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Abstract

Women in formalized (civil) and non-formalised (uncivil) groups have played a vital role in ensuring their improved access and control over land in Zimbabwe. Prior 1998, the involvement of women's organizations and other civic groups in land issues was limited and marginal. During this time the women's movement devoted its time and effort to welfare and development projects in communal areas. Emphasis by the more formal organisations was again on human rights and equality. Those that pursued land reform advocated for market-based and orderly methods of land reform, because the discourse at that time had shifted to radicalism. However, the market-based and orderly methods of land reform were gender blind. The aim at this time was to address racial imbalances, and gender imbalances were not foremost. Poor coordination of women's organizations at this time affected efforts at addressing gender imbalances in land distribution. The ushering in of the Fast Track Land Reform Programme saw improved coordination of women's organizations, that coincided with 'uncivil' women's fight for land and land grabbing through the war veterans led land invasions that preceded the Fast Track period. Little has been done in terms of research to establish the role played by the uncivil women's movement to the current land ownership pattern, but their role need not be underestimated. This paper mainly considers the role played by formalized or civil women's movement to current achievements in women's access and control of land under the Fast Track period. It specifically focuses on the role played by the Women and Land Lobby Group as well as other organizations in documenting the plight of women, lobbying for women's access to land, advocating for legal reform in favour of women among other issues that facilitated improvements in women's access to land under the Fast Track period.

Key words: Women, organizations, struggle, land, Zimbabwe

Introduction

Women have always taken part in movements to assert their rights to resources alongside men. Uncivil women played a central role in the struggle for Zimbabwe's independence where land was the centre of the struggle (Lyons, 2004). Though little has been done in terms of research on the role of women in the land movement it is important to acknowledge the prominence of women's contributions and gender conflicts in a revisionist history of nationalism. Post independence Zimbabwe saw women taking a formalised direction to the quest for gender equity in land reform with more and more women's organisations coming into being. However, whether one looks at women's access to land from a historical perspective or from present day configurations, one point emerges clearly, namely both in the past and at present, and that is that women have limited rights of access to land. Customary rights have granted women indirect access to land through their relationship-by blood ties or marriage-with men. As Youssef (1995) puts it, customary law has continued to limit women's direct access to land, reflecting assumptions that land will be granted to women by their male kin. Resettlement programmes have failed to include women other than as wives and daughters. This is despite the struggle by both the civil and uncivil women's movements. Much of the problem of women's access to resources, especially land, revolves around structural and institutional processes of exclusion by which women are continually excluded from participation. Law, culture, custom and tradition often sanction such exclusions. Grappling with gender discrimination for women's organisations therefore entails grappling with culture and tradition and this is the greatest challenge.

Historical background: Women and their access to land in Zimbabwe

In pre-colonial Zimbabwe, especially among the Shona, who are a major ethnic group in Zimbabwe, women were not men's social equals but they could gain status through bearing children (especially sons), agricultural labour and (like men) with age (Cheater, 1986). Women also possessed rights, which included having a socially defined minimum amount of land on which to grow women's crops (such as groundnuts). Because landholdings were held communally (that is, by the headman) and because men relied on their fathers and elders to provide cattle for bride wealth, which enabled them to marry, men could not afford to flout the opinion of elders and the community (Jacobs, 1990:165). Jacobs argues that it is during the colonial era that the position of women in Zimbabwe deteriorated.

Under colonial law, women were deemed legal minors, unable to enter into contracts or represent themselves in court without permission of and representation by a male guardian. Shona women lost customary rights of various sorts, including their rights to land for women's crops. The colonial state constructed its land allocation strategies through targeting males as farmers, whether white or black and until 1982 used traditional governance structures (chiefs, headmen) as the basis for local land management systems (Moyo, 1995). Because of this, women's access to secure tenure in their own right became a problem. The male-centred registration of land rights in resettlement areas is a colonial legacy inherited and continued by the present state. Family-based land rights have also been promoted by both the colonial and the present State, and this is exacerbated by a growing proportion of men who control the mechanics of land administration.

At independence, the government of Zimbabwe sought to redress the inherited colonial legacy of glaring and skewed racial inequalities in land distribution. Yet, between 1980 and 1990 the government managed to acquire only

3.5 million hectares of land and resettled 71,000 households. The communal areas remained congested, overstocked and overgrazed.

There is a colonial legacy to gender and access to land in post independent Zimbabwe. Land was administered under the Traditional Leaders Act and the Communal land Act. Under the Traditional Leaders Act, the Chief of an area was given overall responsibility for allocating land through traditional leaders, i.e. village heads and headmen who are often the custodians of customary law. These are usually males whose patriarchal notions of women's social status can further work against the allocation of land to women. The Communal Land Act (Chapter 20:04, 1982) provides for the classification of land as communal. In accordance with Section 8(2), access to and use of communal land shall be in accordance with customary law. Yet, customary law has, in many instances, been deemed discriminatory towards women in that it curtails their access to and control of resources. This provision is sometimes seen as perpetuating the marginalisation of women in the allocation of land under communal tenure. Hence, Jacobs (1990:171) has argued that if one attempt of resettlement is to allow certain groups to become or remain middle or wealthy peasants, then women are excluded from entry into these strata of the peasantry and remain dependants of men.

The introduction of the Economic Structural Adjustment programme (ESAP) in 1992 saw an emphasis placed on productivity and farming skills, as evidenced by possession of a Master Farmer Certificate as well as secondary level education as criteria for allocation of land. Ncube et al. (1997) have argued that the emphasis on secondary education has prejudiced a number of rural women who only had minimum primary school education and who did not have the time to attend the training workshops to get a Master Farmer Certificate. Suffice to say that while this policy seems gender neutral, theoretically favouring married people of either sex; in reality it still favoured married men. This is because when a family qualifies for resettlement, the permit is almost always issued in the name of the husband. In the case of divorce, it is the wife who loses access to the land that she and her husband had jointly qualified for, mainly because of the traditional patriarchal system. Ncube et al. (1997) interviewed a resettlement officer who confirmed that as resettlement officers they advise divorcing wives to look for land elsewhere. They have to qualify anew.

Post independence land reform therefore largely maintained the pre-existing gender gap in terms of access to land, though patterns of ownership are improving for women. It is against this background that this paper considers the role of the women's movements in the struggle for land in Zimbabwe, with a view to showing the agency and capability of women in shaping history.

Women's movement involvement in the land discourse in Zimbabwe

A presentation here is made of the involvement of the women's movement in the struggle for land in Zimbabwe's different historical periods, focusing on the colonial and the post-colonial, where the post colonial is divided into two phases—the phase before and the phase after the Fast Track Land Reform.

Women and their struggle for land in colonial times

Women have historically been involved in movements for land in various ways. There have however been misrepresentations of the role of women, especially as regards their involvement in the armed struggle (Lyons, 2004). Lyons tries to show the misrepresentations by explaining that women fighters and women in general have been re-registered as mothers, wives, and homemakers in

many different arenas. This however is debatable considering that both men and women fighters were given privileged access over civilians to army, police, and civil service posts at independence. Lyons' argument is that these misrepresentations resulted in women not receiving recognition for their contribution to the war, whereas men's military service and political/nationalist roles were recognised, even before the hefty 1998 payments to liberation war veterans (p. 213). A few examples of women misrepresentations must suffice. The Statue of the Unknown Soldier at Heroes' Acre, a national public monument to commemorate those who died fighting for independence, depicts the female fighter in a skirt. Lyons interprets this as an attempt to re-domesticate women fighters, who, during the war, wore pants like their male counterparts (p. 222). Contrary to these portrayals, women played a central role in the fight for land. Women organised the 1961 protests against the new constitution and played an important role in rejecting the proposed constitution in 1972 (ibid).

Period before 1998

With independence in 1980, however, the involvement of the women's movement together with other civic organisations in land reform tended to be marginal and limited. Rural social movements, a few though, mainly those that Moyo (2000) calls "uncivil", traditional and informal, which include the cooperative movement, local occupation movements, isolated war veterans' groups, spirit mediums which were engaged in land struggles. Those that were involved in struggles, such as war veterans, were arrested for land occupation and fighting with landowners (ibid). During this time the women's movement devoted its time and effort to welfare and development projects in communal areas. Emphasis by the more formal organisations was again on human rights and equality. Those that pursued land reform advocated for market-based and orderly methods of land reform, because the discourse at that time had shifted to radicalism. However, the market-based and orderly methods of land reform were gender blind. The aim at this time was to address racial imbalances, and gender imbalances were not foremost. Land reform aimed to redistribute largely white-owned land to black potential beneficiaries (Moyo, 1995).

The early responses of women's organisations to gender imbalances in land distribution processes (between 1982 and 1994) mainly involved surveys on the situation of women as well as workshops and conferences to highlight the plight of women. This period was characterised by poor coordination of women's organisations. However, the efforts of this time by women's NGOs are critical in the struggle for land by women in Zimbabwe. The lack of a clear vision and agenda at this time made it possible for the government to get away with a half-hearted and fragmented approach to women's equality (Chari, 1999). The result was that in the first phase of the Land Reform and Redistribution Programme the needs of women were ignored. Data from this period (ending 1997–1998) show that women have always fared badly in terms of access to land and land-related resources. Data from 1997 shows that about 75 percent of the registered landowners are male, about 20 percent of the farms were jointly owned, less than 5 percent were owned by women, and below 4 percent of land were owned by black women (Moyo 1997/8:31). The surveys and documentation by women's organisations during this period formed the basis for lobbying and advocacy, which characterised the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP).

Chari (1999) argues that the period from 1994 ushered in a new period among civil society organisations in general and women's organisations in

particular in terms of coordination of effort towards land reform in general and gender issues in the land question specifically.

The phase was characterised by increasing networking among NGOs, stronger activism and strategic lobbying and advocacy. By this stage, the NGO community, particularly women's NGOs were stronger, more focused on their agenda and had a clearer sense of the issues, a clearer vision, skills and experience with lobby and advocacy work (Chari, 1999).

In January 1994, a national conference for grassroots women was held to enable them to restate problems and solutions. The proceedings were presented to the Land Tenure Commission. During this period, the major weakness noted was failure by women's organisations to mobilise rural women to speak with one voice. As a result, the Land Tenure Commission encountered conflicting statements from women (Chenaux-Repond, 1996). The efforts that therefore characterised the period towards the FTLRP were a response to the failure by the Land Tenure Commission to deal comprehensively with gender issues in its findings and recommendations, and continued governmental insensitivity to the needs of people, particularly women, regarding the land.

The role that women's organisations played during this period can therefore be summarised as:

- Lobbying and advocacy for inclusion in the planning process (evidenced by attending the donor conference as well as accompanying government to Brazil);
- Contributing towards policy and programme documents (e.g. the Draft Land Policy Framework, the Inception Phase of the Land Reform and Resettlement Phase 2);
- Representing their constituency's interests in dialogue with government and giving feedback as well as educating their constituency.

Fast Track Period

The liberal economic and political reform processes which intensified in Zimbabwe during the 1990s had not only gained ready adherence by the national bourgeoisies but had also co-opted the organised working class and NGO politics (Yeros, 2003). Deepening poverty and land occupation since then thus led to both organised and spontaneous land occupation, rural and urban movements, all outside the framework of the civil society. Moyo attributes land invasion to the leadership vacuum in civil society (including preoccupation with human rights of formal women's organisations) mobilisation for land reform, within a context of a neoliberal economic and policy "crisis". Hence, most of black farmer demands for land have been realistically reflected even more by the 'informal' land occupation movements (Moyo, 1995). By 1997, when radical land reform had reared its head, a few NGOs such as the Women's Coalition and Women Land Lobby Group (WLLG) formed in the late 1990s, ZERO and others had begun to argue for land reform, while pleading that their effective involvement in land reform was complicated by "politics". Most of these NGO initiatives merely sought to train the resettled but hardly any sought to lead the demand for greater land transfers, until 2000 when seemingly transient NGOs, such as Inyika Trust, joined the agitation for land redistribution. Since the early 1990s, indigenisation or black affirmative action lobbies, some with gender

foci, partly re-focused themselves towards the land reform agenda, emphasizing the de-racialisation and engendering of the ownership base of commercial farmland (Moyo, 1995).

The civil and uncivil women's movement played a central role in the struggle for land by women prior to and during the FTLRP. During the land invasions prior to the FTLRP, the role of 'uncivil' women should not be underestimated. However, the role played by the uncivil women's movement on current land ownership patterns has not been well documented. Women were part of the land occupation movement that was remobilised nationally in 1998 by liberation struggle veterans in alliance with traditional leaders and peasants, notably in Svosve, Goromonzi, Mrewa and Insiza (Moyo, 2000).

Marongwe's remarkable field-based study, wherein he travelled 'under cover' for much of his work, has one paragraph on women in its 102 pages long text, which at least informs us of the involvement of rural women:

The gender balance at the occupied farms seemed to vary from place to place. Some farms, particularly those close to communal and resettlement areas, showed balanced numbers of male and female occupiers. In other cases, occupiers were young couples where both the wife and husband participated in the farm occupations. There were very few cases in the study area where there were no women occupiers at all.

(Marongwe, 2002: 49)

There is need for further study on the mobilisation structures and how the uncivil women's movement was mobilised for land invasion. Attention is here drawn to the role of women's organisations with a specific focus on the role of the Women and Land in Zimbabwe in the FTLRP.

It is important to state that the women's movement and access to land owe its strength to reinforcements by organisations within the movement. For example, legal reforms and improvements in political representation have a bearing on issues of access to resources. Zimbabwe, alongside other Southern African Development Community countries, adopted the 1997 Declaration on Gender and Development, together with its Codicil on the Prevention and Eradication of all forms of violence against women and girls in 1998. One of the commitments was that by the year 2005, there was going to be a minimum 30 percent representation of women in politics and decision-making positions. The table below gives a comparison of the numerical representation of women in decision-making positions between 1997 and 2002.

Table 1. Women in politics (1997–2002)

	1997				2002			
	No. of Women	No. of Men	Total	% Women	No. of Women	No. of Men	Total	% Women
Ministers	3	23	26	13 %	4	24	28	14 %
Dep. Ministers	5	12	17	29.4 %	1	11	12	8.3
Provincial Governors	1	7	8	12.5 %	1	7	8	12.5 %
Elected MPs	n/a	n/a			14	106	120	11.7 %
Appointed MPs	n/a	n/a			2	28	30	7.1 %
MPs	21	129	150	14 %	16	134	150	10.7 %

(CSO, 1996)

The statistics indicate a decline in the numbers of women in decision-making positions, especially in parliament from 14 percent in 1997 down to 10.7 percent in 2002, but the general representation of women in politics has had a bearing on access to resources by women. Table 2 shows the numbers of women in lower and upper house positions in selected African countries in a bid to show how the occupation of decision-making positions by women has also helped to shape the trend in the improvement of access to land by women in Zimbabwe.

Table 2. Women in Lower and Upper House Positions in Selected African Countries

Rank	Country	Lower or single House				Upper House or Senate			
		Elections	Seats*	Women	% W	Elections	Seats*	Women	% W
1	Rwanda	09 2003	80	39	48.8	09 2003	26	9	34.6
2	Mozambique	12 2004	250	87	34.8	---	---	---	---
3	South Africa	04 2004	400	131	32.8	04 2004	54	18	33.3
4	United Rep. of Tanzania	12 2005	319	97	30.4	---	---	---	---
5	Uganda	02 2006	322	89	27.6	---	---	---	---
6	Namibia	11 2004	78	21	26.9	11 2004	26	7	26.9
7	Eritrea	02 1994	150	33	22.0	---	---	---	---
8	Ethiopia	05 2005	529	116	21.9	10 2005	112	21	18.8
9	Senegal	04 2001	120	23	19.2	---	---	---	---
10	Zimbabwe	03 2005	150	24	16.0	11 2005	66	21	31.8

(Excerpt from Women in National Parliament, July 2006)

The numbers as well as the orientation of women in decision-making pertaining to women's empowerment have had a bearing on improved access to resources by women. Concerted efforts by women as individuals and organisations in relation to legal reform, political representation, affirmative action, among other reforms, have influenced the outcome of the FTLRP. Below is a case study of the Women and Land in Zimbabwe (WLZ), but it is important to stress that the gender outcomes of the FTLRP can not be solely attributed to efforts by the WLZ in Zimbabwe but to women as individuals, uncivil women's groups as well as formal women's organisations, WLZ being one such. International and national efforts to recognise women's rights have also played a major role.

CASE STUDY: Women and Land in Zimbabwe (WLZ)

The Women and Land Lobby Group, now Women and Land in Zimbabwe (WLZ), was formed in 1998. This was about the time when Zimbabwe was launching its second phase of the land reform programme, the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP). It is a coalition of more than 21 organisations, individuals and researchers with an interest in land and women's rights issues. It provided a forum to coordinate the efforts of many NGOs to negotiate with government on women and access to land issues. The WLZ came about because it was felt that, like in previous land reform programmes, women's concerns on land might be sidelined in the land reform process which government was embarking on. What was also in the background was that the majority of women depend on land for livelihoods.

The WLZ challenged government policy on the results of past land resettlement schemes, which excluded women. Their arguments came from the premise that although women heading households could access land and be given permits in resettlement areas, their married counterparts still had to access land through their husbands and remain with no tenure security should their husbands die. In this regard, the WLZ challenged the legal and

policy framework which has not incorporated inheritance rights pertaining to land for widows. Furthermore, very few women own land in small-scale commercial farms as most women do not have the resources to purchase the land. The fact that women lack access and control over land means they are excluded from credit, marketing facilities, decision-making powers over agricultural production activities and benefits, negatively impacting on the productive capacity of women (Women and Land Lobby Group, 2000). The WLZ also recognised that there was no legal or administrative framework in place to ensure gender equality in the distribution of resettlement land. This therefore formed the basis for the formation of the organisation and the framework within which it is operating.

The objectives for the existence of the WLZ are stated as follows:

- To promote women's economic empowerment through equitable access to and control over land and its benefits;
- To ensure that there is equal and substantial access to land in law, policy and in practice;
- To engender the land redistribution process;
- To provide long term support to women in accessing and benefiting from women, and
- To spearhead gender mainstreaming in the land reform programme (WLLG, 2000)

Since its inception, the WLZ has successfully undertaken a number of activities. A major tool used to achieve the stated objectives is lobbying. The WLZ lobbies government to address gender issues in the land reform process. The government has, as a result of such lobbying, involved the WLZ in the drafting of the various policies governing land reform.

At the international Donor Conference on Land Reform and Resettlement in 1998, it is stated that WLZ:

Experienced some difficulty getting into the conference and was only saved by the last minute intervention of the Minister responsible for Gender in the President's office (Chari, 1999).

This shows the challenge that NGOs in general face when it comes to matters of lobbying. Their relationship with the State seems to be one of suspicion and distrust. Despite this situation, WLZ should be commended for being:

The only NGO constituency which was clearly visible as a result of the displays and materials distributed as well as the presence of grassroots women field workers attending a parallel workshop on women and land (Chari, 1999).

The WLZ was successful in lobbying, as evidenced by a call to address the donor conference, and has managed to lobby government to produce gender-disaggregated data each time people are resettled. With the objectives and strategies of the WLZ clearly stated, it is therefore pertinent to see how it has worked towards achieving these objectives by considering the outcomes of the Fast Track Land Reform Programme.

Gender and Outcomes of the FTLRP

The gender outcome of the FTLRP, though positive, is not encouraging. Under the FTLRP there are two resettlement models: Model A1 and Model A2. Model A1 was intended to decongest communal lands. Settler selection and emplacement for A1 was the responsibility of the Provincial Land Identification Committee (PLIC) and District Land Identification Committees (DLICs). The provincial Governor chaired the PLIC, and DLICs were chaired by the District Administrators. The model was for the generality of landless people, with both a villagised and self-contained variant. Model A2 was aimed at creating a cadre of Black commercial farmers and was based on the concept of full cost recovery from the beneficiary. Settler selection was made on the basis of applications submitted to the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture and Rural Resettlement. It was a commercial resettlement scheme, comprising small, medium and large-scale commercial resettlement (Presidential Land review Committee Report, 2003).

Moyo (2004) points out that by November 2003, 6,712 farms covering an area of 12,387,571 hectares nationwide had been gazetted. However, the Presidential Land Review Committee (PLRC) in August 2003 estimated that government had acquired 6,422 farms covering 10,839,108 hectares.

Priority under the FTLRP was going to be given to successful candidates selected from the Rural District Council waiting list, successful candidates selected from other farms and to war veterans or ex-detainees selected by the war veterans association. Though women were considered a special category, they did not benefit as much as they should have. The WLZ lobbied for a quota system in resettlement land. In October 2000, the government stated that it would ensure a 20 percent quota for women to benefit from the Fast Track resettlement programme. This was an achievement since the percentage was surpassed.

Under the FTLRP there was an official structure for allocating land through the civil service and elected officials such as the rural district council. In many cases, however, informal processes governed by the war veterans superseded this system. The police and army, working with the militias, were identified as coordinating some of the land occupations. The extent to which real need, which applies to most women, especially those in communal areas, has been a criterion can therefore be questioned. The politicised nature of beneficiary selection had gender implications. The bias is mirrored and exacerbated by male-dominated land administration systems.

The general costs associated with resettlement partly contributed to low uptake of land by women. As Sachikonye (2004) observed, land reform has been constrained partly because it has not been integrated into a wider national development strategy. Where land reform has been successful, as in East Asia, it has often been part of such a strategy. Land reform that is piecemeal and disconnected from a wider development strategy is bound to generate limited returns or falter.

Table 3 below shows the categories of males and females who accessed land under the FTLRP.

Table 3. Summary of all provinces: Allocation patterns by gender per province

Province	Model A1				Model A2			
	No of males	%	No of females	%	No of males	%	No of females	%
Midlands	14800	82	3198	18	338	95	17	5
Masvingo	19026	84	3644	16	709	92	64	8
Mash Central	12986	88	1770	12	1469	87	215	13
Mash West	12782	81	5270	19	1777	89	226	11
Mash East	12967	76	3992	24	*	*	*	*
Mat South	7754	87	1169	13	215	79	56	21
Mat North	7919	84	1490	16	574	83	121	17
Manicaland	9572	82	2190	18	961	91	97	9
Total	106986	82	22723	18	6043	88	796	12

(Source: The Presidential Land Review Committee Report (TPLRCR), 2003)

*The breakdown of figures by gender for Mashonaland East model 'A2' was not readily available.

Women-headed households who benefited under 'model A1' constituted only 18 percent of the total, while women beneficiaries under 'model A2' constituted only 12 percent. More recent statistics of the land audit by the WLZ indicate that the female beneficiaries are nearing 30 percent (WLZ, 2007).

Impacts of the WLZ

The increase in the percentage of women accessing land under the FTLRP is an indication of the work of the WLZ together with the broader women's movement. After the FTLRP, the WLZ has also undertaken a needs assessment to establish women's ability to utilise natural resources for economic empowerment. Furthermore the organisation has developed a gender sensitive monitoring tool on top of efforts to engender the Zimbabwean constitution to remove the gender discrimination on the grounds of customary law.

As a result of lobbying, government has also included in the policy a statement on joint registration/ownership of land by both spouses. However, although this is included in the policy documents, there is a gap between policy provisions and practice. Government has not effectively implemented joint registration, as land continues to be registered in the husbands' names, excluding women from ownership of land (WLZ, 2007). Presence of a positive policy without accompanying cultural and economic emancipation does not achieve women's empowerment. There is a disjunction between high-level policy commitments to gender equality in land reform programme, and weaknesses in translating these lofty policy principles into vigorous action on the ground.

The WLZ has successfully disseminated information at national, provincial and community levels on the land reform programme, as well as the criteria for identifying people for land resettlement. Furthermore, the organisation has also facilitated dialogue within civil society on the land reform programme through what is called "Open forum". The Open Forum focuses on thematic areas around land and makes recommendations, which are forwarded to government for action. However, in most cases government does not respond to these recommendations.

Chari (1999) has summarised some of the impacts of the WLZ as follows:

- Enhancing the visibility of women and women's issues in the land reform programme;
- Acceptance of women's individual rights to land (at the policy level) by government as evidenced by the redrafted Land Redistribution and Resettlement Policy Framework and programme documents;
- The inclusion of gender in the draft Land Policy Framework document;
- Inclusion of women's rights to land in constitutional debates.

Mobilising grassroots women through the Women Farmers' Associations (WFAs) is now part and parcel of the work of the WLZ. These associations are used by the WLZ to uplift the position of women in society so that, in a sense, WFAs have become the implementing arm of the WLZ. The WFAs are in all ten provinces of Zimbabwe and are composed of representatives of each of the five models of farming: commercial farming, A2, A1, peri-urban and communal farming. These structures are also being used for easier administration of Vice President Mujuru's poultry project with grassroots people. The WLZ believes this is a strategic position it has adopted, as this alliance will positively influence the lobbying of government by these two organisations. The structure of a WFA as highlighted by a key informant at the WLZ is as indicated in the following table (Table 4).

Table 4. Structure of the WFAs

Level	Number
National	10 people representing the 10 provinces in the country
Provincial	1 person per district and 4 technocrats drawn from relevant farming disciplines
District	9 people representing the five models of farming and 4 people invited for technical expertise

The WFA has its headquarters in Harare with sub-offices at provincial and district levels. The WFA is an institution at the grassroots level that is coordinated by the WLZ to lobby on behalf of grassroots women. It is involved in fundraising and sourcing for inputs. In this regard, the WLZ together with the WFAs are working with the Ministry for Women's Affairs, Gender and Community Development to coordinate with the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe for farming equipment to be imported for women. The WLZ is encouraging networking and use of social capital among women for easy access to resources.

Discussion

Despite the achievements by the broad women's movement in relation to the struggle for land, Chari (1999) laments the lack of coordination among women's organisations and with the broader civil society. This lack of coordination sometimes leads to duplication of activities and multiple divergent voices and ultimately competition and division within the movement itself. Related to this is the limited or lack of involvement of grassroots women. One weakness of the efforts by the women's movement, as the previous explanation shows, is the failure by the women's organisations to mobilise rural women and unite them to speak with one voice. The movement seems divided between the civil and uncivil, which seem to relate to class divisions within the movement. As a result,

efforts are not coordinated and resistance at grassroots level is not surprising. A clash of civilizations can partly explain this disjunction.

Although the WLZ has initiated the WFAs, there is need to work with the women's movement that is already there, that has been self-initiated to fight for women's land rights. The struggle should be among these women rather than injected from outside. Women in Zimbabwe have a long history of organizing 'politically' and it has to be established why they coordinate separately and outside the civil women's movement. Strategies to change could be different. Scott's weapons of the weak aptly explain the lack of enthusiasm by the uncivil women's movement in the broad women's movement, as evidenced by lack of coordination for the movement's broad agenda. For Scott (1985) people do not lodge clear protests and even bring retribution to those considered the source of their problems, but these actions do not usually take the form of open rebellion and are not necessarily directed towards longer term change. Scott (1985) describes such behaviour as "weapons of the weak" or "every day forms of resistance". Scott (1985) lists the following everyday forms of resistance: "foot dragging, dissimulation, false compliance, feigned ignorance, desertion, pilfering, smuggling, poaching, arson, slander, sabotage, surreptitious assault and murder, anonymous threats" all characterised by their covert nature and avoidance of open confrontation. While these actions in themselves are not strategic or consciously directed to fundamental change, Scott suggests that they may have cumulative effects and achieve changes that open or organised protest may not.

Part of the explanation can also be that struggles initiated from outside tend to be viewed as alien and as serving petty bourgeois class interests. Rural women need to diagnose the problem themselves in order to identify and see the need for change. Moyo (2000) has shown how land invasions and occupation among the poor were precipitated by growing poverty and the retrenchment of workers under ESAP and among the capitalists, who had begun to expand their focus on accumulating capital through emerging markets based on land and natural resource uses. This calls for women's organisations to carry out needs assessments before advocating any structural changes. Such organisations as the WLZ, in trying to bring women to communicate with one another, can provide arenas of struggle within which women who are poor and subordinated can speak out.

Though working with State arms in empowering women, (such is the case of vice president Mujuru's poultry project) is a good strategy; this seems to compromise the work that the women's movement does. It would seem true that the amount of space allowed to NGOs in any given country is determined first and foremost by political considerations, rather than by any calculation of the contribution of NGOs to economic and social development. This points to the fact that there is a tendency by social movements to be dormant and amenable to cooptation by the State at certain conjunctions, that is to say where the uncivil movements overpower the civil ones. One missing thing from the women's movement in Zimbabwe today is that sense of anger (at the patriarchal system) and passion (to change it) that characterised the initial stages of the movement. The sense of anger and passion has been transformed, appropriated and institutionalised. It would therefore seem that women's organisations operate only as a mechanism of the ruling party by extending State policies into a female constituency, rather than as a separate pressure group which organises women independently and which encourages them to take an active role in asserting and defining their own needs and demands. Organisationally, the agendas of the women's movement should not be determined by national priorities, but rather

by priorities of smaller constituencies. Issues of representation and legitimacy are critical issues in the women's movement today.

Rural power structures, which centre on traditional patriarchal structures, such as chiefs, tend to thwart struggles by the broad women's movement. Urban-based movements such as the WLZ have as a result encountered constraints in penetrating through these structures to their constituencies. The State and chiefs have always worked hand in hand to uphold certain values and belief systems. There is therefore a serious tension between the official commitment to gender equality on the one hand and reluctance to alienate traditionalist structures of rural local government on the other. The relationship between the State and every movement determines the outcome of the activities of such a movement. Abeysekera (2004:35) has pointed that the State always represents the interests of one particular social group, and more often than not, those with economic and/or political influence. The State also espouses an ideology that safeguards the base of those who have power. Feminists argue that the modern nation-State is founded on patriarchal attitudes and norms of behaviour that have led to the exclusion of women from the arenas of power. MacKinnon has argued that "the State is male in feminist sense. The law sees and treats women the way men see and treat women. The State coercively and authoritatively constitutes the social order in the interests of men as a gender, through its legitimizing norms, relation to society and substantive policies. It achieves this through embodying and ensuring male control over women's sexuality at every level, occasionally cushioning, qualifying or de jure prohibiting its excesses when necessary to its normalisation. Substantively, the way the male point of view frames an experience is the way it is framed by State policy." This is the greatest challenge for the women's movement in general and calls for anger and passion for change.

Women's organisations need to take a holistic approach towards improving access to resources by women. Access to land on its own without legal education and economic empowerment is not enough. Women have practical and strategic needs which go hand in hand. Affecting women's decisions on resettlement is the lack of basic social infrastructure and this has contributed to fewer women applying for land. For example, where there are no grinding mills women would resort to manual preparation of ground foodstuffs. The lack of provision of basic social infrastructure in the resettlement areas would impact on women specifically because they are the caregivers of children (schools), the sick (clinics) and families (water and others); this therefore affects women's decisions on resettlement. These are critical issues for the women's movement to fight for. Land in isolation from related resources can not improve the position of women. Furthermore, land redistribution that is not accompanied by a host of support services such as credit extension (agricultural advice) and marketing, as well as infrastructure provision, is unlikely to be sustainable in the long run. Thus the allocation of land is a *necessary* but *insufficient* condition for successful land reform. In short, the big challenge remains for the women's movement to see to it that governments integrate land reform and policy into a broad rural development strategy in the context of a wider social and development vision, if women are to benefit.

The urban land question remains a contentious issue for the women's movement in Zimbabwe. More and more women have limited or no access to land in urban areas and face insurmountable constraints which also require lobbying by the women's movement. Recent years have witnessed the formation of housing cooperatives, a majority of them by war veterans. One would expect the women's movement to participate in this struggle but it seems to be taking a sidetrack in this battle. Informal settlements are a sign of the need for urban

land but the bias has tended to be towards improving access to agricultural land in rural areas.

Conclusion

The women's movement is consciously coordinating activities to promote social change in relation to engendering land reform in Zimbabwe. Like all social movements, this movement is in a process of constant change and transformation. Despite this ever-changing nature, the women's movement has enabled the development of wide ranging alliances that have led to changes in land ownership patterns over the years. The women's movement has been involved in the struggle for land in Zimbabwe's various historical periods. During the colonial era, the struggle was within the struggle for independence and much of the movement's experiences are overshadowed by hegemonic male experiences. At independence, although there was some effort by women's organisations to respond to gender issues in the land question in Zimbabwe, the efforts were essentially uncoordinated, ad hoc, fragmented, localised and sometimes individualised and unfocused. The period towards the second phase of the land reform programme in Zimbabwe (1997 onwards) however saw the beginning of a more structured effort towards the coordination of women's organisations responding to gender issues in the land question, mobilising civil society to participate more meaningfully in land processes.

The uncivil women's movement needs strengthening because it is a core strategy towards women's empowerment. There are, however, a number of challenges and constraints that hamper progress towards women's visibility and access to land, for example the role of traditional authorities in the land reform process: weak legal provisions that seem to favour women's struggle for changes; the contradiction between customary law, practices and attitudes and modern individual rights; discrepancy between policy and practice, and poor coordination among NGOs themselves, to mention a few. Despite such constraints, remarkable achievements can be noted towards engendering land reform programmes, though a lot still needs to be done in terms of policy implementation.

There is a need for coordination of land policies and the general legal framework if women are to benefit from land reform programmes. This calls for coordination of effort among NGOs in general and women's organisations in particular. Specific consideration must be given to how land reform policies are affected by other laws and practices, in particular, divorce and inheritance practices. Land laws would need to be harmonised with marriage and inheritance laws, so that women do not become more vulnerable when marriages break up or husbands die. Land reform programmes must give adequate attention to mainstreaming of gender concerns into land policy and implementation, be it in a customary or more formal context.

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