold one type of right only or multiple and indeed all rights. Transfer rights (particularly rights of sale) are often ranked as the strongest, most desirable rights and, if a person or household holds the full basket of rights then, they are deemed to have full tenure security (Doss and Meinzen-Dick, 2020). In communal and A1 areas, rights of sale (as indicated) typically do not exist (Goodwin, 2013). Even access and user rights at times are insecure. In this respect, Dhliwayo and Joala (2020) in their study of Munyokowere Village in a Chipinge communal area identify land grabs and forced evictions from land, conflict around land ownership, and even boundary disputes as the main threats to land rights.

Basure et al. (2019) in their study in Upper Guruve in Mashonaland East Province found that FTLRP landholdings are temporal and fluid, characterised by uncertainty because of powerful elites at times moving onto A1 farms and evicting the small-scale farmers. Mazwi and Mudimu (2022) concur that national and local elites might threaten the land security of A1 farmers. This Upper

Guruve study also demonstrates a high frequency in the unsystematised exchange of offer letters and land amongst farmers, which thereby weakens farmers' claim to land. Comparing these occurrences to CAs, Basure et al. (2019) argue that the absence of traditional leaders on the Upper Guruve fast track farms put the farmers at a disadvantage as compared to Upper Guruve communal area farmers, Chiefs, and village heads in CAs act as a form of security because they can support and guarantee a farmer's claim to land. The traditional leaders also block double allocation of land in CAs as compared to the fast-track areas in Upper Guruve where double allocation of land is on the increase causing fragility of land tenure. In another case, in Sokis resettlement area at Innezdale Farm in Mhondoro Ngezi, farmers were facing evictions from the A1 farm. These evictions at Innezdale Farm were due to disputed rights to the farm. According to the Zimbabwe People's Land Rights Movement (2021), 99% of the women occupants at Innezdale farm viewed themselves as owners of land yet they were tenure insecure and did not have any documentation to indicate land ownership.

In the case of CAs, there are also major threats to their continuity, due to the government undertaking large-scale developmental projects leading to communal area farmers being forced to relocate and make the land available since the state owns the land. Again, gender often entails into the picture in these cases. A case in point is that of CA villagers who were evicted to make way for the Chisumbanje Ethanol Project because of a deal signed between the Government of Zimbabwe through the Agriculture Development Authority (ARDA) and Billy Rautenbach-linked companies, namely, Rating Investments Ltd and Macdom Investments Ltd. Though this case brings to the fore land security challenges in general for CA villagers, it is notable that the project mainly affected women because they relied on the land to grow food for their families, according to Mutondoro et al. (2016). The few available plots of 0.5 hectares in size that were given to the community as compensation were received by men, as they were recognised as farmers. Of the 1,754 households who lost their land due to this project, only 516 (29.4%) were compensated, indicating a significance absence of tenure security in this area. In another eviction case, in March 2021, about 12,500 villagers in a CA in Chiredzi faced eviction to make way for private companies to engage in quarrying of black granite in the area (Veritas, 2021).

In the context of major incidences of loss of land by both A1 farmers and CA villagers, with women often suffering the most from loss of land, women in areas like Victoria Falls, Hwange, Binga, Chilonga, and Mutoko are coming together to pressure the government to formulate a human rights-based approach to development-induced evictions as a way to protect and promote rights of rural people in the country (Matabeleland Institute for Human Rights, 2021). These incidences, though affecting entire households, show the relevance of considering land tenure from a gendered perspective.

Hence, I now turn more directly to the significance of women, gender and land security in communal areas and A1 farms. In this context, recent studies by Chakona (2012) and Chiweshe (2015) highlight the marginalisation of women in rural Zimbabwe, across agrarian spaces. Chakona's (2012) study in Goromonzi District concluded that FTLRP, like communal areas, perpetuated patriarchy because women are still marginalised in terms of land tenure. Similarly, the study by Chiweshe (2015) of six A1 schemes in Mazowe District found that women were still marginalised, and men controlled land and other resources at grassroots levels on the farms.

In Zimbabwe, patriarchal culture and tradition tend to override women's land rights in most instances such that, according to Bhatasara (2020), women in Zimbabwe do not usually have transfer, exclusion, and enforcement rights over land; they are limited to temporary access and user rights. Moyo et al. (2015) thus emphasise how limited in scope and insecure women's land rights are in both communal areas and A1 farm areas in Zimbabwe. Restrictions on women's land tenure involves both the type of rights they hold as well as the extent to which these rights are secure (Doss and Meinzen-Dick, 2020). Sadly, in Zimbabwe, the dual regulatory framework (civil and customary), alongside local patriarchal discourses and practices, contributes to these challenges for women (Dzvimbo et al., 2018). This means that women's land tenure rights, even those rights they have, are precarious and subject to loss, including in instances where divorce or widowhood befall women (Zvokuomba and Batisai, 2022). These precarious usufruct rights, in both A1 and communal areas, leave women vulnerable and struggling to improve their livelihoods, because secure land tenure and rights are key to improving women's livelihoods (Chigbu et al., 2019), including in relation to food security (Mazwi and Mudimu, 2022), and agricultural production (Melesse and Awel, 2020). Hence, lack of secure land tenure and land rights often leads to women's disempowerment and exposure to threats of poverty and hunger (Liversage et al., 2020). According to Mushunje (2001: 10) "rights in, access to, and control over land and property have direct and indirect bearings on poverty".

The so-called communal land tenure system, also present on A1 farms, has male dominance in the form of male heads of households. Usually, certainly, the household head tends to be a male, at least in households with married couples. In most African countries, women tend to hold fewer and weaker land rights than men. For instance, Murugani et al. (2014) state that mainly men have access, control, and user rights while women are only granted access, user, and influence rights to land – hence, what they lack is crucial, namely, they are denied control rights (including control over agricultural production). In a study conducted by Scoones et al. (2019), women in Wondedzo and Mvurwi gained land access mainly through marriage. In these two study sites, lack of employment and lack of formal education drove girls to marry early so that they could gain access to land through their husbands' parents (Scoones et al. 2019).

In the A1 farms, it was expected that women would benefit from a more progressive gender land regime. Married (female) permit holders were meant to have equal rights in the allocated land with their spouse; however, the prolonged existence of patriarchy in terms of land registration and allocation as well as patriarchal practices leaves women lagging in terms of meaningful land rights (Mazwi and Mudimu, 2022). The situation in communal areas is similar. When a particular household in A1 and communal areas has more than one security-of-tenure right, which they typically do, these are held regularly by one person only (often, the male household head) – the head may distribute rights to others, such that women’s rights become secondary, conditional, and mediated by a male.

Older studies by Mgugu and Chimonyo (2004) and Mushunje (2001) explain how different government legislations have treated the issue of gender equality in Zimbabwe. Their studies show that policy frameworks and laws in Zimbabwe have made it difficult to mainstream gender into the land reform programme or to integrate it into a reconfiguration of the gendered communal area spaces. The gender bias of legislation has left women in a difficult position in terms of access to land security. One such law that remains gender-biased is the customary law on issues of inheritance following the death of the head of the household, which is buttressed by deep-seated local patriarchal arrangements. In communal areas, rural land typically belongs to a lineage or clan and it is usually distributed based on a patrilineal lineage system, which requires men to be the only ones who may be allocated land (Pfumorodze, 2010). For a woman to inherit the land she requires approval from her husband’s relatives and failure to gain the approval means the woman will not be able to use the land to feed her family, which is an indication of gender bias. A similar situation prevails on fast-track farms. However, there is also civil legislation, which goes contrary to customary law. Pfumorodze’s (2010) study thus referred to the Administration of Estates Amendment Act No. 6 of 1997, which does provide women with rights of inheritance including in relation to land.

Zvokuomba and Batisai (2022), in their study conducted in Masvingo, also highlight the lack of mechanisms that ensure longevity regarding land in the possession of women. They highlight that, after a woman dies, her land will enter in the control of patriarchally-inclined family members who will give it back to men in the family. Hence, the authors argue for the introduction of a woman-friendly inheritance system, which promotes gender equality in land inheritance in such a way that land is passed to women in the family when the principal woman landowner dies (Zvokuomba and Batisai (2022). More broadly, whether talking about inheritance or not, there is no clear, firm, and consistent recognition in legislation or policy of how land tenure is differentiated along gender lines (Chigbu et al., 2019). As Mgugu and Chimonyo (2004) recommend, the Government should draft a comprehensive policy that outlines the needs and rights of women and how to achieve the desired equality in land access between men and women.

4.7.2. Gendered Division of Labour and Decision-Making

Land use decisions have implications on gender roles and decision-making within a household. Men and women engage in various activities (roles) to ensure the availability of goods and services for family consumption and well-being (Sikod, 2007) and in rural Zimbabwe, agricultural production is the source of many people's livelihoods. Most agricultural formal-employment opportunities in the rural areas in Zimbabwe are in casual labour form (Chambati, 2017) which makes it difficult for people to sustain their families when agricultural production is insufficient. Hence, men usually migrate to urban areas in search of permanent employment, leaving women to look after the family.

Chambati's (2017) study in Goromonzi found that casual labour hiring was more pronounced in the A1 (60%) and Communal area (38.2%) than permanent labour hiring. In cases where permanent labour is hired, only a small percentage are women, and a larger percentage is men (17% versus 83% in Chambati's study). Shonhe et al. (2022) in their study of former farmworkers who settled in different land categories (LSCFs, A2 farms, A1 farms, CAs, workers from joint ventures (JVs) operating on A2 farms and compounds in A1 areas) in the Mvurwi/Chiweshe area found that LCSFs hired a large proportion of permanent workers (35.9%), CAs (16.2%) and A1 farms (15.4%). To add to this, men dominated the permanent workforce with A1 (94.4%) and A2 (90.9%). CAs in the Mvurwi/Chiweshe area employed mostly women (94.4%) due to the absence of men who were engaged in rural-urban migration and moving across borders. Women employed in the Mvurwi/Chiweshe rural area are commonly employed as either temporary or contract workers.

Generally, men's agricultural and other work is usually recorded whilst women's work is unrecorded. The work that women do, which includes reproductive work and care work such as caring for children, food preparation, water collection, shopping, and housekeeping is often not considered 'real work', yet it is labour-intensive, and time-consuming (Sikod, 2007). As such, women and girls in rural households engage in the bulk of laborious and time-consuming unpaid domestic work (work not compensated by a wage) such as cleaning, shopping, fuel collection, food processing, preparation, cooking and caregiving (IFAD, 2016; Ncube, 2021; Alonso et al., 2019, Karimli et al., 2016). This is despite unpaid work being a crucial aspect of economic activity and well-being of individuals (Alonso et al., 2019). 'Real work' is seen as productive work, "which involves the production of goods and services for consumption and trade" (Sikod, 2007: 64). Though productive activities tend to be associated with men, and hence males are considered as the farmers, women also undertake a significant amount of work in agricultural activities, such as weeding. Domestic work averages 80 per cent of total hours spent on unpaid work. In addition, as indicated, rural women engage in subsistence farming which means women spend a larger proportion of their day on tasks as compared

to men. In many instances, women perform both reproductive and productive work within households (Jaka et al., 2021).

Ncube et al. (2018)'s study is another example of women being involved in productive and reproductive work. These women were involved in food production and family care. However, culture restricted them from land ownership and other entitlements. Ncube (2021) thus views women as people who remain undervalued and discriminated against in terms of access to resources, making independent decisions and opportunities due to their gender. Women interviewed in Ward 5 Bikita communal area, where Jaka et al. (2021) conducted their study, spoke about their challenges in the face of labour demands placed upon them. They mentioned climate change, drought, economic crisis, lack of capital, and poor farming methods as the challenges that affect their production and providing for their families. Similarly, in Zvishavane communal areas, in wards 15 and 16 (Indaba and Mhototi), women's crop and livestock production were affected by climate extremes such as drought (Ncube et al. 2018). Therefore, Jaka et al. (2021) recommend women's access to land, capital, improved technology, and agricultural innovations as ways to empower rural women and take them out of poverty.

The Centre for Innovation and Technology (CITE) in 2021 made a call to the government of Zimbabwe to address the heavy burden of unpaid care work experienced by women in rural Zimbabwe. The CITE (2021) conducted a study in Chimwara A1 area in Lupane where women were unhappy about how unpaid care work has reduced their participation in other spheres of their lives. Chimwara women stated that they receive little or no assistance from their spouses when they travel long distances to fetch water (5-10 km) and pastures for their livestock (15 km) due to the deep rooted patriarchal system in the area. Men in Chimwara refuse to assist because they deem these roles to be reserved for women and men's other excuse is that they never engaged in these roles whilst they were growing up. Chidakwa et al. (2020) interviews with women in Wards 4, 8 and 9 in the communal areas of Zvishavane District also reported how women travel long distances to fetch water thereby increasing women's labour hours. Dziva et al.'s (2021) study on the impact of Covid-19 pandemic on women's vulnerabilities in Zimbabwe found that women (both in communal areas and A1 areas) were the most affected during the pandemic because they spent hours on queues fetching water to wash hands for the family as this was a necessity during the pandemic in addition to their usual household duties. The amount of domestic work for women also increased more than usual during the pandemic because everyone was staying at home. On a somewhat different matter, but also relating to women's disempowerment when it comes decisions around labour activities, Zanza's (2015) study in Rushinga District Ward A and B communal area found patriarchy to be a challenge

in women's development because women have to seek permission to their partners for them to be involved in community development projects.

Oxfam and partners Bekezela, Association of Women's Clubs (AWC) and Kunzwana conducted the FGDs in six wards in four districts of Zimbabwe: Bubi district, Gutu district, Masvingo Rural district, and Seke district in 2018. The study found a highly gendered division of labour, in which women and girls were responsible for all household chores and they internalised this such that they discourage men to take part in household chores (Samman, 2018). Traditional norms and economic crisis were two factors that participants in the study mentioned as influences configuring the division of labour. What was interesting from this study was the widespread temporary involvement of a few men in care duties, where men would assist when women were sick, pregnant or after childbirth (Samman, 2018). However, their involvement in care work was associated with 'love potions' or 'bewitching' by their wives. Men were categorised as providers for the family; therefore, they were not expected to take part in unpaid domestic work. Hence, they migrate to urban areas to seek employment whilst women remain to take care of the family. Women in these districts also engaged in farming activities alongside their husbands, as well as in income-generating activities (Samman, 2018). Cultural expectations and biological differences featured prominently in participants' explanations of the distribution of work. A study by Ncube (2021) revealed how culture and tradition in the communal area of Ntepe Village, Gwanda still promote discrimination, oppression, and exploitation of women by defining women's roles within the household whilst men make most of the decisions within the household.

More so, education also plays a crucial role in determining how labour is divided and how decisions are made in a household. Education allows women to venture into spaces that were traditionally dominated by men. In addition, education enables people to make logical decisions on livelihood strategies as well as understanding new knowledge and skills to improve livelihoods (Ncube et al., 2018). A study conducted by Scoones et al. (2019) in two smallholder A1 resettlement sites in Zimbabwe-Hariana Farm in Mvurwi and Wondedzo farms in Masvingo had women echoing that passing their O'level exams was a route for them to experience a better life but those who fail to pass their O'levels will opt to get married as a way of securing a livelihood and accessing land, especially in Wondedzo. A study in Ntebe Village, Gwanda by Ncube (2021) also reveals that lack of education contributes to women's poverty; minimal education was found to increase poverty through lack of employment for women in Gwanda. In Zvishavane, women's employment opportunities were limited by low education attainment as stated by Ncube et al. (2018).

The traditional division of labour most often places women in roles based on providing emotional support and maintenance, while men are primarily responsible for economic support and

contact with the world outside the home (Sikod, 2007). In the end, we find that decision-making is biased towards men in that, they are usually the head of households; they work fewer hours than women do. A study conducted by Mushunje (2017) in 5 villages (Marimo, Ururu, Majuru, Chigigi and Gore communal areas) in Goromonzi District found that in married households, matters relating to finances and household reproductive assets were left for husbands to make decisions. Widowed women would consult with their sons or male relatives in the family when they wanted to make decisions, especially decisions that fell in the public domain such as slaughtering a cow. Also, in Goromonzi, women's decision making was closely related to their roles as wives and mothers. They found it easier to decide on what was eaten, when and by whom. However, even within this level of decision making, there were set practises and decisions, which were specific and defined by gender. In Mvurwi/Chiweshe A1 area, Shonhe et al. (2022) found men to be employed more in decision-making than women within a household.

As Garutsa et al. (2018) also report in their study in Marondera rural district (Mahusekwa, Chihota, Chiwanzamarara and Chionanana communal areas), men grew cash crops and women concentrated on home-consumed crops. Gender division of labour in livestock production indicated that even though women are now involved in livestock production more than before, men still dominate livestock production. A study by Chidakwa et al. (2020) also revealed that married women in Zvishavane communal areas only own small livestock and they do not have the power to sell those small livestock without consulting with their husbands. Men on the other hand, were said to control the large livestock and have control on when to sell or what to do with the livestock.

Chiweshe (2015) also found that a gendered division of labour existed whereby men were the only ones who belonged to the public sphere and women belonged to the private sphere. Mutopo (2011) attest to Chiweshe's (2015) findings by arguing that the gendered division of labour stems from the socialisation processes which allow women to be discriminated against in matters such as land access. Chiweshe (2015) study reveals how patriarchy is still dominant almost 20 years after the FTLRP. Land, therefore, becomes man's resource whilst women are primary providers of labour (Mutopo, 2011). Because men possess control over land, it makes them sole decision-makers within most households because there is a strong relationship between controlling land and decision-making (Bjornlund et al., 2019).

In their comparative study between Mozambique, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe, Bjornlund et al. (2019) noted differences in decision-making across countries. In Tanzania, men made decisions mostly than women and this was attributed to social norms, in Zimbabwe, they found women to be making most decisions due to the absence of men who work away from home (and widowhood) and in Mozambique, there were areas where men made most decisions than women and vice versa.

Besides, Tanzania and Zimbabwe were low on balanced decision-making, with only 20 per cent reporting balanced decision-making. Moreover, if women are involved in rural leadership, they take peripheral roles such as secretaries and the top leadership roles are reserved for men.

Mutopo (2011) conducted a study in Tavaka Village, Merrivale A1 Farm in the Mwenezi District of Masvingo. The area was previously owned by a white farmer who was the main source of employment for the villagers in Tavaka and other surrounding villages. Merrivale's population has tripled since the year 2000 after the FTLRP. Farmers in the area, at the time of the study, grew both subsistence crops and cash crops. Mutopo's (2011) study was a multi-sited ethnographic study that focused on women, land, non-permanent mobility, and livelihoods at Merrivale Farm. Out of the 20 households interviewed, 10 had women who were travelling between Zimbabwe and South Africa frequently to sell their farm produce and items made from wood and reeds. Mutopo (2011) shows that women could not stay permanently in South Africa because they had acquired the land back home. Land became a magnet that was drawing women back to the village. Therefore, the women would use the land to earn an income through trading their crops in South Africa. According to Mutopo (2011:1043), "cross border trade and non-permanent mobility emerged as key livelihood options for women and income earning". This statement indicates that land acquisition opened opportunities for the women in Merrivale even though they continued to negotiate with patriarchal structures to access the land. Similarly, in a recent study by Scoones et al., (2019) women are still heavily involved in cross-border trading, particularly those from Wonedzo farms in Masvingo. Jaka et al., (2021) also indicate that women in Bikita, Masvingo still engage in cross-border trading as a form of livelihood strategy.

Steen (2011) conducted a study in the Chiweshe Communal Area in Zimbabwe. Steen's (2011) study is similar to this current study except that Steen (2011) focuses only on a single-site (CA) whilst this study takes a comparative dual-site approach between CAs and FTLRAs. Both studies explore land access, labour, and patriarchy in rural communities. Similarly, the studies move beyond focusing only on women when conducting gender studies but also include female-male relations. Moreover, like Steen's (2011) study, the current study will explore how land is placed within the social context, for example, the importance of land as a form of safety, status, lineage connection and identity both in the CAs and Fast Track Resettlement Areas. Steen's (2011) study involved investigating how land and labour rights and social relations of power operate and interact in the gender regime of land and labour rights in subsistence farming. Secondly, Steen (2011) aimed to identify the agency, gender interaction and potential for change in the gender regime using the gender theory and institutional theory.

Steen's (2011) findings of post-colonial Zimbabwe were similar to how women were treated under the colonial administration. The study found that married women in Chiweshe pre-colonial times would be allocated land in their own right alongside their husbands but during the colonial era, women would be granted land rights through their husbands, thereby weakening women's rights. In terms of land access, men in Chiweshe CA indicated that land access is important to them because it allows for food production and food supply; the land is an important aspect of male identity and land access symbolises lineage responsibility. There were different forms of gender relations that came out of the study. Steen (2011) termed this 'doing' gender. Men narrated that their relations with other men are mainly to discuss land issues whilst with women they discuss family issues only. No land issues are discussed with women. Women on the other hand 'do' gender by taking care of the family, providing food, and raising children (Steen, 2011). Just like in the typical Zimbabwean communities, in Chiweshe CA women's land rights are mediated through men. However, women in Chiweshe had their own plots (*tseu*) to grow their crops.

The gender dynamics in Chiweshe CA were quite interesting. The study found that men and women did not share resources within wedlock (non-pooling of resources). In addition, women were treated as outsiders because they did not belong to the same lineage as their husband. Men in Chiweshe CA were given access to control of the land by virtue of being the head of the household. There were no power struggles between men and women over land, but power struggles existed within the women's plots. Steen (2011) states that men tend to want to control the women's plots by suggesting what to grow in the plots and claiming the income earned from selling the plot's produce.

According to Steen (2011), the gender regime in Chiweshe is characterised by an asymmetric power relation whereby husbands exercise two types of power in three types of fields: 'power over' wives, 'power over' decision-making, and 'power to' women's labour. Women, on the other hand, exercise two types of power in two types of fields: a certain limited 'power over' men by producing food for the family in the garden and a limited 'power to' achieve strategic goals and empowerment (Kabeer 2005 as cited in Steen 2011) by using the garden as a 'piggy bank' or 'loot fund'. Steen (2011) argues that men's identity is partly constructed based on controlling land, therefore, men try to access land. Moreover, the study found that "for a woman to become a woman, she must marry and raise children" (Steen, 2011: 147). This implies the position of women that is tied to childbearing and caring for the family, something that is temporary as opposed to men whose identity is tied to the land, a permanent asset. Similarly, Bahta et al. (2020) in their study in the communal area of Tokwane-Ngundu found that participation of women in agriculture remains a challenge because of the gender stereotype that farming is a masculine preserve.

Also, Steen (2011) argues that dichotomising gender to access land is another dimension of securing land and becoming a man. It is an act of separating and keeping women and men apart, which at the same time is an act of subordinating women. Thus, men's strategy becomes how to navigate towards accessing land whereas women's strategy is navigating towards raising children. Steen (2011) in his study concluded that gender and power influence how land is accessed, distributed, used, and controlled; how labour is organised, divided, and controlled; how strategies are formulated and enacted in relation to social goals. Gender and power also influence how women and men engage in bargaining and decision-making processes to enjoy their rights, meet obligations, and fulfil gendered social goals. It will be interesting to explore to what extent gender influences land access, control, and distribution in the CAs and FTRAs in Zvimba Rural District as this is one of the focuses of this current study. Again, it will be interesting to explore the organisation of labour, gendered division of labour and how labour is controlled in these research areas.

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter has focused on questions of land, labour and gender with specific reference to Zimbabwe, tracing these issues from the pre-colonial period, through the colonial period and into the post-colonial period, including developments in the post-2000 period. Like in the case of Africa more broadly, as detailed in chapter 3, the position of rural women in Zimbabwe has been conditioned by the presence of patriarchal systems, practices and discourses. In post-1980 Zimbabwe, the government's redistribution programme (in particular, fast track) has led to the establishment of rural spaces (A1 farms) which are very similar to (colonially-constructed) communal areas in relation to land tenure and small-scale agriculture. The emergence of these A1 farms, alongside the ongoing presence of well-established communal areas, provides the empirical basis for this study, namely, a comparative analysis of land, labour and gender across A1 farms and communal areas. This chapter has detailed some of the key issues related to this comparative analysis, and it has provided some tentative thoughts about similarities and differences between the two rural spaces with regard to women and gender. The next chapter (chapter 5) is the first empirical chapter, and it offers an overview of the two research sites for this study, namely, Stratford FTRA and Kanzou Village.

CHAPTER 5: FARMER LIVELIHOODS IN KANZOU VILLAGE AND STRATFORD FARM

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the two research sites, Kanzou Village and Stratford FTRA, including a brief history of the study sites – one as a communal area village and one as an A1 fast track farm. Also detailed is a demographic profile specifically of the research subjects (villagers) who form part of the fieldwork, with reference to age, gender, marital status, household composition and education. In order to ensure that the reader is able to fully comprehend the discussion in the ensuing four chapters (chapters 6 to 9), this chapter also offer a description of the lives and livelihood strategies of the villagers in the two sites, noting any pertinent differences across the two sites where they arise. This involves a discussion of asset ownership, landholding size, agricultural activities, and non-agricultural and off-farm activities.

5.2 Overview of Zvimba Rural District and Study Sites

Zvimba Rural District (ZRD) is a largely rural settlement located in Mashonaland West Province in central-northern Zimbabwe, which comprises 7 districts and 35 wards. Besides Zvimba, the districts are as follows: Chegutu, Hurungwe, Kariba, Makonde, Mhondoro-Ngezi, and Sanyati. It is bordered by Guruve District to the north, Mazowe District to the east, Chegutu District to the south, the city of Harare to the southeast, Kadoma District to the southwest and Makonde District to the west. Previously, Zvimba District was divided between just two constituencies, Zvimba North and South. Since 2008, the district has been divided into four constituencies, namely, Zvimba South, Zvimba North, Zvimba East and Zvimba West. The district covers an area of 6,275 square kilometres and is the most populous district in the province with a population of 245,489 people constituted of 122,562 males and 122,927 females (ZIMSTAT, 2012). The capital of ZRD is Murombedzi, which is situated 110 kilometres from Harare (the capital city of Zimbabwe) and 48 kilometres from Chinhoyi, the largest city in the province. Murombedzi has numerous government offices, including for ministries and departments such as education, youth and development, agriculture, and local government.

Zvimba District is in Natural Region 2A with annual rainfall patterns ranging between 750 and 1,000 millimetres, a mean minimum temperature of 15 degrees Celsius and a mean maximum temperature of 24 degrees Celsius. Dominant soil types include greyish brown sands and sandy loams derived from granites. Most communal areas and A1 farms in Zvimba District have access to water, which they access from wells and boreholes. The Zvimba District is primarily a farming and ranching

district. The main agricultural activities are tobacco, maize, cotton, horticulture, fish, crocodile farming and eco-tourism. Zvimba is also endowed with mineral resources such as gold, platinum, chrome, and copper since the Great Dyke cuts across the district. Map 1 below shows where Zvimba District is situated in Zimbabwe.



Map 1: Map showing Mashonaland West Districts

Source: Pindula.com.

A significant number of current farmers in the district benefited from the agrarian land reform programme (fast track), from the year 2000 onwards (Tarakini et al., 2020). Four main types of farmers are found currently in Zvimba: (a) communal farmers, (b) A1 farmers, (c) A2 farmers, and (d) commercial farmers. Like other districts in the country, Zvimba district is subdivided into wards for administrative purposes and, at the ward level, agricultural extension officers are deployed to assist farmers. Stratford FTRA is in Zvimba East Constituency, in Ward 19, near Trelawney; and Kanzou Village is in Zvimba West Constituency, in Ward 9, near Murombedzi Growth Point (the administrative centre of Zvimba District). Prior to the FTLRP, Zvimba East consistently mainly of large-scale white commercial farms (and now has numerous fast track farms), while Zvimba West was mainly and is still mainly communal farming. In terms of land tenure: Wards 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 28 and 29 are CAs in which villagers rely mainly on agriculture for their livelihoods; Wards 2, 16, 22 and 23 are urban areas characterised by peri-urban maize production; and Wards 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 24, 25, 26 and 30-35 are fast track resettlement areas that also depend on agriculture as the main source of livelihood, with tobacco and maize as the crops dominantly grown in these wards (Marewo, 2020).

Map 2 below shows the wards in which the two case studies are located (with the exact locations for the case studies marked by small orange dots).



Map 2: Location of Case studies

5.2.1 Historical Background of Zvimba District

According to the historian Stanlake Samukange, the people of Zvimba are real MaZezurus whose cognomen (*mutupo*) is *Ngonya pa Nyora*. Samukange's (1986) study states that the people of Zvimba hailed from Guruwuskwa in the north and they arrived in the area when the Rozvi were ruling. Even though there is some confusion as to where the name Zvimba came from, there is broad agreement that the name hails from one's feet being swollen from walking long distances (as *zvimba* means swollen). At the time, Zvimba shared boundaries with Nova (Chipuriro), Chivero, Hwata and Ngezi.

When Native Reserves were created under colonialism in the 1900s, Zvimba, together with nine other districts, became part of the Lomagundi District. After major alterations were made to the Reserves in 1913, smaller reserves in the area (Sipolilo, Tsheninga, Zvimba, Magondi and Bepura) were abolished, resulting in only two large and comparatively infertile reserves, namely Zvimba (now Zvimba) and Sipolilo (now Guruve) (Palmer, 1977). Large number of Africans were displaced from their lands and moved into these Reserves, with many providing labour to nearby white-owned farms or more distant mines and industrial centres. This was pursued by the colonial state with the assistance of legislation such as the Land Apportionment Act (LAA) of 1930, which empowered white settlers to take prime land forcibly from Africans, including those in now Zvimba. The displacement of Africans forced them to provide labour by working in mines, farms, and industries

in cities. One participant in Kanzou Village acknowledged the displacement of their forefathers from fertile areas to areas with poor soil and drainage, by saying:

Growing up I heard from my grandfather that when they [he and his siblings] were young, their father was moved from the Hunyani side where they were staying by *vauyi* [White settlers] to here because the white settlers needed the good soil. That's why you see us here, we could still be in Hunyani if it were not for the settlers who removed them (Interview with KV16, Male).

These displacements took place alongside the construction of the Reserves (i.e., communal areas), including what is now the communal village of Kanzou, and white farmers grabbed and kept large tracts of land where farms like Stratford were located, which were later repossessed during the FTLRP and became an A1 farm.

5.2.2 Kanzou Village

Kanzou Village falls within the Chirau CA, which is headed by Chief Chirau and, locally at village level, by Sabhuku Kanzou. Murombedzi Growth Point is about 3 kilometres from the village. A nearby grain depot belonging to the Grain Marketing Board, ZB Bank Limited, a post office and Gangarahwe Hospital, also services residents of Kanzou Village. Murombedzi Growth Point has base stations for all major cell phone operators (Telecel, Econet and NetOne) which makes it easier for telecommunications within and beyond the area. As well, there is a good road network linking Murombedzi to the surrounding major towns, with the village located close to the Chinhoyi-Chegutu highway. Most school going children in the village attend Kawondera Primary and Secondary Schools.

Households in Kanzou Village are related through patrilineal kinship. Walking around the village, a new visitor will hear similar surnames for most of the households, and the village head (*sabhuku*) even states that the village comprises a household's extended family: "We are not strangers to one another in this village; we are family", he stated. He added that kinship ties are central to village life, highlighting that when people originating from the village visit from the urban area or the diaspora, they go around the village paying courtesy calls because these values were instilled in children in the village as they were growing up. They feel a sense of belonging to every household in the village. Also, when households face challenges, they come together to assist each other. As the village head put: "No one must face a burden alone in this village, that is what I tell my people." He also pointed out that Covid-19 regulations were a challenge to the villagers because the regulations went contrary to their values of coming together and assisting each other in times of need.

The villagers also come together when performing ceremonies such as appeasing ancestors, Christian gatherings (as many villagers are Christians), *nhimbe*, village meetings, and weddings.

Villagers stated that they go around collecting money and food items when there is a funeral in the village or when someone is having a wedding, to make the burden lighter. Approximately once a week or bi-weekly, usually on a weekend, villagers take turns brewing beer called “seven days” and “one day” (*chihwani*). Villagers visit and support the person brewing and selling the beer while discussing what is happening in the village. Some church members meet during the week for prayers, and they take turns hosting the prayer sessions. Most villagers attend the Roman Catholic Church and, when meeting, they normally spent considerable time reconnecting, especially those who do not participate in the beer drinks.

From my study, 70% of the participants had household members who had moved to a fast-track resettlement area. When asked if they believed that the FTLRP had served its purpose of decongesting the communal area village, 60 % of the participants said yes, and the rest said no. The reason for some disagreement on this matter was that some households that had moved and resettled on an A1 farm were returning to rebuild and farm, leading to congestion once again. In at least one case, the (now returned) villagers’ land had been allocated to other family members who had remained in Kanzou Village. According to the village head, these events created significant conflicts, and he had to seek the chief’s assistance to solve them.

Two other villagers (10%) in the study were also once in the resettlement areas and had come back to the village. Luckily, their land had not been reallocated to other family members. One of these returnees was a widowed female aged 78. She was from Guruve originally and was married in Kanzou Village, and she and her family moved to a resettlement area close to Banket in 2002. But a few years after the death of her husband, she decided to come back to the village because, as she noted, “it was difficult for me to work on that large land on my own”. She also said that being elderly, she needed to be close to her family just in case she fell sick and needed someone to take care of her.

The other returnee is KV17, a single man in his early 40s, who returned to the village, had three brothers (all married) staying in the resettlement area. They were fighting over the land, and he had access to minimal land, so he decided to return to the village since no one was staying at their village home in Kanzou. He moved to the resettlement area with his father and brothers when he was much younger, but he had maintained relations with other family members back in Kanzou Village; therefore, it was relatively easy for him to move back, settle and slowly readjust. He stated:

My family treated me as a little boy because I don’t have a wife, so I was advised by my friend to come back and start afresh, so I did. It was not easy at first; but I got support now I am fine (Interview with KV17, Male).

He relocated four years prior to my research and is very pleased that he now has access to all the land his father once had in Kanzou Village. He would be willing to have his brothers join him back in the

CA. In indicating this, he highlights that, like the communal areas historically; the fast-track areas are now experiencing land pressure and scarcity because of adult sons now requiring land. He applauded those who kept ties with their former communal areas because this would facilitate movement back from A1 farms if and when necessary.

Kanzou Village has limited infrastructure. But, some households in the village benefited from the Rural Electrification Programme (REP), which was introduced by the government in 2002 to “correct the imbalances between urban and rural electrification with the ultimate goal of socially and financially empowering the rural communities and enhancing their capabilities in their contribution towards economic development of the country” (REF, n.d.). Just over half (55%) have access to electricity because of this programme. Photo 2 shows the use of an electric stove in one the villager’s homestead.



Photo 2: A villager cooking on an electric stove in Kanzou Village

Source: Fieldwork.

Villagers were grateful for this project but indicated that they struggle to pay the levies and bills; further, electricity is not always available due to the extensive periods of loadshedding experienced in Zimbabwe. Deforestation is taking place on a significant scale in the surrounding area, including on nearby fast track farms, and access to electricity was meant to minimise the collection and buying of firewood for cooking. However, villagers still buy firewood for the days when they experience load shedding. As one female interview put it:

We still buy firewood from Chitomborwizi [farms located about 20 kilometres from the village] even though we have electricity because, you know, here we struggle with electricity so when we experience loadshedding we need it for cooking (Interview with KV1, Female).

One participant stated that those who cannot afford to buy firewood go around picking dried cow dung to use for cooking. This is a huge problem during the rainy season because the cow dung will be wet due to rain. Another challenge related to this has been the death of cows due to a disease that was spreading in the village in 2020, alongside cattle theft, making it difficult to obtain dried cow dung. Many villagers keep *gurinwa* (maize stalk that remains after harvesting the maize) from their maize harvest to use as a substitute for firewood. However, because it is used frequently, it tends to finish fast. Some villagers (25%) have small solar panels installed on top of their houses for electrical energy, which they mainly use for lighting the house, recharging their cellular phones and for entertainment (radio and television). They cannot afford larger solar panels to use for cooking, so they use firewood and other alternatives. A significant minority of homesteads (20%) have no source of electricity at all. Photo 3 below shows a house with a solar panel on top.



Photo 3: A house in Kanzou Village with a solar panel on top.

Source: Fieldwork

In terms of water, 50% of the households in Kanzou Village have access to tapped water at their homesteads. The taps were erected outside the homestead structures so that the villagers could use the water for both gardening and the house. Only one (5%) of the interviewees has water connected to the whole house. The rest of the villagers uses a communal borehole that was donated a few years ago by a non-governmental organisation.

I observed that most of the main houses in the village have asbestos roofs and brick walls, unlike in the past when most of the main houses had grass-thatched roofs. As well, some of the round

huts are made of bricks with corrugated iron sheet roofs as opposed to mud and thatch (see Photo 4). About one-third of interviewed villagers (35%) had iron sheet roofs on their huts while the rest still has thatched roofs. On average, there were three house structures per household, consisting of a kitchen hut, the main house, and an outside toilet. Additionally, some homesteads had brick-built chicken runs.



Photo 4: A corrugated iron sheet roof on one of the huts in Kanzou Village

Source: Fieldwork.

5.2.3 Stratford Farm FTRA

Stratford Farm (also known as *Kamoto*) is a fast-track area, which was formerly owned by a white commercial farmer called Warrick Evans, who settled on the farm together with his family in 1986. It borders the Zvimba communal lands and what was once the Banket commercial farming area. It is located 14 kilometres from the farming town of Banket and almost 160 kilometres from Zimbabwe's capital city of Harare. Banket serves as a service centre for surrounding farms such as Stratford. Stratford farm is also located 11.3 kilometres from the tobacco research and experiment station in Trelawney. The Stratford Farm area falls under the authority of a headman who reports to Chief Zvimba and the District Administrator.

It is one of 1,792 farms that were acquired for resettlement in Mashonaland West Province, and one of 578 farms in Zvimba District as of 2003. Overall, 28,643 households were settled under the A1 villagised model in the district. It seems that most A1 farmers (villagers) at Stratford came from nearby areas in Zvimba, including the headman, with a few coming from urban areas and other CAs far from Zvimba. The ages of the A1 beneficiaries ranged from the early twenties to the late sixties at the time of the farm invasions in the early 2000s. With time, the farmers settled and built

proper structures at their homesteads with two structures per household on average. Photo 5 shows one homestead at Stratford with properly built structures.



Photo 5: Stratford A1 Homestead

Source: Fieldwork.

Villagers at Stratford depend mainly on firewood for cooking. There was no household with electricity supplied by the national power utility, though a significant minority (38%) had solar panels. What I noticed was that unlike in Kanzou Village where solar panels are on top of the houses, in Stratford they are not fixed permanently. Rather, participants keep their panels inside the house at night for fear of theft and take them out every morning into the sun to recharge. As in Kanzou Village, participants use solar energy to light their houses, charge phones and for entertainment. The former white commercial farmer mainly focused on growing tobacco, maize, and animal husbandry. This made Stratford Farm a source of employment for many locals, either on a permanent or seasonal basis. I was told that the farm employed about 125 permanent employees and occasionally added seasonal workers depending on the demands of the tobacco season because it was a labour-intensive crop. About 75 hectares of land was devoted to tobacco in one farming season. Besides their weekly cash wages, Evans (the former farmer) shared his maize harvest with the farmworkers. One Stratford A1 farmer who worked for Evans declared:

[W]e had a good relationship [with Evans] ... he was good [yah]. He understood that we needed food so he would give us bags of maize per family that would last us a long time (Interview with ST3, Male).

On top of this, they would occasionally receive very cheap meat when the farmer decided to slaughter his cattle. He further explained that the farm labourers were sad when the farm was invaded, even though he benefited from the fast-track process.

Because the previous owners of Stratford Farm mainly focused on farming tobacco, A1 participants inherited tobacco farming as their main cropping activity. However, of the four single women at Stratford FTRA, two do not engage in tobacco farming because they cannot afford the

inputs and it is too labour intensive for them. In this regard, there has been an increase in Zimbabwe in the penetration of middlemen merchants who offer loans to tobacco farmers for inputs, labour and tobacco curing because tobacco farming is capital-intensive. The middlemen merchants then accompany the farmer to the tobacco auction floors and get their payment with profit soon after the tobacco is sold. A1 farmers are purchasing inputs from these merchants because they are not receiving assistance from the government.

In Stratford FTRA, tobacco farmers claim that the merchants steal from them. Participant ST17 for example was frustrated when narrating how he sold tobacco worth US\$5,000 but only came home with US\$1,200. One respondent stated that sometimes the merchants give them incorrect information regarding the payment received at the auction floors, something over which the farmers have no control. In some instances, participants mentioned that they are given half their payments in US Dollars and the other half in Zimbabwe's RTGS via their phones. The RTGS deteriorates in value very quickly such that, by the time the farmers can use the money, it will be insufficient to buy inputs for the next agricultural season. This puts farmers in a cycle of debt because, after paying back the loan, they borrow again for the next season. They suspect that merchants receive US Dollars at the auction floors but choose to give the farmers RTGS, thereby benefitting the merchants. To make matters worse for the A1 farmers at Stratford FTRA, if anything happens to the tobacco crops, the farmer bears the loss, and the merchants still expect their money back with a sizeable profit.

A study by Mkodzongi and Lawrence (2019) also refers to unfair pricing mechanisms of inputs and the manipulation of tobacco prices to the disadvantage of A1 farmers. Similarly, research by Chingosho et al. (2020) found that farmers in Manicaland Province are not benefitting from selling tobacco but are victims of the tobacco sector. Besides not receiving support from government, small-scale A1 farmers do not have any fixed collateral for purposes of loans from banking institutions (Moyo and Nyoni, 2013; Mudimu et al., 2020). If farmers choose to self-fund their tobacco farming, the crops end up being pale and yellowish due to a lack of adequate inputs (see Photo 6).



Photo 6: A photo of tobacco planted by the farmers in Stratford for the 2020/2021 season looking yellow due to insufficient fertiliser

Source: Fieldwork.

To complement crop farming, other livelihood activities are also taking place. For instance, to make ends meet, one farmer at Stratford FTRA (during the farming season) harvests *ishwa* (termites) through a technique he developed, and he sells it for one dollar (US) a gallon to other farmers who eat it as a relish or a snack, thereby generating income for his family in the process (see Photo 7 and 8). Another participant does bricklaying for farmers who are still building their homes and supplements his household income in this way. At one time, almost half of his bricks were stolen, and it is now a challenge for him because he does not have any security to protect the bricks.



Photo 7 & 8: Farmer trapping *ishwa* from their hole and putting them in a sack to go and sell to other farmers for income and me enjoying some of the *ishwa* prepared by the farmer for sale. Source: Fieldwork.

5.3 Demographic Overview of Villagers

This section discusses the demographic composition of the villagers interviewed in this study. Most of the interviewed villagers across the two sites were heads of households. The gender composition of the 40 participants who were interviewed using in-depth interviews was 24 (60%) women and 16 (40%) men. In Kanzou Village, participants were older than Stratford FTRA participants with averages of 56.1 years and 50.4 years respectively. In terms of marital status, comparatively more villagers were married in Stratford FTRA than in Kanzou Village and there were more widowed participants in Kanzou Village than in Stratford FTRA. Stratford FTRA villagers were generally more educated than villagers in Kanzou. Table 1 provides a list of the Kanzou villagers interviewed (by gender, marital status and age), and Table 2 does likewise for Stratford FTRA. The first column in the tables provides the identifier used for each of the 40 villagers in the ensuing empirical discussions in this and later chapters. Below, I discuss the demographic differences between the two sites in more detail.

Table 1: Demographic Profiles for Kanzou Villagers

Participant	Gender	Marital Status	Age
KV1	Female	Widowed	71
KV2	Female	Married	60
KV3	Female	Married	55
KV4	Female	Widowed	62
KV5	Female	Single	44
KV6	Male	Married	62
KV7	Female	Widowed	71
KV8	Female	Widowed	70
KV9	Female	Single	53
KV10	Male	Married	55
KV11	Female	Married	54
KV12	Female	Widowed	78
KV13	Female	Married	47
KV14	Female	Married	45
KV15	Male	Single	53
KV16	Male	Married	43
KV17	Male	Single	43
KV18	Female	Widowed	56
KV19	Male	Married	55
KV20	Male	Married	44

Table 2: Demographic Profile for Stratford Villagers

Participant	Gender	Marital Status	Age
ST1	Female	Single	42
ST2	Female	Married (Polygamy)	44
ST3	Male	Married	52
ST4	Female	Married	65
ST5	Female	Married	44
ST6	Male	Married	53
ST7	Male	Married	43
ST8	Male	Married	55
ST9	Male	Married	42
ST10	Male	Married	68
ST11	Female	Married	44
ST12	Female	Married	47
ST13	Male	Married	42
ST14	Male	Married	43
ST15	Female	Single	55
ST16	Female	Single	50
ST17	Male	Married	62
ST18	Female	Widowed	52
ST19	Female	Married	44
ST20	Female	Single	60

5.3.1. Gender and Age

The gender composition of the 40 interviewees is 24 women and 16 men. Though I had hoped to incorporate all of these interviewees into focus group discussions, eight opted out of FGDs due to other commitments; these were replaced by other individuals (eight) of the same gender. In addition, two male key informants were interviewed. In relation to the two sites, 13 women and 7 men were interviewed in Kanzou Village while 11 women and 9 men were interviewed in Stratford FTRA.

The age distribution of the villagers, disaggregated by research site, appears in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Age of Respondents

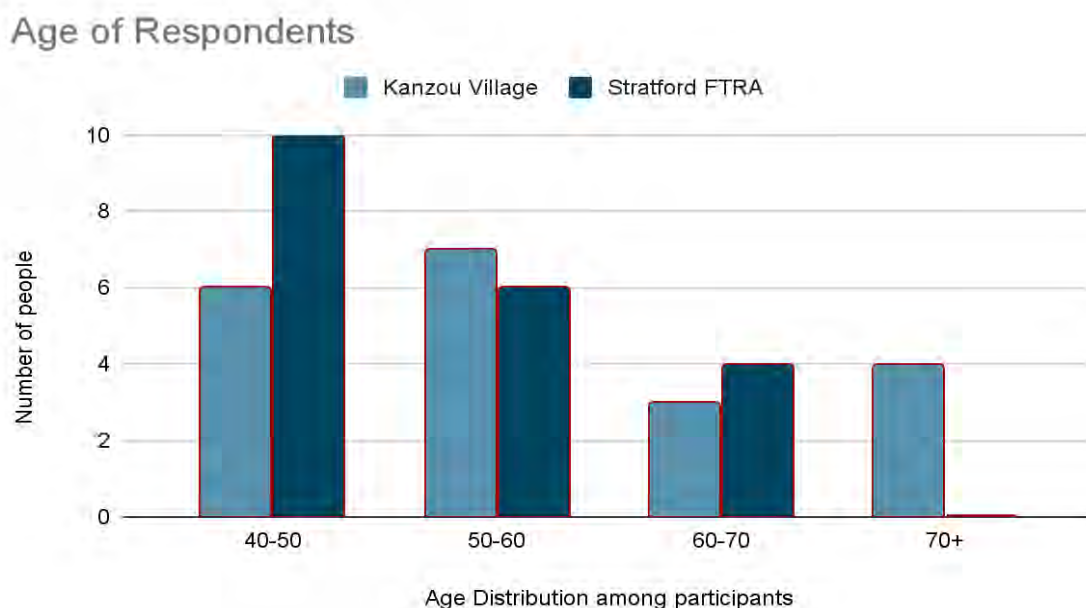


Figure 2 shows a relatively young population for Stratford FTRAs as compared to Kanzou Village (50% of interviewees in Stratford FTRA are in the lowest 40-50 age bracket, compared to 30% in Kanzou Village). No participants from Stratford FTRA were in the highest age bracket of 70+ compared to Kanzou Village with 20% (four) of participants in this category. The evidence confirms that communal area villagers and others who participated in the acquisition of land in the early 2000s were younger men and women. According to Nyawo (2015: 22): “The fast-track land reform programme attracted able-bodied young men who were adventurous and had the energy to start a life, a new homestead and with a future to forge fresh relations”. Most of the interviewees indeed mentioned this during the interviews. Many in Stratford FTRA (60%) indicated that they had just finished high school in the early 2000s when the FTLRP took place while the rest (40%) noted that they had just begun to establish their own homes independent of parents. As highlighted by *ST12*:

My husband left me pregnant with our first born who turned 18 a few months previously; we were young back then and I was happy that he got the land for us.

Some of the participants (especially those above 70 in Kanzou Village) attested to this by stating that they did not partake in the land occupations because their ages were advanced, and they did not have the willpower or capacity to start a new life in the FTRAs. Also, one Kanzou Village participant argued that leaving for the FTRAs meant that he would be abandoning his ancestral land and ancestors, though he was delighted that the youth received their own land.

5.3.2. Heads of Households, Marital Status and Household Composition

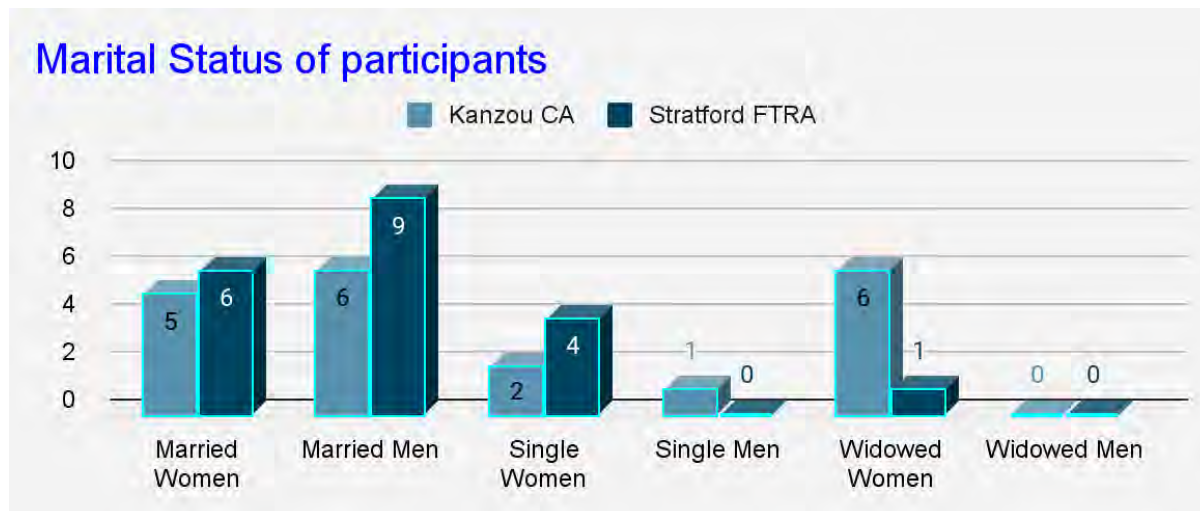
Overall, for the two research sites combined, 67.5% of household heads were males and 32.5% were females. 10% in Kanzou Village were not heads of households and 20% in Stratford FTRA not heads. Those who were not heads were spouses or children of the heads of households. There were both male and female heads of the household. Women either were de jure or de facto heads of households. In cases where women are de jure heads, they are the legal and customary heads (mainly because the women are not married). De facto female heads of households do incorporate at times a self-reported female head whose husband is present but, more typically, there is a de jure male head (usually the husband) who is absent for most of the time and delegates headship to his wife during his absence (Quisumbing et al., 2001).

In Kanzou Village, eight women were de jure heads of household and there was only one de facto head whereas, in Stratford FTRA, two homes were de facto female-headed while five were de jure female headed. The higher rate of de jure female household heads in Kanzou Village were due to the greater presence of in particular widowhood amongst women in the village. The higher rate of de facto female heads in Stratford FTRA might reflect a higher level of livelihood diversification amongst fast-track farmers as well as a higher rate of marriage (as discussed later). A study conducted by Navarra (2019) found similar patterns showing that women who were de jure heads of households were more likely to be divorced or widowed (65% compared to 3% of men). In the case of de facto female heads, women not only shoulder the caring duties in the household but also agricultural production and daily decision-making. However, when it comes to major household decisions, such as the selling of livestock, using income from agricultural sales or perhaps lending a piece of land to another villager, female de facto heads must normally consult their husbands first and then act on their instructions.

Interview evidence indicates the average age of household heads in Kanzou Village as 57 years and in Stratford FTRA as 50.4 years. As stated earlier, the average age for all interviews in Stratford FTRA is lower than in Kanzou Village, and household head age shows this. Overall, household structures in Stratford FTRA are mainly nuclear families (husband and wife/wives with children, or mother and children, or grandmother and grandchildren) but with some extended families as well. Extended families are more prevalent in Kanzou Village than in Stratford FTRA. For example, participant KV4 stated that she is happy to see her grandchildren grow even though everyone in the household must share everything, including homestead, garden and field. At times, this can place significant pressure on the available land, particularly if the household is abnormally large. Thus, when asked about their household composition, participant ST10 said, “I stay with my 5 children and my wife and 4 other children of my relatives”.

Marital status as a socio-cultural dynamic plays a significant role in accessing land and how labour is divided within a household. The evidence in Figure 3 shows a difference in the marital status of interviewed participants in the Kanzou Village versus those in Stratford FTRA.

Figure 3: Marital Status of Interviewees

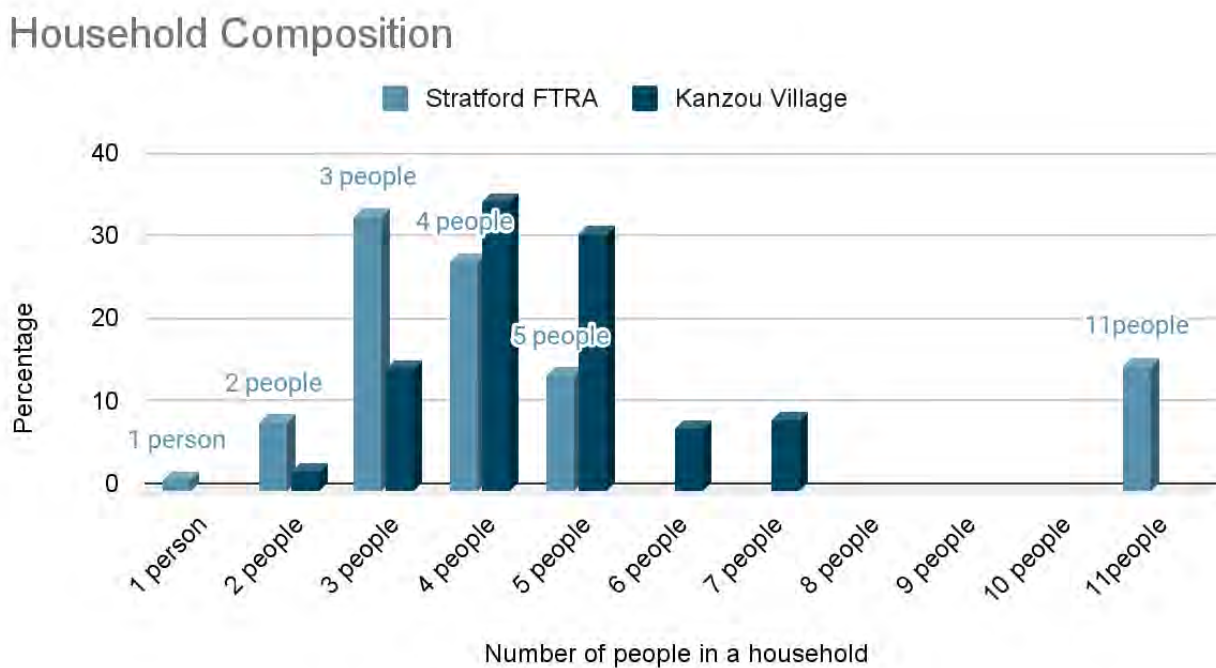


In Kanzou Village, five (38.5%) of the women and six (85.7%) men are married, and six (46.2%) women are widowed, and 0 men are widowed; and only 2 (15.3%) of the women and 1 (14.3%) men are single. In the case of Stratford FTRA, there is a higher rate of marriage as six (54.5%) of the interviewed women and nine (100%) men are married, while four (36.4%) women and 0 men are single, and one (9.1%) woman and 0 men are widowed. For the Stratford FTRA women who are married, four stayed with their husbands and two were *de facto* heads of the household while their husbands worked in nearby cities. Most households (63.6%) in Kanzou Village have couples married for a period of between two and four decades while, in Stratford FTRA, most couples (60%) got married a year before the FTLRP or less than three years after the FTLRP. The balance (40%) in Stratford FTRA were married for more than five years when the FTLRP took place.

The most common type of marriage in both Kanzou Village and Stratford FTRA is the unregistered customary marriage. Only four women interviewed in Kanzou Village and one in Stratford FTRA were married in the civil court. One of the marriages in Stratford FTRA is a polygamous marriage, consisting of a husband and two wives. There were no polygamous marriages recorded amongst participants in Kanzou Village, each married man having one wife only. The participant in the polygamous marriage raised concerns about how men are losing their morals in the FTRAs and engaging romantically and sexually with multiple women. This was a concern also raised in the women-only FGD in Stratford FTRA.

The average household size at Stratford FTRA is 3.6 resident household members. On average, there are two resident children per household but there are also many instances of non-resident children. Households with younger heads of households consist of just parent and children. In Kanzou Village, the average household size is slightly larger, namely, 4.0 resident household members. In addition, most households in Kanzou Village have children who are working elsewhere, and some older participants are staying with (and looking after) grandchildren while the parents are employed in the urban areas. Figure 4 provides the distribution of household sizes in both study sites.

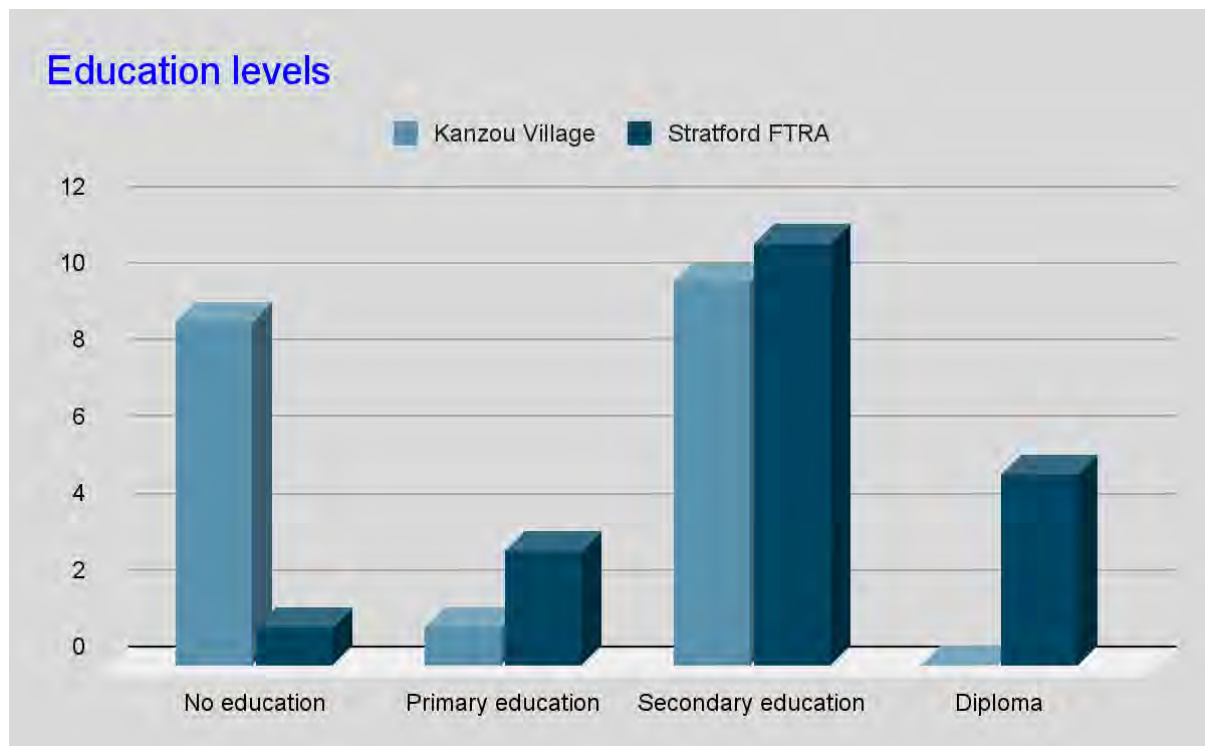
Figure 4: Household Composition



5.3.3. Education

In terms of education (see Figure 5), participants aged between 40-50 (52.5% of interviewees) had reached secondary school education in the form of Ordinary Level (O’Level), which is one of the exit points of the education system in Zimbabwe. This was the case for both Kanzou Village and Stratford FTRA. However, 25% of the participants had no formal education, 10% had primary education and 12, 5% had a diploma. The 12, 5% with diploma holders were only in Stratford FTRA, which in part reflects the younger population at Stratford FTRA and the greater post-1980 educational opportunities for blacks, including in rural Zimbabwe. Nearly all the villagers without any education (ten in total) were women, as only one male interviewee had no education. These women were denied a chance to go to school because of being a girl child.

Figure 5: Education levels of participants



The high number of participants with no formal education in Kanzou Village compared to Stratford FTRA (a ratio of 9:1) can be attributed in part to the older population profile amongst interviewees in Kanzou Village, who grew up in the pre-independence days when education was prioritised for the white minority. In addition, most participants in Kanzou Village are female and their education was not prioritised in pre-independence Zimbabwe and in some areas until today. From 1980, the Zimbabwean government embarked on a massive expansion of educational facilities, including building secondary schools in communal areas. There has been a significant improvement in access to education for the black majority and for black female children in particular in Zimbabwe after independence, with a remarkable increase noted in primary and secondary education between 1980 and 1999 in particular (Kanyongo, 2005). The findings by Kanyongo (2005) substantiate the difference in the level of education between those aged 40-50 and those aged 61-70+, with the former having benefited from the introduction of educational facilities in rural areas. In Stratford FTRA, there were 5 participants who obtained a post-secondary education qualification in the form of diplomas: 2 of these work in nearby cities and 3 work as teachers at a local school. Only one of these 5 interviewees is a woman (a teacher), which reflects ongoing differential educational opportunities based on gender in contemporary Zimbabwe.

Education is important for rural farmers because, when opportunities for agricultural training arise, those with educational qualifications will likely receive the training and benefit most from it. This leads to what Khosrobeigi (2018) argues is agricultural education conditioned by systems of patriarchy, which rarely ever brings about improvements in the education of rural women.

5.4 Lives and Livelihood Strategies in Kanzou Village and Stratford FTRA

In the context of providing the demographical profiles for the two case studies, this section discusses the livelihoods of farmers in Kanzou Village and Stratford FTRA. Ellis (1998) defines a livelihood as encompassing the activities and assets drawn up and pursued in seeking to maintain or enhance the life-course of a household. In rural areas, farming activities and access to land (and natural resources) are central to livelihoods (Mphande, 2016), as is the case in Kanzou Village and Stratford FTRA. However, in addition to farming activities, rural populations are also known to diversify into non-agricultural activities and non-farm activities to supplement their agricultural activities.

5.4.1 Lives before FTLRP

Before examining the current livelihoods of villagers in both research sites subsequent to the emergence of fast track, I first provide a historical overview for the sets of villagers. I start by first discussing Stratford villagers, before going on to focus on Kanzou Village.

5.4.1.1 Stratford FTRA Villagers

Nationally, those who became A1 farmers under FTLRP from the early 2000s originated from diverse spaces. In the case of Stratford FTRA, some had stayed in cities (35%), some in nearby communal areas (30%), and others were former farm workers on Stratford farm (5%). Additionally, some were farm workers at nearby farms (20%), and others came from more distant communal areas (10%). Those who lived in urban areas came as far as Harare and Mutare, though one came from the nearby town of Chinhoyi to resettle on Stratford Farm.

One villager (ST17) stated that he came to try his luck after communication from his sister who was married in a nearby village. This villager travelled all the way from Mutare to join his brother-in-law, and he was successful in receiving land. He stated that, since he is originally from Mozambique, he was not concerned about the location of the farmland as he did not have 'native land' in Zimbabwe and his family was scattered around the country. Seeking employment in cities was difficult at the time, and even informal trading was highly competitive and precarious, so urbanites like ST17 chose to engage in agricultural production as a livelihood alternative. Another Stratford villager indicated that, after receiving a plot on the farm, he resigned from his formal job in

the town of Chinhoyi because his salary was being affected negatively by the high inflation rate. He noted:

I took all my pension money and invested in the plot that I received. I left my family behind for the whole year while I settled; then I fetched them. This was promising (ST14, Male, Interview).

The early 2000s was a period when Zimbabwe was experiencing mega-inflation that caused ordinary citizens to lose their savings as the Zimbabwean dollar lost its value. This made ST14 lose hope and he opted for the FTLRP as an avenue to try to improve his household's livelihood status.

Other villagers came from nearby or more distant communal lands. One such participant (ST4), who came from a communal area in Zvimba district, reported that the issue of land was constantly leading to conflict between her husband and his siblings, so her husband chose to take part in the FTLRP so that they could have their own land:

My husband had issues with his siblings, and I didn't like it. I was happy when he decided to join others in the resettlement programme...he was also happy himself. The soils here [in the CA] were becoming weak because the family has been using the fields for a long time (ST4, Female, Interview).

She added that the soil in the communal area was deficient because of decades of farming without rotation since household members needed a portion of land to grow their crops. Hence, they ended up engaging in *maricho*, a practice where they exchanged labour for bags of maize so that the household would have enough maize to last the whole year.

Other Stratford villagers noted land pressure and shortages. One male villager stressed:

Yah our families were growing, and land was becoming an issue so were grateful for the land resettlement programme (ST10, Male, Interview).

Participant ST6 mentioned that, even though his family had livestock, he left it all back home (in the CA) because the other family members refused to allow him to take livestock to Stratford that he had inherited from his father. This meant that he had to start his new (fast track) life without any livestock, affecting his production in turn. At Stratford FTRA, he has worked hard by performing manual labour for other A1 farmers, including building houses for them since he used to assist his father who was a builder. The income he received from this enabled him to buy two cattle to plough within his A1 plot. Participants who relocated from communal areas outside Zvimba (such as Musana in Bindura district) stated that they were happy to make a fresh start in a different province, but it was not easy since they were far away from their families.

Those who were former farm workers said that their on-farm livelihoods were undercut by the farm invasions because they no longer had a weekly salary, and they did not have any savings

either. For instance, ST10 mentioned that his family struggled, though his wife was buying and selling goods, which assisted them to make a living.

Of the interviewed participants, only three were not the original ‘owners’ of the A1 plots. One interviewee inherited land from his sister, who passed away:

The land is my sister’s because she was a single mother, so I got it when she passed away (ST9, Male, Interview).

Participant ST9 mentioned that, as an elder brother, the family saw it fit for him to inherit his late sister’s land. This decision was made in consultation with his siblings because their parents were dead. The situation was going to be a different if the sister was married because her spouse would have inherited the land. The other two participants inherited the land from their late fathers. They were only teenagers still in school in the early 2000s: one was 14 years old, and the other was 15 years old at the time. They relocated to Stratford FTRA after completing their secondary education. One of them has assumed the position of head of the household and has since married. His other siblings are in the diaspora so, even before they resettled, the siblings sent remittances to the family in Zimbabwe for upkeep. The third villager stated that he is taking care of his mother who is still the main owner, but he makes most of the decisions regarding the use of land and livestock. This indicates that passing land through inheritance is still being practiced in the resettlement areas.

5.4.1.2. Kanzou Village Villagers

For the villagers at Kanzou Village, most participants were born and bred in the village. Before the year 2000, when they were much younger, some were residing as dependents of their parents in the CA, while others were staying with their grandparents because their parents were working in mines and on farms. Only a few of the villagers lived elsewhere before fast track, having relocated from nearby towns subsequently. People in Kanzou Village fall under the Village Head, Sabhuku Kanzou, who took over the reins from his uncle, as the Village Head’s appointment is governed by hereditary principles. Sabhuku Kanzou works together with a village committee to manage the affairs of the village. Like other communal areas in Zimbabwe, and similar to A1 farms, land in Kanzou village is held under a common property tenure institution, with title deeds to the land vested in the State. Villagers have individual rights to their plots and have access to communal grazing land.

Before the FTLRP, Kanzou Village consisted mainly of three-or four-generational households. Sons would marry and live with their families (parents and siblings) in the same homestead, sharing the same plot of land. Participants mentioned that, in some families, sons are expected to stay in the same household with the parents for about a year after getting married as a way for the family to bond with the new family member. The son and his wife would then be given

their own farming land by the parents where they build a homestead and farm. In turn, though, the son would parcel out land to his own sons, and this led to overpopulation and overuse of land, especially in those households that had many sons. In the case of Kanzou Village, it seems that the village head ensured that all married sons received a share of the land, and not just the eldest son.

Kanzou Village's local economy in the 1980s and 1990s was centred on farming and gardening. Cattle raising also existed, but villagers lost a significant number of cattle in the 1992 drought (including whole herds), and another drought in 1995 affected their farming and gardening as well. It is believed that over one million head of cattle died of starvation during the 1992 drought (Maphosa, 1994:53). To combat hunger, Kanzou villagers narrated that they received yellow maize meal from the government, which they called "Kenya" because it was imported from Kenya. This was part of the drought food relief that approximately 2 million people across Zimbabwe received (Sachikonye, 1992).

Zimbabwe was not only shaken by severe challenges in the agricultural sector, but also by deindustrialisation and a dramatic rise of formal unemployment in the 1990s in part because of the structural adjustment programme introduced in 1991. One Kanzou villager was retrenched in 1993 and he migrated back to the village to join his widowed mother who was staying alone. He never went back to the urban area citing the collapse of the urban formal economy. Although some Kanzou villagers received remittances from those working in the formal economy, the reliance on remittances was not as great as it seemingly is now. Also, before 2000, villagers were at times also involved in barter trading, mainly trading maize for household basics such as sugar, cooking oil and soap.

Women in the village were involved in garden cooperatives and stokvels. However, when some of the villagers relocated to A1 farms during the FTLRP, the garden cooperatives stopped. The stokvels continued for some time and later stopped due to economic hardships:

We had a big garden down that side [before 2000] where we grew various vegetables and our market were vegetable vendors in Murombedzi Growth Point and some as far as Chegutu, they would come with their trucks and buy (KV12, Female, Interview).

The cooperatives had a committee to ensure that they operated smoothly. But, there were instances where the cooperatives suffered due to cattle grazing the vegetables and, at times, thieves would harvest during the night from the gardens, resulting in losses. The vegetable-based cooperatives were an important source of household income; for instance, money for school fees was typically generated from this. Knitting and sewing clubs existed in the 1990s as well, but these stopped because of the ageing membership and departures from the village. The clubs entered local and provincial competitions, and some of their products were sold in the nearby towns of Chinhoyi and Chegutu. Men did not partake in these projects.

5.4.2 Livelihoods after FTLRP

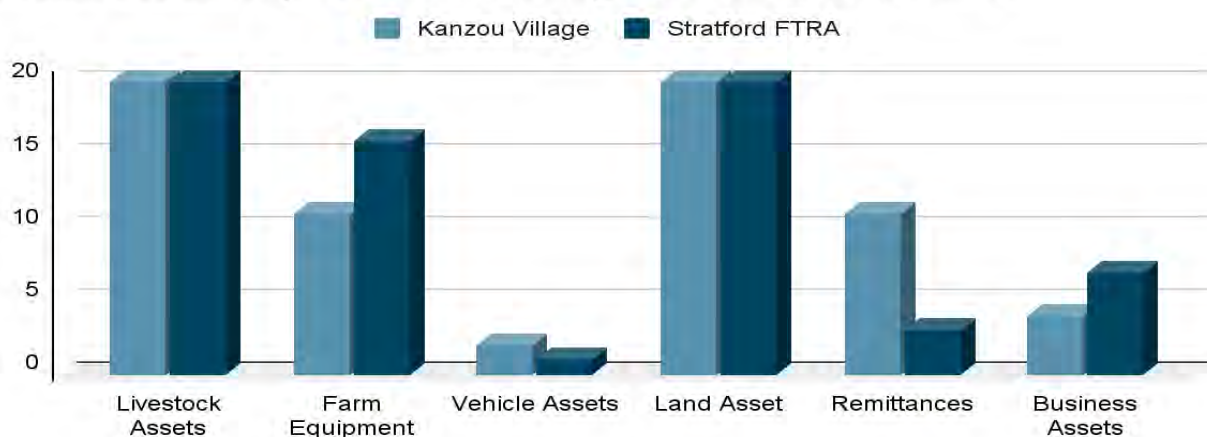
This section details the livelihoods of the Kanzou Village and Stratford FTRA villagers after 2000 based on the fieldwork undertaken. This entails setting out asset ownership, landholdings, agricultural activities, off-farm activities, and other pertinent dimensions of their livelihoods.

5.4.2.1 Asset Ownership

Assets are crucial to maintain and improving households' standard of living and they may provide forms of security during times of economic stress (Crea et al., 2013). Participants in both study areas had personal possessions that they considered as assets (see Figure 6). Given that, farming is the primary livelihood activity undertaken by villagers in Zvimba District, land is considered as a key asset amongst the villagers – yet, the land is merely possessed and accessed, rather than owned. Otherwise, a primary asset under ownership is domestic livestock, especially cattle. Combined, 85% of the interviewed villagers indicated that they owned cattle. Farm equipment (plows, tractors, sprayers, cultivators, and scotch carts) were also mentioned as a form of asset in the study areas, with 55% of the participants in Kanzou Village having access to farming equipment versus 80% in Stratford FTRA. Remittances were also spoken of as an asset, and these were particularly prevalent in Kanzou Village – 55% of the participants in Kanzou Village have access to remittances while only 15% of the participants in Stratford FTRA have such access. Business assets (such as stock, machinery, equipment, and raw materials) in the form of off-farm and non-farm assets were possessed by 20% in Kanzou Village and 35% in Stratford FTRA. Lastly, vehicle assets ranked the lowest in both study areas, as 10% of the participants in Kanzou Village have vehicles as compared to only 5% in Stratford FTRA.

Figure 6: Asset Ownership

Asset ownership in Kanzou Village and Stratford FTRA



5.4.2.2. Landholding Size

From the interviews, it became clear that the average size of landholdings in Stratford FTRA is larger than in Kanzou Village. Villagers in Stratford FTRA have on average 6 hectares of land, including a residential plot within a defined village block, a small plot for gardening near the homestead, and an individually-possessed arable landholding (i.e., field) as well as a communal grazing area for the livestock. The size of A1 farms does vary across the countryside, but their residential and farming land-use structure is similar (Cliffe et al., 2011). Tom and Mutswanga (2015) also found that farmers at Mupfurudzi A1 Farm in Shamva had 6 hectares of prime land for farming and for the construction of a homestead. A survey by Matondi and Dekker (2011) on Ruzivo found that in 2004 found that 84.3% of beneficiaries of A1 farms/plots in Zimbabwe obtained between 3 and 10 hectares, though six hectares and less is more common (Scoones and Wolmer, 2003). At the same time, there is a difference in landholding sizes between men and women in male-headed households in Stratford Farm. Women in male-headed households were allocated a small portion of land (about half a hectare on average) to grow their own crops.

Participants in Kanzou Village have an average total of 3 hectares for both residential and landholding purposes, which is half the size of the landholdings at Stratford FTRA. Like at Stratford FTRA, Kanzou villagers also have a common grazing area for their livestock. Again, married women and unmarried women in households where men are household heads possess smaller plots of land when compared to men. However, this is not the case in all female-headed households. More specifically, women who are de jure heads of households have more land than female de facto household heads because de facto household heads tend to rely on a portion of land that is allocated by their absent husbands, whereas female de jure household heads have greater control over land allocations. Most female interviewees in Kanzou Village stated that their landholding size is below a hectare, ranging from a quarter of a hectare to half of a hectare.

As well, I investigated the area of land actually being farmed by villagers. Most villagers in Stratford FTRA stated that they try to farm at least three-quarters of their available land annually, while those in Kanzou Village stated that they farm all their land area. This difference between the two sites reflect the fact that land-plot sizes in Kanzou Village are smaller than in the fast-track area of Stratford. Maize production takes up most of the cropping area for all villagers in Kanzou, followed by groundnuts. In Stratford FTRA, 55% of the participants stated that tobacco takes up most of the cropping area and 45% indicated that maize did. In Stratford FTRA, those who stated that tobacco is the most prominent crop went on to mention that maize is their second most important crop. Those who have maize as the main crop also grow tobacco. In both study areas, small grains such as cowpeas take up the smallest cropping area.

5.4.2.3 Agricultural Activities

Participants in both study areas grow a variety of crops such as maize, tobacco, groundnuts, round nuts, sweet potatoes, beans, and cowpeas. However, they engage mainly in subsistence agriculture, with maize as a commonly grown crop since it provides the staple food for households in Zimbabwe. In Zvimba, maize is grown for subsistence, but it is also sold at times. As indicated, tobacco is produced exclusively in Stratford FTRA, and for marketing. Growing tobacco in Kanzou Village has never taken place. As one Kanzou villager noted: “People here grew cotton a lot at some point, but they have never tried to grow tobacco” (KV6, Male, Interview). Further, even if Kanzou Village farmers wanted to grow tobacco, the area has very poor soils for tobacco and there is insufficient rainfall to allow farmers to grow tobacco and irrigate the crops. The village has water problems such that the whole village (along with some neighbouring villages) use one borehole that was donated by an NGO to assist with water shortages. Hence, for participants in Kanzou Village, the focus is on growing maize.

In addition to farming in their fields, villagers in both study areas engage in gardening activities. In Kanzou Village, gardens are usually just outside the homestead, and they are fenced to keep away animals from eating the vegetables. Previously, people in Kanzou Village had a common area for gardens that was further away from their homesteads. However, because there was an increase in local people not looking after their domestic animals, the farmers would find their gardens grazed by the animals. Hence, they opted for individual gardens closer to the homestead. Because water is a huge problem in Kanzou Village, farmers dig a well to catch rain during the rainy season so that they can use it to water their vegetables. In Stratford FTRA, the gardens are some distance away from the homesteads as villagers have designated areas for gardens. In both study areas, participants mentioned that they grow covo (a leafy vegetable normally used as relish) as the main vegetable, as well as cabbages, tomatoes, and onion. Most (85%) of the participants in both study areas grow these vegetables mainly for consumption. What was common at Stratford FTRA and not in Kanzou Village was how women would come together to grow vegetables cooperatively and take turns to water the vegetables. Their assigned times for duties permit women to engage in other activities when they are not on watering duty.

Livestock is also very important to farmers in both sites. The most common domestic livestock owned in the two study areas were cattle, goats, sheep, and chickens. Most married women in Stratford FTRA and Kanzou Village indicated that men, as the head of households, were owners of primary livestock such as cattle, goats, and sheep in their households, while women in male-headed households were owners of small domestic animals such as chickens. One female participant in Stratford FTRA also keeps rabbits for consumption.

However, cattle ownership was common in both male-headed and female-headed households because of their multiple uses such as providing draught power, manure for tillage, milk, meat for household consumption, appeasing ancestral spirits (*vadzimu*) and paying bride price.



Photo 9 & 10 Cattle owned by a farmer in Stratford and a farmer milking one of his cows.

Source: Fieldwork

Villagers in Kanzou Village at the time of my interviews were facing a huge problem of cattle theft and foot-and-mouth disease that was killing their cattle. One distraught participant explained that he was anticipating hunger in the upcoming year (2021). He could not hide his anger toward cattle thieves who were robbing villagers of their wealth. For example, one villager had only three cattle left out of a total of twelve. Narrating the story, this villager indicated that around August 2020 he released his cattle to go and graze together with the cattle of other villagers because, when it is the post-harvest season, villagers do not need to look after their cattle. However, when it was time to go and fetch the cattle, he only found five. He spent weeks looking for the other seven with no luck. After a few weeks, the two cattle disappeared, leaving him with three cattle. It is now a challenge for him and his family because cattle production is related to crop production which means, the less the cattle, the less the manure for crop production. Villagers in Stratford FTRA did not see cattle theft as a problem, but they ensure that their cattle are in the kraal at the right time (notably, nighttime).

5.4.2.4 Non-Agricultural and Off-Farm Activities

Livelihood diversification by households in rural areas into non-agricultural and off-farm activities is quite common in Zimbabwe. Off-farm work is “any activity undertaken by the farmer or farm household outside farming [off the farm] as an additional source of income” (Anang et al., 2020). Non-agricultural activities take place on the farm, but these activities are not related to farming. In

the case study sites, these types of diversification included dressmaking, exchanging labour for cash on another farmer's farm, the sale of firewood, and basketry.

Amongst the case study households, 60% of the households were involved in either off-farm or non-agricultural activities (or both), and 40% were not. Those who had at least an Ordinary Level educational qualification participated in non-farm activities more so than those without a formal education qualification or merely a primary education qualification. For Kanzou Village, this involved the children of the interviewed farmers whereas, for Stratford FTRA, it was more the case that heads of households were the ones involved in non-farm activities. In part, this difference is a reflection of the differences in education levels and ages between the two sites. Stratford FTRA has a younger population compared to Kanzou Village, including with regard to the ages of household heads. The children of heads in Kanzou Village are old enough to engage in a variety of activities to generate income. For instance, most young women in Kanzou Village sell tomatoes and other vegetables at the Chinhoyi-Chegutu Highway turn-off, an income that assists them with for example paying fees for their children (see Photo 11).



Photo 11: A photo showing a group consisting of mainly young women from Kanzou Village, selling tomatoes at Robert Mugabe Highway turn-off.
Source: Fieldwork.

In Kanzou Village, 55% of villagers stated that their main source of income is remittances from children who are in the diaspora (including the United Kingdom, Canada, Botswana and South Africa) or are employed in nearby towns like Harare, Chinhoyi, Chegutu and Kadoma. In this case, remittances received are enabling households to stabilise their income and reduce uncertainties associated with agricultural production. Farming is a primary source of income for 40% of the Kanzou Village households even though some also engage in non-farm activities. The rest of the households (5%) stated that off-farm and (non-farm) non-agricultural activities are their main sources of income. To give one example, villager KV18 said that soon after she lost her husband, one of her children got an opportunity to relocate to the United Kingdom. He then asked her to stop undertaking her business of selling vegetables by the roadside because he was now sending money on a monthly basis for her upkeep. In addition, she was having health problems because of her age, which made it difficult for her (like others in Kanzou Village) to continue engaging in off-farm activities. Remittances amount to about US\$1,000 on average per household per year in Kanzou Village. Another villager (KV20) has a tent-and-chairs hiring business that his son (who works in South Africa) started for him. He mentioned that he hires out the tents and chairs for funerals, weddings and any other gatherings in the village, in nearby villages and in the growth point (see Photo 12). This business has helped his household significantly in drought seasons. There are times as well when people are engaging in ‘*kurova makuva*’ (appeasing spirits), normally around August, and the demand becomes high. KV20 stated:

My son did a very good thing for me. Now everyone knows that I hire out tents and chairs. You must come back in August and see how busy I become. This is a good business; I want to buy more. I want my son to be happy that the business is doing well. (KV20, Male, Interview)

Clients come from as far as Murombedzi Growth Point, boosting his confidence in his business. Even though he does not have qualifications in business management, his educational level (O’Level) is assisting him with the basic knowledge of running a business.



Photo 12: A photo showing tents and chairs for hire.
Source: Fieldwork.

Only a minority (25%) of the participants in Stratford FTRA mentioned that they receive remittances from their children and relatives who are in the diaspora or in the capital city of Harare. This lower rate of incoming remittances is due to Stratford FTRA's young population, as most of the interviewed villagers still have children who are very young and in school.

5.5 Ensuing Thematic Presentation

Four main themes relating to land access, the division of labour and gender relations emerged from the data and data analysis (Table 3), and these are discussed below in separate chapters. Each theme consists of a number of sub-themes which detail different dimensions of the main theme in both study sites. The first theme is "Land Acquisition, Access and Security" (chapter 6) and it examines participants' access to, and ownership-possession, of land in terms of gender. This includes the importance they give to land, how they accessed land, and the effect of marital status on land access/ownership. The second theme is "Agricultural Assets, Inputs, and Production" (chapter 7) and it focuses on the gendered character of agriculture in both sites, including participants' access to agricultural equipment and inputs, as well as agricultural schemes introduced by the government to increase productivity. The manner in which gender plays a part in accessing agricultural production resources is central to this, and the analysis is further extended to consider the marketing of agricultural products. While chapters 6 and 7 concentrate on land and agriculture respectively in relation to gender, the following two empirical chapters focus on decision-making and gender in the sphere of production (chapter 8) and the sphere of reproduction (chapter 9). Thus, a third theme is "Division of Labour and Decision-making within Agricultural Production" (chapter 8) and the fourth theme is "Division of Labour and Decision-making within the Domestic Sphere" (chapter 9). In both cases, a range of sub-themes are discussed, as set out in Table 3.

Table 3: Thematic Structure by Chapter

MAIN THEME	SUB-THEMES
Land Acquisition, Access and Security (chapter 6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ‘Land is life’: The importance of accessing agricultural land ● Land access, marital status, and marriage form ● Women’s independent access to land
Agricultural Assets, Inputs and Production (chapter 7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Access to agricultural equipment as a production constraint ● Access to agricultural inputs ● Government’s agricultural support and rampant corruption ● Market prices as barriers to reinvestment
Division of Labour and Decision-making within Agricultural Production (chapter 8)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Division of labour along farm activities ● Subsistence crops vs cash crops: division of labour by crop type ● Dynamics of hiring farm labour ● Gendered control over crop sales
Division of Labour and Decision-making within the Domestic Sphere (chapter 9)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Division of housework along gender lines ● Domestic chores, workload and gender ● Gender roles amongst children ● Decision-making powers in local households ● Attitudes towards male-female equal decision-making power

5.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have provided an overview of the Zvimba Rural District and the two study sites, as well as the research subjects' demographic features, outlining gender, age, educational background, marital status and other variables. Also central to this chapter has been detailing the lives and livelihood activities of the villagers in Kanzou Village and Stratford FTRA, both before and after the implementation of the fast track reform programme. This entailed focusing on asset ownership, landholding size and the various livelihood practices in existence. Given that A1 farms replicate the landholding and agricultural models found in communal areas, it is not surprising to find similar land and labour issues appearing in both Kanzou Village and Stratford FTRA. In the four empirical chapters which follow, many of these similarities (with specific reference to women) will be highlighted, but pertinent differences across the two sites will also be brought to the fore. The next chapter (chapter 6) focuses on land and gender, while chapter 7 considers labour and gender.

CHAPTER 6: LAND ACQUISITION, ACCESS AND SECURITY

6.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the first subsidiary objective of the thesis by considering the significance of land acquisition, access and security across the two sites in relation to women and gender. Land is central to the lives of both A1 farmers and communal area villagers, but it is configured in pronounced gendered ways. The manner in which men and women acquire and access land on a differential basis, and how this affects their land tenure (in) security, is central to this chapter. This is demonstrated in particular ways with reference to both Kanzou Village and Stratford FTRA. The chapter also unpacks the notion of ‘woman’, as it shows that land acquisition, access and security differ between different categories of women. This is detailed with specific regard to the marital status of women and the form of marriage entered into by married women. The chapter ends with a discussion of the thoughts of women and men in Kanzou Village and Stratford FTRA about the possibility and desirability (or lack thereof) of reconfiguring land acquisition, access and security for women (and by extension, men) in the future.

6.2. ‘Land is Life’: The Importance of Accessing Land

Land is an essential resource for rural livelihoods in Africa. As Akinyemi and Mushunje (2019: 2) put it: “Land access is fundamentally crucial to efficient agricultural production, food security and poverty alleviation in Sub-Saharan Africa where rural households have limited access to productive land”. Related to this is the land tenure system, which defines the arrangements for accessing and holding land and for other land rights for people as individuals or collectives (Ingwani, 2021). Before discussing relevant issues surrounding land access with my interviewees in the field, I asked for their perspectives on the importance of having steady access to agricultural land. Some of the older participants were born in pre-independence Zimbabwe, and they were fully aware of the racial injustices around land possession and the dire consequences it had for them.

Generally, both male and female villagers in both study sites stated how they value land by using statements like “land is life” and “it is important”. The following three quotations are representative:

Land is life, I don’t think we will survive without it. It gives you the power to do everything that you want, it makes everything that we want to do possible. You see I can feed my family and send them to school. I thank the government for giving us this [fast track] land. (ST17, Male, Interview)

I can say land is the backbone of our lives; we cannot say we are living without land. You see my child ... [sighs] .. even here people fight because of land, that's how important it is. (KV6, Male, Interview)

What would we feed ourselves and our animals? We need land and more of it if it is possible, because everyone should have their share. The government tried to redistribute the land but we still need more. Land is important to everyone. (KV14, Female, Interview).

It is quite clear, then, that agricultural land is central to the lives and livelihoods of villagers, both male and female, at both sites. However, as this thesis will show, there is unequal access to land on a gendered basis, and women in fact expressed greater concern about access to land than did men, again in both sites. While women at Stratford FTRA acknowledged the significance of the FTLRP for their lives, they claimed that men received the greater portion of allocated land. They were pleased that men as household heads were able to access fast track land (including on their behalf), but men continue to monopolise the land on the basis that they “suffered to own this land”, as one female villager at Stratford FTRA put it (ST12, Female, Interview). Women in Kanzou Village expressed similar sentiments. The importance of land for women was reflected in particular in the lives of widows in Stratford FTRA and Kanzou Village who retained access to the land originally falling under their husbands' control. Participant KV8 (Female, Kanzou) stated that since she has been a widow, it was land that was left by her husband that is assisting her to put food on the table: “I don't know what I was going to do if we didn't have this land,” she exclaimed.

6.2.1. Land Registration and Security

In Zimbabwe, the key formal tenure arrangements pertinent to the two research sites are as follows: traditional usufruct rights in CAs and permits for A1 FTRAs, with both of these giving the land occupier possession and use rights. In both rural spaces, land ownership is vested in the state, Chiefs and headmen oversee the allocation of usufructuary rights to a farmer in CAs, who can hand it down along primogeniture lines in the event of the original owner passing on (Zikhali, 2008). Chiefs are increasingly asserting their authority in and over A1 farms. No freehold rights exist in either area and hence transfers of land through the market are not allowed legally. In the case of tenure in CAs and FTRAs, where the land is owned by the state, transfer of land rights is possible through inheritance (Rukuni, 2012). Transfer rights through selling are often ranked as the strongest, most desirable rights, and they relate to the presence of private ownership. Land held under freehold title gives the owner a full basket of rights and is deemed to imply a high level of tenure security (Doss and Meinzen-Dick, 2020), though the fast track land reform programme demonstrates otherwise. The land position of villagers in this study indicate a relative lack of at least formal tenure security, and the absence of a complete basket of rights.

In this context, it becomes crucial to investigate the land registration processes in the two study areas. I pursued this initially by asking participants if they are in possession of any form of official documentation that confirms land ‘ownership’. Being in possession of a permit or a document places villagers in a position to possibly receive title deeds if the government ever choose to introduce freehold land tenure in the Zimbabwean countryside. Field data shows that nearly all participants (90%) in Stratford FTRA were in possession of an offer letter (permit), while none of the participants in Kanzou Village stating that they were in possession of permits. Mutema’s (2003) study in Chiendambuya and Zimuto Communal Areas shows similar results. The study found some of the participants were not in possession or had not seen any actual permit. Some of the villagers at Kanzou displayed knowledge on the implications of not being in possession of formal documentation, like ST3, who said;

Yes, we were given offer letters [for Stratford] at the Ministry of Lands. Umm [sighs] ... It will not be easy my child to go through that process and not have documents. The issue of land is a sensitive one; you just have to have documents. What if when I am gone, someone comes to claim the land. My children will be in trouble (ST3, Male, Interview).

For this Stratford villager, tenure security (in particular, intergenerational tenure security) was critical, as this would inhibit people from making claims on his land after this death, thereby leaving his children landless. Villagers in Kanzou highlighted that people in CAs simply do not register land with the government in their name. To cite two villagers:

Here in the CAs land is not registered by individuals; maybe if we talk of the resettlement areas [there is registration] (KV5, Female, Interview).

We grew up hearing my father saying this land belongs to the government, so yes, it is for the government. My father advised me to go and grab land with others during the fast track but I was not interested at that time (KV10, Male, Interview).

The emphasis by many Kanzou villagers of the land belonging to the government over time signalled that registration was not necessary from their perspective, as intergenerational land transfers were well established in the area. This gave them a degree of tenure security currently.

During the mixed FGD, participants in Kanzou Village posed questions to each other regarding their views about a situation whereby the government might want to move them from the CA if it decides to use the land for other purposes, such as development projects. This tended to demonstrate a level of anxiety amongst the villagers about their land access and security. Thus, one participant narrated how his family was once relocated in the past because the government wanted to use their land for an irrigation project; hence, he is insecure when it comes to CA land tenure. As well, there were sentiments amongst Kanzou villagers that possessing a land permit, as now witnessed

by CA villagers in the case of A1 farms, might strengthen their land security. For example, the father of KV10 encouraged him (the son) to partake in the fast track process because of the importance of acquiring written documentation pertaining to land possession.

Female participants in Kanzou Village, oddly, were content with the issue of land registration. They stated that between them and their husbands, no one has a land permit or land registered in their name, so they are 'equals' – yet not equal in how land is shared within the household. They must obtain land access and use rights from male family members who are sometimes reluctant to share the land with them, not unlike in Stratford FTRA and beyond (Doss and Meinzen-Dick, 2020). To the contrary, men in Kanzou Village mentioned that, even though it is not written on a piece of paper, it is known that land belongs to the male lineage in a family, and women are not in a position to contest this. Generally, as indicated by the males-only Focus Groups Discussions (FGDs) in Stratford FTRA, there was consensus amongst men that possession of an offer letter (permit) is enough to secure tenure.

They gave us these offer letters I think they are enough my child; I don't think we have anything to worry about. The land is ours. I don't think they can take it from us (ST3, Male, FGD)

I am happy and agree that at least we have these letters. When the time is right I think we will be given the title deeds but with these letters we are confident the land is ours (ST8, Male, FGD).

These findings contradict those by Mutopo (2011), who found that farmers in the A1 Resettlement Area in Mellville felt insecure because they did not have title deeds to their land. Stratford villagers' responses were similar to what Mutema (2003) noted amongst farmers in Chinyika and Gutu Resettlement Schemes. They felt secure in using the land in perpetuity even though the actual permit contains a clause stating that land rights can be revoked anytime without compensation to any improvements. Though men at Stratford FTRA felt land tenure secure in general terms, there was the hope amongst some men that the government would grant title deeds to A1 plots. This was brought to the fore in the FGDs. As one male Stratford villager said:

I wish the government had given us title deeds from the beginning since the land is now ours. Now we cannot fully claim it to be ours, but it's ours; ... you see the confusion ... I hope we will get the title deeds soon (ST9, Male, FGD).

The viewpoint of women at Stratford FTRA differed from that of the men. Married women for instance felt land tenure insecure because their names are not included on the permits. One female participant (Stratford ST5 mixed FGD) expressed her frustration by indicating that it was unfair that women stayed behind at home looking after children while men went to the District Land Offices to register their names, only to have one name on the permit (husband). She felt discriminated against

as a married woman, as single and widowed women found it easier to have land registered in their names. This speaks to the presence of a local system of patriarchy, a system which – according to Chanty (2013) – jeopardise women’s prospects of land access and prosperity. Though not referring to patriarchy specifically, this woman said:

The system puts men first before us so even if we go [to the land office] and ask for the land they will say “oh no she has a husband” and they will then register my husband’s name. They always say if you are a woman with a husband then “we put everything in his name”. Even us when we heard about the land redistribution, we sent our husbands ... you see ... [sighs]. Also, we were not allowed to go to Murombedzi to register our names; they would say “only husbands” (ST5, Female, mixed FGD).

Other married women at Stratford FTRA made similar comments. In this mixed FGD in Stratford FTRA, men cited contentment with how the permits were issued, stating that they were the heads of the household and hence they qualified to have only their names on the permits. These responses indicate how patriarchal power relations are at play, which not only conditions but also determines who will possess a land permit, with men reinforcing this.

Another issue relevant to their form of tenure is accessing credit. Title deeds were mentioned in both male FGDs at Stratford FTRA because men said they want to use them to secure loans from banks because the possession of title deeds is seen as a catalyst for securing credit. However, married women in Stratford FTRA were unhappy citing that married men would use the credit for their own benefit; according to ST2, “they will use the money to marry more wives and we will struggle to pay the loan back”. These married women stated that, even though they would not benefit from the credit, their husbands would likely expect them to assist with paying back the loan, which is unfair to the women. Women in Kanzou Village were in support of loans mentioning that, because their land portions are so small, not much credit would be required and paying back loans would not be difficult. A study by Dube and Guveya (2013) found a positive relationship between secure tenure and credit access, which participants in this study view as an avenue for them to become farmers that are more productive.

The issue of land access and secure tenure clearly affects both men and women but women have less direct and more precarious access to land in both research sites. Even with the new land-use under fast track, and the introduction of a permit system, women are disadvantaged as they often find their name not on the official A1 permit.

6.2.2 Forms of Land Acquisition

In section 6.2.1, I discussed the current tenure status of households in both study sites in relation to whether or not the land is registered in any way. In doing so, I also referred to some of the specific challenges that women face in terms of land access. This current section examines the ways in which land in both sites is acquired over time. According to Lastarria-Cornhiel and García-Frías (2005), broadly speaking, land can be obtained through inheritance, purchase, or state intervention. In the case of this study, the main ways that land has been obtained, currently and in the recent past, were through inheritance (mainly in the CA) and state intervention (FTRA). In this study, no participants acquired land through market sales. State intervention was visible in the Stratford FTRA because participants obtained land through the FTLRP, though inheritance is becomingly increasingly important. Some Stratford villagers have access to land access through inheritance subsequent to the FTLRP. Bikketi et al., (2016) also found that in Kakamega, Kenya, access to land by women is mainly through marriage.

Land acquisition has been an area of contention in Zimbabwe throughout the independence period as the government sought to respond to the high and growing demand for land. This of course was not only a Zimbabwean project, as most countries in Southern Africa undertook land reforms as a way to redress post-independence land ownership inequalities and regressive land-use policies (Biyamugisha, 2014). The Government of Zimbabwe introduced the FTLRP in early 2000, out of which the Stratford villages accessed land (though some had CA land prior to fast track). Of the 20 Stratford villagers interviewed, 15 received fast track land in 2001 and five in 2002. They form part of the tens of thousands of families benefitting from the land reform programme. As indicated earlier, formal acquisition of land at Stratford FTRA primarily involved men, with women often only acquiring secondary land access rights.

From the participants' responses, it is clear that there was a level of excitement around acquiring land, even though there is no evidence that any of the interviewees were directly involved in the land occupations. Two villagers had this to say:

We got it during the land invasions when they announced that the government is redistributing land. We joined others to get our land (ST 3, Male, Interview)

We acquired the land through the redistribution programme in 2001. We heard about the farm invasions, and we decided that my husband should go and put his name down also and get us land like what others were doing (ST 5, Female, Interview).

Their abundant readiness to partake in the land acquisition programme indicates the sheer scale of land shortages in the CAs for purposes of farming. As Stratford villagers highlighted:

It was time. Our family was big, sharing a small piece of land. When the fast track was announced, I told myself I am going to get land for my future family (ST 7, Male, Interview).

We really needed land and I like it here because we all have our own land. When we were in the CAs I was using my father's land. Then that land was taken away from us because of an irrigation project that was introduced, so we no longer had land to grow our crops. So I was happy when this opportunity came. Now I am able to claim that this is my land (ST10, Male, Interview).

Participant ST7 was single when the FTLRP began and he foresaw land tensions in the CA where he was staying. He sought to decongest the CA where he lived so that other family members (including his parents) could have enough land to grow crops. Interviewee ST10 was already married, and he was in his late 30s at the time of the FTLRP. He shared the land with his other family members in the CA. Therefore, the FTLRP was an opportunity for him to have his own piece of land that he does not have to share with others.

Indeed, one of the aims of the FTLRP was to relieve population pressure in overcrowded communal lands (Zembe et al., 2014; Matondi and Dekker, 2011). But the main aim of the FTLRP was to reallocate land to the landless poor, land tenants, farm workers, and emerging farmers for residential and productive use, as well as to improve people's livelihoods and quality of life, especially women in the rural areas (Cliffe, 2000; Hall, 2004; Tom and Mutswanga, 2015). The Stratford villagers spoke highly of this in terms of enhancing their agricultural production:

Now I can expand my farming and produce enough to sell and grow our economy because, when we sell as new farmers, the economy grows (ST6, Male, Interview).

In the context of the occupations and the introduction of the fast-track programme, the interviewees spoke about a process of applying for land and registering their names with the relevant local institutions in their respective areas, and then being contacted later by these local authorities about the allocation of a plot to them on a specific A1 farm. Their eagerness to participate in the FTLRP was indicated by the fact that many submitted more than one application for an A1 plot, thereby enhancing their chance of being allocated land. Participants mentioned their hope of being allocated plots on farms of their choice, with the best agricultural land. However, there was no option for them to choose a farm, and they had to accept the land allocated to them by the officials. One participant expressed dissatisfaction regarding the allocation process, mentioning that officials allocated the best agricultural land to themselves and denied ordinary (often poor) citizens a chance to select their farms of choice:

It's known that those in high places chose those areas with the best land for themselves and gave us poor land, which is unfair (ST10, Male, Interview)

In a study conducted by Matondi (2012), those high up in the security sector and those holding political leadership positions tended to receive the most well-endowed land during the FTLRP allocations, with the very best land transferred to ZANU-PF politicians. This was a common trend during the FTLRP, with those with political connections being allocated the commercial A2 fast track farms.

Participant ST13 is in a unique situation compared to other Stratford FTRA interviewees, as he did not benefit directly from the fast-track programme. Rather, he has entered into a land leasing agreement with another A1 farmer. Land leasing is a two-sided voluntary exchange for a specified period, with the lessor normally receiving income and/or other benefits from the lessee. According to Mudimu et al. (2020), land renting is gathering pace in post-fast track Zimbabwe despite it being an illegal form of land acquisition. In this case, the A1 farmer renting land to ST13 stays in an urban area (as an absentee landlord) and is not yet ready to utilise the land, and ST13 does not in fact pay rent for the land. He has user rights in exchange for looking after the homestead on behalf of the registered A1 farmer. They have a verbal agreement and there is no timeline as to when the landlord will take his land back. But the lessee stated that he would be ready to surrender back the land at any time when the owner wants it back:

Land is an issue here for some of us who did not partake in the FTLRP. I am glad that, for now, I have a place to farm. I don't know for how long but when the owner comes, I will give him back his land. The good thing is that I am using the land for free. It is good that the government allows us to sublet now than before where it was illegal (ST13, Male, Interview).

Participant ST13 spoke about the government now allowing joint ventures as well as farmers to sub-let their farms to ensure that less land stands idle and to increase production in the A1 resettlement areas. The government introduced this policy on joint ventures and sub-letting of land for agricultural purposes in 2019 in which, after harvesting and selling the produce, the user has to pay a rental fee to the owner of the land (Matondi, 2019). However, joint ventures and sub-letting have to be in line with the pertinent legislation such as the Joint Ventures Act 22 (2022). The simultaneous existence of both formal and informal forms of joint ventures and sub-letting means that farmers have a choice of which one to adopt. This leaves some farmers (as in this study) opting for the informal route whereby they verbally agree on terms that work for them as individuals.

In Kanzou Village, land leasing happens regularly amongst relatives and is facilitated by the village head. Those with relatives who left for the A1 resettlement areas or are staying in urban areas farm on the communal area land until such time when time the rightful owner comes back or another relative wants to use the land. Relatives of participants KV12 and KV17 are examples of those who, did not take over their relatives' land (the land of KV12 and KV17) when they were away for an

extended period. Participant KV2 stated that, if there were people using her land whilst she was staying in the FTRAs, she was going to share with them since she is now old and cannot do much in the fields.

I don't have a problem with sharing the land, my child. I am now old I cannot farm this land on my own (KV2, Female, Interview).

The village head mentioned that there are cases where conflicts arise due to relatives using absent relatives' land and he discourages villagers from doing that. However, in cases where people are desperate for land, he allows them after being granted permission from the absent relatives first.

There is no stipulated time for making use of the land because the lessee does not know whether the relative will come back or not. Generally, using land left by resettled relatives (i.e., those on A1 farms) allows Kanzou villagers to expand their portions of land since there is land scarcity in the area. Just like in the FTRA, there are no written contractual agreements, as all agreements are verbal though witnessed by the village head as a local person of authority. The village head said he avoids allowing people to agree on their own even if they are relatives because, if conflicts arise, he becomes the mediator. When asked if he encountered such incidents before, the village head stated that he encountered them once; hence, he decided that people should notify him of such arrangements.

Inheritance as a form of acquiring land is beginning to take place in fast-track areas as the original A1 farmers age and die off. Until the time of the fieldwork, only 2 participants (10%) at Stratford FTRA had accessed land through inheritance: one from a late sister and the other from his late father. The latter (participant ST8) mentioned that the registration papers have not yet been changed from his father's name into his name six years on but, because he is the only son in the family at Stratford FTRA, it was automatic that he is taking over the land. He has three siblings, but they all live elsewhere. He indicated that, if his siblings were to never return to Stratford FTRA, he would pass the land to his two sons:

There won't be anything for them [his siblings] they will have to buy their own land because they haven't been around for a long time. Giving the land to my sons will be a reward to them for taking care of the homestead since birth.

For participant ST9, the other inheritor of land, his sister died and left 3 small children. He was the only surviving sibling, so he had to relocate to Stratford FTRA and take care of his sister's children. Like ST8, the A1 land documentation has not yet changed into his name (three years after the death of his sister). There is a complex issue because his sister did not leave the name of next of kin when she registered to receive the land under the FTLRP. His sister was a single mother, who was never married, and he is waiting to hear what the officials decide about the inheritance. He was unsure of

what to expect regarding his sister's land inheritance, but he was optimistic that he was going to inherit officially his sister's land.

Inheritance is the main form of land acquisition in communal areas such as Kanzou Village, whether inheritance from a parent, a sibling or a spouse after death. In Kanzou Village, their parents, given the generational depth of communal area households, had previously inherited the land of the interviewees. Like at Stratford FTRA, inheritance at Kanzou Village is generally based on a patrilineal lineage system, which requires men to be the only ones who may acquire land in this way (Pfumorodze, 2010). However, in practice, there are cases where male and female siblings share the land inheritance. Kanzou villagers spoke about acquiring land in the following way:

My siblings and I shared the land that we inherited from our parents after they passed on. Our mother passed away first many years ago and we were left in the care of our father. When he [father] passed away, we had to share the land because we all stay here. Before our father passed away, we all tilled the land together (KV5, Female, Interview).

Umm ... this land that we have was my great-grandfather's land that was passed to my grandfather, then my father who then left it for us. Now I am using it together with my two sons. As you can see, that is my first son's house over there. The other one is still yet to build his own place but I already showed him his space (KV15, male, Interview).

The passing of land to sons, as expressed by KV15, was the normal land inheritance arrangement in Kanzou Village, while the KV5 circumstance was rather unusual. The father of Participant KV5 (who is a woman) strove for equality amongst his children even when culture and patriarchy dictated otherwise. As the primary holder of land use rights, the father shared available land with his children irrespective of gender (though there are no legal papers to show how he shared the land since no one has title deeds in communal areas in Zimbabwe). The father had possession and use rights, which he passed on to his children. Participant KV5's father was seemingly concerned about the struggles that girl children encounter when it comes to inheritance, so he put in place a land-use arrangement before his death. Historically, culture dictated that girl children inherit kitchen utensils from their mothers and not assets like land since they were expected to marry, then go, and live with their spouses. Interviewee KV5 spoke about being 'daddy's girl' (as the only girl with two brothers), with the father wanting to make sure that he left a legacy for her. She implied that she did not believe that it was her right, just like her brothers, to be allocated land by their father. This resonates with the findings of Toro (2016:82) that "the views on inheritance, even by women themselves, reflects the weight of tradition in favour of the male rather than female children". Participant KV5 did not in fact receive a land portion equivalent to that of her brothers but she was grateful that her father considered her in the inheritance, a practice that is unpopular in Shona culture.

She understood that her brothers would one day marry and need to raise their families on the inherited land, while she might get married and relocate to her husband's homestead. If she was to get married, she expects that her brothers will divide her portion of land amongst themselves or pass it to their own children.

Interviewees' responses in Kanzou Village concurs with the findings of Matondi and Dekker (2009), who found that land transfers in CAs normally take place generationally through inheritance, through the death of a landholder. Inheritance is an effective form of transferring land from one generation to the other (Cooper, 2010; Pfumorudze, 2010), though it is typically gendered in favour of men (Mwetundila, 2021). This relates to the administration of land in communal areas based on customary land tenure systems, involving cultural beliefs about gender norms and practices, as also demonstrated in a study conducted in Domboshava by Ingwani (2019).

Besides inheritance of land arising from the death of a parent in Kanzou Village, it also takes place through other ways, such as the death of a husband for women inheriting land. Some female Kanzou villagers mentioned moving from urban areas into the CA following an invitation by a relative who had settled there first. The women then ended up inheriting the land when their husband passed away:

We used to stay in the city and we relocated here after my sister-in-law notified us of land available. She [sister-in-law] warned us of staying in the city and said we should look for a rural place just in case my husband loses his job. I then came to stay here with the children and my husband remained in the city until retirement. He came to stay here full-time until he died a few years ago. (KV1, Female, Interview).

The man of this house [my husband] died in 1988, leaving me with 8 children and 1 grandchild. So, I moved here from Banket where we were staying because we had built a homestead here. We have been staying here ever since. All my children left for urban areas after completing their education and they have left me all by myself here. Whenever they are ready to come back, they can always do ... [sighs] ... The problem is there is plenty of land here that needs people to till it. I cannot do that as I am now old, so I just use a small portion, enough for one person. I always encourage them to come during the planting season to grow some crops but they don't come. (KV8, Female, Interview).

Participant KV1's sister-in-law and her family were the first to be given land in Kanzou Village. Her husband's cousins, who had settled there, invited them to settle, as there were land portions available due to people relocating out of Kanzou Village. She (KV1) stayed just 40 kilometres from Kanzou Village, in Chinhoyi, and they were looking for land close by. Her sister-in-law was on the lookout for land that was going to be made available and she (the sister-in-law) spoke to the village head who notified her of a homestead from which people were relocating to other

communal areas. As KV1 and her siblings were from Malawi, they did not have original roots in Zimbabwe, which made it difficult for them to have their own communal area homestead. Land played a pivotal role in her husband's life because it became his retirement place until his time of death. In the case of KV8, Kanzou Village also became a permanent home for her. She is and hoping and waiting for her children to do the same when they are tired of the urban areas.

6.3. Land Access, Marital Status and Marriage Form

Up until now, the chapter has focused on land acquisition, access and security by offering a comparative analysis between the two sites with an emphasis on gender as well. In this section, the focus is on how women and men of different marital statuses and marriage forms experience land access and land security. As Chiweshe et al. (2015) note, marital status (and age) is recognised as a particularly crucial identity regarding accessing land and land security, especially for women. In addition to marital status, the form of marriage is also significant. In particular for women, Zimbabwe has three forms of marriages: civil marriage which is monogamous and registered and recognised by the state (commonly referred to as a '5:11 Marriage'); customary law marriage, which is registered but a man can have more than one wife; and, the most common, the unregistered customary union which is not registered officially with any government agency or local officials.

The marital status and marriage form details for the case studies are as follows, with reference to women and men. In Kanzou Village, there are five married women, six widowed women and two single women; in Stratford FTRA, there are six married women, one widowed woman, and four single women. Of the married women in Kanzou Village, four are married in a civil marriage and one is married in a customary law marriage; and, in Stratford FTRA, one is in a polygamous unregistered marriage, three are unregistered (monogamous) marriages, one is a civil marriage and one is a customary law marriage. For the men in Kanzou Village, three are married in a civil marriage, one is married in customary law marriage, and two are in unregistered marriages. In the case of Stratford FTRA, six men are in unregistered marriages, one is in a customary marriage and two are in civil marriages (see Table 4). As stated above, for this study, marital status (single, married, widowed and divorced) and form of marriage (civil, customary and unregistered) are important variables regarding land acquisition, access and security.

Table 4: Different Forms of Marriage

Marriage Type	Kanzou Village		Stratford FTRA	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Unregistered marriages	0	2	4 (1 polygamy)	6
Customary marriages	1	1	1	1
Civil union marriages	4	3	1	2
Total	5	6	6	9

6.3.1 Single Women and Men

In this study, only the single women (4) in Stratford FTRA, all of whom were never married, received land in their own right. Three of the single women had children, only one never had children. However, there was also a special category of single women that was mentioned in the women-only FGD in Stratford FTRA who also accessed land directly, but they did not receive this land during the FTLRP. These women in effect became single after their partners ran away to stay with ‘small houses’ either in other rural areas or in urban areas. It would be inappropriate to refer to this as entailing divorce, because the FGD participants stated that these women were not legally married but ‘*vaichaya mapoto*’ (cohabiting). I was informed that some of the single women whose partners vanished were successful in changing the A1 permits from the partners’ names into their names.

Single men (2) and the two single women in Kanzou Village stated that they received land in their own right through inheritance. As indicated earlier, in Africa, inheritance systems are important opportunities for the transfer of adults’ accumulated physical capital such as land (Cooper, 2008). Participant KV5, referred to earlier, inherited land along with her siblings from her late parents, and the siblings share the available land so that each of them has a portion. The study by Tom and Mutswanga (2015) found that women in A1 areas who ‘owned’ land indicated that they are more secure than those in the communal areas whose access to land is more strongly hampered by patriarchy. Even though patriarchal practices are present on fast-track farms, my study, in line with (Badstute et al., (2020) findings, also indicates that single women appear to have firmer chances to access land use rights in their own capacity (not under men). To emphasise, though, gender relations are significant on A1 farms such as Stratford FTRA, as they are in many parts of the world (Mukhopadhyay, 2001).

6.3.2 Widowed Women and Men

In practice, land in rural Zimbabwe is often governed by customary law, which requires inheritance to pass through the patrilineal line, thus bypassing widows and daughters. In Stratford, I interviewed

only one widowed female while, in Kanzou Village, I interviewed six. Because of the younger population in Stratford FTRA, there tend to be fewer widows compared to Kanzou Village. Discussing the land-access status of widowed women will also provide some insights into the status of married women, including with regard to their marriage form.

The one widow at Stratford FTRA (ST18) stated that her husband took part in the farm invasions and the A1 permit was registered in her late husband's name. At the time of the interview, it had been 5 years since his passing, yet she was still struggling to change the permit into her name. They had received A1 land under the FTLRP in 2002, three years before the introduction in 2005 of the enactment allowing officially for joint naming (both spouses) on the A1 offer letter (Matondi, 2012). The joint naming on the offer letter did not apply to applications made before 2005, as the government did not retrospectively change previous offer letters. This means that a large number of women were prejudiced, just like participant ST18 and other women in the same situation.

She was aware of her right to approach the relevant state ministry about transferring the permit into her name; even she was not well acquainted with the laws of inheritance:

Here we don't know about inheritance laws; we rely on the land offices to advise us on what to do with the property. My late husband's land permit is in his name so I am not sure if my son or I will take over...Ummm...I will just fight for it. I don't mind if they say my son can take over (ST18, Female, Interview).

One of the main reasons for her challenge was that she and her husband were married under an unregistered customary marriage arrangement, which is sometimes an enabler of property grabbing from widows by the late husband's relatives (Human Rights Watch, 2017). As stated before, unregistered customary marriages were the most common form of marriage within Stratford FTRA. Participant ST18 highlights that she keeps going to the land offices with no success and she is on the verge of giving up. Also, participant ST18 felt that her in-laws were interfering with the process of her changing the permit behind her back, as she is confused as to what exactly is delaying the process. As she explained:

I have been trying for 5 years now. When I go to the land offices to change the permit into my name, they keep giving me new dates to return. Now with Covid [because of lockdowns], I haven't been going; I will see when Covid is over. My sisters were saying I should leave it until my son turns 18 but I just want to do it to avoid problems. I am not sure if my in-laws would want the land so I want to put it in my name to avoid losing it. I do not understand what is happening. I have a feeling that they [my in-laws] are stopping it behind my back (ST18, Female, Interview).

A woman's-only focus group discussion at Stratford FTRA brought to the fore the problem experienced by ST18, related to the manner in which the A1 permit was issued:

Some women here automatically take over the land left by their husbands [after death]. On the offer letter, there is a space for next of kin that the wife was supposed to sign to assure her that she also owns the land. The problem is that some women did not go with their husbands to sign so the next of kin section is blank (FGD1, Female, Stratford).

Participant ST18 is a typical example of an issue that both Mgugu and Chimonyo (2004) and Mushunje (2001) also point out, which is the difficulty that women face in accessing security of tenure on land because of laws and traditions that are gender-biased. This includes customary law around inheritance, following the death of the male head of the household, specifically in those instances where the marriage was unregistered. There has been some progress in instances where marriages are registered, particularly with the introduction of succession laws that favour the surviving spouse and children. This means that those with unregistered marriages are likely to struggle with inheriting their spouse's assets as compared to those in registered marriages. In the case of ST18, she mentioned that she might consider her sister's advice of waiting for her son to turn 18 years, the legal age of majority, so that he can try to have the permit changed into his name. It is not unusual for widows to act as guardians of land until their minor sons grow up and inherit the land (Asiimwe and Crankshaw, 2011).

As mentioned, it seems that women were afforded the chance to have their names on the original permits but, due to a variety of reasons, some women (including ST18) were not included as next of kin, which is problematic. Some women in the cited FGD added that they were not aware that their names were supposed to be on the permit, which likely means that some men hid intentionally this prospect from their spouses. Women activist land-groups like Women and Land Lobby Group (WLLG) have highlighted this and other gender-biased issues about the FTLRP (Goebel, 2006), including agitating around the need for permits to include both women's and men's names (in the case of married couples). However, what is happening on the ground is a different story insofar as the names of wives are not appearing from the start, with the old way of registering (with the husband's name only) continuing to take place in many instances. At one stage, the Minister of Lands, Agriculture and Rural Resettlement was quoted as saying that families should decide for themselves who should be registered on the permit, and that the government was not involved in the decision (Goebel, 2006). This then left men to decide on having their names only registered on the permits, blocking women (their wives) from obtaining primary rights to land, which becomes problematic after the passing of the husband.

Participant ST18 also thinks that her husband's family do not want to change the name on the permit because they (the husband's family) believe that she might remarry. She suspects they are conniving with land officials not to change the permit. She was determined though to ensure that she

would retain the A1 plot. The form of marriage entered into by ST18 did not help her situation. In relation to inheritance of property such as land, those widows who were married under unregistered customary marriages experienced particular difficulties because male in-laws (who sometimes want to benefit from their relative's inheritance) must verify their marriages customarily. This was affirmed in the study by Pfumorodze's (2010) which shows that, for a woman to inherit land, she first require approval from her husband's relatives. Failure to gain approval means that the widowed woman will not be able to access and use unhindered the available land to feed her family. Gaidzanwa (1995) also reports on, with more historical depth, the challenges faced by women when it comes inheriting their husband's property. To add to ST18's barriers in seeking to have her name put on the permit was the Covid-19 lockdowns, which led to the closure of land offices where she could be assisted, at least potentially.

There are six widowed women interviewed in Kanzou Village. When comparing participant ST18 to widowed female participants KV1 and KV8 in Kanzou Village, it might seem that widowed women in Kanzou Village were not experiencing as many difficulties in inheriting land from their late husbands. But, in the case of KV1 and KV8, this is like because they were legally married to their late husbands. Their marriages were registered under the Marriage Act [Chapter 5:11] formerly known as Chapter 37. More broadly, this study highlights the importance of marriage type or form in land inheritance, with women in registered marriages more likely to inherit land from their late husbands because they possess a marriage certificate, and those in unregistered marriages less likely to do so because the inheritance is mainly regulated by customary laws.

Participant KV1 feels incapable of inheriting the land because she is now old and she is thinking of handing over the land to her son:

They say I am the sole owner of the land that my husband left but I want to give it to my son since I am now very old (KV1, Female, Interview)

Even though participant KV1 feels this way, her family still recognises her as the rightful heir to the land left by her husband. However, from her perspective, she is keeping the land for her sons since they are the recognised landowners within Shona culture. In this participant's case, history is in a sense repeating itself in that, before her husband died, she was a custodian of her husband's land as a de facto head of household whilst her husband was working in a nearby town, and now she is a custodian of her sons' land. The only difference is that, while her husband was alive, she had no choice but to be the custodian but, after his death, the land is now rightfully hers and she is choosing to surrender it to her son. Due to the age differences between ST18 (52) and KV1 (71), with participant ST18 being younger, their needs for land are very different – thus, participant ST18 is fighting for what is hers while KV1 chooses to pass the land to her son. Participant ST18 is concerned

about the legal documentation and not her ability to till the land, as she is positive that she can work the land in a productive way. Meanwhile, KV1 struggles to accept the idea that, as a woman, she should have primary usufruct rights to her late husband's land, in part because she appears to have internalised the traditional notion of passing land to the eldest sons in the event of losing the male head of the family through death.

Like ST18, KV1 and KV8 were unaware of the existence of inheritance laws in Zimbabwe:

Ummm... Soon after my husband's passing, I heard my young nieces asking me about the laws, that is, after they heard people discussing my husband's inheritance. I didn't know there are inheritance laws ... you know when we live in these villages, we do not get that information (KV1, Female, Interview).

When my husband died, my son asked me if his father left a will to guide us on how to share his inheritance and I told him I don't know about the will. I didn't think much about it also that time. I think the learned young ones know about these things (KV8, Female, Interview).

Goebel (2006) and Pfumorodze (2010) raise this concern about women's generally poor access to (and knowledge of) their legal rights, just as displayed in this study. Clearly, such excerpts call for inheritance law education in rural Zimbabwe because, when widows lose their spouses, they are unaware of how the laws work and where to go to seek assistance.

Participant KV1 mentioned that she only heard about inheritance laws soon after her husband's passing, but she has little knowledge of where to receive further information. Participant KV8 just heard about inheritance laws in passing from her son, but she does not know how the laws work. In addition, she commented that at her advanced age, she couldn't be expected to know about inheritance laws, as it is something that younger and learned generations are expected to know. At the same time, she seems to fear challenging customary laws, which play a central role in the lives of people in communal areas. Nevertheless, widowed women with registered marriages (KV1 and KV8) in Kanzou Village tend to be included in land inheritance arrangements because of their registered marriage contracts. The other four widowed women were married customarily; therefore, they relied on the male elders in their families to decide on what happens to the land left behind, guided by the customary law.

This study had no male widows in both sites to compare their position with women regarding land access on death of their spouses. However, since men are generally regarded as land 'owners' given the patriarchal structuring of rural Zimbabwe, it is likely that men would not have any stumbling blocks with land inheritance. In the case of fast track, this is also because land permits are registered in their names at the very least (sometimes also in their wife's name).

6.3.3. Land Access by Married women and Men

Of the six married women in Stratford FTRA (4 unregistered, 1 customary and 1 civil union marriages), only one indicated that both their names (husband and wife) were on the permit. The other five women have the land permits registered in their husbands' names only. Just like ST18, this one marriage under civil union was registered in 2002, three years before the joint registration was introduced, and it was not allowed for joint naming to be amended for those who got permits before 2005. The other married women might not be included on the permit due to the forms of their marriages, which recognise men as befitting to own land and not women. All of the men interviewed in Stratford FTRA stated that the permits are in their names. As Gaidzanwa (2011) argues, there is a well-entrenched practice in rural Zimbabwe of treating male-headed households as a socio-cultural norm (and as normal), such that it becomes difficult to ensure that land permits are registered in the names of both the husband and wife. A study by Moyo (2019) in Chakari in Mashonaland West Province came to similar findings.

In Stratford FTRA, some of the married women mentioned that the only time that they are afforded primary access and use rights and rights of control over the A1 farmland is when their husbands are working in the city. Their husbands will then grant them custodianship and *de facto* rights to the land while they are away. In such cases, women say 'they feel' in control of the land, knowing full-well that the land remains registered in their husbands' name and most crops in the fields belong to the husbands. Thus, a married woman's control of land is only recognised in the absence of the husband. In most cases, as well, these women stated that they consult with their husbands regarding land use on an ongoing basis:

I just phone my husband ... it is good that technology is all over. Sometimes I miscall him and he calls me back. I cannot decide for him (ST5, Female, Interview).

Men are not obliged to consult with anyone when it comes to land use because they 'own' the land by the virtue of their head of household position.

Amongst the married women participants in Stratford FTRA was one who is in a polygamous marriage. She is the first and more senior wife. She views it as better for land not to be registered in their husband's name because she fears their husband might end up choosing the second wife over her in terms of land inheritance since they are in an unregistered customary marriage. As she put it:

Men here are busy taking many wives and divorcing their first wives is now a pattern. Me I chose to stay because I have been working hard. I cannot just leave for someone to enjoy my sweat. I see young girls choosing to become second wives because they would have been lured using our tobacco sales income (ST2, Female, Interview).

Zimbabwe's dual legal system recognises both civil and customary marriage but there is a challenge for people who do not register their marriages (like in this case) or whose marriages are not solemnised. Customary marriages that are not solemnised in terms of the Customary Marriages Act of Zimbabwe are not recognised in terms of general law and are only valid and recognised by customary law (Gonese-Manjonjo, 2019). This means that, when the husband dies, those married customarily will not be governed by the Deceased Estates Succession Act, under which property will be shared between the deceased's surviving spouse and children. As an unregistered customary marriage, Participant ST2 and her husband's union involved paying a bride price (*roora*) to her family, but there was no official registration of the marriage - a common feature in rural Zimbabwe (Goebel, 2006). In 2019, about 70 per cent of the marriages were not registered in Zimbabwe, according to (Mubaiwa, 2019).

What ST2 was unaware of, as the first wife in their marriage, are the inheritance rights that guide the distribution of an estate (after losing a spouse) for a person married under an unregistered customary law union. In instances where the deceased had more than one wife, one-third of the net estate is shared between the two wives and two-thirds shared equally amongst the children (Tavirai, 2020). The first wife is entitled to two-thirds of the one-third of the estate with the second wife being entitled to one-third of the net estate. Unregistered customary marriages put women like ST2 at a disadvantage, especially when the husband dies. She demonstrates signs of unhappiness with her polygamous situation; however, she depends mainly on the land controlled by her husband to sustain a living, hence she stays in the polygamous marriage. She had this to say:

My husband is the only one with land so, if I leave, I will struggle to have land because back home I have brothers who are using the family plot. Plus, I cannot leave our sweat for another wife [laughs] (ST2, Female, Interview).

A study by Kaarhus and Dondeyne (2015) found that many women in polygamous marriages were unhappy and wanted to leave, but they feared that they might not have access to land if they did, given that the land is registered in their husbands' names. In the case of ST2, she stated that in the event of losing their husband, his family must decide on how their son's land will be inherited since he has two wives, and she felt insecure about this because the second wife might be recognised before her – as is the case with other such women in rural Zimbabwe, including in a study of Chiwundura in Midlands Province (Centre for Conflict Management and Transformation, 2016). However, she consoles herself that, as a first wife, she might get first preference in inheritance:

I am his first wife. I know the law will be on my side if my husband is to leave us.

Similar sentiments were raised in a women-only FGD in Stratford FTRA. Discussants stated that men in the area are taking second wives and having extramarital affairs, something that is affecting many marriages:

My sister ... here we are struggling with our men bringing us second or even third wives. I think it's the tobacco money that they are getting. It is becoming a trend here (FGD 2, Female, FGD).

Yes, it is sad our marriages are being contaminated by other women agreeing to join our marriages. It's not easy ... ask everyone here, we will not leave our homes because of that (FGD5, Female, FGD).

Both Goebel (2002) and Scoones (2018) found that marriages in resettlement areas broadly and A1 farms specifically are unstable and fragile, with many divorces taking place. Indeed, Nyawo (2015) argues that the FTLRP changed the face (or structure) of families, with most adults co-habiting without even following the proper customary procedure of paying *lobola*. This affects women if and when the man decides to enter into a relationship with another woman or to relocate. Female villagers at Stratford FTRA mentioned that sometimes women are forced to leave their crops in the field when they separate from their partners. However, as mentioned previously, some women who remained behind after a partner elopes with another woman have been fortunate in being able to change the A1 permit into their names.

I asked the interviewed men in Stratford FTRA, all of whom are married, how they felt about not having joint 'ownership' of land with their wives. They did not see any problem with their name alone being on the A1 permit, thus excluding their wife in the process. The joint land permit was not necessary from their perspective, claiming for instance:

Ummm... there is no problem, they [women] know that they take over when we die (ST6, Male, Married).

What I have is hers, so this land is ours; there is no need for her name to be there. It is known that this is our land (ST14, Male, Married).

However, in practice, the situation is often more complicated, as indicated earlier with reference for instance to the form of marriage in place. Men in this study seem to be unaware of the consequences that come with not registering women as co-owners of A1 land on the permits. For participant ST6, it is automatic that his wife takes over the land after he dies and participant ST14 feels that, even in the absence of documentation, people just know that his wife is first in line to take over the land from him. The challenges faced by ST18 (discussed above) in changing the name on the permit indicate that the process is not a smooth one. It is problems such as these that led other countries in the region, notably Botswana, to pass legislation allowing married women to have equal access to land and land certificates in their own right (Griffiths, 2011; Khama and Seleka, 2016).

Land access by married women in Kanzou Village is similar to that of Stratford FTRA as married women there also access land through their husbands. The husbands subdivide the land and give a portion of the land to the wives, which becomes their *tseu* for growing women's crops. Men in Kanzou Village thus stated that they are the main 'owners' of the land. The land is often for an extended family and, in sharing land amongst male family members; it becomes difficult to provide a land tract of any significance in size to their wives. One male participant stated that:

This land that you see is for the family. I really want my wife to have a big portion but I don't have control over [all] the land. I share it with my two brothers and a sister. We all want to feed our families so we have to prioritise maize farming because it gives us an income (KV16, Male, Interview).

In KV16's case, his siblings (male and female) come before his wife in apportioning land. Land access, in terms of the sheer size of plots for farming, is a huge issue in Kanzou Village since people must share the land as extended families (unlike in Stratford FTRA to date). This puts wives at a distinct disadvantage in terms of their *tseu*. As I was doing my observations, I realised that in Kanzou Village, unlike Stratford FTRA, women's plots are located in peripheral and marginal areas. This would seem to imply that women's crops are more highly valued in Stratford FTRA than in Kanzou Village. However, on closer inspection, it became clear that men at Stratford FTRA, as mentioned by some participants, lack the capacity to use all the A1 land that they received, and hence they can give women portions almost wherever they want.

6.4 Women's Independent Access to Land

Globally, men own and/or control more land than women control, and they have more secure rights over land than women. This is despite the fact that women carry many workloads in small-scale agriculture, both productive and domestic labour. Women face these challenges because land is usually allocated to heads of households, who are mostly men, which reflects systems and practices of patriarchy. As feminists highlight, gender ideologies such as giving preference to men over women in land inheritance are reproduced through culture and family, as in this case.

I asked the interviewees on both sites, both male and female, about their views regarding the desirability of women's independent access to land, especially knowing that patriarchy is usually a barrier to women's land access in rural societies. This gave me a sense of the extent to which the gendered inequality around land control and access is likely entrenched in Kanzou Village and Stratford FTRA. Some male participants (20% in Kanzou Village and 30% in Stratford FTRA) were in support of women accessing land and they mentioned being in support of women having independent land rights, controlling it and managing it. Men from Stratford FTRA made the following comments:

Yes, they should have done that [given women direct access to A1 land] from the beginning. I know some women here are single and they have land, which is good for them to take care of themselves and their children since they don't have husbands (ST13, Male, Interview).

It is the right thing to do. I think the government is being late in looking into that because women can do a lot with land (ST14, Male, Interview).

The provision is there even on the offer letters. The 6 hectares that we were given, 3 hectares is for the wife. It is not stated on the offer letters, but it was mentioned when we were given the land (ST8, Male, Interview).

One male villager from Kanzou also spoke approvingly in this way:

I support that, yes, then we will not have to fight over this small piece of land that we have. The government would have done the job for us, we will know which land belongs to who (KV15, Male, Interview).

The male villagers in Stratford FTRA believed that the government should have considered women's independent land access from the start of the fast-track programme, though men like ST13 may have been thinking about single women in particular in articulating their thoughts. Interviewee ST14 views women's access to land as a mechanism that promotes empowerment as "women can do a lot with land". The various ways that women use land allow them to contribute to the welfare and well-being of their families (Allendorf, 2007), notably their children's nutritional and educational needs (Giovarelli et al., 2013) as mentioned by participant ST13. Household food security and overall well-being are thus important reasons for protecting or enhancing women's rights to land (Lastarria-Cornhiel and García-Frías, 2005). In the case of Kanzou Village, KV15 sees women's independent access to land as a solution to eradicate conflict over the small portions of land that are available in the context of severe land pressure in the communal area.

Despite these positive perspectives amongst some men in the two sites, most men (80% in Kanzou Village and 70% in Stratford FTRA) were not in support of women's primary access to land. For example, participants ST10, KV17, and KV20 said respectively:

I feel like it is not right because, if we are to get separate pieces of land, it means the land will not be enough for everyone, and there will be people short of land ... I think we should both have the same land; even though it is in my name, it is for the family. If I am to die, my wife will remain using that land ... [but] what about the others? I can say that the only time a woman can have land is when they do not have a husband; in that case, it is fine to give her land to feed the family (ST10, Male, Interview).

When we get land, it is said to be for the family, so women also benefit from the portions that they are given in their families, which is enough, I guess (KV17, Male, Interview).

I see no need for separate land access. Even if we get separate land, we need inputs to farm the land which becomes another problem so I think what we have is enough (KV20, Male, Interview).

The excerpts are commonly citing that land belongs to the family; therefore, there is no need for women to have their own independent access. For example, ST10 argues that having land registered in his name is sufficient for the family, but he does not realise that his wife also wants her own piece of land and one that is not as insignificant as the *tseu* she gets. Furthermore, KV17 feels that the land apportioned to women within the family is enough, despite it being very small in size. Lastly, KV20 is concerned about not having enough inputs to use in separate women and men's fields, so he feels it is better to keep the situation as it is. In general, these men support patriarchal arrangements and gender-based access to land, depicting women as second-class rural citizens who should access land, in the case of married women, through their husband. They adopt this position even though statutory laws around land access are supportive of equal rights to land.

There was a clear gender difference in terms of views around women's independent access to land, as almost all women across the two sites supported this. This is evident with regard to for example ST2, a female villager in Stratford FTRA who is in a polygamous marriage. In her view, married women should be given their own land to avoid situations where a man marries a second wife, and they end up losing the land they received jointly with the husband. The issue of polygamy kept surfacing in both interviews and FGDs in Stratford FTRA. As she put it:

It is important like I said that if my husband brought another wife, she found us in possession of this land already. But, if my husband was to say 'go away I want to stay with the new wife', I will be chased away. If you got the land when you were just the two of you, so you have your own land and you just move to your own land and stay with your children. So, I feel like women should also be included when redistributing land even if they are married (ST2, Female, Interview).

Another female villager from Stratford made a similar point:

I think it is right [for women to have their own land] because even when my husband passes on, my children will not suffer. Sometimes the husband marries another woman then it becomes obvious that the new woman will take over the land (ST5, Female, Interview)

Polygamy (taking of more than one wife) is on the rise in the FTRAs in Zimbabwe, and it is becoming a threat to many married women. Patriarchal rule in Zimbabwe permits polygamy and excludes women from property rights (Pswarayi, 2011), and similar situations exist elsewhere including Malawi (Tschirhart et al., 2018). Moreover, because many marriages are unregistered, it becomes difficult for wives to stop their husbands from marrying co-wives since this type of marriage also allows polygamy. In this case, women in these marriages are suffering at the hands of polygamy and patriarchy; hence, their wish to have an equal share of land that is registered in their own names.

In polygamous marriages, if a woman fails to inherit the land after the death of her husband, then there can be a significant conflict as well arising amongst the co-wives.

One female discussant in a polygamous marriage in the FGD in Stratford FTRA mentioned that she gave birth to three girls while the co-wife has a son, and I could observe from her talking that she was justifying her husband marrying a second wife on the basis that she did not have a boy child. This discussant was in support of her husband marrying another wife because she is also of the belief that a household should have a son who inherits the father's property (land). The fear of a man that he might die without being survived by a male child was one of the main reasons why polygamy thrived in rural areas, as marriages are a means of continuing the patrilineal lineage (Nkomazana, 2006). If the first wife does not have a boy child, then inheritance is likely to be passed onto the son of the second wife. For reasons such as this, most female married participants were in favour of them having separately registered land from their husbands. Their failure to have primary rights to land (along with their husbands) is an example of how patriarchal practices, and the strength of these practices, threaten women's land rights even when they are enshrined in the rule of law (Villa, 2017; World Bank, 2008). A female villager from Kanzou, like her Stratford FTRA counterparts, brought this to the fore by referring to the strenuous agricultural labour performed by women:

I think it is very important [for women to have their own land] because if you look around in most households, women play an important role when it comes to farming. Also, women persevere, and they don't back down easily. If we choose to work in my field, we can even spend the whole day hungry but we continue working in our fields (KV2, Female, Interview).

For Participant KV2, women should possess the land in their own right because they play a crucial role in farming, and they are hard workers. This means that when women are at the forefront of agriculture, including by way of possessing land outright, productivity is guaranteed.

In both sites, though, a section of the women supported the gender gap regarding land access to ensure and maintain social stability while also defending African traditional values. For instance, participants ST4 and ST11, and KV3 do not see a problem in giving land to married men only as heads of households:

If you have a husband, I don't think it is right. But if you do not have a husband then yes you can have your own land as a woman. If you have a husband ... aah ... in our culture it is not right for a [married] woman to own land (ST4, Female, Interview).

I don't mind if men get more land than us because we follow after them in everything that we do (ST11, Female, Interview).

This thing of saying women must also get their own land just like their husbands is a nowadays thing. For us old people, we do not contest that. If my husband has lots of land then we are fine, we all benefit

so if he can give me mine [*tseu*] to put my groundnuts then I am fine, I don't have a problem (KV3, Female, Interview).

These excerpts illustrate the presence at both Kanzou Village and Stratford FTRA of a patriarchal ideology, which women have internalised, presumably to varying degrees, with some fully endorsing the gendered division of land in terms of control, access and usage. For these latter women, and indeed for all women in the two sites, their main concern is their family (and any children in particular). Insofar as this concern is addressed by way of men only having primary rights to land, then women such as KV3, ST4 and ST11 find the arrangement acceptable: the husband has land, and therefore the family has land.

Of course, this minimises the land rights of women independent of their husbands. For Murugani et al. (2014), the existence of women's land rights strengthens their position and afford them bargaining power. Owning or even possessing a piece of land with independent or collective control over it, rather than simply accessing land via the rights of others, provides women with a basis for contributing more resolutely to agricultural production and food security at household level. In addition, women who possess land are less likely to become economically vulnerable in the event of the death of, separation from, or divorce from their spouse. Thus, challenges exist at both Kanzou Village and Stratford FTRA in this regard, with women who consent to (or even simply comply with) patriarchal arrangements becoming enablers of these arrangements, albeit not necessarily intentionally.

Overall, I observed some differences between the two sites with regard to women's ideas around access and control. In Stratford FTRA, perhaps because of their younger age, some women spoke at times about the empowerment that comes with independent access to land, whereas such views did not exist in Kanzou Village where women were outwardly content with men as the main owners of land. The younger female participants have greater exposure to the importance of independent access to land as compared to older participants.

6.5. Conclusion

This chapter has provided an examination of land and gender in the two research sites (Kanzou Village and Stratford FTRA) and, in doing so, it has begun to consider the differences and similarities in terms of the lives of rural women between the two sites. While differences for women around land issues do exist across the two sites, they may be overshadowed by similarities. At the same time, the chapter also brought to the fore the salience of deconstructing the category of 'woman' to identify and show the variegated experiences of women in terms of land acquisition, access and security. Not all women in either of the two sites share the same experiences, as marital status and form of marriage

are of some significance in conditioning and configuring women's experiences. Nevertheless, patriarchal arrangements affect all women (no matter how disaggregated) in both sites, leading to their marginalisation on matters around land. Differences exist though, including in relation to age, as to whether the patriarchal structuring of women's lives is legitimate or otherwise.

CHAPTER 7: AGRICULTURAL ASSETS, INPUTS AND PRODUCTION

7.1 Introduction

Agriculture remains the backbone of Zimbabwe's economy as most people live in rural areas (Zembe et al., 2014), in both communal and resettlement areas. As stated previously, the fast track land reform programme was expected to decongest communal areas to enhance agricultural production in these areas, while also ensuring the development of productive small-scale A1 farms in the former white commercial farming areas (Matondi and Dekker, 2009). Whether or not this took place is an empirical question, as I investigate now in relation to Stratford FTRA and Kanzou Village. I spoke to the farmers to hear their views regarding agricultural production since the early 2000s, with a particular interest in their crop yields – as crop yields are a common measure of agricultural productivity (Doss, 2018). In doing so, I sought to compare the effects that the FTLRP had on agricultural production in both Kanzou Village and Stratford FTRA. There was consensus amongst the farmers that FTLRP helped to reduce congestion in the CAs and opened an opportunity for those in the FTRAs to have larger pieces of land to enhance production. Crop yields in Stratford FTRA were in fact higher than those in Kanzou Village, a point Zikhali (2010) notes more broadly in his comparative study of agricultural production in communal and A1-farm areas. However, participants in both study areas mentioned three main concerns affecting their levels of agricultural production, namely, lack of agricultural equipment (assets), lack of agricultural inputs, and the manner in which corruption is affecting farmers' access to agricultural inputs. We discuss these issues in this chapter. Further, though, we focus on the agricultural division of labour in both sites, specifically along gender lines, and examine if there are any differences between the two sites in this regard.

7.2 Access to Agricultural Equipment as a Production Constraint

Equipment and inputs come in a wide array of forms, but the most common are machinery, improved seed, fertilisers, crop protection chemicals, irrigation equipment and knowledge. In this section, I discuss access to agricultural equipment or assets, particularly as a production constraint.

In this study, cattle-driven ploughs, cultivators, and scotch carts were the most common equipment owned by the participants in both study areas, with 80% of informants in Kanzou Village owning these, and 90% in Stratford FTRA. Only 5% in both study areas had mechanised equipment in the form of a tractor. The rest (15% in Kanzou Village and 5% in Stratford FTRA) own hand tools such as hoes and axes, and thus relied exclusively on human power in their farming. These findings are similar to Chisoko's (2006) findings that, in most rural areas of Zimbabwe, animal draught power is the most significant way of preparing the cropped area (between 70% and 90%); and tractor power

was between 2% and 15%, and hand tillage from 5% to 15%. Photo 13 below shows a Stratford FTRA farmer making use of his tractor.



Photo 13: A farming preparing his field in Stratford

Source: Fieldwork.

Similarly, Simalenga (2013) states that ploughs, cultivators, harrows, and scotch carts are the main agricultural equipment used by A1 farmers, though hand hoes are also used extensively to complement draught power. This situation exists beyond Zimbabwe. As Mukasa et al. (2017:11) note, “Most agricultural systems in Africa are still based on subsistence farming, unable to generate sufficient surplus cash to purchase modern tools and machinery”. As such, one participant in Stratford FTRA had this to say:

I only have a plough, scotch cart and cultivator. The plough is not in good shape anymore; it’s mouth is finished but I have no money to replace it. I have to use it like that until it cannot work anymore (ST10, Male, Interview).

Tractor use is insignificant compared to cattle-drawn equipment, but it does exist in both study sites:

I do own a tractor and a few other equipment. I bought it a few years ago after I had a good tobacco harvest (ST13, Male, Interview).

I have a tractor and irrigation pipes that I use to water my fields and clean my pigsty and chicken runs (KV19, Male, Interview).

Agricultural mechanisation through use of tractors is uncommon in both areas, which might explain in part the reason why participants are not reaching their full potential in terms of crop yields. Similar studies by Simalenga (2013) and Mhembwe et al. (2019) support this finding. As such, participant ST13 is the only farmer who owns a tractor amongst the participants in Stratford FTRA (5%) and,

likewise, one farmer (KV19) in Kanzou Village (5%) owns a tractor. Both farmers with tractors are men, so that no woman owned a tractor, which does likely indicate a gendered dimension in terms of agricultural mechanisation in the two sites. Ragasa et al. (2013) and Weideman (2006) also found that gender differences exist between males and females in terms of technology or machinery adoption.

Both women and men in the FGDs in Kanzou Village mentioned that they never dreamt of owning tractors because they are just far too expensive.

[Laughs] tractors are expensive...ummm ... some of us can never afford them (FGD2 Female, Kanzou).

As you can see, only one family has a tractor in this village. We cannot all afford tractors (Male, FGD, Kanzou).

Participant KV18 mentioned that her children in the diaspora wanted to buy her a tractor to use in the field, but she turned down the offer because she needed to hire someone to operate it. She does not have the expertise of how tractors operate, so she felt that it was going to be a challenge if she is required to supervise the operator: “It will end up just parked in the yard. We would have wasted money,” she said.

The two tractor owners (ST13 and KV19) agreed that tractors are quite expensive to maintain, which sometimes affects their agricultural production. For example, ST13 specified that even though he owns a tractor, it suffers physical depreciation from usage. The ability to service and buy parts for the tractors depends on how well the harvest season went for him and, if he does not harvest well, he will not be able to buy spare parts for the tractor. He stated:

We struggle here because, when we harvest, the income is not enough to service the tractor and it ends up worn out from too much usage. At the end of the day, I end up parking the tractor because it becomes an expense (ST13, Male, Interview).

This finding matches with the study by Mhembwe et al. (2019) of the Ruchanyu irrigation scheme in Shurugwi district where farmers had a newly acquired tractor grounded because of a lack of technical skills amongst the farmers to service and repair their machinery. Unlike ST13, who struggles to service and buy spare parts for the tractor, KV19 mentioned that he prepares his tractor well in advance for the upcoming agricultural season so that when the new season begins the tractor will be ready:

When it is almost farming season, I make sure my boys prepare the tractor every time so that our farming season is not disturbed with the tractor not doing its job properly. If the tractor is dead [not working properly], then we will not be able to farm all the land (KV19, Male, Interview).

The difference between these two farmers is that participant KV19 has an off-farm income that finances his farming and allows him to attend to his tractor on a regular basis, whereas participant ST13 depends solely on farming for his livelihood. Similar to findings by Shonhe (2019) in a study conducted in Mvurwi, participant ST13 specified that he hires out his tractor to other farmers in exchange for labour or cash.

However, fellow farmers whom he expects might want to use his tractor service usually face financial challenges of their own or need to spend time working in their own fields, and they are not able to rent his tractor for these reasons. This leads to just a few farmers using the tractor services. As he puts it:

My people here are struggling financially so my services are not normally used. Sometimes ... ummm ... they say they want to work in their own fields, so they won't find time to come and work for the tractor [by labouring in his fields]. I wish the government would assist us with tractors so that no one has to pay for tractor services (ST13, Male, Interview).

Participant KV19 indicated that he does not hire out his tractor to other communal farmers because he is aware of the many costs involved in maintaining the tractor. He stated:

I would love to help, but since I only come here during weekends, I will not be the one in control of how it is used. People's fields may damage my tractor and it is expensive to maintain. I like to do it myself [drive the tractor], but I am not always available (KV19, Male, Interview).

I asked Participant KV19 why his wife does not operate the tractor in his absence, and he responded by saying that she does not know how to drive. He only trained his sons to operate the tractor because "as men they must know". Intriguingly, KV19 has seven children (3 girls, 4 boys) with two of the girls being older than the son is. But, based on his understanding of the gendered division of agricultural labour, he views teaching a boy child how to operate a tractor as preferable to training girls. He adopts this position despite the fact that his agricultural work might be affected negatively, and come to a possible standstill, during the week when he and sons are away from the village. In this light, one woman in the mixed FGD in Stratford FTRA raised a question to other discussants about how many women knew how to drive any type of motorised vehicle compared to how many men. Only one man had no idea on how to drive, and not all women knew how. This means that, if tractors were made available for farmers to use, women would be at a disadvantage.

Participant ST13 stated that sometimes he encounters challenges such as purchasing diesel on the black market, which is more expensive than the formal market, and this takes up most of his savings for the farming season. This reflects the broader problem raised by Kirui (2019) about agricultural mechanisation in most parts of Africa, namely, a lack of finance, with most farmers across the continent depending on their own savings to buy agricultural machinery. Therefore, in ST13's

case, he sometimes resorts to using hand tools instead of the tractor during the farming season. This reduces his agricultural production because hand tools force him to limit the land area for growing crops. When his tractor is working well, though, he even rents land from his neighbours to increase crop production and yields and is therefore assured of a productive season. For ST13, providing a free tractor service for other villagers simply is not viable, because of the sheer expense of maintaining the tractor. Many female villagers in Stratford FTRA (and indeed in Kanzou Village) wished that they could afford to hire a tractor, particularly those of advancing years, but the cost of hiring a tractor is exorbitant, therefore, they use hand tools in their fields or at best cattle-drawn equipment. Of course, many men in both Kanzou Village and Stratford FTRA also desired their own tractor or at least access to one.

During the mixed FGDs, participants reported awareness of the many advantages of using machinery in agriculture, particularly tractors. They mentioned how tractors allow more land to be cultivated and save time in land preparation, unlike using hand hoes. Participant KV20 was one farmer who strongly desired a tractor. He is a young farmer in his 40s and he aims to own a tractor before he gets too old so that it is easier for him to farm. Some in Stratford FTRA highlighted that they wish the government would facilitate loans for tractors for every farmer during the FTLRP, which they would pay for over a period of about 10 years. At the same time, discussants in both sites reminded each other about how they do not have formalised land tenure security, which impairs their ability to acquire mechanised equipment as land is often seen as critical collateral for acquiring loans on offer from financial institutions. Without legal title, finance providers will likely refuse to accept a farmer's land as security for a loan (Ströh de Martínez et al., 2016). Some participants, however, view tractors as unnecessary since their land sizes are small and can be cropped via cattle-drawn equipment. Others were caught in-between stating that they would benefit using tractors but that they could do without. They realised that owning a tractor comes with its own set of challenges, such as maintaining the tractor and purchasing spare parts, something similar to what farmers in the interviews mentioned. In this sense, the tractor becomes a burden to the farmers rather than an essential asset that increases productivity. Importantly, women indicated that owning a tractor would be an advantage because they would be able to reduce the time spent tilling the land to engage in other activities (as discussed later in this chapter).

Another productive asset that both male and female villagers in Stratford FTRA and women in Kanzou Village do not have access to is irrigation equipment. Only one male participant and no female participant in Kanzou Village uses irrigation for his crops (5%) as compared to none (0%) both males and females in Stratford FTRA. The number of even male-headed households possessing irrigation equipment is very low, with the results showing only a slight variation in gendered access

to irrigation. This is despite irrigation's role in enhancing agricultural production being widely recognised (Oyebamiji et al., 2021). Because farmers lack irrigation equipment, they rain-feed their land and crops leading to low yields. Affordability and lack of access to credit emerged as the reasons why both men and women fail to access irrigation systems and irrigate their crops. Participant ST6 stated that he once received a quotation for irrigation equipment, but it was too expensive to consider purchasing: "I just put the quotation away, I don't even know where I put it", he said.

Irrigation is a greater necessity for Stratford FTRA farmers than for those in Kanzou Village because of the greater size of their farming land, but there is no irrigation equipment at all at Stratford FTRA. With the right irrigation equipment, farmers might be assured of twice the productivity as compared to rain-fed crops. Lack of irrigation equipment leads to particularly A1 farmers only farming those portions of their fields they can manage and leaving other land unused. One female participant in Kanzou Village stated that their field portions are very small as compared to the A1 fields, so there is no need for irrigation equipment in local communal areas unless (vegetable) garden cooperatives exist.

Clearly, household economies in the two study sites, as in rural Zimbabwe more broadly, are largely dependent on rain-fed agriculture. Some male informants indicated that the government should consider the plight of tobacco farmers by availing funds for them to purchase irrigation equipment. Currently, when the need arises for them to irrigate tobacco after planting, they use water cans, with the water drawn from the nearest water source or hire from those who have irrigation equipment at a cost. This availing of funds for irrigation, if it were to happen, would mainly benefit men because of the gender bias in tobacco farming.

Interestingly, the male farmer who uses irrigation in Kanzou Village (K19) is the same farmer who owns a tractor. He practices small-scale irrigation using a sprinkler system for irrigation and a borehole as a water source to water crops as well as clean his pigsty and chicken runs. This enables him to supply fellow villagers and local businesses with off-season crops and vegetables throughout the year. This finding supports the argument of Mhembwe et al. (2019) who spoke about the significant impact of irrigation schemes in Shurugwi, where the farmers in the district can now grow their crops all year round, contrary to the period before the schemes were established when the farmers relied on erratic rains. In this context, one participant in Kanzou Village praised KV19's agricultural work in the village, stating that he is feeding the village and inspiring young men and women from the village to invest in their rural homes. This participant went on to suggest that the government needs to invest in young people in rural villages, via irrigation schemes, so that they can use the land available to create food security and employment opportunities. As argued by Adebayo et al. (2018:155), "irrigated agriculture significantly contributes towards generating rural employment

and maintaining rural livelihoods”. In Stratford FTRA, one participant suggested that farmers should join hands and buy irrigation equipment, which can be used by everyone in the area who contributed towards buying the equipment. However, he acknowledged that water could be a source of conflict amongst farmers; therefore, the government should intervene by offering credit to individual farmers. Others expressed concern that irrigation equipment might be stolen within a short period of time, given the high rate theft (particularly in Kanzou Village).

Livestock, especially cattle, plays a very significant role for most of Zimbabwe’s rural-based households, and this includes the provision of draught power, manure, meat and transport, as well as income and social security or risk aversion (Barret, 1992). Participants in this study mentioned oxen/cattle as their major draught power animal. As Zhou et al. (2018:3), state, “Draught animals have been identified as a significant tool in providing farmers with farm power to facilitate agricultural production”. In the two study sites, cattle were of particular significance. Kanzou Village, however, as mentioned previously, is experiencing a high level of cattle theft and cattle disease that is then affecting crop production. As a widow who lost two of her cows lamented:

We don't have cows anymore my child, we don't know where they are going, whether they were stolen or they are in other villages (KV1, Female, Interview).

A huge challenge for her is that she stays with her young grandchild who is unable to assist her with tracing the cows at the end of the day after the grazing period is over. She stated that, as women, they are afraid of walking long distances to look for their cows. This is unlike men, who sometimes go for hours looking for their cattle and are more likely to retain their cattle for this reason. Men are unafraid to walk in the forests and look for cows. Women in Kanzou Village thus rely on male neighbours, as men tend to bring all their neighbours’ cattle home because they know to whom the cattle belong:

Here we all know each other’s cows so whoever goes to look for them will bring them and notify the owners; that’s how we sometimes get our cows back. When my boy [herder] is not around ... eeh ... during the holidays I struggle (KV1, Female, Interview).

In Stratford FTRA, both men and women said they do not experience cattle theft, but some are unlucky with cattle, as their cattle do not multiply as fast as others do. Hence, they have fewer cattle than others whose cattle multiply faster:

Eh ... you know what our problem here is: that our cattle seem not to multiple as fast as we want them to, which is a problem for us farmers, but we cannot say we have a cattle theft problem ... no ... (ST9 Male, Interview).

Participants in Stratford FTRA were concerned that there might be something in their area causing their cattle not to multiply as fast as they want, thereby causing significant stress to the farmers. In the end, both study areas are facing challenges in growing their herds of cattle, a sign that their wealth is not expanding since cattle ownership is a symbol of status in the rural areas.

Given the unavailability of tractors in the research areas, other forms of equipment are of great significance for agricultural and domestic use. For instance, those with scotch carts (55% in Kanzou Village and 80% in Stratford FTRA) stated that scotch carts play a crucial role in ferrying organic manure from the cattle kraals to the fields in preparation for the farming season (since they cannot afford enough inorganic fertiliser inputs for their fields). In Stratford FTRA, only male-headed households had scotch carts, whereas in Kanzou Village both male- and female-headed households own scotch carts. Scotch carts are also useful during harvest season to carry harvested crops from the fields. In addition, scotch carts offer relief from strenuous labour during droughts as, during those years when there is drought, households need to transport water from afar to their homesteads. This is especially important for women because fetching water is their duty within the household. In male-headed households, the husband typically controls scotch cart use. Thus, one female informant (in Stratford FTRA) noted that her household's scotch cart is of little use to her because her husband refuses to let her use it in his absence because she might damage it. She cannot make independent decisions regarding the scotch cart, so she waits for her husband to return home or phones him for approval. A case in point is when one of their neighbours fell ill and needed to be transported to the bus station, as she first phoned her husband for approval who then asked his friend to assist.

Cultivators were present as well in the two sites, and they are considered to be very useful during weeding as they reduce the amount of labour and time in the fields (whereas ploughs are used for land preparation before planting the seeds). Male-headed households in both study sites had more access to cultivators (85% in Stratford FTRA and 70% in Kanzou Village) as compared to female-headed households (10% in Stratford FTRA and 20% in Kanzou Village). Those households without cultivators in Kanzou Village stated that they sometimes borrow cultivators from their neighbours but sometimes the latter are not willing to lend their cultivators since they are expensive to buy and repair. Normally, cultivators are rented in exchange for cattle herding for a week or more depending on how many days they want to borrow the cultivator:

I sometimes spend close to a week herding other people's cattle because I would have borrowed a cultivator for my field. It's usually 3 days of cattle herding for one day that I use a cultivator. This is our way of doing things. We are used to it; no one says we should do it that way, but we just agree amongst ourselves (KV17, Male, Interview).

Some participants without cultivators mentioned that cultivator use is not necessary. They consider their use as optional because they can use hand hoes to weed all their fields.

Generally, the interviewed farmers were happy with their animal-drawn equipment (such as scotch carts and cultivators) because they are affordable and easily accessible as compared to tractors. These results seem to be consistent with research by Zhou et al. (2018), which found that animal power is generally affordable and accessible to smallholder farmers. This is one key reason why villagers in both Kanzou Village and Stratford FTRA are deeply concerned about protecting their cattle, both from theft and diseases. Any local shortfalls in cattle herds undercut the capacity of the farmers to undertake crop farming productively.

A few farmers who have the resources to hire labour stated that the weeding stage is the one in which they hire the most labour because of the bending required at this stage. One Kanzou Village participant (KV12) said: “I cannot do it anymore; I cannot bend for a long time, and that’s why I prefer to hire people to assist me.” These were the sentiments of many participants in Stratford FTRA as well. They stated that bending is a challenge, especially in their larger fields. One aspect common in both study areas was how weeding is mainly executed by women and children with men in large part as supervisors – men only help it seems when the crops are drastically affected by weed growth. The weeding process was clearly gendered, and some female participants argued that this is the reason why their husbands resist investing in cultivators, because this stage does not affect them.

If a household does not have their own cattle, they borrow from other villagers either in exchange for casual labour (*maricho*) or for a payment. When the exchange is for casual labour, those who borrow cattle to plough their fields will go and assist with weeding or planting in the cattle owner’s field. However, in the case of Stratford FTRA, it was intriguing to see that neighbouring farmers may pair their cattle together to plough; for example, if one farmer has only one cattle, they look for another farmer with one cattle and they put the cattle together to plough their fields. One participant had this to say:

When I got married, my father gave me a cow to start my cattle herd with but, in the past few years, I managed to have two more cows. Of the three, one is capable of working in the fields. I team up with other farmers so that I will be able to plough my fields. If I don’t do that, I will miss the farming season (ST7, Male, Interview).

This was common in particular amongst the younger farmers who received cattle from their fathers upon marriage, and who are still trying to grow their herd. In agreement with this, Moyo and Mlilo (2019:250) in his study in rural Hwange found that “the most effective way for poor males to own cattle in the study area is through buying one cow and waiting for it to reproduce”. While the young farmers wait for their cattle to reproduce, they team up with other farmers in order for them to

work in their fields. Other participants mentioned how animal draught power is preferred because it gives a better yield than mere hand tools (such as hoes). As Photo 14 shows, it is not unusual for farmers in both sites to be unable to farm their entire fields because of the unavailability of the proper agricultural equipment.



Photo 14: Land left unploughed in Stratford FTRA due to lack of agricultural equipment

Source: Fieldwork.

7.3 Access to Agricultural Inputs

This section focuses on agricultural inputs, mainly, seeds, fertilizers and herbicides, that are often provided by the government for farmers at subsidised rates to use to boost their productivity. The farmers will repay for the inputs when they sell their crops at the Grain Marketing Board (GMB). In a later section, I consider the question of corruption in the supply of these inputs.

Zimbabwe produces a diversity of agricultural commodities that can be categorised into subsistence and commercial sub-sectors. Cereal crops, like maize and small grains like beans, cowpeas, groundnuts, and round nuts are mainly for subsistence purposes; while tobacco, cotton, wheat, beef, sugar cane, horticultural crops, coffee, and tea are mainly commercial. Maize is often labelled as a ‘family crop’ because almost every family involved in small-scale agriculture grows it, and it produces the staple food of Zimbabwe (*sadza*). As presented earlier, farmers in both study areas grow a variety of crops such as maize, tobacco, groundnuts, round nuts, sweet potatoes, beans, and

cowpeas. However, maize is the dominant crop in both Kanzou Village and Stratford FTRA, and tobacco is grown extensively in Stratford FTRA.

In Kanzou Village and Stratford FTRA, the maize crop is usually grown for subsistence with the possibility of market sales. There are certain seasons when farmers end up only growing maize for subsistence, especially when drought hits the country; and, in seasons when rains are good, they manage to grow for sale. One male participant in Kanzou had this to say about their maize production, which is generally true for all Kanzou Village and Stratford FTRA farmers, both male and female:

First, it is for family consumption, that is subsistence; then the surplus that we farm is to get some income [through sales] to run the household (KV4, Male, Interview).

Moreover, most informants in Stratford FTRA (65%) and Kanzou Village (70%) stated that they use purchased maize seed or seed received from the Presidential Input Schemes (PIS) on small portions of their fields and use retained maize seed from previous harvests on the rest of the fields. For some, purchasing seeds is dependent on their financial status at the time:

We mix uncertified and certified seeds. Certified seed is expensive so we will not be able to buy for all the fields (ST 8, Male, Interview).

When we have money we buy but, when we do not have money, we select the best [seeds] from our previous harvest and plant that (KV13, Female, Interview).

The use of retained seed emerged in all the FGDs as well, with participants agreeing that the government is letting them down by not providing seed inputs on time.

As stated in one FGD in Kanzou Village:

Yah, we blame our government for leaving the redistribution of inputs until late into the farming season. We are forced to use retained seed; we have no choice. Some of us will be looking forward to the inputs ... ummm ... they are expensive nowadays. If the government does not give us on time, where do they think we will get the inputs, especially some of us widows (FGD4, Female, Kanzou Village).

These findings concur with Magiya's (2015) study, which indicates that more than 20% of Zimbabwean smallholder farmers use either retained or open-pollinated maize seed. This figure is rising because of the increasingly high cost of buying seeds.

As stated by participant KV13, they buy seeds only when they have the money to do so. As for other families, this is a challenge for her because her husband works in the informal sector and does not generate sufficient income for the household. This in turn affects her crop production because, when her husband manages to buy maize seed, the few bags he purchases are used in the main field, leaving her *tseu* to use retained seed. This reflects the gendered access to purchased seed existing in the two study sites, with men getting preference over women. For example, married

women in both study areas claimed that their husbands chose to use purchased inputs on their portions of land first before the portion of their wife or wives.

The few (10% in Kanzou Village and 15% in Stratford FTRA) of those who purchase maize seed for all their fields mentioned that they have a working family member who sends money for input purchases or buys inputs for them using online stores that they then collect from the nearest access point: “We cannot do it on our own, we don’t have the money; I am glad for our son who helps us,” said participant KV10. Households which receive remittances are in a stronger position to purchase (or receive) what is needed for the farming season. Overall, in terms of accessing seeds, women are in a weaker position in both study areas because the types of crops they grow (in their *tseu*) are not considered as significant as men’s crops. Single women in both study sites were in a better position to access agricultural inputs as compared to their married counterparts because, in seasons when they receive government inputs, they use them in their own fields. Some of the single women in Kanzou Village stated they notice their advantages over married women in the village in that they begin their farming season earlier each year while the married women are still waiting for inputs from their husbands.

I noted different responses about seed inputs and crop production between the participants in Stratford FTRA and those in Kanzou Village. Those A1 farmers at Stratford FTRA who lived in the CAs before resettlement cited an increase in production due to larger land sizes, even though this had a knock-on effect in terms of the lack of seed inputs. They argued that the larger land size yields more crops compared to the CAs even when they have used only minimal inputs at Stratford FTRA. As one male farmer put it:

No ... ummm ... I am happy here. You see, now I have bigger land even though I might not feed it [with inputs] properly still I harvest a bit because it is bigger than my previous portion of land [in the CA]. Now I added tobacco that I never grew before, you see (ST6, Male, Interview).

Most A1 farmers (80%) mentioned their excitement in venturing into new crop production, mainly tobacco that they were not farming in the CAs. Tobacco is mainly a men’s crop in Stratford FTRA households, which have men and women present. In this study, all men in Stratford FTRA mentioned that they farm tobacco even though the farming scale differs from less than a hectare to more than three hectares. For women, only two of the single women stated that they farm tobacco with the assistance of their male relatives. Male participant ST7 highlighted that acquiring land during the FTLRP was an excellent opportunity to engage mainly in cash crops because the shortage of land in the CAs, as well as the soil type there, was blocking them from doing so. However, just like with maize production, farmers in Stratford FTRA mentioned that they struggle to secure needed inputs, not just seed but also inorganic fertilisers and insecticides. They were dissatisfied with the high

production costs involved in farming tobacco, including inputs and labour, citing a lack of government support and the necessary know-how to undertake tobacco farming:

There are plenty of challenges, starting with lack of capital to expand our farming area, and also the inputs are expensive. We were hoping that the government will have some programmes to teach us how to grow new crops that we started farming here like tobacco. I wish the government can subsidise these so that they are affordable [sighs], also labour [sighs]; we do not have enough money to hire people to help us so ... yah ... we have to work with what we have (ST2, Male, interview).

We have financial challenges, we do not always plant all the crops that we want and the amount that we want because we struggle to raise money for inputs (ST13, Male, Interview).

These findings align with what Tom and Mutswanga (2015) argue, namely, that FTLRP farmers are experiencing low yields because they are inexperienced in tobacco farming and lack inputs. In the findings of Tom and Mutswanga (2015), A1 reiterated the lack of inputs, irrigation development and financial support from banks and the government as their key challenges. According to my informants at Stratford FTRA, the government never assisted them with loans to buy inputs even at the beginning of the FTLRP. This is despite the government arguing that it availed an input loan scheme for the farmers worth about US\$16 million at the start of the FTLRP (Thomas, 2003).

In addition to using inorganic fertilisers (mainly Compound D and Ammonium Nitrate or top dressing for maize) in their fields, some farmers supplement it with organic fertilisers (manure), while other farmers use manure only when they cannot afford to buy (the expensive) fertiliser. Manure provide farmers with soil nutrients and is used in both study sites as the key ingredient to feed and strengthen the growing capacity of the soil. In terms of gender, one female discussant in Kanzou Village FGD argued that men's fields benefit first from manure because, as indicated earlier, men believe that their crops are more important than women's and, as well, men highlight that they provide most of the labour power to dig and carry the manure. Men (60%) and women (75%) in both study sites, confirmed that men are the main diggers and carriers of manure.

In the FGD in Kanzou Village, another woman justified male control of manure use. She noted that cattle are men's property, as are the hand tools and scotch cart used to dig up and ferry the manure, and hence men should have first preference regarding the use and distribution of manure. However, this sparked a debate because other female discussants disagreed: "There is nothing called an important crop, all our crops are equally important", argued one discussant. Only one male member of this FGD was willing to accept that men and women should have an equal share of organic manure. Interestingly, he argued that women's fields are small and do not require a large amount of manure, and hence their *tseu* fields should be rightly considered as recipients of manure.

Similar findings are true for the use of inorganic fertilisers. Most participants in both study areas confirmed that men's crops receive preference with the available bags of fertiliser since they are mainly the cash crops that are expected to be sold for profit. One participant in Stratford FTRA noted that she would normally use only a quarter of a 50-kilogramme bag of fertiliser for her *tseu* (both Compound D and top dressing) because they have to ensure that family (cash) crops receive enough fertiliser. Surprisingly, women in male-headed households agreed on how the inorganic fertiliser is distributed, citing less importance given to female crops in most households.

7.4 Government's Agricultural Support and Rampant Corruption

In an attempt to boost agricultural production, the President of Zimbabwe launched The Presidential Inputs Scheme (PIS) in 2011, an inputs donation scheme meant to assist the most vulnerable farming households both in CAs and in FTRAs. The inputs were to include seed, fertilizer and fall armyworm pesticides for the following agricultural season. According to the interviewees, this scheme is insufficient as it usually provides only between 1 to 2 bags of seed (either 5 kilogramme or 10 kilogramme bags) and fertilizer (which is meant to be 50 kilogrammes of Compound D and 50 kilogrammes of top dressing), and this is barely enough for cropping 1 hectare. This means that farmers need to buy inputs, particularly if they want to farm all their fields. The PIS caters for maize, sorghum, pearl millet, soya beans, sunflower, cowpeas and sugar beans. If farmers do not receive the Scheme's inputs in the right quantities, and at the right time, they will experience low yields because they depend quite significantly on the inputs scheme.

As mentioned previously, most of the participants in both study areas (70% in Kanzou Village and 65% in Stratford FTRA) highlighted their reliance mainly on the PIS for seed and fertiliser. The other (20% and 10% respectively) mentioned that they mainly use retained seed and manure – plus, they sometimes buy their own seed and fertiliser if the government is late with the distribution of inputs. This depends on the previous harvest. If the harvest was good then they afford to buy their own inputs but, if it was bad, then they resort to mainly retained seed and organic manure. This becomes a challenge as most of the time farmers in both study areas stated that they experience poor harvests on a regular basis. The rest (5% and 25%) purchase maize seeds for all their fields.

Additionally, farmers struggle to receive their allocated inputs (seed, fertilizer and pesticides) from government on time for the planting season due, they argue, to corruption. This was a concern amongst participants both in Kanzou Village and in Stratford FTRA:

I wish people wouldn't steal inputs meant for the poor. The government did a good job to teach us new farming techniques (*Pfumvudza/Intwasa*), but people are stealing (KV4, Female, Interview).

Participant KV4 claimed that there was a rise in input theft in the country, and not just in Kanzou Village, and that it is now difficult for farmers to trust their political leaders because they do the opposite of what they are in the office for. Women are affected more than men are because, as stated before, men's crops get first preference over women's *tseu* and, thus, any shortfalls in input supplies are likely to undercut the limited inputs women receive in the first place. Farmers in Stratford FTRA cited that they rarely produce enough crops to sell, especially single women who do not engage in tobacco farming. One single female participant at Stratford FTRA said she gave up any attempt at market sales and now just ensures that her family (two children) has enough to eat, using cattle manure exclusively for enriching the soil. Another single female farmer at Stratford FTRA was even worse off, as the harvested maize crop is sometimes not enough for subsistence, and hence her family is forced to work for other people in order for them to supplement their harvest. Those most vulnerable suffer the most when inputs are late or do not arrive at all.

Corruption with regard to the government's agricultural schemes is a general faced by small-scale farmers across the countryside. Chisango (2018) conducted a study in A1 farms in Bindura and farmers mentioned rampant corruption as one of the key obstacles hindering the adoption and success of the fast track initiative. Likewise, Muzulu (2020) states that government programmes are a failure due to corruption undertaken by rich and politically-connected individuals.

Besides the Input Scheme, farmers in both Kanzou Village and Stratford FTRA referred to two other schemes that were introduced by the government to farmers: The Command Agriculture and *Pfumvudza /Intwasa* programmes. The Command Agriculture Scheme was introduced during the 2015-2016 farming season to "mobilise sustainable and affordable funding for the agricultural sector where farmers were supposed to benefit from the agricultural inputs in an endeavour to boost production of strategic crops to restore sanity in the provision of adequate food and nutrition to the rural populace" (Chisango, 2018: 77). *Pfumvudza* is a climate-proofing, high-profile conservation agriculture technique that was introduced by the government as part of the PIS in October 2020. Both schemes were introduced to boost agricultural production, and provide food, nutrition and livelihood security at the household level.

Generally, participants mentioned that both the Command Agriculture Scheme and *Pfumvudza* programme have positive dimensions, but that they also have their downsides. Farmers indicated that the introduction of the two schemes led to a delay in starting to farm in their 2020-2021 farming season because they had to wait indefinitely for inputs (seed and fertiliser) and training as promised by the government. In addition, the *Pfumvudza* programme was labour intensive because it required farmers to dig pits (that look like small planting basins) to concentrate water and nutrients (see Photo 15).



Photo 15: Farmers engaging in Pfumvudza farming in Harare

Source: *Harare Post*, 29 November 2021

Only a minority (18 out of the 40) of the participants in both study sites indicated that they partook in both the Command Agriculture and *Pfumvudza* schemes. *Pfumvudza* was not that evident in Kanzou Village, with only 40% of the participants having practiced it in at least one of their fields; Command Agriculture existed in Stratford FTRA, but with only 30% stating that they benefited from it. Though participating in the programmes, many still practised their traditional way of farming (rather than the government's imposed conservation agriculture) because they were not very sure of the outcomes of the programmes. I observed that there was no evidence of *Pfumvudza* taking place in Stratford FTRA during my fieldwork. Only a few households in Kanzou Village in fact practiced it. Some respondents lamented that the Command Agriculture Scheme benefited people with political connections, in that only those farmers (and mainly A2 farmers) received enough inputs to use in their fields. As one male farmer at Stratford FTRA exclaimed:

To tell you the truth my sister you need connections, be it family or people in those offices ... you know ... for you to be able to get the inputs. We have seen it but that's how it is ... yah ... it's not easy. We all want to farm but these are the challenges (ST14, Male, Interview).

What this farmer argued is in line with the claim by Mkodzongi and Lawrence (2019) that the schemes benefited black capitalist farmers.

Older participants in Kanzou Village complained that *Pfumvudza* is just too labour intensive (including the hole digging exercise – Photo 15), which in their advanced age makes it very difficult for them to participate and benefit from inputs. One female farmer at Kanzou Village said:

I am now old as you can see ... How am I going to finish even one piece of land digging at my age? I leave this for the young ones with a whole future ahead of them. I just want to have something to eat... (KV12, Female, Interview).

Similarly, one farmer in Zimbabwe who is part of a movement that advocates for family-farm-based sustainable agriculture criticised *Pfumvudza* for being labour demanding (Bafana, 2021). Even the younger men and women at Kanzou Village expressed dissatisfaction with the scheme stating that, on top of being labour intensive, it is time-consuming as compared to animal-drawn or machinery methods. Muzulu (2020) attests to this by noting that fields across the country demonstrate that farmers were not practicing the government's version of conservation agriculture.

Female informants make the point as well that that women and children in particular end up suffering if the family decides to adopt *Pfumvudza*, because they are the ones who do the digging of the holes in most cases. Three participants highlight:

My husband says he does not know how to use a hoe because where he comes from women were responsible for weeding the fields so he is reluctant to do it. When *Pfumvudza* was introduced, I did it with my children and he ploughed the normal way (KV13, Female, Interview).

It is like this scheme was introduced for us women ... We never attempted it because my husband said he does not like digging holes. He said I can do it if I want with the help of the children but my children are small, you see I cannot let them do that (ST5, Female, Interview).

Ummm... this scheme my sister we will see. I am used to just using my plough and finishing the portion that I am ploughing that day, and fast. I still want to understand it but I told my wife to do it if she wants to (ST14, Male, Interview).

The above excerpts indicate how people are hesitant to adopt this farming method because of its labour-intensive character. Further, men in both sites expect women to perform the hard labour while women expect assistance from the men. At the end of the day, no one ends up doing it.

Farmers in Zvimba were not the only ones doubtful of the *Pfumvudza* programme and the other government support programmes. There were broad doubts about joining the programmes as they something that farmers were doing for the first time. An article written by Chikumba in the *Herald Newspaper* on the 25th of May 2021 thus stated that farmers in Bindura were also doubtful of the programmes. Zvimba participants highlighted that these schemes come with terms and conditions that make them lose interest in participating. Participant ST17 gave an example of how it was mandatory for all participating farmers to sell all their produce to the Grain Marketing Board (GMB), a government parastatal, so that the government could recover the money for inputs that were distributed to the farmers. However, the GMB's buying price is very low. In both male and female FGDs, participants in both sites agreed that selling the harvested maize to private buyers and repaying the government the input loan on their own is a better option.

Corruption also became pervasive. According to Tapfumaneyi (2020:1), "Masvingo, Mashonaland Central, and Mashonaland West provinces had the highest number of recorded cases of

human rights violations attributed to the partisan distribution of inputs under the government's *Pfumvudza* scheme". Additionally, even before the launch of the *Pfumvudza* programme, farmers had always faced problems whereby they do not receive seed and fertilizer inputs on time (dating back to the year 2000 when the government introduced inputs programmes), thereby affecting their crop production. There were incidents under *Pfumvudza* where corrupt local councillors in different parts of the country were caught in the act of stealing inputs meant for farmers. These councillors would even charge farmers to deliver inputs that they never delivered. Some have been banned from campaigning in the 2023 elections because of this. Mashonaland West Province (where the study sites are located) was one of the provinces where numerous officials were violating the national constitution through the openly partisan distribution of government-sourced inputs.

In Kanzou Village, female participants generally viewed input programmes as an exercise that favours men over women because it requires people to wake up early in the morning, spend the whole day in a queue and fight for spots in the queue, something that is very difficult for women to do because they need to be home to take care of the family. Participant KV11, a married woman, said that even if her husband receives the inputs, he would consider his field portion before hers because it produces food for the whole family. A similar situation existed in Stratford FTRA.

Farmers in Stratford FTRA and Kanzou Village face all these production-related challenges, including lack of equipment, inputs and corruption, to varying degrees, and these challenges contribute to low crop production, particularly for female villagers.

7.5 Market Prices as Barriers to Reinvestment

In addition to the challenges faced during the crop production stages, farmers in both study areas spoke about their unhappiness with the pricing of grains and tobacco when making market sales. Dissatisfaction about tobacco pricing existed amongst farmers in Stratford FTRA as none of the farmers in Kanzou Village grew tobacco. Maize production existed in both sites. About 30% of the participants in Kanzou Village and 25% of participants in Stratford FTRA sold maize to the GMB (the official market). As well, respectively, 50% and 55% sold to middlemen while the remainder sell directly to other families particularly at times when maize becomes scarce. Only 35% of the tobacco farmers sold tobacco at the auction floors, and the rest stated that they sell to merchants. The main reasons for using middlemen for both maize and tobacco sales relate to logistics. Villagers at both sites must travel long physical distances to access the official markets, and they struggle to pay for the transportation to the GMB and tobacco auction floors. For tobacco farmers, the auction floors are centralised in Harare, and travelling there is a huge cost for the farmers. When they do manage to locate suitable transportation, the GMB and tobacco auction floors do not pay prices expected by the

farmers. Because of this, they end up selling to middlemen who bring their own transport to buy their crops. Farmers claim that if they calculate the difference in the amount paid by the middlemen and the amount paid by GMB and tobacco auction floors, using middlemen are a better option because paying for transport takes away from the net income that they receive after selling at the GMB and the tobacco auction floors. Even though what they receive from the middlemen falls short of what they expect, this is the best option available given the circumstances. Participants who keep their maize harvest in order to sell to local farmers stated that they sell at a higher price because people will be desperate to feed their families whilst waiting for the next harvesting season.

The results of this study show that market prices seem to affect tobacco farmers more so than grain farmers. One Stratford FTRA farmer, who had been a tobacco farmer for six years decided to stop tobacco farming, and he had this to say:

This year I was demotivated by the prices that they are paying at the auction to tobacco farmers, as they are not paying well. This other time I managed to buy a generator and an engine for my grinding mill but last time ... huh. ... it was too little so I decided to drop it and focus on maize. But tobacco was the main crop that I grew in the past (ST 9, Male, Interview).

This farmer's crop production was affected by the income he received after selling his tobacco crops which was not enough to buy further necessary inputs. Because of this, he and other tobacco farmers tend to sell to third parties at a low price, who then resell the crop for a sizeable profit. Mkodzongi and Lawrence (2019) come to a similar conclusion in highlighting how farmers in Zimbabwe are exploited through the unfair pricing mechanisms of inputs and the manipulation of tobacco prices.

Additionally, tobacco farmers are likely to receive about half of their income from selling tobacco at the auctions in US Dollars, and the rest will be RTGS. The RTGS loses its value quickly such that the farmers will not be able to buy any inputs for the next season from it. At the tobacco auction floors, buying prices are said to be very low and sometimes good grade tobacco is graded lowly, for example, instead of receiving \$3.50 per kilogram, they receive \$1.50. This means that farmers realise a very low profit even when the tobacco is a good grade. This exposes how dysfunctional Zimbabwe's agricultural markets are, because well-functioning markets would provide transparent information, fair prices, and low levels of speculation (Mafuse et al. 2021). The tobacco farmers at Stratford FTRA, though satisfied with the size of their cropping land, fail to reach their full potential because of this problem and the productions-specific challenges they face regularly. In this context, Musemwa et al. (2013:2) make the broader claim that "the Zimbabwean land reform programme has not lived up to some of its objectives which include combating poverty and revitalising the rural economy".

Easiness in marketing of crops was skewed towards men in this study. Even though farmers experience some unfairness in how they are paid for their crops, men were in a better position than women in terms of negotiating power, physical strength to carry the crops, and price knowledge. Men displayed knowledge on how to negotiate prices when selling their crops, an issue that some stated that women struggle to do. Women in both Kanzou Village and Stratford FTRA focus group discussions agreed that the middlemen or merchants refuse to negotiate when women are selling crops as compared to when men are selling. Hence, women with male relatives ask them to sell their crops on their behalf. This method, according to the female participants, works only if the male relative is trustworthy. There were instances where some female participants were conned by their own relatives.

Male participants have an advantage of strength to lift sacks of maize or bales of tobacco to go and sell to the official markets whereas female-headed households are required to hire male seasonal workers to lift and off-load at the destination for them. All this, when calculated, becomes costly and leads to female farmers opting to sell to middlemen or merchants. In addition, women's crops are usually for subsistence, which means they are normally left with a little to sell such that there will not be any point in hiring manpower to take their crops to the official markets. Female participants in male-headed households stated that selling and marketing of crops is exclusively done by the male head of household simply because of the reasons stated above (negotiating power, know-how and physique). This gendered aspect of crop marketing and selling indicates the need to make formal crop marketing channels accessible to all farmers regardless of gender through the government providing subsidised transport and manpower that assist female farmers.

7.6 Conclusion

This chapter shows that farmers in both CAs and A1 farms (Kanzou Village and Stratford FTRA respectively) are struggling to enhance their agricultural production, because of limited agricultural machinery and technology, lack of inputs, low market prices for their crops, insufficient government support, systemic corruption and related matters. Overall, though, levels of agricultural production tend to be higher in Stratford FTRA than in Kanzou Village. Two agricultural support schemes (Command Agriculture and *Pfumvudza*) introduced by the Zimbabwean government, while potentially of value, are also not having the desired effects. Overall, women are more disadvantaged than men, which reflects the patriarchal biases embedded in the two sites. For instance, inputs, technology and market access are highly gendered, with women's fields (*tseu*) not prioritised in this regard. Further, in relation to the government's support schemes, men often rely upon the labour of women to ensure that homesteads farm according to the methodologies set out by government. This

is part of a broader trend of homesteads depending heavily upon the agricultural labour of women. The next chapter (chapter 8) examines agricultural production at Kanzou Village and Stratford FTRA with respect to decision-making powers and processes more specifically.

CHAPTER 8: DIVISION OF LABOUR AND DECISION-MAKING WITHIN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION

8.1 Introduction

The different work, tasks, and responsibilities assigned by gender refers to the gendered division of labour, in both the sphere of production and reproduction. The economic (so-called productive) sphere mainly comprises activities related to the production and circulation of goods regarding trade and income-generating activities, for example, agricultural labour for production and marketing. The domestic (reproductive) sphere comprises tasks and activities relating to the sustenance of the family and the household, for example, childcare (GLOPP/ILO, 2008). According to Benería (1979: 209), “[i]t is in the reproductive sphere of the household that the primary relations of subordination/domination between the sexes [genders] is located”.

This chapter focuses on the sphere of production while the next chapter (chapter 9) focuses on the sphere of reproduction. In examining agricultural production at the two study sites, the chapter first considers the gendered division of labour with regard to such activities as land preparation, planting, weeding, harvesting and marketing. It then turns to the existence of a gendered division of labour by crop type, that is, subsistence crops and cash crops. This is followed by examining the question of gendered dynamics in hiring farm labour as well as the gendered dimension to crop sales. How the two sites differ, or do not differ, along these dimensions is brought to the fore.

8.2 Division of Labour in Farming Activities

Agricultural activities that participants engage in include land clearing, land preparation, ploughing, planting, weeding, harvesting, and marketing. In this current study, there is a clear division of activities along gender lines in both Kanzou Village and Stratford FTRA. Female participants engage more than men do in planting and harvesting, while men are involved more fully in pesticide application, supervising and post-harvest activities by selling and receiving income from cash and food crops.

Regarding **land clearing and preparation**, all men and women in both study areas cited being involved. Using hand tools such as hoes, making use of a rented plough or using their own plough, came out as the three main ways in which participants in both study areas clear and prepare their land. The majority (75% in Kanzou Village and 80% in Stratford FTRA) used ploughs either their own or rented while the rest uses hoes to clear and prepare the land (see Figure 7). Interestingly, female-headed households were the ones that indicated the main use of hoes for land clearing and preparation.

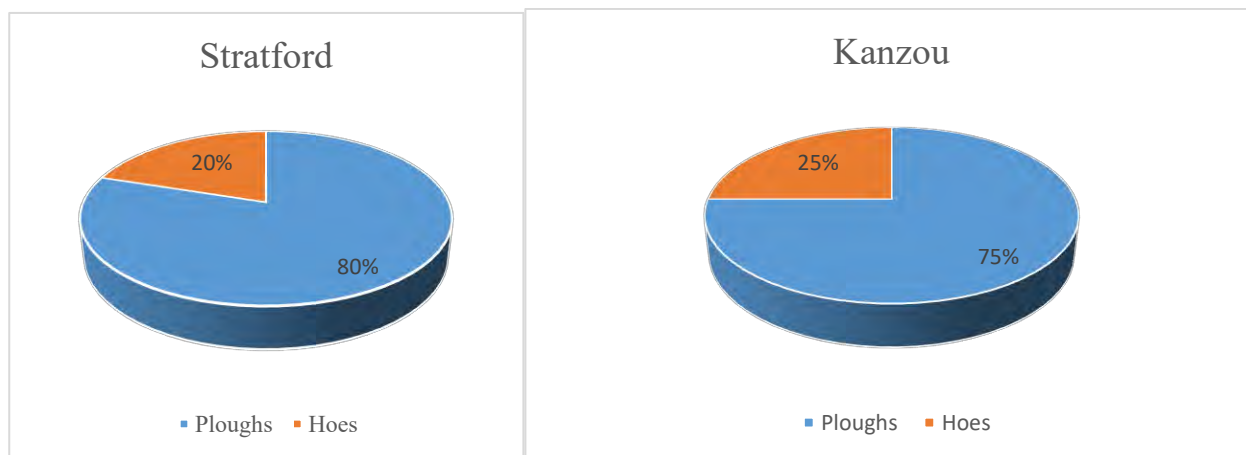
However, both men and women are responsible to clear their own pieces of land in order to engage in farming. To quote from both sites:

Everyone must prepare and clear their land, if they don't, who will do it for them? My wife is always excited to clear her portion because she knows I will not fight with her on whatever she wants to grow there (ST 6, Male, Interview).

Clearing and preparing the land is non-negotiable because it has to be ready come farming season so everyone is involved in our household (KV 16, Male, Interview).

These findings contradict the study by Palacios-Lopez. et al. (2016) who found land preparation to be an activity mainly done by males in Ethiopia and Niger.

Figure 7: Land clearing and preparation tools used by both men and women



In terms of clearing and preparing women's *tseu*, only one (14%) of the married men in Kanzou Village stated that he assists his wife with land clearing and preparation, and he does so because it is a heavy task for his wife to do alone. For Stratford FTRA, none of the married men mentioned that they assist their wives in clearing and preparing their *tseu*. One male participant indicated that since his wife's portion is not the main one in terms of generating income for the family, it is better if she focuses on it alone while he ensures the vital land for the family (his land) is cleared.

Not that her portion is not important ... [But] I have to make sure that what brings us income is sorted first (ST 17, Male, Interview).

Married women who do not get assistance from their husbands with their *tseu* sometimes assist their husbands in clearing and preparing land because they recognise that their husbands' land is used mainly for the family crops that bring about sales while women's crops are usually for subsistence. As one male from Kanzou Village said:

We all need to work together because we need to take care of the family; if we don't help each other, then we won't have an income. We all understand that ... yah ... it's not about who has a larger portion (KV 20, Male, Interview).

The only single man in this study mainly clears and prepares his land alone. Still, some single and widowed women (2 women in Stratford FTRA and 3 in Kanzou Village) have their male family members rendering them assistance. Single women have the burden of engaging in these (and other farming) activities alone or with the help of a male relative or hiring labour. Participant KV5 is one of the single women who mentioned that her brothers assisted her with clearing and preparing for the land:

I am grateful because my brothers help me with my portion, they don't leave me to do it by myself (KV 5, Female, Interview).

Comparatively, 67% of men in Stratford FTRA and 71% in Kanzou Village stated that they use mainly a harrow implement (consisting of a heavy frame set with teeth or tines) which is dragged over ploughed land to break up clods and remove weeds in their fields.

In terms of **planting**, the main focus was on planting maize and tobacco as the main sources of cash in the two study areas. Maize is also a main subsistence crop in the two areas. Hence, the vast majority of women, 81% in Stratford FTRA and 77% in Kanzou Village, stated that they are mainly involved in planting maize crop. In addition to the maize crop, women also plant other small grains like groundnuts and sorghum in their *tseu*. They stated that they plant these crops using their hands and legs to drop and cover seeds with soil, while only a few (33.3% and 28.5% respectively) of men in both areas mentioned that they are involved in planting the maize crop. However, these few men mentioned that they do the planting to help women, which is an indication that planting is considered a women's job. None of the participants mentioned the use of machinery during the planting process. Women in the Kanzou Village female-only FGD mentioned how this stage is important in their farming cycle because it sets the tone for them in terms of what they are expecting to harvest.

There is no comparison between Kanzou Village and Stratford FTRA regarding tobacco because tobacco was only farmed in Stratford FTRA; none of the participants in Kanzou Village farm tobacco. There were notable differences between men and women with respect to planting tobacco. Tobacco planting in Stratford FTRA was considered a man's task. This included both planting seeds in the seedbeds (nursery preparation), and transplanting tobacco. Most of the interviewed men claimed that women struggle with transplanting, hence leaving the duties to men in the household. This does not mean that women were not involved. Even though women struggle to transplant tobacco, a few married women (33%) in Stratford FTRA mentioned that they also assist their husbands in transplanting tobacco. Most (67%) though mentioned that their husbands prefer to

transplant tobacco themselves with the assistance of hired men and male children in the household. The main reason given was that tobacco farming is a delicate type of farming as compared to other crops, so it needs care. One female participant affirmed this by stating that women struggle with transplanting tobacco and feel relieved if men do it themselves:

It is better that they do it themselves, as the seedlings need to be handled with care. If the plants die, that means there will be a lot of gaps and then it will involve a lot of work to fill the gaps (ST5, Female, Interview).

In addition to just the planting, participants added that sometimes the seedbeds are treated with insecticides and fertiliser is applied before sowing the seeds, and men prefer to do that to avoid wastage of resources. The female-only FGD in Stratford FTRA agreed that the tobacco-planting phase is time-consuming and labourious and, therefore, it makes sense to hire labour and involve men in the family so that the women can find time to focus on other household duties. Participants added that female-headed households usually suffer because sometimes the planting phase fails to do well because they lack money to hire labour or lack male family members who can assist them. In its study in Ethiopia, Malawi, Uganda and Tanzania, UN Women (2018) found that women have less access to male family labour in female-headed households.

In the case of **weeding**, both men and women are involved. This finding contradicts some studies in Africa (for example, van Eerdewijk and Danielsen, 2015) that found weeding mainly a women's task. However, no men participated in weeding groundnuts or any of the crops women grew in their *tseu*. Participants emphasised the importance of removing weeds in their crops to avoid poor yields and to block the growth of a weed seed bank that can trouble them for several years. There is also a difference in the type of weeding in which male participants and female participants engage. Most men (65% in Kanzou Village and 60% in Stratford FTRA) stated that they use herbicides (*mushonga wesora*) as weed killer chemicals for the maize crop, whilst the remainder (35% in Kanzou Village and 40% in Stratford FTRA) use a hoe for manual weeding. A common herbicide amongst participants was Atrazine, which participants mentioned is easy to use, it is effective and it is cheaper than hiring labour. Muoni et al. (2013) attest to this finding, that the use of atrazine is relatively common in Zimbabwe. One male participant had this to say about Atrazine:

Ever since I started using Atrazine, I hardly struggle with weeds in my maize field. It really works and my grandson helps me with instructions and mixing it. You see if a small boy like my grandson can mix it then it's good ... I also don't stress about paying people to come and weed here; they are expensive. With one gallon of Atrazine I can spray two of my fields. I also like it because it stays when you spray it for a long time which reduces my worries about weeds in my maize crops and my time in the field (KV10, Male, Interview)

Most female participants (95% in both study areas) undertake manual (hoe) weeding, with some citing that they cannot afford herbicides and others indicating illiteracy as a barrier for them in using herbicides for weed control as they struggle to read and follow the instructions on how to administer the herbicides. Participant ST15 thus expressed that:

I don't know how to read the instructions. They need someone who can read to help me so I source help in the village and pay them with maize.

In this instance, participant ST15 relies on assistance from her brothers and neighbouring farmers to ensure that she does not kill her maize crop by misapplying the herbicide. Moreover, participant KV18 (a widow who stays with her grandchildren) narrated how one December, when her grandchildren visited relatives during their school holiday, she burnt her crops with herbicides because she failed to follow the instructions:

I cannot read my child. One time my grandchildren found all the maize burnt [she laughed]. I could not read the instructions, yah ... I did not attain any education (KV18, Female, interview).

This excerpt indicates that education is important when farmers want to administer herbicides to their crops and, in general, women are less literate than men are. Hence, men tend to be the ones who administer herbicides. As such, in Stratford FTRA, men emerged as the ones responsible for pesticide application for tobacco plants, in part because they are more educated than women are. Single women at Stratford FTRA seek assistance outside of their household in this regard, with some also fearing that they may not mix the chemicals properly and destroy the tobacco crop:

Haa ... I can do it but I am scared I might not do it properly, so I let my brother do it for me I don't want to mess with the tobacco (ST16, Female, Interview).

Generally, findings in this study concur with other studies (Mashingaidze, 2004; Muoni et al., 2013; Mavunganidze et al., 2014) that hoe-weeding is still a main weed control method used by smallholder farmers in Zimbabwe – even though in this study there is an indication of a gender gap between men and women in accessing alternative methods to hoe-weeding. Men have emerged as having access to alternative methods than women in both study sites.

In this study, maize **harvesting** is mostly a women's task, though men typically do tobacco harvesting. Most married women in both de jure and de facto households (70% in Stratford FTRA and 80% in Kanzou Village) mentioned that it is their task to ensure that maize crops are harvested with a few (30% and 20% respectively) citing assistance from their husbands. However, men supervise and organise transport, mainly in the form of scotch carts to carry the harvested crops from the field. Of the few (15% in Kanzou Village and 5% in Stratford FTRA) without scotch carts, some mentioned that they hire scotch carts but sometimes it becomes a challenge when the owners are busy

with their own fields. Alternatively, some participants mentioned that they use wheelbarrows but this is labour-intensive since it is necessary to make many trips. The female-only FGD in Kanzou Village also mentioned dissatisfaction because women are sometimes tasked to assist by carrying sacks loaded with crops on their heads from the fields, all the way to their homes. This exercise was uncommon amongst men and amongst women in Stratford FTRA. This might be due to the cultural perspective that it is a woman's duty to carry using their heads and that there are fewer people without scotch carts in Stratford FTRA as compared to Kanzou Village.

One single woman in Kanzou Village stated that she brews beer and organises a *nhimbe*, which is a traditional Shona practice of working together as a community to help each other in daily tasks such as harvesting, weeding fields, constructing a house, gathering manure or other tasks (Muyambo, 2017). As she put it:

I make sure I have enough beer so that when people are done in my field, they can come together and continue to socialise over the beer. I usually do it on Saturdays. People here love it. They always look forward to the harvesting season because they love my beer... [laughs] ... It helps me a lot. I know it will take one day for a field to finish (KV9, Female, Interview).

Participant KV9 highlighted that, as a single woman, this is the only way she can get assistance with harvesting since she only stays with small children. She even sometimes struggles to dismiss people because they enjoy coming together and socialising until the wee hours of the morning.

One married woman, in Stratford FTRA, sells her and her children's old clothes to hire labour to assist with the whole process, from harvesting maize until it is packed in sacks and ready for the market. She mentioned that this ensures that there is enough labour to partake in this time-consuming and heavy task:

Maize harvesting is a lot of work because we need to cut the maize stalks and stack them together in one place in the field. Then we remove the cobs from the stalks, put them in one place and carry them using sacks to the area where we remove the maize from the cob; so it's a lot of work for me. All the work, from cutting to sewing the sacks and making the maize ready for the GMB, is my work – that's why I hire people. The people who come to assist me help me a lot. Sometimes my husband ends up not coming to check how the harvest is going, so I have to do it (ST2, Female, Interview).

Participant ST2, being in a polygamous marriage, stated that it is difficult for her husband to be available to assist her; hence, she must hire labour for herself. Other female participants in the female-only FGD in Stratford FTRA echoed the same sentiments, claiming that – with this new trend of men taking more wives – it becomes difficult for them to get assistance since the husband will be focusing mainly on his new family.

Participant ST2 and other female villagers do most of the shelling using hands and rocks and sometimes they thresh the dry maize cobs in a sack to remove the kernels (*kupura chibage*). Afterwards, they winnow using winnowing shovels (*rusero*) to ensure that the maize is clean and ready for the market and consumption. After winnowing and packing in sacks, men will then apply insecticides to the maize that is stored for consumption because, as stated before regarding pesticides, men have the knowledge required for this task. The insecticide is not applied to the maize that is for sale.

In Stratford FTRA, as mentioned above, all men focus mainly on the tobacco crop and they leave women to organise harvesting of maize. Male heads of households who are usually absent during most of the year stated that they take leave from work during the harvesting period, and those self-employed said they organise someone to sell their merchandise while they return home to harvest their cash crop. They harvest the tobacco by themselves to ensure that it is prepared well for curing. They want to ensure that the ripe leaves are removed properly, the entire plant is cut properly and the stalk is split properly during the harvesting process. Respondents mentioned the use of sharp knives for this purpose, and hence they do not want their wives or female relatives to end up having accidents with the knives. As attested by one of the female participants, ST12: “Hanging tobacco for curing is a heavy task that requires men to do it”. Another woman agreed that tobacco harvesting and curing is a challenge for them, with one (ST15) saying that she relies heavily on her brother to assist her. One season, she almost stopped tobacco farming because her brother was not feeling well. She said that she was lucky that he got better within a short period of time and he assisted her:

I would have given up and not farmed tobacco at all, but he got better and was available to assist me. It's not an easy process but it has money if done properly. I didn't want to mess a crop that had grown properly in the field at the final stage (ST15, Female, Interview).

When curing tobacco after harvest, issues like the quality of the barn, how much air gets in, and how much moisture is around, are very important and this needs people with knowledge about curing. The male participants at Stratford FTRA said they guide each other on how to cure properly since they use a central barn to cure their tobacco. One male informant mentioned that, if the barn gets too moist, tobacco will rot, resulting in a loss – because of this, men insist that they be responsible for curing. Also, the process of curing might take a few weeks to complete, an indication that it is labour-intensive. Some women at Stratford FTRA expressed dissatisfaction with the way in which men insist on overseeing the harvest and curing of tobacco alone, while others did not have this concern. The latter women complained about how hot it gets when curing tobacco, so they prefer that men do the curing. As one woman put it:

I cannot stand the heat in there. It's better for them [men] to do it, as they are used to it and they are strong (ST12, Female, Interview).

In this regard, the division of labour along gender lines, according to how heavy a task is, appears more evident in Stratford FTRA as compared to Kanzou Village where women are involved in harvesting more than men even (though it is a heavy task).

Results in this study indicate that most men also oversee the **marketing** of cash crops, such as maize and tobacco, especially in married participants' households. The reason why men are involved more in marketing than women according to most participants (85% in Stratford FTRA and 70% in Kanzou Village) is that marketing is labour intensive, and it involves lifting and offloading heavy goods. The majority of participants (70% in Kanzou Village and 75% in Stratford FTRA) indicated that they do not sell their maize crop to the GMB, they sell to individual maize buyers through informal channels. As stated previously (section 7.4), participants echoed that the government encourages them to sell to the GMB. However, they are sometimes not happy with the payment they receive from the government via the GMB:

It's too little [the payment] so I end up tempted to sell to individual buyers (KV14, Male, Interview)

The boys [individual buyers] buy nicely even though we will be doing illegal deals. Their payments are more than we are offered at GMB. As a person I get attracted to money ... you know... (ST10, Male, Interview).

In both Kanzou Village and Stratford FTRA, there seems to be a move towards getting the best price in selling cash crops than going with the set official channels. For Stratford FTRA, the participants also mentioned that the distance they travel to the nearest GMB depot is quite long so, if someone offers to buy from their doorstep, it will be a better option. This will save them both time and money to hire transport and sometimes people to take the produce to the GMB.

Another reason given by farmers for not selling to the GMB is the price paid to farmers – it is too low and erodes quickly through inflation (with only part payment in USD and a large payment in the devaluing local currency) and the long waiting period for the payment. A study by Chisango (2017) also found that delayed payment by GMB, which is the sole official buyer, causes farmers to use parallel markets. According to the farmers, there was a promise of an increase in the price of a tonne of maize in the forthcoming harvesting season, but the increase was to be in local currency, which farmers do not appreciate. According to the participants, at the time, a tonne of maize gave them about \$150 US dollars in total instead of about \$320 US dollars if they were paid in full in US dollars. Because of these challenges, the farmers have to decide where to sell their maize crop.

Some discussants in the men-only FGD in Kanzou Village agreed that it is better for men to decide where to market the produce because they can make bold decisions and are unafraid to break

the law as compared to women. Their argument was that farming is their main source of income, therefore, they need to sell for maximum profit so that they can buy inputs as well take care of their family. Some male participants in Stratford FTRA echoed this claim, highlighting the many negotiations that happen especially when selling to unofficial markets, something that they viewed to be difficult for women to pursue. Women in both study areas agreed that selling of the maize crop is now very complex and they do not have a problem with men handling this task, as all they want is to see the money after selling takes place.

In this study, tobacco in Stratford FTRA is marketed through three channels: contract, non-contract, or side-selling marketing channels. There was more farmers who sell through contract and side-selling (65%), and the rest (35%) sell at the auction (non-contract). Side-selling is an informal way of selling tobacco, but it is attracting farmers due to it paying more than the other two available options. One participant who sold his tobacco through side-marketing in the previous tobacco season stated that he was satisfied with the negotiations that took place and with the amount he was paid per kilogramme. There was not much input from female participants on this matter, but they acknowledged the increase in the use of side-marketers recently, with one woman emphasising:

Last time we heard of people who were coming to buy tobacco here and the price was good so a number of us decided to also give it a try. The money was good; it was more than what the auctions offered; it was all US Dollars. I heard my fellow farmers saying this is a good option [side-selling]. The issue with the other options, they pay us part local currency, part foreign currency. You know our money devalues quickly so we end up working for nothing (ST11, Female, Interview).

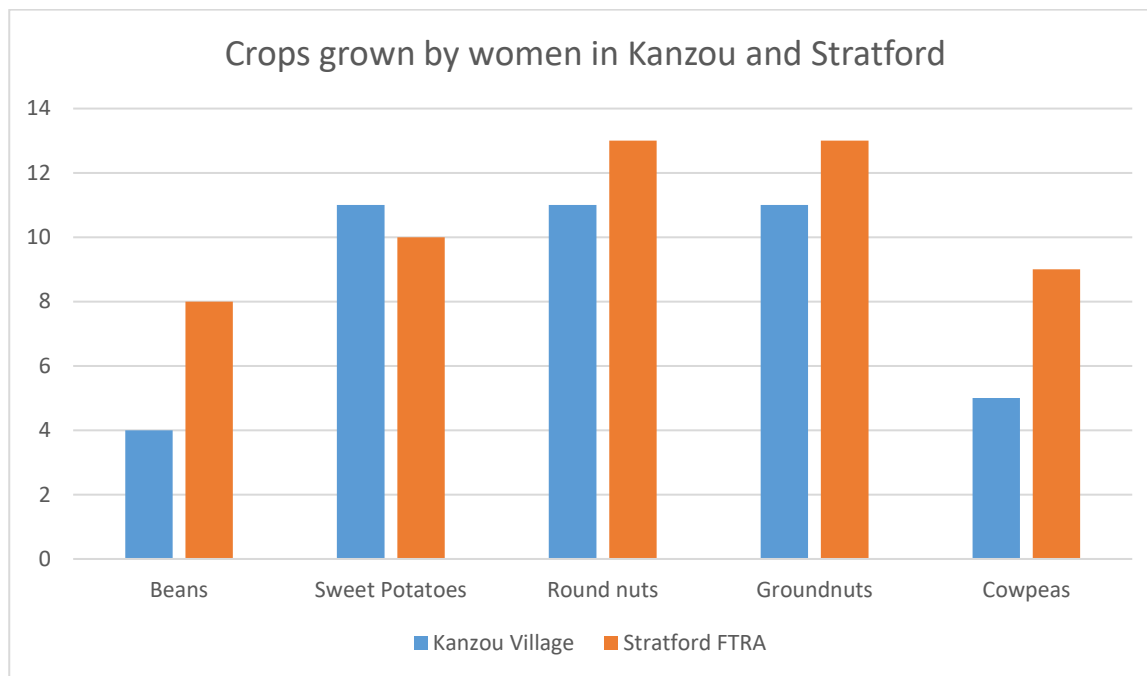
On top of the lower amount paid by the auctions, participants added that they sometimes have to wait for payment. In Stratford FTRA, tobacco marketing also involves travelling long distances to get to the markets (auction floors) and sleeping in the open while awaiting payment; hence, the option of side-selling is becoming more common, with buyers visiting the farmers to buy the crop. It is dangerous for women to sleep outside, such that this form of payment (via auction floors) is more suitable for men. For both maize and tobacco as main cash crops for farmers in the two study areas, side-selling is proving to be a selling method of choice with both men and women agreeing to it.

8.3 Subsistence Crops vs Cash crops: Division of Labour by Crop Type

One common distinction made in the literature is that cash crops are male crops, while subsistence crops are female crops (Kumar, 1987; Randolph and Sanders, 1988). The World Bank (2009) also argues that men may take over production and marketing, even of traditional women's crops, when it becomes financially lucrative to do so. A common explanation for the division of crops by gender is that women are responsible for feeding the family and, therefore, grow subsistence crops, and men

grow cash crops because they are responsible for providing cash income to the family. This was the case in this study's findings. The figure below (Figure 8) shows the crops grown by women in the two study areas.

Figure 8: Crops Grown by Women in Kanzou Village vs Stratford FTRA



Results show that all female participants for all marital statuses in both Stratford FTRA and Kanzou Village stated that they own and grow beans, cowpeas, sweet potatoes, roundnuts (*nyimo*) and groundnuts (see Photo 16). More women in Stratford FTRA grow beans and cowpeas as compared to women in Kanzou Village, and the opposite is the case regarding sweet potatoes. None of the men in this study stated that they are involved in farming these so-called 'female crops'. They focus on crops used for obtaining cash (maize for cash and tobacco) than on subsistence crops. When asked the types of crops they grow, the female participants had this to say:

Maize, groundnuts, sweet potatoes, that's what I usually plant (ST2, Female, Interview).

Maize, groundnuts, sweet potatoes ... ummm ... and round nuts only (KV3, Female, Interview).

My portion is enough for groundnuts, sweet potatoes and cowpeas (KV13, Female, Interview).

The excerpts above confirm that, overall, sweet potatoes, groundnuts and roundnuts are the most common crops amongst women in the study areas. Even though some mentioned that they grow maize, they do not have control over it since it is both a crop for consumption and the market. In this respect, there are similarities between findings in this study and those in earlier work by, for instance, Kachingwe (1986), Jacobs (1983), Jacobs (2002), Pasura (2010) and Shumba (2011). Their studies

bring to the fore that, even in pre-colonial times in Zimbabwe, groundnuts were known as ‘women’s crops’, indicating that the gendered character of crops has a long history in Zimbabwe. Ultimately, women’s crops are crops in which women have comparatively more control over decision-making in the various steps in the production process (Doss, 2001).



Photo 16: A woman using a hoe to prepare her *tseu* for planting crops

Source: Fieldwork.

From this study, maize emerged as both the main subsistence crop and the main source of cash in both Stratford FTRA and Kanzou Village, a situation that is found more broadly in Zimbabwe’s A1 farms and communal areas. In male-headed households, maize is grown with a share of labour provided by women while, in female-headed households, women grow it with a share of labour provided by other members of the household or hired labour. As one female put it:

I usually grow maize together with my husband but I grow groundnuts and roundnuts on my own, yes (ST8, Female, Interviews).

A male farmer said the following:

Maize is for everyone, we all work together as a family because we sell it to send our children to school and for other basic things that we need to run the household (KV20, Male, Interviews).

Within the women-only FGDs, women in male-headed households in both study sites raised concerns about the lack of power to decide on what to do with the maize crop after it is harvested, as they are only allowed to make post-harvest decisions for the crops that they grow on their own. Though men and women, especially amongst those who are married, usually grow maize jointly any decision about the harvested maize lies with the husband. Overall, then, women’s decision-making

powers (for married women at least) are restricted to their own (women's) crops. They grow these crops mainly for consumption (with some sales) or for consumption only. Some mentioned that they use any surpluses from their fields to hire labour for the fields and, if they happen to have a bumper harvest, they sell to other women in their area who did not have a good harvest so that they can feed their families. As two female participants noted:

I use sweet potatoes to replace bread since it [bread] is expensive here and groundnuts are mainly for making peanut butter for my children (KV11, Female, Interview).

These crops that I grow here are for family consumption. They help us not to buy food all the time. Food is now very expensive (ST12, Female, Interview).

As indicated earlier, the gendered allocation of men's and women's crops (and the focus on consumption in the case of women's crops) is linked to the prevailing view that women are responsible for domestic and care-giving chores, including caring for children (Guendel, 2009). The above quotations illustrate this, with KV11 saying that she uses her crops to feed her family by making peanut butter from the groundnuts and substituting bread with sweet potatoes, and ST12 stating that food is expensive nowadays hence she grows crops for family consumption. Because they grow their crops in small fields and thus on a limited scale, it leaves them with nothing or little to sell for a profit in most instances. This tendency is also clear in a study conducted by Dzvimbo et al. (2020) in Sanyati District.

Even though women in both study areas successfully grow their crops, their farming activities are not without constraints. Some of the constraints include limited access to land, capital, education, credit, and extension services. To quote two women:

The land that I use I got from my husband and it is small plus I don't have the money to buy inputs for my portion so ... yah ... that's my challenge (KV3, Female, Interview)

If I am to get a bigger land and money to buy fertilisers I will prosper in my farming; the lack of land and capital affects us a lot (ST12, Female, Interview)

Land access is the main constraint for women because women, whether married or not, rely on a portion of land handed to them by their male relatives or husbands. This makes it difficult for women to reach their maximum potential in agriculture. For those women who are married, their husbands have total control over land and its distribution, and they tend to divide it in an unfair manner (with men getting much larger portions). This is true elsewhere in Zimbabwe and even beyond (Saito et al., 1994; FAO, 2018). For instance, a study by Carr (2008) in Ghana found that men allocated themselves between three or four times more than the amount of land they allocated to their wives. In Kanzou Village, elderly relatives were even allocating a large portion of land to nephews and grandsons and

a small portion to nieces and granddaughters after the loss of their parents. For example, KV5 (a female) inherited land from her parents together with her siblings but an allocation of land along patrilineal lines took place whereby her brother received a larger portion of land because he is male. Here, cultural norms were dictating how land should be divided.

In addition, female participants struggle to afford inputs, which, when available, make their agricultural production more successful. This includes lack of access to securing credit to finance their purchase of inputs needed for their crops mainly because they (women) lack collateral. It is difficult for them as well to engage in farming new crops because they struggle with the know-how of how to farm the crops because of a lack of access to agricultural extension services. Some women stated that the times scheduled for extension training do not suit them because they have to take care of their families, so men benefit because the onus to take care of the family is not on them. At the same time, married women are undermined by their husbands in the sense of not having access to valuable knowledge about growing crops, including tobacco in the case of Stratford FTRA.

8.4 Dynamics of Hiring Farm Labour

In most rural households in Zimbabwe and elsewhere, the division of labour follows the ‘traditional’ labour division where gender inequality is inherent, as women are the unpaid and invisible labour force (Contzen and Forney, 2017). Results of this study indicate that most female participants in both areas rely mainly on family labour for work to be done in their fields, compared to most men who hire labour to assist in their fields. In Kanzou Village, 85% of the female participants stated that they use mainly family labour in their fields, and 82% in Stratford FTRA stated that they rely on family labour. The difference between the female farmers in these two sites might be because women in Stratford FTRA have bigger *tseus* than those in Kanzou Village, since the overall land portions in Stratford FTRA are bigger than in Kanzou Village. This means that women at Stratford FTRA might have some crop surpluses to sell to their fellow women to pay for the labour. But the difference between the two sites is very minimal and even those in Stratford FTRA have to find ways and means and accessing extra labour, as one female lamented:

My husband does not want to help me with my portion. He says his focus is on what brings income to the family, and my land is my problem. I have to find ways to seek assistance with my portion; that’s why I use my children’s second hand clothes to pay (ST5, Female, Interview).

Female participants (18% in Stratford FTRA) who hire casual labour pay mainly using their previous year’s harvest of groundnuts (if they had a bumper harvest) and second-hand clothing as well as money from any off-farm activities such as stokvels and chicken rearing. However, they face challenges such as not having the cash immediately available at the time when they want to pay for

the labour, because their clients do not pay on time. This might lead to using the second-hand clothes they are supposed to sell for profit as payment for the field labour. One woman (ST4) added that her husband sometimes asks her to pay for tobacco labour hire using the same clothes because their son in the diaspora sends them. Because of this, she does not realise profits from selling clothes. Her husband clearly prefers prioritising cash crops that bring income to the family. The 15% of women in Kanzou Village who hired labour also mentioned the significance of using second-hand clothing as payment on occasion. On top of that, some women in Kanzou Village bake and sell yeast buns and, if they manage to make a profit from their yeast buns business and share proceeds amongst themselves, they use the money to pay for labour. However, just like in Stratford FTRA, they face challenges: they also need to use the profits from the business to buy food for the household. It thus ends up as being insufficient to pay for labour such that, in the end, labour hire will not be feasible.

Women mentioned that sometimes they have to choose a specific stage in their farming season that is labour intensive, and then they hire labour for that stage. In this regard, weeding and harvesting emerged as the key stages where extra labour is required. However, at times when they do not have any resources to draw upon to hire labour, women in both study areas would labour all by themselves or with the assistance of family members. This means that they have to wait until the cash crops are harvested because they receive first priority in accessing family labour.

As well as hiring labour, men also tend to benefit from family labour. According to Adams (1991) and Chambati (2017), most African smallholders rely on unpaid family labour to work on their farms. Most men in the study mentioned that they pay cash for casual labour, even though the number is lower in Kanzou Village compared to Stratford FTRA (71% vs 78%). As three men said:

My pay helps me to pay for labour because I am not always around and sometimes I use my income from the previous season after taking care of my family needs (KV19, Male, Interview).

My informal business gives me a bit of income and I use that to hire my boys for the tobacco fields (ST3, Male, Interview).

My job helps me a lot, as I put money aside all the time. I can say some of my savings are for paying people who come and help in my field. I helps me a lot ... I think it was going to be difficult [to farm] without it [extra labour] (KV19, Male, interview).

Two men (22%) in the Stratford FTRA area mentioned their source of casual labour payment as their salary since they are employed. Their salaries subsidise their farm operations, as they use their salaries to buy inputs and pay labour, which puts them at an advantage compared to those with no salaries. For example, participant KV19 affords a tractor and irrigation equipment because of his salary. The rest of the men who hire casual labour use income from crop sales from the previous harvest, but it is sometimes insufficient to hire the labour needed, especially for tobacco. The same

issues around hiring labour using previously-harvested crops were found to be common in Murehwa (Mandizadza, 2010). The hired casual labour assists with ploughing, planting, cultivating, weeding, and harvesting. Most of the people who provide casual labour in both Kanzou Village and Stratford FTRA are women and children who reside in the same villages and neighbouring villages.

No participants mentioned the hiring of permanent labour, and they only hire seasonally depending on available work. Barriers to permanent labour hire in the study areas included a lack of funding and support from the government to boost the scale of agricultural productivity so that they can use income generated from the farms to commit to permanent labour hire.

8.5 Gendered Control over Crop Sales

Because women typically assume a larger role in child-care and household responsibilities than men, it restricts their ability to work and manage their own *tseu*. Hence, the agricultural productivity gap between men and women contributes to income inequality between them (Ali et al., 2016). As stated earlier, control over agricultural income varies by crop in the two study sites with tobacco and maize income being controlled mainly by men. However, in some instances, maize occupies a middle ground, with control shared somewhat between women and men. Women have more complete control over their women's crops that rarely make it to the market.

Cash crop production holds great prospects as a means by which rural households can improve their welfare (Hill and Vigneri, 2009). According to Ruzivo Trust (2016), tobacco is Zimbabwe's most valuable cash crop, accounting for approximately 26% of agricultural GDP and 61% of agricultural exports. As indicated previously, tobacco is a cash crop that men grow in Stratford FTRA. Chambati (2017) supports this by showing that both A1 and A2 fast track farmers grow tobacco, but that A1 farms form the bulk of its grower base. Male interviewees from Stratford FTRA spoke often about the significance of tobacco for their agricultural activities:

Tobacco that I have mentioned is mainly for income purposes, I can say that's a cash crop that I grow (ST3, Male, Interview).

I grow some cash crops, especially tobacco, it's a cash crop we sell (ST8, Male, Interview).

In Zimbabwe generally, other cash crops are considered men's crops as well, notably cotton, sugarcane, tea, coffee and cut flowers (Maiyaki, 2010).

Decisions on production and market processes of cash crops grown at Stratford FTRA lie with men. For example, one male participant (ST3) clearly used the personal pronoun 'I' to stress that the tobacco crop belongs to him as the man of the household. Some of the women participants in Stratford FTRA expressed their dissatisfaction with the way in which their husbands only focus on cash crops and refuse to assist them (the women) with their crops. However, citing that men's crops are

significant for the family, women assist their husbands when men require assistance with their cash crops. When it is time to transplant tobacco and harvest, one woman highlighted that her husband asks for help because tobacco farming is labour-intensive, and they cannot afford to hire labour. One female participant even stated that she sometimes uses her own harvested crops in exchange for hiring labour to work on the tobacco part of the farm. However, when husbands sell the tobacco harvest, wives do not get any income from it or get very little:

I also work hard to help with cooking for them when they are working and I sometimes transplant the tobacco together with my husband, especially at times when he cannot afford to hire labour. But, I don't know what happens when he sells the tobacco; the money vanishes (ST11, Female, Interview).

I explicitly asked women in this study about their views regarding exclusion in the marketing stage of the agricultural crops. Just over half (55%) of the female participants in Stratford FTRA supported this arrangement in arguing that men, as heads of households, should manage the household's income. Some expressed sentiments similar to what Tapfumaneyi (2021) notes in *NewZimbabwe.com*, that they would be willing to accompany their husbands or male relatives to the tobacco auction floors to avoid losses. There is the widely held perception, though, that markets are meant for men; therefore, women must stay at home and just encourage their husbands and relatives to bring the full income back home. This speaks to women's overall exclusion from public spaces and the decision-making sphere, which keeps them within the private space (the home).

A few female informants in Stratford FTRA mentioned how they use their negotiating skills to convince their husbands to take them to the tobacco auction floors. Because selling tobacco on the auction floor is a patriarchal venture, they reach a compromise that allows them to accompany their husband to the auction floors, with the husband agreeing seemingly only for the sake of marital peace and transparency. There are also women in Stratford FTRA who, perhaps more stridently, opt to leave the children at home and accompany their husbands to the auction floors because, sometimes, their husbands return home with only a small fraction of the income after spending it on sex workers who they meet at the auction floors. The article by Tapfumaneyi (2021) in *NewZimbabwe.com* also raises this. It reported that women were now escorting their spouses to the tobacco auction floors because, collectively, farmers were losing thousands of US dollars, as they became easy prey for sex workers who ply their trade near the floors. One Stratford FTRA women in a FGD mentioned that she is now a single mother because her partner left her to go and stay with a woman he met while selling tobacco on the auction floor:

This is very serious I tell you. We are working for nothing here because we end up getting not one cent from it. Our husbands are eating money there in the city with ladies of the night. I don't know what has gotten into them (FGD6, Female, FGD).

One man in the mixed FGD at Stratford FTRA agreed, stating that he has witnessed it happening and he wishes that measures can be taken to ensure that men return all the tobacco income home to benefit their families:

Yes, I can say it's true, we witness it a lot and I cannot deny that. My wish is that the [auction] floor management or the Government can ... do something (FGD5, Male, FGD).

Women who provide their unpaid labour towards the farming of cash crops might end up not benefitting from it, but a sex worker who did not contribute any labour towards the crop benefits from the income, which is a bit unfair to the women farmers.

Further, some participants in the female-only FGD in Stratford FTRA stated that they wished the government would pass a law about joint (marital) benefits of the income that comes from selling farm crops, a point raised many years ago by Mushunje (2001). These women argued that men are letting their families down because, without the income from selling men's cash crops, they cannot afford to pay for children's school fees, clothes, food, and other essential goods.

Some married women (27%) who mentioned their involvement in selling their crops (including maize) stated that they do not go to the market as buyers come to buy at their homesteads. For the others, 18% mentioned that they go to the GMB to sell their maize, 10% stated that both they and their husbands go, and 45% said that their husbands do the selling. This applies to both Stratford FTRA and Kanzou Village. For those who sell separately, they still have to present the income earned to their husbands so that they decide on how to spend the income generated from the maize sales. This is part of a more general trend, as Quisumbing et al. (2019: 158) bring to the fore: "Social norms require that a woman hand over the money that she receives to her husband and it is up to the husband to determine how much to return to her." In the mixed FGDs in both Stratford FTRA and Kanzou Village, female and male discussants acknowledged that both husband and wife should be involved in the selling stage of cash crops (maize and tobacco), but that the inevitable presence of a male head of households inhibits this in practice.

Women in fact argued that husbands should allow their wives to handle all crop-sales income because they are reliable and trustworthy, unlike men who tend to manage household finances irresponsibly. A case in point is how men have been misusing the money received when they go to sell tobacco. One married woman in Kanzou Village mentioned that she does not know what happens to the income they receive after selling the maize to the Grain Marketing Board (GMB). She highlights that she and her husband assist each other with the whole cropping process, from planting to harvesting, because maize is a family crop that is meant to benefit the whole family. However, to her surprise, maize ceases to be a family crop post-harvest as the husband takes control of the selling and what to do with the income received from the sales. These findings concur with the argument of

Chiweshe et al. (2014) that the decisions over what crops to grow, how marketing is done and who controls the proceeds are highly inclined towards men.

At least one female (from Kanzou Village) was grateful that her husband prioritises the children so that, after selling crops, he settles their school fees and buys clothes for them. She is happy with that arrangement because it benefits the children even if she does not benefit:

Each time that I sell our maize, I present the money to my husband, he then decides what needs to be bought ... yah ... but most of the time its children's clothes and school fees. Even if I don't get much all the time, I am happy that our children have clothes and have their fees paid (KV11, Female, Interview).

She goes to the GMB to sell their maize produce because her husband has back problems. He cannot stand for long or lift heavy goods, which is why she does it herself. Before, when he was fit, he would do it himself. Another woman in Kanzou Village sells the maize produce because her husband is employed, so he delegates her to go and sell on his behalf. This illustrates how women only get involved in the sale of crops in the absence of their husbands. Farmers in Kanzou Village, unlike in Stratford FTRA, have their selling point close by, so they always come back home for their meals during those days when they are spending more than a day queuing to sell at the GMB offices. Villagers take turns with neighbours to go home to eat, check on their families, and refresh themselves, which does not cost them a significant amount of money as compared to tobacco farmers who have to stay in Harare for the whole duration of the auction sale.

In the case of single female participants in Kanzou Village, it seems that some of them ask male relatives to go to the GMB on their behalf. One single woman said she sends her brother and, in instances when her brother is not around, she asks a male relative to assist her. She had this to say:

Ummm ... I am scared to go and sell my maize crop after harvest. Those places need strong people like my brother so I send him there to sell it for me or my other relatives who will be free at the time. Sometimes I do not get all my money, but what can I do: my safety comes first (KV9, Female, Interview).

Consistent with KV9's sentiments, there was a consensus in the female-only FGD in Kanzou Village that male relatives sometimes steal from them when they go to market crops on their behalf. Hence, one single female farmer stated that she goes herself even though it requires much physical energy. In this respect, she had a previous ordeal where she lost all her money after trusting her uncle to sell the crop and then receive the money in his account:

I am talking from experience. My uncle one year disappeared with my money and came back telling me stories that they were robbed of the money. But I know he used my money, so now I do it by myself. It's better to get something even though I don't sell much but I need the money (KV9, Female, Interview).

A gender disparity in the receiving of income from crop sales, with men typically in charge of this income in married households, is an indication of unequal distribution of income within households in the study areas. It also shows a lack of recognition of the contribution made by women to agricultural production and sales. This, in turn, affects decision-making within the household, as men tend to possess more power than women and therefore make the most important decisions concerning agricultural activities and crops. It is almost impossible for women to enjoy the full income from selling their crops because they rely on patriarchs who relegate their crops to subsistence purposes only and seize control of all marketed crops. In a similar way to the arguments of Adeyemi (2010), there is evidence in this study that men dominate decision-making, ownership and control of key resources needed in agricultural production and post-production (marketing) processes.

Given the concerns raised by most female participants regarding how men spend income from crop sales, I asked men what they do with the income they receive from selling the cash crops. There are 27 male-headed households in the two sites (15 households in Stratford FTRA and 12 households in Kanzou Village). Results show that the main crop sale-based expenditure lines in both study areas are children's education, agricultural inputs, clothes, and food. In fact, all heads (100%) in both sites referred to these four expenditure items, with farmers in Kanzou Village relying only on maize sales and Stratford FTRA also having tobacco income. Most male household heads (50% in Kanzou Village and 66% in Stratford FTRA) stated that they also buy durable goods such as spare parts for a grinding mill and equipment needed for welding, as well as buying electronics for their households. Some had this to say:

When I was still growing tobacco, I paid for my children's school fees and bought spare parts for my grinding mill and equipment that I needed for welding (ST9, Male, Interview).

I buy inputs for the next season, then I ask my wife what is needed in the house, then I buy. It's usually not much because of inflation also; by the time you get the money, it would have devalued (ST10, Male, Interview).

When I get to sell our maize, I pay for the children's education, for all of them for the year, then I buy seed and fertilizer for the next season (just what we can with the little we have). And then I bulk buy some basics for the family to eat (KV6, Male, Interview).

The thoughts of ST10 demonstrate how he struggles to meet basic household needs because the income he receives from selling crops quickly devalues due to the inflationary economic situation in Zimbabwe. This is a huge challenge, especially because these men are local breadwinners for their families, and most survive almost exclusively on farming. Participant ST9 uses his farm income to also purchase equipment for his off-farm economy activity to sustain his family until the next farming season. This point relates to his ownership of a grinding mill. He in fact earns more from the grinding

mill than in farming because it runs throughout the year, unlike farming, where he waits for the selling season to receive an income from crop sales. Also, if drought strikes, his family can survive on the income from the grinding mill.

Data shows that crops that are for household consumption and are rarely transacted belong to women, whereas cash crops are men's crops. This indicates a difference in purpose between yields achieved by men and those achieved by women in the same household. In the case of de jure female-headed households, any income received from maize sales is used for basic household needs. One single woman in Kanzou Village had this to say:

We buy inputs for the next farming season first, then we buy what is needed in the house by the family; we just prioritise what is urgent at that time (KV2, Female, Interview).

In this study, people in female-headed households made joint decisions on what to do with the income received from selling the maize crop. The head consults with her children and other household members on what to prioritise with the income. Because women struggle to buy agricultural inputs, which are critical for the next farming season, KV2 sought to first ensure that these inputs were secured for long-term household sustainability before attending to basic consumption needs. In a study conducted by Kurebwa (2015), the sole objective of female farmers was likewise care for household members, notably children.

8.6 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the division of labour and decision-making within the agricultural sphere of production in the two study areas. The results show a gendered division of labour in farm tasks (activities), crop types, and the selling of crops. In the case of male-headed households in particular, there is a clear patriarchal pattern when it comes to decision-making around agricultural production. Given that land has great cultural, religious, and livelihood significance, a strong patriarchal correlation thus exists between – on the one hand – those with decision-making power at household level and – on the other – rights of access to and usage of land (both quantity and quality) for agricultural production (FAO, 2002). Men dominate in agricultural production, not necessarily in terms of their labour input, but in relation to their access to land and their power to make decisions around agricultural production. Women tend to suffer from land constraints, and women's crops are devalued in comparison to men's crops. The patriarchal character of the agricultural division of labour as well as agricultural production (and marketing) decision-making processes is quite similar in Kanzou Village and Stratford FTRA, with the existence of tobacco production and marketing contributing to specific dimensions of the patriarchal configuration at Stratford FTRA.

CHAPTER 9: DIVISION OF LABOUR AND DECISION-MAKING WITHIN THE DOMESTIC SPHERE

9.1 Introduction

The division of labour within households, and decision-making pertaining to social reproduction at household level, are central to the patriarchal structuring of rural Africa and beyond. As Sikod (2007:60) states, “the gender division of labour in households is the main economic strategy used to meet family basic needs for shelter, food, health, procreation and education.” Hence, analysing the gendered division of labour within the domestic sphere is central to understanding gender inequality and women’s disempowerment (Shelton and John, 1996; Bikketi et al., 2016; Doss, 2018; Cunningham, 2001).

As discussed in Chapter 8, men and women in both study areas (Stratford FTRA and Kanzou Village) are involved in farming activities. However, besides engaging in different agricultural tasks, they also are involved in unpaid and undervalued household work. Unpaid housework by women, including parenthood and caring duties, limits their capacity to spend quality time in looking after their fields and crops while relieving men of homestead-centred responsibilities. This chapter concentrates on identifying and examining the division of labour and decision-making in the domestic sphere in the two sites, highlighting its deeply gendered character. It examines various dimensions of the patriarchal structuring of the domestic sphere at Stratford FTRA and Kanzou Village, identifying any differences between the two sites in doing so.

9.2 Division of Housework along Gender Lines

The rural domestic sphere includes activities such as food preparation and cooking, house cleaning, sweeping the yard, fetching water, securing firewood, looking after domestic animals, washing clothes, childcare, family healthcare, and shopping for domestic items (Mollel and Mtenga, 2000). Both men and women are involved in some way and to some extent in the domestic sphere but certainly, in the case of both research sites, women spend more time in the home than men. All women mentioned that they are involved in household chores, while only a few men did so. At least one male informant in both sites is involved in nearly each of the domestic activities, but it is quite clear that the domestic sphere is in effect a women’s sphere. Tables 8 and 9 below show the division of household tasks by gender in both study areas, first in Kanzou Village and then in Stratford FTRA. These trends are well established and very common in rural areas, as demonstrated by the findings of Robinson and Godbey (1997),

Table 5: Division of Household Tasks by Gender in Kanzou Village

Task	Number of Men (out of 7)	Number of Women (out of 13)
Food preparation and cooking	1	13
House cleaning	1	13
Fetching Water	2	13
Securing firewood	4	10
Tending to livestock	7	10
Childcare	2	13
Household Shopping	6	4
Family healthcare	0	13

Table 6: Division of Household Tasks by Gender in Stratford FTRA

Task	Number of Men (out of 9)	Number of Women (out of 11)
Food preparation and cooking	3	11
House cleaning	0	11
Fetching Water	3	11
Securing firewood	5	9
Tending to livestock	5	8
Childcare	2	11
Household Shopping	7	5
Family healthcare	0	11

Women in both sites were more involved in household chores in both male-headed and female-headed households, when compared to their male counterparts. Of the seven men in Kanzou Village, only one (14%) engages in food preparation, while three (33%) of the nine men in Stratford FTRA do so. None of the men in Stratford FTRA cleans the house while only one single man in Kanzou Village cleans the house. Fetching water is done by 33% (3) of the men in Stratford FTRA and by two (28.5%) of those in Kanzou Village. Further, four (57%) of men secure firewood in Kanzou Village versus five (55.5%) in Stratford FTRA, and all seven (100%) of the men in Kanzou Village tend to domestic animals (cattle and goats) and 5 (71) % do so in Stratford FTRA. Finally, two (22%) of men in Stratford FTRA and two (28.5%) in Kanzou Village engage in childcare, while seven (77.7%) of men in Stratford FTRA and six (85.7%) of men in Kanzou Village are involved in household shopping. In terms of women participants, all women in both study areas (13 in Kanzou Village and 11 in Stratford FTRA) stated that they engage in cooking and food preparation, house

cleaning, fetching water, childcare, and family healthcare. As well, 10 (77%) of women in Kanzou Village and nine (81.8%) in Stratford FTRA fetch firewood on their own, and the remainder are assisted by male family members. Further, ten (77%) of the women in Kanzou Village tend to domestic animals and eight (72%) in Stratford FTRA do so, while five (45%) of the women in Stratford FTRA engage in household shopping versus four (31%) in Kanzou Village. It is notable that only women are involved in caring for the health of family members, which would include taking ill family members to the clinic.

There is not much difference in the division of labour between the two sites except that, in Stratford FTRA, more married men seem to be willing to engage in chores that have been traditionally assigned to women than the men in Kanzou Village, such as food preparation and fetching water. However, women still dominate in doing the household chores (more so than men), an indication that men are still reluctant to assume chores traditionally assigned to women.

These findings are not surprising as they reflect broader trends within rural Zimbabwe and Africa generally regarding the gendered division of household chores. It is generally recognised that women in Africa undertake a double burden by engaging in both productive and reproductive activities (UNCTAD, 2015; Bikketi et al., 2016). As indicated in this study, women are heavily involved in labouring in agricultural activities while, at the same time, being responsible for most of the domestic care work. In speaking about the double work burden they perform, the female participants narrated how they undertake housework, take care of the children and labour in the fields:

I do the cleaning, washing, cooking and working in the field (ST12, Female, Interview).

I take care of the household in general, including looking after the children and doing household chores, and also doing vegetable gardening and helping in the field. When my daughter is around she helps me, but when she leaves I do everything ... yah. .. [laughs] (ST11, Female, Interview).

I normally do everything from cooking, to washing to cleaning the house ... and I also work in my field. This is how we grew up ...yah ... I live with a boy so he doesn't know how to do those things, he is just my bodyguard ... [laughs] (KV1, Female, Interview).

Clearly, then, just as there are 'women's crops' in agricultural activities, there are 'women's chores' in homestead work in both Kanzou Village and Stratford FTRA.

The phrase "this is how we grew up" in the preceding quotation is significant. One reason agreed upon in the women-only FGDs in both study areas, as an explanation for the gendered division of labour in homesteads, was a cultural one: that it was contrary to culture for women to let men engage in duties traditionally understood as performed by for women, such as to cook and clean. Women in the two study areas do not necessarily view the chores they do within the household as

‘unpaid labour’ but rather as their responsibility. One female participant in the FGD in Kanzou Village mentioned:

I stay in the same yard as my mother-in-law; how is she going to feel seeing her son cleaning when he is the father of the house? What if he doesn’t clean well?

This woman worried about the view of her elders and highlighted the need to uphold certain values within Shona culture. Because men are not expected to clean and cook in the house, she was concerned that her husband might not do it properly, which would reflect badly on her as a wife. Previous studies find that cleanliness of the home reflects a women’s competence as a ‘wife and mother’ (Bianchi et al., 2000) hence, if her home is not clean, she would have failed in her motherly and wifely duties.

Indeed, women in this study tend to reinforce gendered norms that discourage men’s involvement in household activities. A case in point is KV1, who feels obligated to perform housework and also teaches her grandson that domestic work is primarily the responsibility of females. All female respondents in Kanzou Village and Stratford FTRA stated that housework is mainly for them with the help of girl-children when the latter are free. Overall, they seem to accept the gendered roles into which they have been socialised. As Akanle and Oluwakemi (2012:205) argue, “once children internalise traditional and sentimental gendered ethos in early childhood, a radical departure from such internalisation becomes difficult and sometimes impossible, especially when actors remain within the primary traditional culture”. Hence, there is a proverb within Shona culture encapsulated in the phrase ‘*musha mukadzi*’ – loosely translated, this means ‘a home is a woman’ or ‘it’s the woman who makes any household tick’.

Fetching water is considered mainly a female household chore in both study sites, despite the arduous work this often entails. Women stated that they do this chore with the assistance of girl children in most cases. Thus, the number of men who fetch water in both Stratford FTRA and Kanzou Village is low (33% and 28.5% respectively) as compared to all women (100%), who indicated that fetching water was their primary responsibility. Pickering and Davis (2012) note that women and children are known to be the main water carriers in low-income countries. These findings are also in line with Graham et al. (2016), who found that fetching water was predominantly done by women in the 24 sub-Saharan African countries they studied (including Zimbabwe).

In Kanzou Village, those without tapped water on their premises (50%) use a central borehole that is perennial, so they do not have to travel a long distance to fetch water, something that female participants appreciated. They added that they are grateful for this protected source of water because, before it was built, they would drink water from open sources that they shared with domestic animals. The difference between women in Kanzou Village and Stratford FTRA, in terms of accessing water,

is that women in Stratford FTRA walk far to fetch water when it is the dry season because they do not have perennial water sources on or close to their premises. Their existing wells in Stratford FTRA dry up especially from mid-year (June-July) until around October, which means they must travel further, spend more time, and expend more energy to access water. They wish that men would assist them with fetching the water. This was common for both married and single women in single women households. One married female participant at Stratford FTRA mentioned that her husband stated that he could only assist when they buy a wheelbarrow to carry the water; he cannot carry it on his head because only women carry water on their heads. This indicates how the carrying or fetching of water is highly gendered. The few men who participate in fetching water use scotch carts and wheelbarrows, and never their heads, to carry water.

Fetching firewood is a task done by men and women in both sites but with more women doing the chore. This is in line with the study by Chipango (2022) who shows that, in Zimbabwe, it is mainly women who collect and use firewood. Firewood is used mainly by families to satisfy their energy demand, especially for cooking, and collecting it typically entails travelling long distances. They do not collect firewood daily, but do it weekly or bi-weekly, in large part because of the distance involved (between 2 and 5 kilometres). There are some villagers who buy firewood because they do not have anyone to cut the wood for them, or they have aged. An example is KV1, who stays with her young grandchild. In addition to firewood, some informants in Kanzou Village have electricity; none of the participants in Stratford FTRA mentioned electricity availability. Data also indicate that some villagers (70% in Kanzou Village, and 25% in Stratford FTRA) use cow dung cakes to supplement firewood as the main energy source. The difference in the use of cow dung cakes in the two study areas is due to the massive deforestation, which has taken place over time around Kanzou Village as compared to Stratford FTRA, which, as a fast-track area, still has forests nearby. In Kanzou Village, it is mainly the duty of children to pick cow dung cakes and put them in sacks. In Stratford FTRA, a few of the participants (30%) mentioned that they sometimes use charcoal, while only 10% in Kanzou Village mentioned this. Even though some informants in Kanzou Village have solar energy, none of them said that they use it for cooking.

Most married men in both study areas (60% in total) acknowledged that collecting firewood was a difficult task and thus they assisted their wives in fetching firewood:

I have to make sure that my family has enough firewood. Here we have a problem when it comes to firewood. We sometimes buy as far as Chitomborwizi [nearby farms] so my wife won't be able to do that (KV16, Male, Interview).

Our area still has forests to go and fetch firewood, so I do it because it is a heavy task to cut the firewood, bundle it up and carry it. I don't want my wife to get injured there, so I assist her with that (ST10, Male, Interview).

Some of the married men stated that it is a joint chore, as they carry the firewood while their wives carry the necessary tools for collecting it:

We have electricity here but, with loadshedding, I have to make sure that we have firewood. So we both go and look for firewood during the weekends to use during the week when we have loadshedding. My wife accompanies me, but I do most of the work and carry the firewood home while she carries my axes (KV20, Male, Interview).

If she chooses to go with me, I will not say no. But I just ensure that she does the light stuff if she wants to help. I then do the heavy task of cutting and carrying the firewood (ST7, Male, Interview).

There was an overall consensus that fetching firewood was a heavy and demanding task more suitable for the masculine body, and hence men were willing to assist their (feminine) wives with this task. If they do not have a grown male family member within their household, single women though fetch firewood on their own.

Most informants, even in Stratford FTRA, acknowledged the problem of deforestation and how it is affecting their energy use, with some stating that alternative energy sources are expensive. In Stratford FTRA, deforestation was blamed on tobacco farming. The two villagers (10%) in Kanzou Village who use charcoal have their children bringing bags of charcoal when they visit them. In Stratford FTRA as well, those have a family member employed in the urban areas sometimes use charcoal for cooking. Another common concern among participants were the conflicts that arise amongst villagers because some villagers steal wood from other people's land (especially those with land that is a distance from their homesteads, and which is difficult to monitor). This was agreed to be a serious issue, with one participant in the Kanzou Village male-only FGD wishing he could guard his land against these thieves.

Men more so than women are involved in tending to domestic animals (livestock) in both study areas, in large part because of the value given to livestock as a source of wealth and status and particularly cattle. This is indicated by the difference between the domestic animals that men and women tend; men mainly tend cattle and goats, while women tend mainly poultry. Mupawaenda et al. (2008) likewise found in their study that cattle were mainly for men, with women caring for poultry, and they attributed this difference to societal customs and norms. Even though 77% and 72% of women (both married and single) in Kanzou Village and Stratford FTRA respectively care for domestic animals, only 10% of them in Stratford FTRA and 15% in Kanzou Village do so for cattle and goats, with the rest tending to poultry. Women (both single and married) who look after cattle

and goats pay cattle herders to do it for them, while others take turns looking after them with neighbours (*dzoro*). This collective effort is normally done by way of each family taking turns caring for the cattle and goats for a week at a time. Overall, though, villagers tend to the domestic animals they own.

As stated previously, cattle fulfil multiple roles in local households such as providing milk, manure, draught power, meat, and hides, as well as serving as an indication of a household's wealth status, and specifically the wealth status of the husband or senior male. Cattle are also used in rituals involving livestock, which are performed to celebrate lifecycle events, such as marriages and deaths. Men mostly undertake these key rituals. Male informants spoke about their tending of cattle and goats because of the significance of these for household status and wealth: "I have to make sure my livestock is well taken care of, it's my wealth", highlighted one man in the men-only FGD in Kanzou Village, with all other men in the focus group nodding in agreement to what he was saying. In Stratford FTRA, one male participant stated:

When I run out of money, I sell one of my livestock to continue with life, so I take care of my livestock alone.

Because women are responsible for taking care of the domestic sphere, their poultry is mainly for home consumption for ensuring that the family has food to eat. Only a few (20% in Stratford FTRA and 10% in Kanzou Village) sell their poultry for an income.

Men are also known as the ones who control the financial affairs of local households and, in male-headed households, they are more likely than women to be involved in shopping activities. Female informants who engage in shopping are those in *de jure* female-headed households and one in a *de facto* female-headed household in Stratford FTRA. Most women were not happy with this arrangement, but they realised that it is difficult for them to manage money, which they did not earn (in the case of paid employment). For instance, according to ST19,

I am a home defender [someone who stays at home and is unemployed] so where can I get the money to buy groceries? At least my husband works for us, so I have no problem with him shopping for us ... it's his money.

Her view was common among married women with employed husbands in Stratford FTRA. These women accepted that, since they do not bring an income into the household, they are not meant to do shopping for the household or control the finances of the household. All the women mentioned that they wish to at least control the income received from selling crops because they would have worked together with the husbands, but still they are not given a chance to control the income due mainly to men being the head and in control of finances by default according to culture.

In Kanzou Village, there seemed to be little concern amongst married women as to who does the shopping for the household because of the cultural belief that finances are to be controlled by the head of the household. As well, the male focus group discussants in the mixed FGD in Kanzou Village asserted that it is the man's duty as the head of the household to buy groceries for the family. When I posed the question about the women being responsible for childcare and cooking, such that it might make more sense for them to do the shopping, as they knew what was needed, one discussant noted that it was simply her duty to write down what is needed in the household so that her husband then goes shopping for the items. In the end, focus group discussants agreed that, so long as the family is well taken care of, there is no need to worry about who does the shopping. However, in both study sites, the evidence points to the finding that men prefer to be in control of the household's income and its expenditure. One interviewee in Stratford FTRA stated that, with the rise of polygamous marriages in the area, men like to control what the family consumes in order to make provision for the multiple families in the household.

Childcare (the care and supervision of a child or children within a home) and family health care (health care provided to children and other dependents) are mainly performed by women, with a minority of men (28.5% in Kanzou Village and 22% in Stratford FTRA) involved in childcare and none in family healthcare in both areas. Thus, rural men are also taking part in the care and supervision of children in their households, though the number is very low. However, most married female participants (60% in Stratford FTRA and 55% in Kanzou Village) reported sharing tasks (such as supervising children and assisting them with homework) with their husbands. In some cases, villagers mentioned that extended family members take care of the children within a household when the parents are busy. According to the FGDs, villagers still practice the notion of 'it takes a village to raise a child' so that, even in the absence of parents, neighbours take it upon themselves to supervise and care for their children just to ensure that the children are safe.

As noted, family healthcare is still the sole responsibility of women in male-headed households. For example, when children fall sick, women take them to the nearest clinic or hospital and then report to their husbands when they return. One male villager mentioned that sometimes he is not even aware that his children are sick, as his wife takes care of everything. Clearly, then, there is an entrenched belief that women are responsible for family healthcare. Indeed, one woman participant in the mixed FGD in Kanzou Village mentioned how, over and above looking after the children's healthcare, she cares for her husband's health and well-being as well. Narrating one incident that happened, she said:

There was a time when my husband fell sick, and he refused to go to the clinic, I had to look for transport to take him to the hospital even though he refused to go when he could walk. He waited for me to take him to the clinic (FGD2, Female, FGD, Kanzou).

Generally, female informants agreed that it was their duty, arising from their maternal instinct, to take care of the health of their families; and men in both study areas applauded their wives for doing an excellent job in caring for the health of their families. One male participant had this to say:

My wife does a good job. When the children say they are sick, she wakes up early in the morning to take them to the clinic. She does a good job because mostly when they come back, the children will be feeling better ... you know ... (ST3, Male, Interview).

The contribution of men to indoor household chores is minimal, as they focus on agricultural activities and other outdoor tasks typically expected of men in the two areas. Of the few who cook and clean, one is a single man while the other five are married (4 in Stratford FTRA and 1 in Kanzou village). The five married men are all young, in their 40s, and they have a secondary school qualification, which means they are likely more willing to be involved in household chores when compared to the older generation. In this regard, Chahalis et al. (2021) found in their study that males are also more willing to help with chores if they have completed either primary or secondary education. Married women seem to do more housework than single women in both study areas because they have to perform wifely duties to their husbands as well, and this leads to more time spent in housework. Women in male-headed households claimed that their household decisions were mainly centred on caring for the children and undertaking the household chores. Again, this confirms other findings such as by Becker et al. (2006) who demonstrate that the areas of cooking and childcare are often seen as women's domains within the homestead. Additionally, as mentioned already, men emerged as the main decision-makers in the use of cash within households in both Kanzou Village and Stratford FTRA.

9.3 Domestic Chores, Workload and Gender

As Coltrane (1989) argues, the meaning of gender is expressed, confirmed, and transformed through the division of household tasks. Globally, women are viewed as working longer hours than men work when both paid work and unpaid work is accounted for. In many rural areas in developing countries, women have a triple responsibility of engaging in domestic duties, as well as on-farm and off-farm activities. Moreover, an important constraint for women's overall labour capacity is the time-burden imposed by domestic tasks (Quisumbing and Pandolfelli, 2009).

Women contribute very significantly to agricultural and domestic work, but their contribution to the rural economy is greatly underestimated. Further, the findings of this study (at least 11-12 hours

per day for women vs at least 4-5 hours per day for men) are in sync with Coltrane's (2000) findings which show that, in terms of time spent, women engage in household tasks (both agriculture and domestic) twice or sometimes three times as long as men. Some studies (Vivuya et al., 2021) even show that rural women work 12 hours or longer a day. One study is by Bishop-Sambrok (2016), which found that women in rural areas work up to 16 hours or longer a day engaging in tasks simultaneously. In the case of the two study sites, there is not a significant difference in the time women dedicate to housework and agricultural work. The evidence indicates that women in both study areas are overworked. Respondents had this to say:

I spend 4-5 hours in the field [agricultural activities] (ST13, Male, Interview)

Aaah ... we work from around 5am when we will be in the fields, and around 12pm we go home for an hour to eat. Then we go back to the fields and come back home around 6pm and continue with what needs to be done in the house like cooking, bathing the children and washing dishes (ST4, Female, Interview).

When it's the farming season, we stay in the field [laughs]; that is where I spend most of my time. I usually prepare food that I carry with me and only come back around 5pm or 6pm to prepare supper (KV9, Female, Interview).

These views give a sense of the disparity in workload between men and women in Kanzou Village and Stratford FTRA. Female informants spoke about how their days are divided between the field and taking care of the household. This leads to what IFAD (2016) terms 'time poverty' whereby women work long hours and have no choice to do otherwise (Hyde et al., 2020). Just like in this study, in Bahi-Sokoni, Tanzania, household work is shared along gender lines, and women spent much more time (1842 hours/per annum) doing household chores as compared to men (492 hours/annum). Peters and Peters (1998) and Shumba (2011) state that, in the colonial era in Zimbabwe, rural women worked 16-18 hours a day, an indication that not much has changed regarding the position of women in terms of working hours.

Female participants in the female-only Stratford FTRA FGD brought to the fore quite emphatically the character of their workday, by saying that "we are the first ones to wake up and the last ones to sleep". This statement, and the preceding quotations from women, highlights how much time women in the study areas spend on agricultural tasks that are an extension of their domestic work, which then limits the amount and quality of time women can allocate to look after their own farm (*tseu*) portions. Furthermore, the type of crops grown by women in Stratford FTRA and Kanzou Village are considered as of low value compared to men's crops, making it difficult for them to allocate time for these crops. This is despite the fact that their crops are less labour intensive than

men's crops – they struggle to find time to tend to their crops given the priorities given to men's crops and domestic chores and their labour commitments to these.

As stated by Baxter (1997), the dynamics in most rural households is that the person with the most economic power in the household is usually the least involved in domestic labour as indicated by the 4-5 hours of involvement in household labour by men. In the case of the study of Kanzou Village and Stratford FTRA, men spend less time engaging in domestic labour (on average 4 hours a day) because they are the heads of households responsible for the overall upkeep of the family. In female-headed households, the time burden is far greater than that of men (as heads) because the woman is doubling up as a head of household and provider of domestic labour. One female head in Stratford FTRA (ST15) spoke of this as being very exhausting. She stated that

Everything waits for me as the mother and the father of this house. I work too much, it's tiring. I wish my husband was alive to do some of the work around the house.

The patriarchal culture in both Kanzou Village and Stratford FTRA means that men are the ones who benefit the most from farm income, but they work fewer hours a day than women do.

Women in the Kanzou Village female-only FGD indicated that, whenever they come home during lunchtime, the men will be resting under a shade while women are doing domestic chores like cooking, after which they have to go back to work in the field. Similarly, when they come back home at sunset, men will relax immediately, and women will start taking care of the children, cleaning, and cooking. Women indicated that their failure to challenge men for not assisting with the housework related to the payment of *lobola* by men as part of the marriage, which exempted men from certain types of work. As one female respondent said:

What can I do? That is why my husband paid a bride price [*lobola*] for me; I have to do it (ST12, Female, Interview).

The *lobola* payment, in this instance, seems to be a cultural justification for women's slave-like condition in caring for husbands and families. Local cultural arrangements, in both sites, configure the organisation of labour along gendered lines whereby men and women are supposed to undertake different household chores for different durations.

This is internalised from a very early age, such that boys and girls are socialised to perform certain roles according to their gender until they reach adulthood. As adults, they maintain these norms when they have their own families. For example, men in this study stated the following:

I construct kraals for our domestic animals, do the ploughing of course because I am the only one who can drive our tractor, and I also assist my wife with cooking when I see that she is tired (ST13, Male, Interview).

As the father, I only focus on the garden, domestic animals and the field; my wife as a woman focuses on the household chores. I only assist when my wife is not feeling well (ST10, Male, Interview).

I don't know how to cook. There was this time when my wife went away for a week, I was surviving on bread alone until she came back. I didn't know what to do in the kitchen since the owner of the kitchen was not around. Men our ages did not grow up working in the kitchen. It is a place for women (KV6, Male, Interview).

These extracts indicate that women only receive assistance from men in cases where they are not feeling well or are tired or when there is no girl-child in the household, such that, otherwise, husbands do not offer them a hand.

Traditional gender imbalances in unpaid work are prevalent in most countries despite the increase in labour-saving household technologies. In this study, participants (both men and women) in both study areas do not possess labour-saving technologies within the household, so that every chore is executed manually and therefore only serves to maximise the labour burden on women's bodies. For most married men interviewed in Stratford FTRA, participating in household chores is optional. However, two married male respondents said they help their wives with housework. In Kanzou Village, all husbands follow the culture and stay away from women's roles, which means that married women work longer hours in Kanzou Village compared to Stratford FTRA. For example, KV6 views the kitchen as a woman's place according to how he was raised, thereby following the cultures and norms of their household. Generally, all married men in Kanzou Village stated that they could not cook and take care of the household in the absence of the wife, with a small minority (25%) in Stratford FTRA saying that they know how to cook and take care of the household. One male participant in Kanzou Village stated that, whenever he wants something from the kitchen, he asks his children for assistance. He added that he could not even recall the last time he set foot in the kitchen because it is not a place for men.

This overall disinclination for rural men to engage in domestic work has wider resonance (Habodászová, 2010). But, there is slight difference between men in Stratford FTRA and Kanzou Village with regard to participation in housework, with those in the former site being more willing to engage in domestic work than those in the latter site. This can be attributed to the fact that men in Stratford FTRA are somewhat younger and more exposed to alternative ideas through education than those in Kanzou Village. Even older female informants view letting a husband do household chores as a form of disrespect. One participant in her seventies in the women-only FGD in Kanzou Village thus mentioned that allowing a husband to go for days without a proper meal implies acting against the marriage contract: "Married women should ensure that their husbands are fed", she said.

According to Breen and Cooke (2005:43), “the division of labour is part of the on-going negotiation process of marriage and can affect marital outcomes”. This means that, even if women are concerned about the heavy workload they experience, they will likely ensure that their husbands are well taken care of; in part, this is because their marriages can be affected detrimentally if the husband is unhappy. In this context, women tend to engage with heavy workloads without directly challenging gender power relations. In this respect, the presence of patriarchal relations as well as the differential socialisation of men and women into different work roles have their most fundamental expression within the household-domestic sphere (Benería, 1979).

9.4 Gender Roles amongst Children

Socialisation from a young age has a significant effect on gender identities (Winegar and Valsiner, 1992), which is very clear in the case of the culturally-based socialisation taking place in rural Zimbabwe. The gendered division of labour in the two study sites is socially constructed and is pervasive amongst both young and adult villagers.

Informants with children in both study areas gave their insights on how chores are divided between boys and girls within their households. The data suggests that women, when compared to men, are more open to boys and girls sharing chores equally. Further, in comparing the two study areas, participants in Kanzou Village regardless of gender were more firmly against the idea of equal sharing of chores between boys and girls. Thus, eight out of the 13 women (61.5%) in Kanzou Village were against equal sharing of chores between girls and boys, whereas only two out of the 11 women (18%) in Stratford FTRA held this view. All seven men (100%) in Kanzou Village were against equal sharing of chores between girls and boys as compared to only three men (33.3%) in Stratford FTRA. Again, the differences between men and women in Kanzou Village and Stratford FTRA might be due to differences in age and education, with Kanzou Village having older less educated informants than those in Stratford FTRA.

The reasons that participants gave for their arguments about the gendered division of labour amongst boys and girls demonstrates the effects of culture and socialisation:

In our Shona culture, my child, when we were growing up, it was known what boys and what girls do so if I am to change it now can't you see that I will be lost? (KV16, Male, Interview).

I know these days people are saying boys must cook but, ever since I was born, I have never cooked. I am a middle child in a family of 5 so my elder sisters always cooked. That's our upbringing, so I don't know if you say I must cook now how am I going to do it; and my boy has never cooked, also how is he going to do it? (ST3, Male, Interview).

Many parents spoke as if the gendered division of labour was natural, necessary, and inevitable, such that local culture was configured by the biological gender differences:

Mostly we weigh how heavy the task is and if it suits a boy or a girl ... If it is washing dishes, we give it to the girls and the mother ... If it involves ploughing and looking after the cattle, then we delegate it to the boys and me (ST8, Male, Interview).

Boys should focus on tasks that boys should do, and girls should focus on their own tasks such as cleaning and cooking. I cannot let my grandchild cook when I am there. I do the same when my other grandchildren visit; the girls cook while the boys tend to the domestic animals. That is what we know (KV1, Female, Interview).

The view about doing away with the stark division between work tasks for girls and boys came out most clearly in the female-only FGD in Stratford FTRA, and mostly amongst Stratford FTRA women more broadly. One discussant in this focus group depicted the way in which some parents feel the need to train the boy child to engage in all tasks around the house like cooking, ironing, and cleaning (i.e., those tasks traditionally assigned to girls):

I have three boys, and my girl is still very young, so I teach the boys how to cook and clean and take care of themselves and their sister. I cannot wait for the little girl to grow and help me. The boys must learn that there are no chores for boys and girls; everyone in the house should contribute towards housework (FGD, ST, Female).

This particular woman is the holder of a tertiary education qualification, which might explain her quest for some level of gender equality. Indeed, a few discussants in this same group explicitly rejected this gender-equality contribution and argued that teaching the boy child domestic chores promotes laziness on the part of the girl child and the mother as well, because women traditionally do domestic chores. One discussant argued that:

What will the girls be doing when the boys are cleaning? I don't promote my girls to be lazy; they must do their chores without any help from the brothers (FGD, ST, Female).

Compared to their female counterparts, male Stratford villagers were more supportive of the current gendered division of labour amongst children.

In Kanzou Village, there was even more widespread support for the gender-based division of labour, and for boys doing heavy tasks and girls doing (supposedly) lighter tasks. Most informants (60%) argued that girls do not possess the physical power required to undertake boys' chores, hence they should do the lighter tasks. Another 30% said that boys should assist girls at times because they are able to do the lighter tasks as well, but that girls do not have the strength for performing boys' work. The balance (10%) stated that both boys and girls should assist each other no matter how heavy

or light the task. One male villager in Kanzou Village had particularly strong views against acting contrary to gendered socialisation. He narrated how, at the beginning of 2019, he attended a Red Cross course attended by two men and 33 women that encouraged gender equality in the division of labour within the homestead. They both outright rejected the idea of men assisting with household chores and training boy children to assist around the house:

When we went for our Red Cross training in Chinhoyi at the beginning of last year, the facilitator there brought up this topic that you are talking about. Myself and the other gentleman (we were just 2 men and 33 women) refused and said men and boys cannot do household chores; it is women's work, there is no equality there. My children know that there is no equality when they are doing work here; girls cook and clean etc. and my boys help me with the kraal and other men-jobs here (KV6, Male, Interview).

This male villager in Kanzou Village views domestic chores as 'women's work' and argues that equality in the division of household tasks is unattainable. This is somewhat surprising given that he has a Diploma in Journalism and worked at one of the top newspapers in Zimbabwe before retrenchment and settling in the village. This is the same villager cited earlier who spent an entire week surviving on bread because his wife had travelled, and he was not able to cook for himself. He socialised his children consistent with his patriarchal views.

Children in the two sites not only demand their parents' and other people's time in terms of caring duties, as they also supply labour in the family including by participating in household production. This at times reduces the household burden carried by mothers. Older children though engage in more tasks than younger children do, with some informants indicating that children below the age of 10 are not required to work in the fields because they lack the necessary understanding of agricultural work. In addition, birth sequence emerged as crucial when assigning tasks to children. Firstborns undertake more work than their younger siblings do because parents will be training them to be responsible in caring for their siblings. A study by Bonke (2010) found similar results, namely, that parents' demand for housework by children go according to the child's placement in the child sequence.

Finally, I also asked participants their views regarding the importance of bringing about an equal gendered division of labour in the household. Consistent with the earlier discussion, female informants in Stratford FTRA stated that it is important for gender equality to exist through socialising children differently than is happening currently. However, even for them, it appeared unlikely that this would come about easily or soon, because gender equality is a foreign concept out of sync with their well-established cultural arrangements. Women in Kanzou Village were less supportive of bringing about any change at all. Men in the study sites, particularly in Kanzou Village, argued that boys do not necessarily have to learn roles meant for girls because they will eventually marry, and

the wives will do those duties for them. Also, male respondents argued that asking boys to engage in 'women's work' is deviating from culture as culture dictates that domestic chores are for women. In line with the feminist theoretical framing, this reveals how social reproduction is itself reproduced across generations.

9.5 Decision-Making Powers in Local Households

The household is the basic unit of production and decision-making unit in Kanzou Village and Stratford FTRA. In relation to questions around land, labour and gender in the two study sites, it is crucial to understand how men and women reach decisions within the household, and the patriarchal character of this. The level of decision-making power that a woman has in a household is an indicator of her empowerment (Becker et al., 2006). As well, decision-making powers within the household affects the allocation of resources such that, if women are afforded a level of decision-making, their access to resources is likely to increase.

Kishor and Subaiya (2008, as cited in Doss et al., 2014) highlight that a critical measure for sources of empowerment must include decision-making within a household as well as the extent of women's access to and control over resources such as land and income (for example, from crop sales), and the character of the gendered division of labour (Sell and Minot, 2008). All these points are central to this study. In this study, those with control over a higher proportion of household income, more access to land and less involvement in labouring activities have proved to be the main decision-makers. This is true of rural spaces more broadly as, in most rural households, there is an unequal distribution of power and resources within households, with men generally benefiting more than women do (Bradshaw, 2013).

Generally, men dominated intra-household decision-making in male-headed households in Stratford FTRA (in 12 out of the 15 male-headed households, or 80%) while women were the major decision-makers in single, widowed, and de facto female-headed households. In Kanzou Village, 10 out of the 12 (83%) male-headed households had men as the main decision-makers. Just like in Stratford FTRA, women were major decision-makers in single and widowed households in Kanzou Village. The one de facto-headed household has the husband still as the main decision-maker. Some married informants spoke about joint decision-making by husband and wife: 20% in Stratford FTRA and 17% in Kanzou Village.

In Kanzou Village and Stratford FTRA, men mainly control land, agricultural inputs, and agricultural equipment. Moreover, there is a difference in the kind of decisions that men make versus those made by women in male-headed households. When asked about which type of decisions they make in the household, the following comments are quite representative:

I make the big decisions mainly. The small decisions are not that important, so the mother of the house can make those ones (ST8, Male, Interview).

It's me and my wife, we help each other (ST3, Male, Interview).

I often consult my husband about everything that needs to be done in the household but sometimes, if I am not happy with it, then he will go ahead [anyways]. I don't like it because we need to all agree on something for it to be implemented in our household (ST 12, Female, Interview).

I make big decisions that affect the family like how to use money, what to buy and other things you know that the family faces every day (KV2, Female, Interview)

I am the main decision-maker as the father in the house. My wife asks me first on anything, then I make the final decision. When I am not around, she tells people to wait for me (KV16, Male, Interview).

Overall, patriarchal norms are dominant in households when it comes to intra-household decision-making. In those households where people are married, participants (male and female) tended to indicate that husbands are the major decision-makers. This goes contrary to the findings by Bjornlund et al. (2019) that, in Zimbabwe, women make most decisions. In Kanzou Village, women only make major decisions in female-headed households, where a male figure is absent. Female informants in de facto-headed households, with husbands who work in urban areas, may consult them by way of phone before making final decisions on a matter.

Though the difference between Stratford FTRA and Kanzou Village (20% versus 17%) does not seem significant with regard to the extent of joint decision-making, there is still a tendency for younger and more educated adults to be more supportive of this form of decision-making. One male participant in Stratford FTRA thus had this to say:

I think today's education promotes equality so I want to be equal with my wife in making big decisions in our household ... So, I do not have a problem with us deciding on important things together; ... this needs to be encouraged in all households actually (ST13, Male, Interview).

Meanwhile, an older male in Kanzou spoke differently:

It's only that people these days want to equalise everything as they say they are taught [are educated] but, as an older generation with no education [laughs], where do we learn about these things? I make important decisions for my family as the head (KV10, Male, Interview)

A study for example conducted by Valera et al. (2018) reports that women's power to make decisions is less prominent amongst older couples. Similarly, some researchers (Sultana, 2011; Valera et al., 2018; Bjornlund et al., 2019), argue that decision-making is more collaborative in households where the male heads are more educated. As such, some of the households that engage in joint decision-making in Stratford FTRA are holders of post-secondary qualifications. In this study, most

women, especially in Kanzou Village, did not have a formal education, which means that their involvement in decision-making was limited, and their power was unequal unless they were the head of the household. Not surprisingly, as Patel's (2020) study found, rural women are more than twice as likely as urban women to have no formal education.

Women's earning status and control over income might also be a contributing factor in some of the women's involvement in joint decision-making as well (Becker et al., 2006), with a few women engaging in off-farm activities as income-generating projects. In Stratford FTRA, three out of the 6 (50%) married women engage in off-farm activities as compared to only one (16.7%) in Kanzou Village. The other two (33.3%) women who engage in off-farm activities are single women in Stratford FTRA. The type of off-farm activities that women in Stratford FTRA engage in are stokvels, buying and selling second-hand clothes and chicken rearing (and selling), whilst the one in Kanzou Village bakes and sells yeast buns. The involvement of these married women in income-generating activities, together with their husbands' education background, is highly likely to increase their bargaining power in the household resulting in joint decision-making. The income-generating projects of married women are particularly important when agricultural production is low, as the projects enhance the potential capacity of these women to provide inputs into household decisions.

Though there is evidence of joint decision-making between couples in some male-headed households, Bjornlund et al. (2019) quite rightly state that there is still typically one person who makes most of the decisions and, in the vast majority of instances, it is the husband. I observed this in Stratford FTRA such that, even though the participants mentioned joint decision-making, most of the time when we were conversing, the wives would always refer to their husband as having knowledge of how things are run in the household; and men also would always say "me as the head of the household, I...", revealing that they made most intra-household decisions. This finding corroborates other studies elsewhere, including by Devkota (1999) in rural Nepal. In this context, Sultana (2011) argues that men possess greater power and authority in a household simply by virtue of being a 'man' and therefore 'head' of the family.

In this sense, culturally-defined gender roles trump any particular qualities of the husband and wife (such as age and education), as confirmed by further studies (Cheteni et al., 2019; Lardies et al. 2019; Samman, 2018). Lower participation rates of women in decision-making are configured by cultural arrangements, with other issues (such as age, education and income) only serving to minimise the possible effects of these arrangements. In other words, these issues mediate the effects of culture on decision-making at household level without necessarily undercutting cultural effects.

9.6 Attitudes towards Male-Female Equal Decision-Making Power

It is clear that, despite some variation across households, a significant gender of labour exists within both the domestic and productive spheres in both Kanzou Village and Stratford FTRA and, further, that men are the main decision-makers when it comes to who does what, how and to what extent. In seeking to consider the extent to which the current decision-making arrangements are entrenched, I asked informants how they would feel about a more collaborative and inclusive form of decision-making within the household along gender lines.

Approximately 70% of participants in Kanzou Village and 75% in Stratford FTRA agreed that women and men should not share equal powers in decision-making, while 30% and 25% respectively were willing to accept this (at least in principle). The vast majority of the respondents who were in favour of unequal power sharing in decision-making were married male informants together with single men. Nearly three-quarters of single and widowed women in Stratford FTRA and in Kanzou Village were in favour of equal sharing of power in decision-making; and just over one half (56%) of the married female participants in Kanzou Village and 66% in Stratford FTRA also supported this. This view amongst married women was more prominent in Stratford FTRA. The married women in opposition cited culture as a reason why there should and would never be equality in decision-making in a household. One female informant articulated the view that “there cannot be two bulls in one kraal”, which means that making joint decisions undermines the authority of the (male) head of the household.

As such, this shows that many female villagers in both sites internalised patriarchal ideas that place them in a position that is inferior to men. In a study analysing southern Africa’s land tenure systems, in as far as they constrain women’s access to land ownership, Mutangadura (2004) found that some women also internalised their own discrimination. Like the women, men against equal power in the household cited culture as laying bare the guiding principles on who should make decisions in a household. In addition, as noted earlier, men cited that paying *lobola* to the bride’s family affords men power over women. This does seem problematic because *lobola* is not meant to subordinate women but rather to unite families. Some male participants had the following to say:

If I am the one who paid the bride price then my wife has to listen to me. I cannot be equal with my wife. Our culture encourages us to uphold *hunhu* so if my wife now expects us to be equal then she can as well pay a bride price for me [Laughs] (KV16, Male, Interview).

If I paid *lobola* then there is no 50/50, my child. I don’t know these new things that are coming from you children of today that there should be 50/50. I don’t think that works, my child. Here we know that our wives respect us (ST17, Male, Interview).

The quotations clearly demonstrate how men believe in a culture so strongly that they do not see any valid reason to go against it. The male villager from Kanzou Village (KV16) expects his wife to display *hunhu* as embodied in Shona culture, and this is indicated by the need for his wife to listen to and abide by her husband's decisions in the household. As Mungwini (2007:129) argues, men have "always wanted to keep intact institutionalised values and practices that would continue to keep women within their subordinate position, silent and disempowered". This is in line with the views of the Stratford FTRA man (ST17) who refuses to compromise and allow for equality between him and his wife. For him, outsiders bring their strange ideas to women in rural areas and corrupt their thinking with foreign ideologies. He believes that local women are satisfied with their subordinate position and that striving for equality within the household is a sign of disrespect for men.

A significant number of female informants, particularly in Kanzou Village, are in support of the current unequal sharing of decision-making power, to such an extent that they also view ideas emerging from media as a threat to their marriages. As one woman from Kanzou Village claimed:

This thing of telling men what to do ... uhm ... does not work for us. We know that when we are married, we do what our husbands want. Then we hear some saying men should help around the house, men should cook. I am not the one who decides what happens in this house, it is my husband. I see if we follow what we hear on the radio and from people who come from outside our marriages will end, I tell you (KV14, Female, Interview).

She perceives equality of decision-making for men and women within the household as a foreign and corrupting influence and respects the traditional customary practices that guide marriages within the Shona culture. Though this view amongst female villages was most prominent in Kanzou Village, there was also evidence of it in Stratford FTRA. For example, one woman in Stratford FTRA mentioned how, even if she wants her and her husband to be equal in decision-making and share all duties in the household, her husband would be ashamed of what other men around would say. In her words:

No, no, no, we were not born like that. My husband cannot be seen as someone whom I rule in our house. What will other men say, what will my family say? I have to give him his position [of authority] (ST19, Female, Interview).

Views like this make it highly improbable that changes in the balance of power in local households will be forthcoming any time soon.

9.7 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the various ways in which labour is divided within the household along gendered lines in Kanzou Village and Stratford FTRA, and how this affects the upbringing of children. It seems clear that the local cultural arrangements in the two sites are heavily infused with long-established patriarchal narratives and practices pertaining to the role of men and women in domestic chores, with almost a natural or necessary link drawn between women and domestic chores. This means that there is a tendency amongst many women to accept the patriarchal basis of homestead responsibilities and therefore to act according to the wishes of the male head. As indicated, just as there are women's crops in the sphere of production, there are women's chores in the sphere of social reproduction. Again, though there are some differences between Kanzou Village and Stratford FTRA in this regard, patriarchy seems to be the dominant axis of power at the household level which, in turn, configures the division of labour in the case of domestic chores. This is the last empirical chapter. The next and final chapter (chapter 10) concludes the thesis.

CHAPTER 10: CONCLUSION

10.1. Introduction

This chapter provides a summary of the thesis primarily by way of demonstrating the way in which the thesis addressed the research objectives as well as the significance of the theoretical framework in doing so. Hence, the conclusions of the study, as set out here, are examined with reference to the objectives and theory. The theory adopted for analysing the empirical findings is feminism and, more specifically, a combination of Third World and Socialist Feminism. The specific research sites are Kanzou Village, a communal area, and the Stratford A1 resettlement area. The main objective of the thesis is to:

Provide a comparative analysis of gender, land and labour, particularly in relation to women, between communal areas and A1 fast track farms in Zvimba Rural District, Zimbabwe.

The subsidiary objectives, with reference to both research sites, are:

- a) To examine the position of women with regard to land acquisition, access and security;
- b) To examine the position of women with regard to agricultural labour, including assets, inputs, production and other livelihood practices;
- c) To examine the division of labour and decision-making processes within the sphere of (agricultural) production; and
- d) To examine the division of labour and decision-making processes in the sphere of social reproduction (the domestic sphere).

These four subsidiary objectives were each considered separately in one empirical chapter, namely, chapters 6, 7, 8 and 9, respectively. Each of these objectives, as subsidiary objectives, fall within the scope of the main objective. This means that the main objective was pursued indirectly by addressing the subsidiary objectives.

In section 10.2, I focus on the manner in which the thesis addressed the subsidiary objectives. Section 10.3 then considers the overall objective and the relevance of the theoretical framing for pursuing this objective. The chapter ends with a section (section 10.4) on limitations of the thesis, contributions of the thesis, and suggestions about future research on the topic.

10.2 Addressing Subsidiary Objectives

In this section, I examine each subsidiary objective in turn.

10.2.1 Land Access, Acquisition and Security

Chapters six of this thesis answered subsidiary goal one. In relation to land access, acquisition, security, and usage patterns, I found that there is a clear gendered dimension in both study areas. All participants acknowledged that land is central to their lives and they mentioned that “land is life” and “it is important”; however, there is unequal access to land on a gendered basis. Men tend to have access to larger portions of land than women do in both study areas. Formal land acquisition in both areas primarily involved men, with women often acquiring secondary land access rights. There are two key formal tenure arrangements pertinent to the two research sites, which are traditional usufruct rights in communal areas and permits on A1 fast track farms. Both of these arrangements grant the occupiers possession and use rights. Generally, the use and occupation of land is overseen by local land authorities (such as a village head), with male villagers being privileged in this regard.

Land registration processes indicate that those in Stratford FTRA are in possession of permits while those in Kanzou Village do not possess any form of permit, something which is common in rural Zimbabwe. However, the absence of formal documentation seems not to worry Kanzou villagers because of inter-generational transfers that have been happening over decades. Women felt more land tenure insecure than men in Stratford FTRA because, in instances where people are married, the name on the permit is usually that of the husband (head of household), which indicates the promotion of patriarchy in the registration of land. Land tenure insecurity also emerged as a barrier to women accessing credit and loans because they cannot use permits as collateral since the permits are registered in the husbands’ names. However, female participants in Kanzou Village were reasonably content with the issue of land registration, citing that it makes them ‘equals’ with men – yet not equal in how land is shared within the household.

Generally, Stratford FTRA informants were quite satisfied about the results of the FTLRP, though some were not satisfied with the quality of the agricultural land they received due to corruption by officials and the political elite. Land leasing emerged as another way that land is being acquired in Stratford FTRA, but it is mainly done informally despite the government introducing a policy on joint-ventures and sub-letting of land. In Kanzou Village, land leasing happens regularly amongst relatives and is facilitated by the village head. In addition, land transfers in both study areas are mainly done through inheritance (communal areas) and state intervention (fast track areas), processes which seem to favour men more than women. However, inheritance is beginning to take place in the fast-track areas due to original occupiers of land ageing and dying, but only one male participant in this

study has inherited land (from a late sister). Inheritance of land in Kanzou Village favoured male children more than female children because of culture and patriarchy that upholds the rights of boy children more than those of girl children. Only one female participant in Kanzou Village stated that she obtained land through inheritance and the father in this case desired for all his children to have their own portion of land irrespective of gender.

In terms of marital status, single women in Stratford FTRA appeared to have an easier time of obtaining land as opposed to Kanzou Village due to communal areas' land access being more strongly hampered by patriarchy. Widowed women's access to land depended on the type and form of marriage that existed before the husband's passing. Women in registered marriages were more likely to inherit land from their late husbands because they possess a marriage certificate, and those in unregistered marriages less likely to do so because the inheritance is mainly regulated by customary laws. Widowed women also displayed lack of knowledge about their legal rights, calling for inheritance-law education in Zimbabwe. Single and widowed women in Stratford FTRA found it easier to register land in their names as opposed to married women. For married women in Stratford FTRA, only one woman indicated having her name jointly on the permit; the rest of the married women in Stratford FTRA mentioned that only the husbands' names are on the permits. Polygamous marriages are increasing in Stratford FTRA as this is bringing about new dynamics to marriages that leads to uncertainty to women in these sorts of marriages. In these cases, women mentioned preference for permits to be registered in the husband's name.

Women's independent access to land in both sites was met with mixed feelings, with only a few male informants in support of this. Some men in Stratford FTRA mentioned that it would have been a good idea if the government had considered equal access from the beginning of the FTLRP. Men in both study sites tended to oppose independent access to land by women because land is a family asset and therefore it has to be registered in the name of the head of the household who, in most cases, is male. There was a clear gender difference in terms of views around women's independent access to land, as almost all women across the two sites supported this. In both sites, though, a section of the women supported the gender gap regarding land access to ensure and maintain family and social stability while also defending African traditional values. In this respect, patriarchy tends to remain of significance in configuring perspectives and practices around land access, acquisition and security in Kanzou Village and Stratford FTRA.

10.2.2 Agricultural Labour: Assets, Inputs and Production

Chapter seven answered the second subsidiary goal whose focus is on the dynamics around agricultural assets, inputs, and production (and other livelihood practices) within the two study sites.

In addressing this subsidiary objective, I first discussed participants' level of access to agricultural equipment and tools and how, according to them, this affects their agricultural production. Results indicate that farmers rely mainly on hand tools rather than mechanised equipment, with only 5% of the total participants (all men) owning a tractor, indicating a gendered dimension in terms of agricultural mechanisation in the two sites. The farmers indicated that animal draught power, such as cattle-driven ploughs, cultivators, and scotch carts, are the most common equipment. Those with tractors mentioned that they are faced with challenges such as maintaining the tractor and purchasing diesel for the tractor because they use black market rates to purchase fuel. The use of animal-drawn power tends to affect crop yields by farmers, but women are the worst affected because their crops receive limited draught power attention. Even though participants reported awareness of the many advantages of using machinery in agriculture, particularly tractors, they stated that using mechanised equipment is very expensive and requires operational know-how which most of them do not possess. A similar trend existed regarding the use of irrigation equipment, which only one participant (male) in Kanzou Village reported to be owning. Household economies in the two study sites, as in rural Zimbabwe more broadly, are largely dependent on rain-fed agriculture. Scotch carts and cultivators are the most used agricultural equipment for rain-fed cropping in both study areas, but these are not as powerful and effective as tractors. Overall, in both study sites, there is a gendered dimension because men have greater access to agricultural equipment and men's crops get preference over women's crops in the use of this equipment.

Also, participants stated that amongst all the domestic animals owned by participants, cattle play the most significant role as a provider of draught power, but also for manure, meat, and transport, as well as income, social security and risk aversion. However, in Kanzou Village, people are facing a high level of cattle theft and cattle disease that in turn affects crop production. This was not the case for Stratford FTRA, but the participants in Stratford FTRA were concerned that their cattle were not multiplying as fast as they should, which causes stress to the farmers. The study shows that participants with resources hire cattle and some borrow cattle from other villagers either in exchange for casual labour (*maricho*) or for a payment – just to allow them to be able to produce some crops during the farming season. Again, even in this, there is a skew towards men and their crops in getting first preference in cattle usage.

The farmers narrated that agricultural inputs are a challenge as well. Maize was the dominant crop ('family crop') in both study areas with tobacco extensively grown in Stratford FTRA. Even

though farmers receive inputs from the government at subsidised rates to boost their productivity, in both sites they are inadequate for their needs and the officials responsible for distributing the inputs are corrupt. Therefore, participants supplement these inputs, including using seeds from previous harvests. Only a few of the farmers who have employed family members purchase seeds to supplement inputs received from the government. In instances where inputs are not enough for all the fields, women's *tseu* usually is the last to be considered, reflecting the wider gendered bias against women in Kanzou Village and Stratford FTRA. Married women were more disadvantaged than single and widowed women because single and widowed women manage their own inputs without the need to consult with a husband. There was a gendered access to organic and inorganic fertiliser inputs as well. Men's crops are valued more than women's crops, so they received the fertiliser inputs first because these are the main cash crops for families.

Tobacco farmers in Stratford FTRA echoed similar sentiments in that they struggle to secure needed inputs, not just seed but also inorganic fertilisers and insecticides. These farmers' shortfalls are exacerbated by the high production costs of farming tobacco, as well as lack of government support and farmer know-how on tobacco farming. Tobacco farming was dominated by men, with only two single female farmers citing farming tobacco (with the assistance of male family members).

Farmers in Zimbabwe receive input donations from the Presidential Input Schemes (PIS), including seed (maize, sorghum, pearl millet, soya beans, sunflower, cowpeas and sugar beans), fertilizer and fall armyworm pesticides for the following agricultural season. On top of the PIS, the government introduced the Command Agriculture and *Pfumvudza /Intwasa* programmes. However, farmers still prefer their traditional ways of farming which is less laborious. Concerns about corruption and late redistribution of inputs made the programmes less attractive and favourable to farmers.

Marketing of crops was stated as a dilemma faced by the farmers in that the pricing is too low and the markets are too far, especially the tobacco auction floors. Middlemen were then involved for logistic purposes. For both maize and tobacco cash crops, middlemen were considered important because of their buying prices and the fact that they usually come to the farmers to buy, cutting on transport costs. Easiness in marketing of crops was skewed towards men in this study, with men being in a stronger position than women in terms of negotiating power, physical strength to carry the crops, and price know-how.

10.2.3 Division of Labour and Decision-Making in Production

In terms of the third subsidiary objective, the study found that there is a significant gender division of labour in various agricultural tasks in the two study sites, as well as in relation to decision-making pertaining to agricultural production.

For example, women participants in the two study areas engage more in planting and harvesting than men. Meanwhile, men are involved more in pesticide and herbicide application, post-harvest activities and overall supervision of agricultural activities. Further, men are involved in selling and the receipt of income from cash crops as well as food crops, at least in male-headed households. Weeding, land clearing, and land preparation were common activities among both men and women, with everyone mentioning that they engaged in them. These findings differ from, for instance, Guyer (1988) who argues that women are the ones who mainly engage in activities that involve any form of physical bending. Men emerged as the ones responsible for the supervision of the labour of women, children and hired labour both in male-headed households and female-headed households (through a male relative in the case of the latter). The involvement of men in applying pesticides is due to their higher levels of education in most households, as they are capable of reading instructions on how to use the pesticides and herbicides. Generally, men were viewed as having more knowledge than women about farming, hence their supervision responsibilities.

In addition to supervision, men emerged as responsible for marketing cash crops because it is an exercise that is labour intensive, requires long-distance travelling, involves waiting for long periods at the auction floors (for tobacco amongst Stratford FTRA farmers), and requires good negotiating skills. This happens for both married and single women, because most single women's crops are taken to the market by their male relatives. Married female participants at Stratford FTRA indicated unhappiness with how men handled the income they collected at the tobacco auction floors when they go to sell tobacco – because men end up involved with sex workers and squander their money, leaving the men with only a small fraction of the income to take home to the family. This has been noted as a common problem in Zimbabwe more broadly (Tapfumaneyi, 2021). While some women expressed no concern over their exclusion in the marketing stage of cash crops, others wished to accompany their husbands to the marketplaces to avoid financial losses for the household. The results indicate an unequal distribution of income along gender lines obtained from marketing crops, and this affects women because of their key role in the domestic sphere. Also, insofar as income is squandered, there is a cycle of not being able to buy inputs for the next season because the income received from crop sales is not enough to finance the next season.

Crops grown in the two study sites are divided along gender lines. Female participants in both study areas specialise in 'women crops' such as sweet potatoes, groundnuts and round nuts, whereas

men specialise in cash crops, notably tobacco and maize in Stratford FTRA and maize in Kanzou Village. Because women do not engage significantly in farming cash crops, men's crops get preference in terms of inputs over women's crops by the mere fact of men's crops being cash crops. As noted elsewhere (Udry, 1996; Carter, 2003), women achieve yields less than men's because of unequal access to inputs and other resources (including land itself). Married men divide the land unfairly (giving their wives smaller portions) and men receive more land under inheritance. An example is that of Kanzou Village, whereby male elders divided the land among their nieces and nephews, but they would favour nephews and give them larger portions of land. Contrary to land size and crop type, there does not seem to be a gendered difference in the soil quality of the land farmed by men and women in both sites. However, *tseus* were usually at the periphery of the fields.

Men could afford to hire agricultural labour at least more so than women, and female participants rely mainly on family labour. However, men also benefit from family labour. A noted difference between men and women was that men use cash to pay for the hired labour while, in those instances where women hire labour, they pay using barter exchange. Most use second-hand clothing to pay for farm labour, as well as previous crop harvests or cash obtained from off-farm activities (stokvels and chicken rearing). In terms of harvests, women are always disadvantaged because they cannot afford hired labour and their plot sizes are small. Differences were noted though between women in Kanzou Village and Stratford FTRA. Women in Stratford FTRA have larger *tseus* – because of this, they are more likely to have crop surpluses to sell to other women and pay for labour in cash.

10.2.4 Division of Labour and Decision-Making in Social Reproduction

Chapter nine focused on the domestic sphere and pursued the fourth subsidiary objective in doing so, examining the division of labour and decision-making in the sphere of social reproduction. Apart from the division of agricultural labour along crop type, farm activities, and the form of labour used in the field, the study found that households in the study areas divide housework along gender lines. There is a clear demarcation of what men in the house can do and what women can do. Women indicated that they mainly provide emotional support and ensure maintenance of the household, while men are primarily responsible for economic support and contact with the world outside the home. The women studied still engage in the extra burden of unpaid work within their households, but they do not necessarily view it in that way. Indeed, many view it as their responsibility as women.

Women's days tend to be longer than men's, as their days are divided between the field and taking care of the household, a trend that IFAD (2016) terms as 'time poverty'. Local cultural norms tend to dictate that women are linked to domestic chores, and many indicated that the *lobola* paid by

their husbands bind them to do housework without any complaint. The acceptance by women of their lot in life in the two sites is related to the process of family socialisation across generations. In this study, some participants (including women) indicated resistance to teaching their boy children to assist with housework, citing culture as a reason. But, some women did complain that partaking in housework and fieldwork is tedious, so they would like their boy children to assist them in domestic work. For men, there is no point in boys being trained to assist with housework because they will eventually marry someone who will do it for them. This then translates into the existence of households where men's duties are to supervise women while women remain in a subordinate position. Hence, the significant adverse effect of socialisation is the subordination of women and girls.

Participants generally stated that men dominate decision-making in male-headed households, while women are the main decision-makers in those households where they are *de jure* heads. However, there was some evidence of 'joint decision-making' in married households. In this regard, men stated that they make the major decisions and leave minor decisions to their wives. There was a difference between Kanzou Village and Stratford FTRA in that, in Stratford FTRA, women were more likely to be involved in 'joint decision-making'. But, the percentage of those women in Stratford FTRA remains small and, to emphasise, the type of decisions they make are minor decisions centred on childcare and household chores.

The patriarchal configuration of the domestic sphere in both Kanzou Village and Stratford FTRA seems quite entrenched. Thus, participants' attitudes towards equal sharing of decision making were generally towards an unequal share in decision making, with 70% of the participants against equal sharing, whereas 30% of the participants were for equal sharing. The main reason for opposing equal sharing in decision-making was the Shona culture which dictates that men are the main decision-makers in households. The culture of paying *lobola*, to reiterate, emerged as central in affecting women's decision-making power because, when a man pays *lobola*, he is somehow buying ownership rights over the wife from her family. In so doing, anything that a wife does must be approved by the husband. Failure to comply with the husband's rules means a wife has lost *hunhu* and losing *hunhu* is unacceptable within the local culture. According to some participants, rural women in Kanzou Village and Stratford FTRA who are opposed to the patriarchal arrangements are being corrupted by outsiders who bring in unfamiliar and foreign ideologies.

10.3 Addressing the Main Objective

The main objective of this thesis was pursued in and through the subsidiary objectives. To remind the reader, the main objective of this thesis was to: *Provide a comparative analysis of gender, land and labour, particularly in relation to women, between communal areas and A1 fast track farms in Zvimba Rural District, Zimbabwe.* In addressing this main objective, I examined the lives of women and men in Kanzou Village and Stratford FTRA, as communal area and A1 farms respectively. The study focused on how land is accessed, labour is divided and gendered relations are configured among men and women in Kanzou Village and Stratford FTRA.

The fast-track land reform programme, as an initiative of the Zimbabwean government dating back to the year 2000 and now implemented over two decades, provides a basis for comparison (with long-established communal areas) to determine whether this land initiative entailed any significant gender-based restructuring in terms of land and labour, as measured against communal areas. To highlight, the comparison drawn is between gender, land and labour in Kanzou Village and Stratford FTRA at the time of the research – that is, a spatial comparison at one moment in time, rather than a temporal comparison across two moments in time. However, in examining gender, land and labour in Zimbabwe from pre-colonial to post-colonial times, it is clear that deeply-entrenched patriarchal systems continue to prevail in rural Zimbabwe.

The similarities across the two study sites are quite stark. Men and women still access land differently. Marriage and inheritance, as systems birthed through patriarchy, continue to put women in subordinate positions in both Kanzou Village and Stratford FTRA. Women in Kanzou Village and Stratford FTRA have responsibilities to perform both productive and reproductive labour, a tendency that social, cultural and family structures reproduce as acceptable. Kanzou Village and Stratford FTRA women experience similar patriarchal patterns due to the institutionalised values and practices that keep women within subordinate position, silent and disempowered (Mugwini, 2007). Certain phrases such as referring to domestic chores as ‘women’s work’, saying ‘the woman makes the household tick’, and ‘women’s crops’ perpetuate marginalisation and subordination in such a way that women internalise their subordinate position and accept it. In the end, because men have more access to land, less involvement in labouring activities, control the higher proportion of the household income, they become the main decision-makers in the household.

At the same time, there are certain differences across the two sites in terms of land, labour and gender. But these differences, at least in part, are mediated by other variables besides spatial location, in particular the form of marriage, marital status, age and education. For example, differences in age and educational qualifications tend to lead to different understandings of the importance of men in assisting with housework. In addition, those women with a registered marriage are in a better position

than those with an unregistered marriage with regard to what they can inherit, and those women in de facto female-headed households are in a better position financially than those women in male-headed households (because the de facto female-headed households receive remittances from their working husbands).

Thus, with respect to age, Kanzou Village has older villagers than those in Stratford FTRA, with Kanzou Village having an average age of 56.1 years and Stratford an average age of 50.4 years. More villagers were married in Stratford FTRA than in Kanzou Village and there were more widowed women in Kanzou Village as compared to Stratford FTRA. Education-wise, Stratford FTRA had more educated villagers as compared to Kanzou Village. In Kanzou Village, eight women were de jure heads of household and there was only one de facto head whereas, in Stratford FTRA, two homes were de facto female-headed while five were de jure female headed. In Kanzou Village, there are more extended families staying in one household, unlike in Stratford FTRA where most households consist of nuclear families. Couples in Kanzou Village were married longer, spanning up to four decades (given their older ages generally) as compared to Stratford FTRA (between 5 to 20 years). These and other differences go some way in explaining the differences for women across the two sites in relation to land and labour, as discussed in the thesis. For instance, in the case of the domestic sphere, household chores for Stratford FTRA married women are sometimes lessened by their husbands assisting them, but married women in Kanzou Village are less likely to receive assistance from their husbands – reflecting in part the differences in education and age between the two sites. Overall, then, similarities tend to outweigh differences across the two sites with reference to women, land and labour.

The use of Third World and socialist feminism, as complementary feminist framings, has facilitated the pursuance of the main objective of the thesis. Both perspectives go beyond considering patriarchy as a legal system alone and focus on it as a social-cultural system (including practices and discourses) which configure the lived realities of women. The perspectives also recognise the significance of focusing on both the spheres of production and reproduction. Importantly, socialist feminism brings to the fore the importance of labour – and not simply land when analysing the experiences of rural women. Additionally, in its criticisms of Western feminisms, Third World feminism stresses that not all women are situated in the same social location and share common experiences. This leads to the importance of recognising the variegated experiences of women, as this thesis sought to do regarding the variables discussed.

10.4 Contributions to Gender Policy Framework

This study has provided insights that might assist various stakeholders and entities to formulate policies around gender, land, and labour. The points that I outline below will hopefully assist different stakeholders to work on solutions to end the gender-gap existing in rural communities.

The study exposed the existence of numerous barriers that perpetuates the gap in accessing resources equally between men and women. For example, in the thesis, I discuss how ‘woman’ is not a homogenous category as women have variegated statuses and identities that lead to differentiated experiences of discrimination and inequality. For example, a woman’s marital status conditions her land access, access to agricultural equipment, agricultural inputs, etc. In order for gender equality to be realised, opportunities should be availed to women which recognise, simultaneously, the differential conditions of women so that no women are left behind.

The study highlights how men are, in most cases, the most active decision-makers within the household, farm-activities and the community. I emphasise the importance of women becoming active participants on all levels of society, on matters that affect them, especially in rural settings where patriarchy and cultural legacies dominant. Women’s participation allows them to narrate their stories in relation to experiences of land acquisition, access, and security, and this provides a platform for informing and shaping policy development. At the same time, men as active enablers of patriarchy and customary arrangements need to be included in educational campaigns that promote the rightful place of women, legally and culturally, in land issues. This entails a gendered policy approach to land and labour issues in rural Zimbabwe, rather than a women-centric approach.

Ministries such as the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development as well as the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, and Rural Resettlement should work together to formulate policies that provide for an equal distribution of agricultural inputs and assets across genders. Identifying nagging gender-gaps existing in relation to agricultural assets and inputs is a key stepping-stone in implementing programmes that can change women’s lives. Also, adding women’s voices in the formulation of policies, at every stage of the policy development process, will ensure that the policies resonate with, and address, the constraints and challenges faced by different categories of rural women in Zimbabwe.

10.5 Limitations and Contributions of the Study and Areas for Future Research

This study involved a comparative analysis of land access, division of labour and gender relations between a communal area and an A1 area in rural Zimbabwe. However, the study has potential limitations. The first one is sample limitation. The sample does not allow for any statistical generalisations to the rest of the Zimbabwean countryside, though the findings of the study likely

resonate with other areas. Certainly, comparing the studied areas with areas in other districts would allow for a richer and more solid comparative analysis of gender, land and labour. The timing of the study also led to certain challenges because the data were collected during the Covid-19 pandemic. This affected the number of participants that could be reached to take part in the study, and some potential interviewees refused to take part due to the fear of contracting the virus. Due to Covid-19, travelling for fieldwork purposes could only take place when the lockdown was lifted or reduced. Issues around land are very sensitive topics in Zimbabwe and some people were not very comfortable in discussing the topic which may have made them withhold certain information. Finally, a mixed methods approach which incorporated quantitative research methods may have providing additional insights not available through qualitative methods alone.

This study has made an important empirical contribution to understanding the lives of rural women in Zimbabwe because it offers an integrated examination and analysis of land and labour – typically, land and labour issues are treated separately in relation to gender questions in the Zimbabwean countryside. Further, empirically, the study pursued and enabled an understanding of gender, land and labour across two different rural sites in Zimbabwe, namely communal areas and redistributed farms. Again, in the Zimbabwean literature, the tendency is to discuss one area and not the other. In terms of theory, the thesis has shown that two different feminist theories (with different histories in terms of their formation), one from the global South and one from the global North, show significant consistencies and compatibilities. In this way, the thesis contributes to the current global conversations around theoretical convergences and divergences.

However, further research can be suggested and in fact is needed, as the limitations to this study suggest. There continue to be significant gaps in the Zimbabwean literature around comparative analyses of land, labour, and gender in rural Zimbabwe. For instance, further research could focus on other land tenure types in rural Zimbabwe, including commercial farm holdings – not only on the A2 farms under fast track, but on the remaining white farms and large estates. Such studies would serve to further unpack the category of ‘woman’ and demonstrate the variegated and diverse experiences of different categories of women, without ignoring the overall patriarchal structuring of Zimbabwean history and society.

I hope this thesis will inspire other students to engage in gender studies and the subordinate position of marginalised women in rural Zimbabwe and beyond.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Interview Schedule for Farmers in CA and A1 Farm

Demographic information

- What is your name?
- How old are you?
- What is your marital status?

Background Information

- What is your position in the household?
- How many people live in your household? (men, women, children)
- How are you related? (e.g. married, siblings, extended family or in-laws)
- Who is the breadwinner of your household? And WHY
- How many wives does your husband have? (If more than one: How do you feel about polygamy) If it is a man, how many wives do you have?
- When did you marry/divorce/become a widow?
- Who is the head of the household?

Land and gender

- Do you have access to land? If YES, how did you acquire the land?
- How did you access the land? When? What is the size of your land?
- Under whose name is the land registered?
- Do you have any documents that shows that you own the land? If so, what form of documents?
- Did you face any challenges in acquiring the land?
- Do you have any idle land? If so, why?
- Do you have any plans with the idle land? If so, what plans?
- What type of marriage are you in? (e.g., legal/statutory, customary, or religious)
- Where were you staying before settling here? How long were you staying there? How long have you been staying here?

- What were the major changes that you experienced in the lives of families? (For those in the FTLRP, probe to find out if families were separated during land acquisition. If so, why? Were changes permanent or temporary?)
- For those in the CAs, have you noticed any changes in gendered relations over the years?
- For those in the FTLRP, do you notice any differences in gendered relations since moving here?
- Are you satisfied with the present livelihood in the CA/FTLRA? Why?
- How do you feel about women's possession of land in their own right?
- Do you think it is necessary for women to equally own land? (Probe: That is, for the government to formally recognise women's land rights? Do you feel adequately covered by informal channels?)
- What do you think stops women from owning land? How do you think this can be addressed?
- Do you think the Government is doing enough to ensure that land is acquired equally across gender?

Agricultural Activities

- What types of crops do you farm in your fields and why those specific crops?
- What types of domestic animals do you own? What do you use them for?
- About how much of your day do you spend working you/your families land?
- Is this production purely for your family's consumption or are some of the crops sold at a market?
- Are women involved in decision making concerning crop production in the household?
- How do you deal with the crops harvested in your fields?
- Do you produce enough for the household consumption?
- Do you employ people to work in your fields? If so, where do they come from?
- Do you face any challenges when producing your crops? If YES, what sort of challenges? How do you overcome the challenges?

Non-agricultural Activities

- Do you have other activities that you do besides farming? If so, what motivated you to choose those activities? If so, what type of activities do you engage in?
- What time of the day/year do you engage in these activities?

- What role do household members play in carrying out these activities? (Probe on roles by father, sons, daughters, extended family or even neighbours)
- Where do you market your goods?
- Can you describe how you spend the income you get from marketing these goods?
- Do you have any source of funding for the activities? If so, where do the funds come from?
- Can you describe the kind of challenges that you face when engaging in these activities?
- Do you receive any help from donors and NGOs, if so, what kind of help and how often?
- How do you think the Government/NGOs etc. can help?
- What do you think is the significance of engaging in non-agricultural activities?

Domestic sphere

- Are you involved in decision making in the household?
- If NO, WHY are you not involved in decision-making?
- How do you feel about that?
- If YES, can you describe what kind of decisions you make and WHY?
- Do you wish to change anything in terms of decision-making in your household?
- Do you own any agricultural assets? If so, do you have total control of the assets? Do you own any domestic assets? If so, do you have total control of the assets?
- In terms of crops, who decides the type of crops that are grown in the fields and what to do with the crops after harvest?
- Do you face any challenges in trying to make decisions in the household? If so, what are the challenges and how do you overcome them?
- How is the income distributed in the household?
- Who runs the programs of the day in the household? WHY?
- What do you understand by domestic labour?
- What kind of chores do you do around the house?
- Who delegates the chores?
- Why do you engage in those specific chores?
- Do you receive any help with the chores? If so, who helps you?
- Do you wish to change anything in terms of how household chores are divided in your household?

Thank you for your time.

Appendix B: Focus Group Discussions Guide

- Please tell me a bit about this area. How did you get to settle here?
- How long have you been staying here?
- How is land obtained in this area?
- How is land important to you?
- What do you think is the importance of owning land?
- How much land do you have as individuals?
- Are there any differences in how men and women inherit or acquire land in this area? [If so, how?]
- Do you think women should own land in their own right? [Give reasons]
- What sort of crops do you grow in this area?
- What equipment do you use for your fields?
- What domestic animals do you own?
- Do conflicts arise regarding land in this area? If so, how are they solved?
- Do you agree with the way conflicts are resolved?
- How do you describe the relationship among people in this area?
- What kind of support do you have from the government in your farming?
- Is the support enough?
- What do you think the government can do differently?
- What off-farm projects do people do in this area?
- Are women involved in decision-making in this area? [If Yes or No –Why?]
- What challenges do women face in their day-to-day activities in this area?
- Can you describe the relationship that you have with the leaders in this area?
- Is there anything that leader do to promote equality between men and women in this area?
- How do you divide household chores within your households? Why that way?
- Do men in the household assist with the chores?
- For women, how do you feel about men assisting with household chores and men how do you feel about assisting with household chores?

Appendix C: Key Informants Interview Schedule

Demographic information

Name _____

Marital Status _____

Area of residence _____

Position _____

Land

- For how long have you been a leader in this area?
- Can you give a brief history of this place?
- How big are the land portions in this area?
- Who is responsible for allocating land in this area?
- Who is entitled to receive land in the communal areas/FTLRP?
- What are the main issues faced by villagers in terms of land?
- Who is responsible to resolve land conflicts in this area?
- Do farmers receive assistance with inputs? If so, from who? And what do they receive?

Gender

- Do women own land in this area?
- If so, how did they acquire the land?
- Are there any systems in place to assist women in terms of land ownership?
- Are there any women leaders in this area? If so, when were they elected into leadership? What positions do they hold?
- If not, why do you think is the reason?
- Do the traditional leadership structure (Chiefs, *VanaSabhuku* etc) support women's land ownership?
- Are there any projects in place to uplift women in this area?
- Do you think men and women should have equal rights to land? A yes b) no Give reasons for your choice.
- How do you think land issues should be handled going forward?

Labour

- In general, how do you think men and women distribute labour in the fields?
- Do you think men and women should share household duties equally in a household? (a) yes (b) no. Give reasons for your choice
- Are there programs available to encourage equal division of labour between men and women?

- What do you think is the biggest challenge in promoting equality between men and women?

Appendix D: Consent Form for Participants

Participant's Name.....Date.....

Principal Researcher: Perpetua Chinomona, Rhodes University, P. Bag 94, Grahamstown 6140

Informed Consent. (translated into Shona)

1. Title of study: A comparative analysis of land, labour and gender in a communal area and fast track farm in Zvimba Rural District, Zimbabwe

2. Purpose of the study: To examine the lives of rural women and men in Zimbabwe by pursuing a comparative analysis of land, labour and gender in a communal area and fast track farm in Zvimba Rural District, Zimbabwe.

3. Procedures: I will be asked to answer/respond to questions about the study. The interviewing process will be scheduled at my convenience and will be conducted in a place that I feel comfortable.

4. Risk and discomforts: There are no known medical risk or discomforts associated with this project, although I may experience fatigue and/ or stress when responding to these questions. I will be given as many breaks as I want during interviewing session.

5. Benefits: I understand that there are no known direct benefits to me for participating in this study. However, the results of the study may help researchers gain a better understanding of how gender-division of labour and land access impact on the lives of rural women in Zvimba District.

6. Participant's rights: I may withdraw from participating in the study any time.

7. Financial Compensation: I will not be reimbursed for my participation and any travel expenses.

8. Confidentiality: The researcher will record my responses to enable her to have valid and reliable data (transcripts). The transcripts will only be viewed by the researcher and her Supervisor. I understand that the results of this study will be kept confidential unless I ask that they be released. The results of this study may be published in professional journals or presented at professional conferences, but my record or identity will not be revealed unless required by law.

9. If I have any questions or concerns, I can contact Perpetua Chinomona on +27837473188

I understand my rights as research subject, and I voluntarily consent to participate in the study, I understand what the study is about and how and why it is being done. I will receive a signed copy of this consent form.

Participant's Signature Date

Signature of Researcher

Appendix E: Confidentiality Binding Form for Research Assistant

I, in my personal capacity as a research assistant collaborating with Perpetua Chinomona on research titled ‘A comparative analysis of land, labour and gender in a communal area and fast track farm in Zvimba Rural District, Zimbabwe’, acknowledge that I am aware of and familiar with the stipulations and contents of the conditions of ethical clearance specific to this study. I shall conform to and abide by these conditions.

Furthermore, I am aware of the sensitivity of the information collected and the need for strict controls to ensure confidentiality obligations associated with the study.

I understand the contents and conditions of the study and bind myself to the following:

1. I will be privileged to know the identity of participants in this study and will therefore under no circumstances reveal the identity of participants.
2. I am aware that information shared by participants is confidential and I will therefore not share it with anyone.

I declare that my role in this study is purely that of research assistance and nothing less or more.

I undertake to discuss any issues related to this study with the researcher Mrs Perpetua Chinomona. I also confirm that I have been briefed by the researcher on the protocols and expectations of my behaviour and involvement in the research as an assistant.

.....

Research Assistant Signature

Date:

.....

.....

Researcher Signature

Date:

.....

Appendix F: Clearance letter

Office of the Provincial Administrator
Ministry of Local Government, Public Works and National Housing
Mashonaland West
P.O Box 710
Chinhoyi

Tel: (067) 21 22361

Ms P. Chinomona

REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN ZVIMBA DISTRICT

Your request to conduct an academic research in Zvimba District is acknowledged.

Permission is hereby granted with strict instructions to limit your interaction to intended purpose of study.

Should you encounter any challenges during the course of your work, please consult the ward councillor and local leadership within the community in question.

We wish you success in your studies.

A. Tizora
Acting Provincial Development Coordinator