



The Food Security, Employment and Migration Nexus in Zimbabwe Post-Land Reform: A Gender Perspective

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Abstract

Serious inequalities in asset distribution in many developing countries consistently remain a key driver of household food insecurity, high unemployment, poverty and, ultimately, rural outmigration. Yet, the employment-retaining capacity of agriculture and its counter to rural-urban, including international, migration has been proven in many contexts. The 2000 land reform programme in Zimbabwe saw between 12 and 18 per cent of women gaining access to land in their own right. Using a transformative social policy approach, the article explores the extent to which land reform as a social policy instrument enhanced household food security and rural incomes and opened new employment opportunities for beneficiaries relative to non-land reform beneficiary households. Highlighting the migration-social-policy nexus, I argue for land reform as a restraint to not only rural-urban but also international migration. Data gathered through a mixed methods ethnographic approach, combining in-depth interviews and surveys, and analysed using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, indicates that access to agricultural land and water can not only reduce but reverse rural to urban, including economically driven, international, migration. This suggests that continuous agrarianisation, in the Zimbabwean context, remains one plausible pathway to tackle the triple challenges of household food insecurity, unemployment and rural outmigration.

Keywords: household food security, poverty, unemployment, migration, land reform, Zimbabwe

Résumé

Dans de nombreux pays en développement, les graves inégalités dans la répartition des actifs demeurent un important facteur d'insécurité alimentaire des ménages, du chômage élevé, de la pauvreté et, en fin de compte, de l'exode rural. Pourtant, la capacité de maintien d'emplois dans l'agriculture et son impact

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dans la lutte contre la migration campagnes-villes, y compris internationale, ont fait leurs preuves dans de nombreux contextes. Au Zimbabwe, le programme de réforme agraire de 2000 a permis à entre 12 et 18 pour cent des femmes d'accéder de plein droit à la terre. En utilisant une approche de politique sociale transformatrice, le document revisite la réforme agraire en tant qu'instrument de politique sociale dans l'amélioration de la sécurité alimentaire des ménages et des revenus des ruraux, et a ouvert de nouvelles opportunités d'emploi pour ses bénéficiaires en comparaison de ménages non bénéficiaires de la réforme agraire. Je souligne le lien entre migration et politique sociale, et plaide pour la réforme agraire en tant que ralentisseur non seulement à la migration campagnes-villes, mais aussi internationale. Les données recueillies grâce à une approche ethnographique à méthodes mixtes, mêlant entretiens approfondis et enquêtes, et analysée à l'aide d'une combinaison de méthodes qualitatives et quantitatives indiquent que l'accès aux terres agricoles et à l'eau peut, non seulement réduire, mais également inverser les flux, y compris de la migration internationale pour des raisons économiques. Cela suggère que l'agrarisation continue, dans le contexte zimbabwéen, demeure une voie plausible pour relever le triple défi de l'insécurité alimentaire des ménages, du chômage et de l'émigration.

Mots-clés : sécurité alimentaire des ménages, pauvreté, chômage, migration, réforme agraire, Zimbabwe

Introduction

Whilst vast populations in the developing world continue to rely on agriculture as their main source of livelihood (Mkandawire 2014: 26), agriculture increasingly provides insufficient incomes and employment opportunities, which stimulates a massive exodus from the countryside. The desire to escape poverty, chronic food insecurity, lack of employment opportunities, as well as ethnic, gender and other forms of discrimination and marginalisation, have been identified as the key drivers of rural to urban, including international, migration in much of the developing world (Sadiddin et al. 2019: 522; Ataç and Rosenberger 2019: 6). In a technical report that links migration, agriculture, food security and rural development, the FAO, IFAD, IOM and WFP concluded that rural areas are a major donor of a large share of international migrants (FAO et al. 2018: 1). In much of the settler colonies, particularly in southern Africa, these processes are, however, not new. Colonial land dispossession of indigenous Zimbabweans was consciously crafted 'to delink the black majority from their source of wellbeing and prosperity (prime land) (Tom 2020: 111). In Chiredzi District, from the 1930s these experiences included the forced removals of indigenous Shangaan people to make way for the establishment of the Gonarezhou National Park (Tavuyanago 2017). In the district, the

triple tragedy of 'arid soils, sparse rainfall and overcrowding in the areas designated for indigenous settlement eliminated guarantee for producing adequate food among the ever-growing African population' (Utete 2003; Tavuyanago 2017: 63; Manamere 2014). Consequently, indigenous farmers, including the Shangaan people, abandoned farming and opted to migrate to work in mines, factories and commercial farms (large-scale commercial sugar plantations in the case of Chiredzi), for wages (Gundani 2003, cited in Tom 2020: 112; Manamere 2014). Vulnerability to food shortages, malnutrition, disease and death, which were the outcomes of alienation from prime land, represented deliberately induced forms of forced migration of indigenous populations (Mukanya 1991, cited in Tom 2020: 111). Thus, in Chiredzi every communal rural household has reported having a migrant worker in South Africa (Manamere 2014).

With the turn of the millennium such processes remained key drivers of rural to urban migration in post-independent Zimbabwe, as a result of limited rural resettlement coupled with dwindling household arable land sizes due to the intergenerational subdivision of plots (Moyo and Makumbe 2000). It is under such circumstances that the so-called inevitable processes of deagrarianisation and depeasantisation need to be interrogated.

Zimbabwe recently implemented an extensive land reform exercise which some view through the prism of the global counter-processes of reagrarianisation and repeasantisation as opposed to hegemonic deagrarianisation and depeasantisation (Hebinck 2018: 6; Scoones et al. 2012: 2). Deagrarianisation is broadly referred to, in the scholarly literature, as a process that produces social, material and biophysical conditions uncondusive to the reproduction of agricultural land-based livelihoods (Bryceson 2002a, 2002b). Depeasantisation manifests where farming increasingly becomes organised by corporate entities, which entails the disappearance of the peasantry whose livelihoods are tied to the land (Hebinck 2018: 2).

In many contexts, the processes of deagrarianisation and depeasantisation have been associated with the creation of food insecurity and hunger, which are then used to denigrate family farming in favour of corporate farming. Migration that emanates from the processes of depeasantisation has also been associated with a rise in urban hopelessness and a jobless non-agrarian future (Stone 2000: 575; Hebinck 2018: 4). Land dispossession and the abandonment of farming as a source of livelihood are catastrophic for cities, which find it difficult to absorb great influxes of people due to the displacement of the agricultural peasantry (Stone 2000: 575).

The role of state lending in these processes cannot be ignored, particularly its retreat from the reorientation of agricultural policies, from the provision

of state-led agricultural support for family farms in favour of the market (Rusike 2000, cited in Poulton et al. 2002: 51). The neoliberalisation of national economies and the associated risks since the 1990s negatively affected many family farm operations and peasant land-based livelihoods (Hebinck 2018: 3; see also Tekwa and Tekwa 2022). In the Zimbabwean context, this was accompanied by the dismantling of parastatal agricultural marketing boards, which induced volatility and instability within the domestic agricultural market (Sibanda and Makwata 2017: 9; Zhou 2000: 198; Tekwa and Tekwa 2022). In addition, the repositioning of the state narrowed the political arenas in which family farmers could seek state protection for their rights to land (Borras and Franco 2010). This has an attendant effect of increasing tenure insecurity, household food insecurity and pressure on agricultural employment and incomes, further spurring the rural exodus. These processes provide a more plausible explanation for the observed dynamics of rural livelihoods and migration than those allowed by the inexorable deagrarianisation and depeasantisation theses (Sadiddin et al. 2019; Knoll et al. 2017; FAO et al. 2018; Laborde et al. 2017; Bryceson 2002a, 2002b). The confluence of de-/reagrarianisation and de-/repeasantisation offers critical scope for the understanding and conceptualisation of the food security, employment and migration nexus, particularly in the context of land reforms.

This article explores the gendered implications of Zimbabwe's land reform on migration in one of the country's districts, using detailed quantitative and qualitative empirical information that emanates from the author's doctoral fieldwork conducted in 2016. Specifically, conceptualising land reform as a social policy instrument within the Transformative Social Policy (TSP) framework, the following research questions inform the article.

1. What are the implications of the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) on household cultivable land size and household food and nutrition security for beneficiary versus non-beneficiary households in Chiredzi District, Zimbabwe?
2. What has been the effect of the enhanced access to land on own production and household employment creation for beneficiary relative to non-beneficiary households in Chiredzi District, Zimbabwe?
3. To what extent did access to land enhance household income security between land reform beneficiary households relative to non-land reform beneficiaries in Chiredzi District, Zimbabwe?
4. What policy implications on the gender dimensions of internal and international migration can be drawn from the socioeconomic outcomes of the FTLRP for beneficiary relative to non-land reform beneficiary households in Chiredzi District?

The hypothesis that informs the article sought to empirically test the efficacy of in-kind land transfers to rural households in curtailing or even reversing gendered outward rural migration following enhanced food security, on farm employment and rural household incomes. The rest of the article is structured as follows. The next section presents the conceptual framework, the Transformative Social Policy (TSP), to highlight the social policy-land reform-migration nexus that frames the study. The methods used to collect and analyse the data presented in the article are described, followed by a discussion of the results. The article concludes by highlighting the policy implications of land and agrarian reforms on gendered rural-urban and international migration.

Conceptual Framework: The Transformative Social Policy (TSP)

The transformative approach to social policy, which originates from the UNRISD flagship research programme, Social Policy in a Development Context (2000-2006), defines social policy as ‘collective public efforts aimed at affecting and protecting the wellbeing of people in a given territory’ (Adesina 2009: 38). Building on this, Thandika Mkandawire defined it as ‘collective interventions in the economy to influence access to and the incidence of adequate and secure livelihood and income’ (Mkandawire 2004: 1). As illustrated in Figure 1, the TSP approach offers a diversity of social policy instruments which are important and relevant to a ‘developmental context’ in the pursuit of human welfare and wellbeing. The diagram shows that land and agrarian reform is one redistributive social policy instrument within the TSP framework to enhance the productive capacities of individuals, households and communities; at the same time, it has a social protection function in protecting individuals, households and communities from socioeconomic vulnerabilities, including income, food and nutrition insecurity.

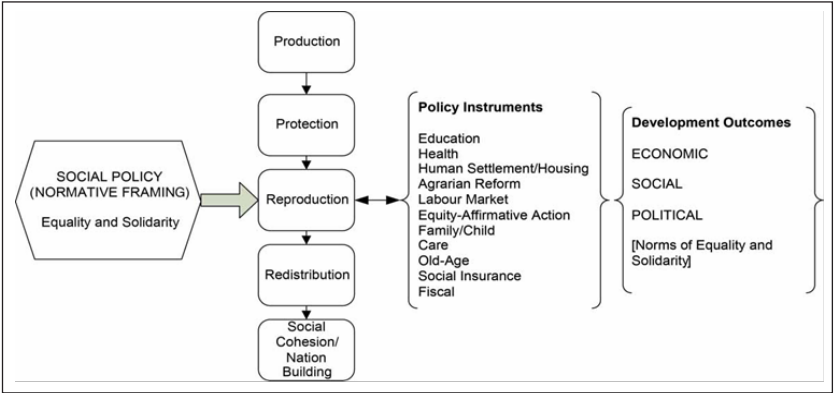


Figure 1: Transformative social policy – norms, functions, instruments and outcomes
Source: Adesina (2011: 463)

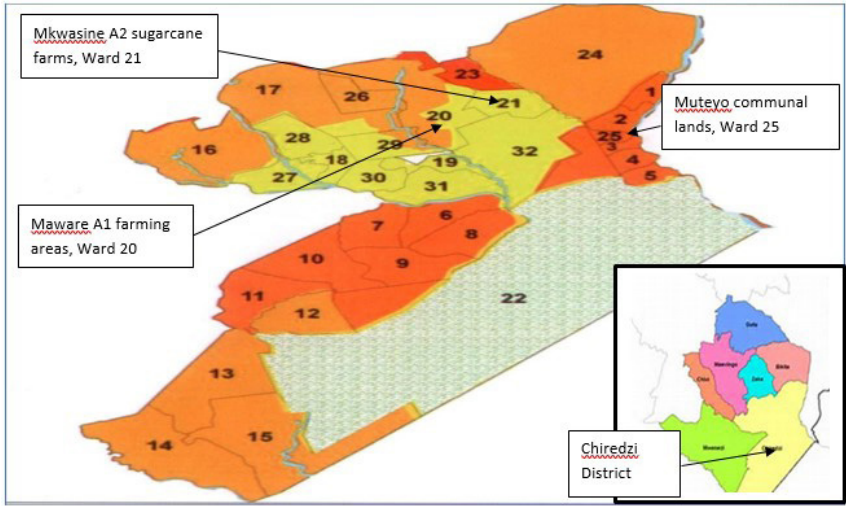
With insecurity of income, food and nutrition identified as the key drivers of rural-urban and international migration in much of sub-Saharan Africa (Sadiddin et al. 2019: 516; FAO et al. 2018; Knoll et al. 2017: 9). Social policy interventions that influence the household asset base, such as the in-kind transfer of productive resources through land and water reforms, have the potential to reduce household vulnerability levels, including food insecurity, and reduce individual and household distress-induced domestic and international migration (Knoll et al. 2017: 9; Laborde et al. 2017: 5). On the gender front, TSP emphasises the transformation of social relations and institutions, including those related to gender (Adesina 2011:466, 2009: 38; Mkandawire 2007). Women's gender disadvantage in access to productive resources (land, agricultural capital, credit and markets) is fuelling female migration in Africa (FAO et al. 2018: 25; Knoll et al. 2017: 13). Available statistics indicate that women constitute up to 48 per cent of migrants in sub-Saharan Africa, with 101 female migrants for every 100 male migrants for those aged twenty years (Knoll et al. 2017: 13; FAO et al. 2018: 25). This indicates that the rate of migration among females has been growing faster relative to that of their male counterparts (Knoll et al. 2017: 13). By implication, gender remains an important dimension in addressing agriculture and rural development in the context of internal and international migration dynamics due to gender discrimination in the access to productive resources (Knoll et al. 2017: 14).

Methods and Analysis

This article is based on a study conducted in 2016 in Chiredzi, one of the fifty-nine districts in Zimbabwe located in Masvingo Province, 433 kilometres southeast of the capital, Harare (see Map 1). In a context of land reform, the district's long history of labour migration characterised by labour migrants crossing the border to South Africa for generations (Manamere 2014) provides an interesting case for examining the extent to which land reform can reverse some of these long-established migration patterns.

Data from the three study sites was gathered through an ethnographic field study, using a mixed-methods approach that combined structured questionnaires, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and key informant interviews. The quantitative sample comprised 105 survey participants drawn from three study sites. Two study sites, Maware A1 and Mkwasine A2 farming areas, represented resettlement (treatment areas), and the Muteyo communal area acted as a control, providing a reliable counterfactual. To give weight to the perspectives of women, two-thirds

of the qualitative study involved in-depth interviews with female land beneficiaries. The data analysis combined qualitative and quantitative methods, using Atlas.ti and SPSS, respectively.



Map 1: Chiredzi District (map of Zimbabwe insert) and the study sites
Source: Chiredzi District Agriculture and Extension Office

Discussion of Results

This section begins by profiling household demographic characteristics from the three study sites, to illustrate the migration characteristics of the different households that were surveyed during the research as preliminary evidence to buttress the arguments presented in the article. The survey instrument used in the preliminary quantitative study sought to investigate not only the sex and age of household members but also their residency, whether they stayed in the rural area (on-farm residency) or outside (off-farm residency). For the last, the survey instrument sought to specify the nature of the off-farm residency, that is, outside the rural area but in another rural area, in an urban area or, more interestingly for this research, in the diaspora. The diaspora was conceptualised in the study to mean any household member who had migrated outside Zimbabwe, whether within the southern African region or abroad (though the destination country was not requested). It is on the basis of the data collected from these questions on the survey instrument that the tables presented in the article were constructed.

Table 1 presents household demographic characteristics across four important migration age groups: less migratory – under 15 years; the more migratory, economically active age group of sixteen to forty-five years; the relatively migratory economic age group of forty-six to fifty-nine years; and the less migratory group above sixty years of age. Table 2 presents households’ contribution to migration, depicting with or without off-farm residency. The idea was to capture household migration characteristics across the three study sites benchmarked against the socioeconomic outcomes of the Zimbabwean Fast Track Land Reform Programme.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the Study Population Across the Three Study Sites

Study Sites	Below 15 Years	16–45 Years	46–59 Years	60+ Years	Total
Mkwesine A2 areas	35.0	51.6	12.1	1.3	100
Maware A1 areas	48.2	40.6	9.2	2.0	100
Muteyo communal areas	50.6	35.1	7.9	6.4	100

Source: Fieldwork 2016

As presented in Table 1, the communal area that acted as the control group experienced greater attrition of its economic active age group compared to the other age groups presented in the table, if benchmarked against the two resettlement sites in the study. Whilst the A2 medium-size farming areas had the highest percentage of the more migratory economically active sixteen to forty-five age group, at 51.5 per cent, the control group had the smallest percentage, at 35.1 per cent; in the A1 small-scale resettlement areas this age group constituted 40.6 per cent of its population. The lower percentage of the more migratory economically active age group in the control group is offset by the highest rate of the less migratory group aged under 15 years, at 50.6 per cent relative to 35.0 per cent in the A2 medium-size resettlement areas and 48.2 per cent in the A1 small-scale farming areas.

The above observation is further buttressed by a relative high percentage of the less migratory above-sixty age group in the control group, at 6.4 per cent of the total population, relative to 1.3 per cent and 2 per cent in the A2 medium-scale farming areas and A1 small-scale farming areas, respectively.

The demographic structures represented by the data in Table 1 and Table 2 reveal that the A2 farming areas and the control group had an almost equal percentage of off-farm residency – 47 per cent and 48 per cent – combining both local and diaspora off-farm residency. This seemingly

Table 2: Households With and Without Off-Farm Residents: Diaspora and Local

Mkwasine A2 Areas								Maware A1 Areas							
With				Without		Total		With				Without Diaspora		Total	
Diaspora		No Diaspora						Diaspora		No Diaspora					
No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1	3.0	14	44	17	53	32	100	0	0	1	3	32	97	33	100

Muteyo Communal Areas							
With				Without		Total	
Diaspora		No Diaspora					
No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
16	40	3	8	21	52	40	100

Source: Fieldwork 2016

equal contribution to off-farm residency, which implies rural outmigration, requires further qualification. The A2 sugarcane plots in Chiredzi District that measured an average of 20 hectares in area, created from the subdivision of former large-scale estate and foreign-owned outgrower sugarcane plots, did not have provision for on-site accommodation, unlike the self-contained sugarcane plots where the farmer residency is within the plot. Land reform sugarcane plot beneficiaries were allocated former estate managers’ accommodation, which was not enough to accommodate all the incoming indigenous sugarcane growers. A good number were housed in former farm labourer compounds, which meant that they lived off-site but in proximity to their fields. Whilst some sugarcane plot beneficiaries moved in with their families, others had household members staying in Chiredzi town, but not as migrants. Thus, much of the off-farm residency – that is, 44 per cent in the A2 farming households – was local (Chiredzi town) relative to only 3 per cent diaspora. Contrastingly, in the control group, the diaspora constituted 40 per cent of the households with off-farm residency relative to 8 per cent of local off-farm residency. The above statistics support observations by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) (2018) that

a large share of international migrants originate from rural areas (2018: 1). The A1 farming areas had the least number of households with off-farm residency, with 97 per cent on-farm residency, indicating that no household members had migrated elsewhere in the majority of the surveyed households. Subsequent sections seek to qualify the observed household demographic migration characteristics across the three study sites.

Gender-Household-Land Size-Migration Nexus

In Chiredzi District, as in other resettlement districts, one of the redistributive outcomes of the latest land reform programme in Zimbabwe was the transfer of productive agricultural land to ordinary people, including women, which was dubbed 'the return to the land' (Moyo et al. 2009; Scoones et al. 2010; Moyo 2011). Illustrating the redistributive function of social policies framed within the TSP framework, Table 3 shows the net transfer of land to households engendered by the FTLRP in Zimbabwe in the 2000s. It depicts that per capita cultivable land was highest in resettled areas, at 3.36 hectares and 2.28 hectares for A2 and A1 areas, respectively. This is in contrast to 0.4 hectares in the control group, where the minimum was as low as 0.08 hectares. Such disparities in landholdings between resettled and communal households help in explaining the food-nutrition-migration nexus, where land shortage leads to household food and nutrition insecurity resulting in outmigration from the communal areas of Zimbabwe (Potts 2010; Knoll et al. 2017: 3; Lowder, Skiet and Raney 2016; Choithani 2016). Prior to the FTLRP, symptoms of land hunger in the communal areas included squatting and encroachment onto underused commercial land (Moyo et al. 2009; Moyo 2011).

The smaller land sizes in the control group represent a colonial legacy in which the continual subdivisions of land within the former 'native reserves' (now the 'communal areas', a consequence of population expansion) had given rise to livelihood viability problems (Moyo and Makumbe 2000; Amanor-Wilks 2009: 19). A gendered analysis of Table 3 reveals a statistically significant correlation with a Chi-square exact test of significance *p*-value of .01 between gender of household head and land size within the control group area, which suggests the effect of cultural norms in access to land. The concomitant effect on the demographic composition of the rural to urban migration (Table 1) would comprise males and females with a higher rate for the latter, as suggested in recent literature (Knoll et al. 2017: 13; FAO et al. 2018: 25).

Table 3: FTLLRP Land Transfers and Household Cultivable Land Size (ha) by Gender

land Size (Ha)	Mkwesine A2 Areas						Maware A1 Areas						Mureyo Communal Areas					
	Male		Female		Total		Male		Female		Total		Male		Female		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
3 ha and below	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	14	35.0	17	42.5	31	77.5
4–5 ha	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	10.0	5	12.5	9	22.5
6–10 ha	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	7	21.2	11	33.3	18	54.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
11–15 ha	2	6.3	1	3.1	3	9.4	5	15.2	4	12.1	9	27.	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
16–20 ha	5	15.6	9	28.1	14	43.8	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
21–25 ha	2	6.3	6	18.8	8	25.0	0	0.0	1	3.0	1	3.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Above 25 ha	3	9.4	4	12.5	7	21.9	3	9.1	2	6.1	5	15.2	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Chi-square P-value					1.727						1.943						.001	
Per capita land ave.					3.36						2.28						0.40	
Per capita max (ha)					8.60						8.33						1.0	
Per capita minimum					1.38						0.38						0.08	

The hypothesis that links gender of household head to the size of cultivable land they control was rejected in both the resettlement sites where the Chi-square test of significance recorded a p-value above 0.05, suggesting no correlation between gender of household head and available land size. Thus, the effect of access to land on household food and nutrition security is likely to equalise irrespective of the gender of the household head, equally dampening the desire to migrate across gender (Ba et al. 2017: 32; Knoll et al. 2017: 13; FAO et al. 2018: 25). Relatedly, FAO et al. (2018) found gender inequalities in access to land to be one factor that pushed younger women into cities in search for better economic opportunities (2018: 25). This points to land shortage as one key driver of rural to urban migration, including international migration, in Zimbabwe, as shown in Table 1.

The household migration characteristics presented above suggest that, while anecdotal evidence indicates only 10 per cent of households in Zimbabwe to have benefited in the FTLRP, there is sufficient evidence to show that enhanced access to land has the potential to curtail or reverse rural outmigration, including the diaspora, altogether. Evidence presented in the article affirms that mainly rural households with poor endowments are the ones most likely to send younger members out for work elsewhere (FAO et al. 2018: 20). In the Zimbabwean case, Potts (2010) observed that as early as the 1990s an increasing proportion of urbanites (one beneficiary category of the FTLRP) were planning or anticipating return moves to rural areas in 1994, and an even larger proportion in 2001. Most urban migrants had positive attitudes towards the land reform programme and judged that the beneficiaries had generally gained materially. In addition, the perceptions of the security and benefits of urban-based livelihoods had deteriorated very sharply compared to the 1980s – a rational response to national economic trends (Potts 2010). As such, Zimbabwe was already tilted towards a return to the countryside, resulting in reagrarianisation and repeasantisation and a potential reversal in the rural to urban migration characteristic of the 1990s (Scoones et al. 2012; Hebinck 2018).

Land Access, Own Account Production/Employment and Migration

The employment-retaining capacity of agriculture exemplified by the South-East Asian experience provides important insights into the land-employment-migration nexus in Africa (Mkandawire 2014). Whilst one of the key drivers of migration is the lack of employment opportunities in the rural economy, the empirical evidence from this study points to the potential of family farms to provide employment for a much larger number of people per unit of farmland than large-scale capital-intensive farming

Table 4: Use of Permanent, Casual and Family Labour by Gender of Plot Owner

	Hire Permanent Labour				Hire Casual Labour				Use of Family Labour					
	Yes		No		Yes		No		Yes		No			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%		
Mkwesine A2 farms	Male	12	37.5	0	0.0		7	21.9	5	15.6	1	21.9	5	15.6
	Female	20	62.5	0	0.0		17	53.1	3	9.4	9	28.1	11	34.4
	Total	32	100	0	0.0		24	75.0	8	25.0	16	50.0	16	50.0
	Male	4	12.1	11	33.3		12	36.4	3	9.1	15	45.5	0	0.0
Maware A1 farms	Female	3	9.1	15	45.5		18	54.5	0	0.0	18	55.5	0	0.0
	Total	7	21.2	26	78.8		30	90.9	3	9.1	33	100	0	0.0
	Male	2	5.0	15	37.5		2	5.0	16	40.0	18	45.0	0	0.0
Muteyo Communal (control)	Female	0	0.0	22	55.0		0	0.0	22	55.0	22	55.0	0	0.0
	Total	2	5.0	37	92.5		2	5.0	38	95.0	40	100	0	0.0

Source: Field notes (2016)

units do, due to their labour intensity (Milone and Ventura 2010; Lowder et al. 2016; Van der Ploeg 2017). Illustrating the extent to which social policies framed within the TSP approach seek to enhance the productive capacities of individuals, households and communities, Table 4 presents the use of permanent, casual and family labour in the three study sites that were investigated. The table reveals the considerable scope for expansion of employment in agriculture and the rural economy in the aftermath of land and water sector reforms, with the potential to retain the economically active age groups and curtail rural outmigration (Laborde et al. 2017).

A closer analysis of Table 4 reveals a higher use of farm labour in resettlement areas as opposed to the communal (control) areas, suggesting that the employment opportunity potential is greater in the former than in the latter. In the A2 areas (medium-scale farms), all households hire permanent farm labour, with above 50 per cent of the households making use of both casual and family labour on their farms. Whilst the A1 farming areas (small-scale farms) reported a low percentage use of hired permanent labour, close to 80 per cent of the households used casual labour and all households made use of family labour on the farms. The lack of potential employment opportunities in the control area can be deduced from the absence of the use of permanent and casual labour, with over 90 per cent of the households making use of neither of the two. As suggested by Table 1 and 2, such a lack of employment opportunities in the control group, which represents much of the communal areas in Zimbabwe, has the potential to stimulate the desire to migrate out of the rural areas in search of economic opportunities elsewhere, internally or internationally (Knoll et al. 2017: 3; FAO et al. 2018: 20).

Reinforcing the importance of land as a source of employment, particularly in the rural areas, all households in the control group indicated land as their source of employment. Paradoxically, this is against a backdrop of increasing land shortages and sub-economical average household cultivable land size of less than 0.4 hectares, which spurred rural outmigration to the urban areas in the 1990s and to the diaspora from the 2000s. The labour absorption and employment-retaining capacity of rural economies in the context of agriculture and land reforms is presented in Table 5, showing the size and forms of employment across the three study sites in Chiredzi. The table illustrates that access to land not only provided employment in the form of hired labour but also absorbed family labour of land reform beneficiaries working on their newly government-created family farms.

Table 5: Utilisation of hired and family labour in Chiredzi resettled and communal areas

Labour Utilisation	Mkwesine A2 Areas			Maware A1 Areas			Muteyo Communal		
	Hired	Family	Total	Hired	Family	Total	Hired	Family	Total
Mean/Average	3.69	2.58	6.27	2.14	5.6	7.7	1.5	4.4	5.9
Maximum	10	7	-	6	23	-	1	1	-
Minimum	1	0	-	1	2	-	2	10	-

Source: Fieldwork (2016)

Whilst the A2 sugarcane plots indicated the highest amount of hired labour with an average of 3.69 persons, it is the smaller-scale A1 farms that provided the highest absorption of family labour, with a combined labour absorption of 7.7 persons. Such a labour-retaining capacity of access to land is particularly important in the face of high youth unemployment and migration, currently emerging as an important and contemporary agrarian question (Hebinck 2018: 3; Chipenda and Tom 2019). The labour-absorption capacity of land, despite the economic challenges land reform beneficiaries are facing, is critical in enabling people to remain in their place or country of birth and to migrate out of choice rather than as the only option to escape poverty and economic hardship (Laborde et al. 2017: 5).

It has been observed that youths in Africa are facing the highest under- and unemployment rates and many move away from rural areas because of the unattractiveness of low-productivity agriculture (FAO et al. 2018: 24). With around 20 million people entering the labour market every year (of which 12 million are in rural areas), the challenge for policy-makers in sub-Saharan Africa in the next decades is to generate enough employment to absorb its booming labour force (AfDB 2016: 1). Therefore, policies to tackle the challenges associated with migration must consider its agricultural, rural and gender dimensions. This suggests that agriculture and rural development must be an integral part of any policy response to large-scale migratory movements. In Senegal, according to recent surveys in the Groundnut Basin, the Delta and the Niayes regions, 51 per cent of young people who had migrated to an urban area did not possess any productive resource (land or livestock) in the locality of origin (Ba, Bourgoin and Diop 2017: 32). This situation was even more pronounced for women, at 76 per cent, reflecting not only the gendered pattern of migration but also asset ownership in Africa (Ba et al. 2017: 32; Knoll et al. 2017: 13; FAO et al. 2018: 25). Such statistics highlight the importance of the land-gender-employment-migration nexus on the African continent.

In the 2000s, engendered by the economic crisis, Zimbabwe witnessed unprecedented outmigration to neighbouring countries, particularly South Africa, which is currently estimated to be hosting over three million migrant Zimbabweans (Sisulu, Moyo and Tshuma 2007, cited in De Jager and Musuva 2016: 16). A sizeable number migrated overseas, mainly to the UK. Anecdotally, some have directly linked these patterns of migration to the land reforms of the 2000s. Evidence presented in this paper, though at a micro level, suggests that such assertions require further critical investigation; the nexus between land reform in Zimbabwe, particularly the FTLRP, and outmigration is yet to be fully interrogated. Knoll et al. (2017) hint at the impact of state-sponsored resettlement programmes on migration (Knoll et al. 2017: 12). Below are some perceptions and field experiences gathered during the researcher's ethnographic in-depth interviews with female land beneficiaries in Chiredzi District, with regard to access to land and migration, particularly to South Africa:

One of my sons who had gone to South Africa to look for work had actually returned and I am working with him on the farm. He even testifies that it is better to work here than being in South Africa. At times you hear him saying how can I work on a white man's farm in South Africa whilst my father has a farm back home? (A1 female land beneficiary, 11 April 2016)

The programme has created employment opportunities for many people. I no longer need to go to town or to South Africa to go and look for work. Right now, people are picking chilli and may get USD 30 at the end of the month to use in the household. (Married A1 female land beneficiary, 15 April 2016)

Many people come here looking for work to maintain their households. Even some young people who used to go to South Africa are realising that they are wasting time. Some who had gone to South Africa would come back and find people here owning televisions, cars and so on. (Female A1 land beneficiary, 21 April 2016)

I had employed relatives, but I found it difficult working with them, I then employed an irrigator including one of our sons. This son was in South Africa and is back to work on the farm. These two we pay them \$120 each per month. There are five household members working on the field. (Female A2 sugarcane land beneficiary, 13 September 2016)

The above narrative from field experiences suggests that access to land not only has an inverse relationship with internal migration, particularly rural to urban migration, but also international migration. The land reform beneficiaries cited above suggest that access to land provides economic options apart from migrating to South Africa to look for employment. Witnessed in the field sites were South African migrants who had returned to Zimbabwe to work on their family farms together with other household

members. These testimonies provide important policy insights on the land reform-migration dynamics in Zimbabwe, which experienced a mass exodus in the face of land redistribution at the turn of the millennium. It will be particularly insightful to investigate the donor areas, or areas of origin, of the majority of these international migrants in light of the above-lived experiences of beneficiaries of the 2000 land reform. Arguably, they have to be those experiencing deteriorating urban-based rather than rural livelihood insecurity, particularly in the resettlement areas.

Reinforcing the above observations but from a gender perspective, in her study of female land beneficiaries of the FTLRP at Merrivale Farm, Mwenezi District, Mutopo documented women farmers who engaged in short-term migration to neighbouring South Africa, not to seek employment as described in the mainstream literature but as a form of 'mobility pattern of agricultural marketing' (Mutopo 2014: 205, 2011: 1039; Mutopo, Manjengwa and Chiweshe 2014: 55). Such migration patterns were engendered by asset accumulation through the FTLRP (Mutopo 2014: 205). Collectively, the above points to the as yet inadequately explored nexus between land reform, gender, food security, employment and migration patterns in Zimbabwe post 2000. Such evidence suggests the potential impact of access to land not only on gender inequalities in economic terms but also on the gender dimensions of migration. This represents an interesting area for future and ongoing research on the socioeconomic outcomes of the land reform programme in Zimbabwe post-redistribution.

Access to Land, Guaranteed Source of Household Income and Migration

The causes or triggers of migration in Zimbabwe appear to be associated strongly with acute poverty, that is, people living on less than a US dollar a day (Dzingirai et al. 2015; Bracking and Sachikonye 2006; Raftopoulos 2011). Furthermore, migrants have been found to be drawn from households whose consumption expenditure per capita is below the food poverty line (Dzingirai et al. 2015). Consequently, I argue that if poverty gives rise to migration, it also appears to be eased by it. The study sought to understand the extent to which access to land had enhanced household incomes benchmarked against those obtaining in the communal areas that served as a baseline control group disaggregated by gender of household head. Undoubtedly, as presented in Table 6, access to productive agricultural land provides not only a source of employment but also an opportunity for access to personal as well as household income, reinforcing the income-generating capacity of access to land (Burgess 2001: 1).

Table 6: Per Capita Household Net Income by Gender of Household Head

Per Capita Household Income USD	A2 Farming Areas		A1 Farming Areas		Communal Areas	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Household per capita mean	4,038.00	4,859.56	429.55	185.46	75.90	23.89
Household per capita max.	11,600.00	11,000.00	2,444.00	400.00	449.00	277.00
Household per capita min.	1538.00	1714.00	21.00	90.00	0.00	0.00
Household per capita income by area						
Study site per capita mean	4,462.03		333.39		50.56	
Chi-square p-value exact test of significance	.269		.823		.048	

Source: Field data (2016)

Benchmarked against the control group, access to land has had a positive net effect on gendered household incomes. A key finding from this research is the varied net effect of access to land, depending not only on the size of household cultivable land but also the type of crop being cultivated. In the A2 farming areas that specialised in the cultivation of sugarcane, annual per capita household incomes were found to be above USD 4,000 in 2016. An analysis that disaggregates by gender of household showed female-headed households having a higher annual per capita household net income of USD 4,859.56 relative to USD 4,038.00 for their male counterparts. These higher per capita household incomes in the A2 farming areas are attributed to beneficiary integration into high-value sugarcane production in the aftermath of Fast Track Land Reform.

In an attempt to assess the return to labour to provide a picture of the adequacy of the newly gained lands for households to reproduce themselves, I benchmarked the above per capita household incomes against 2014 wage structures compiled by the Labour and Economic Development Research Institute of Zimbabwe (LEDRIZ). If wages are a return to labour, the average wage for the private and public sector in 2014 was pegged at USD 409, which translates to a household per capita income of USD 981.6 for a family of five. This is more than four times lower than the per capita incomes obtaining in the A2 sugarcane farming areas. In the A1 areas that specialised in chilli production and other marketable fresh produce, such as green mealies grown under irrigation, despite the relatively low per capita household net incomes these households relied more on own-produced calories than purchased calories (food grain) (FAO et al. 2018: 18). The

shadow price for own-produced calories for A1 households positions them relatively better compared to their counterpart urban households (Tekwa 2020: 195) with the potential to dampen the propensity for outward migration. Reflecting the gendered dimensions of poverty and the gender transformative potential of land reform, a strong association existed between the gender of the household head and household per capita income in the control group with a Chi-square test of significance at p-value of 0.048. This hypothesis was rejected in both resettlement sites with a Chi-square test of significance at p-value above 0.5, suggesting no correlation between the gender of the household and per capita net household income in these areas.

Presented below are some perspectives from female study participants with the potential to rule out any slight desire for outward migration.

The government gave me employment I am on an employment ticket. (In-depth interview, A2 female sugarcane farmer, 3 September 2016)

I had managed to purchase three tractors which I also put in the pool for transporting cane during harvest time getting additional money from that. This additional income helped me obtain money to purchase more tractors. (In-depth interview, A2 female land beneficiary, 19 September 2016)

The programme (chilli cultivation) has enhanced the lives of women to a greater extent. When the crop is ready for harvest women are getting on a monthly basis income that allow them to cover their household expenses ... on average I could get \$300 per month from my crop sales. (In-depth interview, polygamous married A1 female land beneficiary, 7 May 2016)

These field experiences highlight the extent to which access to land had provided female land beneficiaries with not only a source of employment but also a guaranteed source of household income with the potential to counter rural outmigration, including international migration. This represents a superior and robust source of social protection emanating from social policies framed within the TSP approach relative to the current meagre cash transfers being promoted by International Finance Institutions in most developing countries.

Land Reforms, Household Food Security and Migration

Access to land has long been established as an important resource for those seeking to produce their own food (Burgess 2001). Table 7 presents the food security situation across the three study sites disaggregated by marital status of head of household to reflect the effect of landholding on gendered household food insecurity, one key driver of migration, particularly for landless and land-short households (Choithani 2016: 201; Knoll et al. 2017: 9).

Table 7: Land Reform, Household Food Security and Marital Status of Household Head

Study Area			% Total				Total
			MGM	PLG	DSS	WD	
Mkwase A2 farms	Faced food shortage	No	100	100	100	100	100
Maware A1 farms	Faced food shortage	Yes	11.1	7.7	50.0	0.0	9.1
		No	88.9	92.3	50.0	100	90.9
Muteyo communal areas	Faced food shortage	Yes	72.7	60.0	60.0	89.5	82.5
		No	16.3	40.0	40.0	10.5	17.5

Source: Field work (2016)

Key: MGM – monogamous; PLG – polygamous; DSS – divorced/single/ separated; WD – widowed)

An analysis of the household food security situation across the study sites revealed that 82.5 per cent of households within the control group experienced food shortages in the 2014/15 seasons. A gendered analysis within this study area indicated a higher vulnerability to food insecurity within female-headed households, with 89.5 per cent of widow-headed households reporting food insecurity in the season in question. The situation existing in the control group reinforces the inextricable link between land shortage, gender, household food insecurity and migration. Contrastingly, in the resettlement areas, a mere 9.1 per cent of A1 households experienced food shortage in the 2015/16 season and none in the A2 farming areas, including female-headed households. The food security situation within resettlement areas curtailed outmigration from these areas, as presented in tables 1 and 2.

Corroborating the above, Table 8 presents the correlations between household cultivable land size and selected household food security indicators, namely: household food shortage, number of meals per day, household main source of food and dietary diversity. Presented in the table are p-values from the calculated Chi-square exact test of significance.

Table 8: Correlations between Household Landholding and Selected Food Security Indicators

Household Food Security Indicator	P-Value Chi-square Exact Test of Significance
Household food shortage (2015/16 season)	0.03
Number of meals per day	0.43
Household main source of food	0.01
Dietary diversity	0.01

Source: Fieldwork (2016)

As shown in Table 8, ownership of productive agricultural land exerts a positive effect on household food security. In all but one of the food security indicators presented, a strong association exists between landholding and household food security status. All the household food security indicators produced a Chi-square p-value less than 0.05, except for the household number of meals per day, which had a Chi-square p-value of 0.43. While these findings relate more to a micro-level analysis, their policy implications in countering out migration cannot be underestimated.

Below are women's experiences with regard to household food security as captured during in-depth interviews:

The land we had in the communal areas was not enough to grow enough food to feed my children. But now we have large pieces of land where I can grow enough food to feed my family. (In-depth interview female A1 land beneficiary, 8 May 2016)

Now my household is food secure throughout the year. There is no time when I do not have cooking oil, sugar or rice. After harvesting, we leave four tonnes of maize for household consumption. (In-depth interview with polygamous married female A1 land beneficiary, 9 May 2016)

After harvesting I leave 1.5 tonnes of maize for household consumption. In my household we have three meals per day. (Polygamous married female A1 land beneficiary, 7 May 2016)

Most of these households in the A1 farming areas indicated producing more grain for exchange than use-value to satisfy their household needs:

After harvesting I sell more maize grain than what I retain for food... I usually leave one tonne for consumption and hiring labour. I have three meals per day throughout the year. (In-depth interview widow female land beneficiary, 6 May 2016)

From our produce we retain a smaller percentage than what market. We sell 75 per cent and retain 25 per cent every harvest. We leave a small produce for consumption enough for only three months because we will be harvesting again (In-depth interview female A1 irrigating land beneficiary, 14 May 2016)

My household is food secure. I sell more grain than I reserve for household consumption. We have three meals a day and this does not change throughout the year. My relatives from the communal areas come here and obtain grain to feed their families. (In-depth married permit own name, 9 May 2016)

The above experiences reflect the positive effect of access to land on household food security with the potential to curb outmigration from rural areas. Laborde et al. (2017) note the robustness of in-kind transfer of arable land to households. They argue that solving hunger problems

through either cash transfers or food stamps will not significantly impact on international migration, as such interventions have to be accompanied by efforts to provide economic opportunities for people to stay in their country of birth (Laborde et al. 2017: 5). In the context of agriculture, food security and rural development, the assertion by Laborde et al. (2017) has significant policy implications in the developing world where cash transfers have been rolled out as a poverty reduction strategy.

Land Access and Household Main Sources of Food

Migration has been identified as one of the livelihood options available to households to cope with increasing socioeconomic vulnerabilities including food insecurity, particularly in the context of land shortage (Rawal 2008: 45). The desire to migrate has been found to increase with the severity of food insecurity (Sadiddin et al. 2019: 515) that is caused, mainly, by landlessness. Table 8 reveals a statistically significant correlation between a household's main source of food and household land, with a Chi-square exact test of significance at p-value 0.01. All A1 farming households, including female-headed households, identified land as their main source of food. Arguably, access to land serves not only as a source of income but also as a means of producing cheaper food, with a more profound effect on migration through ensuring the security of food supply by own production. This view is also supported by Chiweshe (2015), who argues that food security in rural areas is based on the ability to produce, which is dependent on access to productive resources such as land (2015: 50).

Analysed and presented in Table 9 are the main sources of food grain across the three study sites – own production, purchases and safety nets, food aid or work for food – disaggregated by gender of household head. Resulting from poor household land endowment with a capita average of 0.4 ha, see Table 3, a mere 12.5 per cent in the communal control group reported land (own production) as their main source of food grain. Interestingly, despite the poor land endowment, a gender analysis reveals that female-headed households relied more on land as a source of food, with a figure at 60 per cent relative to 40 per cent for male-headed households. Coupled with the gendered lack of access to land typical of customary communal areas, this presents a potential risk factor for female-headed households, resulting in a high probability of increased rural outmigration (Knoll et al. 2018: 13).

Table 9: Household Main Sources of Food by Gender of Household Head

Household main sources of food (grain)	Mkwase A2 Farming Areas				Maware A1 Farming Areas				Muteyo Communal Areas (Control)			
	Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
	Total		Total		Total		Total		Total		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Own production	4	26.7	4	23.5	8	25.0	13	100.0	1	4.8	1	5.3
Purchases	11	73.3	13	76.5	24	75.0	0	0.0	5	23.8	5	12.5
Safety net / Food aid / Work for food	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	15	71.4	13	68.4
											28	70.0*

Source: Fieldwork 2016

The multiple sources of food grain characteristic of the control group relative to the A1 farming areas reflect their high vulnerability to food insecurity, a situation that triggers rural outmigration in these areas. Reflecting the vulnerability of households in the control group, in spite of poor household incomes as shown in Table 6, 32.5 per cent of the households reported purchase as one of their main sources of food. A gender analysis reveals that a lower percentage of female-headed households (FHHs) depended on purchases relative to male-headed households (MHHs), with figures at 38.5 per cent and 61.5 per cent respectively. This supports the earlier observation that more FHHs rely on land as their main source of food and the assertion that access to land is particularly important in securing their household food security and reducing the propensity to migrate. Thus the gendered scarcity of land and limited potential to inherit land have been identified as key drivers of youth and female migration in sub-Saharan Africa (FAO et al. 2018: 24–25).

An interesting finding on the effect of land reform on one of the pillars of food security with a potential to reduced rural outmigration is evident in the A2 category. Similar to the control group, a meagre 18.8 per cent of households reported own production as the main source of food. In the A2 sector a lower percentage of households reported that land, as the main source of food, did not translate into household food insecurity, with the potential to trigger rural outmigration, as was the case with the control group. What the study confirms in the A2 category is that households become food insecure only when they lack the capacity to produce enough food (access to land) and the financial resources to purchase food from the market. Where households cannot produce food for their own consumption, access to an adequate income to purchase food equally contributes to household food security. These incomes need not necessarily come from migrant remittances (Choithani 2018), or many of the assumptions in the mainstream literature, but from other land-based economic activities. The above dynamics have been well captured during in-depth interviews with the sugarcane A2 land beneficiaries themselves:

I buy my groceries in bulk and stock. When I get money, I buy a beast and put my meat in the fridge. The other remaining beef I would sell to others. I have at least three meals a day. As part of my meals there is beef, fish, milk, polonies, salad and so on. (In-depth interview female A2 land beneficiary, 17 September 2016)

After selling my sugarcane I buy two tonnes of maize and my household is food secure. When I used to get into a supermarket, I wished for apples but could not afford them. Now I can buy apples, grapes for my children as much as I would want. I buy beef, chicken, goat meat, sausages and put in the fridge. (In-depth interview female A2 sugarcane farmer, 3 September 2016)

I include on my budget food for the family for the whole year. When we first came, we ate whatever we liked. Now we have actually reduced as a sign of living pretty. The kind of food has drastically changed. Now we can have breakfast with eggs. (In-depth interview female A2 land beneficiary, 20 September 2016).

This has been facilitated by access to productive water coupled with rich vertosols characteristic of Chiredzi district. Field observation indicated that A2 farmers are growing not only maize but also vegetable crops, such as tomatoes, potatoes and onions, on these smaller plots, which enhances their household food/nutrition security with the likelihood of dampening the desire to migrate out of the rural areas.

Meals per Day and Dietary Diversity Proxies for Household Food Security

The nutritional dimension of food security is often ignored in the food security-migration nexus, yet it is critically important (Knoll et al. 2017: 8). The number of meals per day and dietary diversity are important household food security indicators. This study employed the weekly recall method to capture dietary diversity within resettled and communal households and the likely effect of access to adequate pieces of land on household migration patterns. Whilst a Chi-square exact test of significance suggests no strong association between household cultivable land size and number of meals per day, with a p-value of 0.43 (see Table 8) resettled households were more food secure than communal households. In the A2 and A1 farming areas, above 70 per cent of the households reported three meals a day in contrast to only 35 per cent in the control group. The remaining 65 per cent in the control reduced the number of meals as a coping mechanism to household food shortages. A gender analysis in the control group reveals that 57.7 per cent of households that reduced meals as a coping mechanism were female-headed relative to 42.3 per cent for MHHs. If household food security is a key driver of vulnerability and rural outmigration, this is likely to be more profound in the communal areas with a gender dimension as opposed to resettlement areas, due to the disparities in land endowments between the study sites, as satisfaction with one's standard of living is negatively associated with migration desire (Sadiddin et al. 2019: 525). Thus, land reforms conceptualised as a social policy instrument are not only redistributive but also hold the potential to enhance the productive capacities of individuals, households and communities and act as a prophylactic and ex ante social protection instrument, dampening the desire for people to migrate, including women.

Conclusion

This study pioneers research in an area seldom explored in post-land reform Zimbabwe, the nexus of the socioeconomic outcomes of the Fast Track Land Reform Programme – employment, household income, food security and migration dynamics, both internal and international. This is particularly important in the context of the massive exodus experienced in Zimbabwe at the turn of the millennium. The article argues that access to land enabled previously landless and/or land-short households to exploit their newly gained land to produce food, attain a higher income and generate employment for their families and others. This scenario curtailed and, to some extent reversed the common trend of outmigration from rural areas to urban areas, including international migration. Key findings from the study confirm household food insecurity, lack of employment opportunities and depressed rural incomes as the key drivers of outmigration from the countryside. Using quantitative data comprising demographic and household migration characteristics, the socioeconomic outcomes of the FTLRP, complemented with qualitative empirical information from in-depth interviews with female land reform beneficiaries, the study confirms that the key drivers of rural outmigration are closely associated with poor access to productive resources such as land. Access to land was found to have a negative effect on all the identified key drivers of rural outmigration, including international migration. The study contributes to ongoing global discussions on the nexus of food security and international migration but from a gendered, transformative, social policy, land reform, migration perspective. Its contribution has national and global policy implications for countries that are experiencing an influx into urban areas resulting from a rural exodus. At the supranational scale, the findings presented in the paper are critical in addressing international migration, particularly as it results from a lack of livelihood options in countries of origin. Additionally, the Zimbabwean case reveals that reagrarianisation and repeasantisation are plausible options, particularly in the context of rising urban turmoil emanating from high insecurity in urban labour markets, xenophobic attacks in destination countries and global pandemics resulting from population influxes.

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