



# **Introduction: Agrarian Change, Food Security, Migration and Sustainable Development in Senegal and Zimbabwe**

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## **Background**

African countries face multiple developmental, economic, social and industrial transformation hurdles, especially in the era of sustainable development and sensitivity to environmental damage. As late-comer industrialisers, there is some catching up to do, but they need to navigate complex, international, legal and institutional agreements that early industrialisers did not face. Given the environmental concerns, it is not surprising that the development thrusts encouraged are in agriculture and not in heavy industry. At the same time, many African countries are grappling food security, rural–urban and cross-border migration, and social, economic with industrial transformation challenges (Mkandawire 2001; Buijij, Van Dijk and Foeken 2001; Diop 2008; Tsikata 2009; Patnaik, Moyo and Shivji 2011; Sall et al. 2011; Cheru and Modi 2013; Hall, Scoones and Tsikata 2015; Cross and Cliffe 2017; Bredeloup 2015; Jha, Chambati and Ossome 2021; Adesina 2021). This special issue brings together a broad range of papers exploring some of the myriad complexities faced by African countries. It focuses on Senegal and Zimbabwe, a western and a southern Africa country. The choice of countries was purposive as the editors had active networks in Zimbabwe and Senegal, and bringing together two

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countries with different economic histories and socioeconomic dynamics could help to highlight a greater diversity of key issues concerning agrarian change, food security, migration and sustainability.

In Senegal, post-1960, food security has been a central preoccupation of successive development strategies, all of which have made agriculture a priority sector. As a result, the country has experienced limited structural transformation and diversification has become an important policy to reduce its vulnerability to shocks and crises (including climate change, droughts and financial and food crises). Undernourishment in the country decreased sharply, from 24 per cent in 2001 to 11.4 per cent in 2011 to 7.5 per cent in 2019 (World Bank Development Indicators 2021), and monetary poverty decreased slightly, from 42.8 per cent in 2011 to 37.8 per cent in 2018/2019 (ANSD 2021). Despite these improvements, challenges remain: for example, food riots have occurred over the last decades, including the March 2021 events which resulted in fourteen casualties. Other issues the country seeks to address include labour migration, economic diversification, livelihood prospects and youth employment, increased social differentiation and the rural-urban dynamics of agrarian and climate change.

Zimbabwe, which has faced food insecurity challenges over the last two and half decades, provides an opportunity to examine, within and outside the context of radical fast-track land redistribution, issues of migration, food security and the emergence of the maize innovation ecosystem. The macroeconomic crisis that engulfed the country in the 2000s combined with climatic shocks deflated food production capacity even in rural sectors where land was not redistributed (e.g. communal areas and plantation estates) (Moyo 2011; Binswanger-Mkhize and Moyo 2012). Imports and aid, have featured prominently in the country because domestic production of staple cereals declined substantially from 2002, and household and national food insecurity as well as dependence on food welfare transfers, increased (Moyo et al. 2014). A recovery in food production was spurred by an expansive state input subsidy programme from around 2016, but it continues to be interrupted by adverse climatic conditions (Mazwi et al. 2019). Notwithstanding the cereal surpluses achieved in some years, substantial sections of the population still suffer food shortages. For instance, the 2020/21 season recorded the highest cereal surplus in the history of the country, yet up to a third of the population of 15.6 million people was estimated to be food insecure (WFP 2021). Moreover, the number of food-insecure people tend to fluctuate throughout the season, reaching as much as 56 per cent of the rural population in the lean season and dropping to about 21 per cent as harvests come in (ibid). Since one of the key staples,

maize, is predominantly produced by small-scale farmers for their own consumption, the scale and temporal variability and the spatial distribution of access to food in relation to nourishment and social vulnerability is not well understood (Moyo et al. 2014). In the context of heightened stresses on urban livelihoods, marked by deindustrialisation and limited employment opportunities, the implications of land access through the Fast Track Land Redistribution Programme (FTLRP) on rural-urban migration trends and tendencies are also yet to be adequately comprehended (Scoones & Murimbarimba 2021). These are some of the issues that the articles in this collection grapple with.

The articles in this issue were first presented at a symposium in June 2019 in Dakar, organised by the University of Edinburgh (Centre of African Studies – CAS; Science, Technology and Innovation Studies – STIS; and the Global Academy of Agriculture and Food Security – GAAFS), the Sam Moyo African Institute of Agrarian Studies (SMAIAS) in partnership with the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP), and the think tank l'Initiative Prospective Agricole et Rurale (IPAR). We hope that this collection will contribute to decentring knowledge production on Africa and amplifying the voices and context-sensitive perspectives of young African scholars who constitute the majority of authors of this special issue.

## **Articles on Senegal**

Six articles on Senegal analyse the intersections of food security, rural-urban and cross-border dynamics and migration for improved rural livelihoods, within the context of climate change and natural resource management. The first three articles focus on food security, agriculture and labour migration in northern Senegal and the implications of these factors for livelihoods. Cissokho investigates how food security and irrigated agriculture fare in the context of recession and migration in Tuabou, a Soninke locality in the region of Bakel, Senegal. He shows an increased dependence on remittances in the three decades after Senegalese independence as agriculture was gradually abandoned and emigration rose. However, post the 1990s, remittances decreased sharply because of the collapse of migration networks, which eventually led to food insecurity. The author reflects on contemporary transformations in receding and irrigated agriculture and the impact on livelihoods, using households as a unit of analysis.

Ba and Diop discuss food security in the context of climate change and transformations in agro-pastoral activities in the Matam Region (north-east Senegal), specifically the Ferlo and the Middle Valley of Senegal. They argue

that in the Matam Region climate change is a significant threat, illustrated by the drop in rainfall and higher temperatures at unusual times. They review the outcomes of desertification, loss of arable land and pasture, reduced water levels for irrigation, drinking and other productive activities, as well as household livelihood coping strategies.

Dieng examines labour migration in the horticulture sector of fresh fruits for export, which has demonstrated a steady growth in the last decade and is being considered as a potential alternative industrialisation pathway to manufacturing. In this context, Dieng uses an intersectional feminist political economy lens to show that care chains are an invisibilised dimension of the circulation of labour and rural-urban dynamics, despite being central to food security and the social reproduction of migrant workers in horticulture. As a result, care chains in the context of labour migration illustrate increased social differentiation and pose new/changing challenges for policy.

Diédhiou, Cissé and Dabo present a case study from the south of Senegal, Ziguinchor, where a land rush in urban areas created an unprecedented need for employment, mobility, housing and food. They focus on food security in a city dominated by urban projects, and discuss the mutation(s) of agricultural spaces especially within the context of precarious land tenure for farming families, raising questions about the place of agriculture in land development but also its capability for short food chains – local food production for local populations.

Similar to Ba and Diop ; Mané, Diombaty, Cissé, Ba (Ibrahima), Ba (Rawane) and Diallo consider food security in the context of climate change, using a cashew nut case study in the Fogy-Kombo in Casamance, southern Senegal. They argue that cross-border mobility has been used as a coping strategy by rural populations to improve their livelihoods in this highly ethnically diverse and unstable region.

The last article on Senegal, by Ka, Diakhaté and Ba, focuses on the sustainability of natural resources, specifically fisheries in the context of oil and gas exploitation at three Senegalese offshore stations: Sangomar, Cayar and Saint-Louis. The authors analyse the socioeconomic consequences of the decline of the fisheries systems, such as the layoff of fishers and the migration of young fishermen to Europe. They highlight the need to identify coping mechanisms and resilience strategies that encourage economic diversification.

## **Articles on Zimbabwe**

Six articles focus on Zimbabwe. Banda adopts a periodisation approach to analyse the transition of food security in Zimbabwe since the colonial period. Using an innovation ecosystem lens, he examines the maize sub-

sector, focusing on technological capabilities in breeding and extension services, financial institution architecture and state support for agriculture, and bridging institutions that supported technology adoption and innovation diffusion.

Beyond the state's role in evolving national food security trends, Mafongoya demonstrates how women small-scale farmers in a dry communal area exercise their agency by drawing upon various types of social capital, including bonding, bridging and linking, to advance food security at the household level. Using four group projects as case studies, namely Food For Assets (FFA), community gardening, Boer goat production and the Fushai credit scheme, he finds that food access, household income and availability of other social needs were bolstered when all three elements of social capital were present.

Turning to the role of agency, Tawodzera's contribution focuses on a different geographical zone to examine how poor people in a peri-urban district on the periphery of the capital city, Harare, cope with food insecurity challenges amidst rising poverty levels. He delineates four major strategies adopted by households to cope with food insecurity: reliance on urban farming; dependence on rural food and monetary remittances; utilisation of employment opportunities in the surrounding farming lands; and participation in, as well as dependence on, informality.

Tekwa assesses the role of improved access to land for previously land-poor small-scale farmers from the communal areas, as a result of the redistributive land reforms, in addressing what he terms the 'triple challenge' of household food insecurity, unemployment and migration. The study, anchored on a transformative social policy approach, utilises primary data to contrast the food security status of land beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries. It reveals that access to more land not only increased household food security and rural incomes, but also opened up new employment opportunities for both women and men. This was found to act as a restraint to both rural-to-urban and international migration.

Chambati furthers the debate on the social and economic outcomes of Zimbabwe's land reforms by examining, from a Marxist political economy perspective, the consequences of the peasantry's enhanced access to land on the dynamics of rural labour migration. Using empirical evidence from two rural districts, Goromonzi and Kwekwe, he demonstrates that while there were many peasant beneficiaries, land shortages were not completely eradicated and the new farm labour markets depended on the super-exploitation of landless migrants. His findings contradict conventional wisdom that migration is a deliberate diversification strategy of household

labour to enhance livelihoods. Rather, resistance to proletarianisation undergirded the struggles of farm labourers as they largely sought autonomous land-based social reproduction outside the wage economy.

Vhumbunu examines the possibility, rationality, utility, practicality and mechanics of designing and implementing staple crops processing zones (SCPZs) in Zimbabwe. He argues that agro-processing nodes possessing high agricultural potential need to be identified so that food productivity, processing and marketing can be enhanced. The study uses the agricultural development theory as well as the food security-rural-urban-migration nexus as the conceptual framework to argue that despite multiple threats to food security, the concept of SCPZs has potential as an intervention mechanism.

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