

Land Reform in War to Peace Transitions

Do Southern African experiences
have any relevance for Colombia?

Outline

- Why compare?
- No trade off between equity and efficiency?
- South Africa and Zimbabwe
- Another approach?
- Conclusion: an intelligent rebuttal of a stupid claim?

Unhappy Families:

Can we expect any comparative insight?

- “The land-conflict nexus” does not really exist
- Even within one country, there is no single land reform process
- And there is a great variety in how transitions from war to peace evolve...

War to peace transitions

- Variation is the rule
 - Variation in **whose** peace
 - Variation in how peaceful is peace - **violence rights**
- Variation in how societies & states address 3 challenges:
 - How to **pay** for the peace (peace is expensive)
 - How to **produce** peace
 - How to **work** for peace

- But do we have to agree with James Robinson that comparisons are, for Colombia, irrelevant?
- There is enough in common between Colombia's own history and recent experiences in Southern Africa to make a comparison relevant
- Where land *as* conflict and land *in* conflict are relevant, agrarian political economy is at the heart of war to peace transition

Justice and Efficiency

ARGUMENTS FOR (ABOUT) LAND REFORM AFTER VIOLENT CONFLICTS

Justice

- Justice must not only be done but it must be **seen to be done**
- Where conflict is 'framed' in terms of land, then peace may well be measured in terms of the perceived success of restitution, redistribution, and tenure reform

Land reform: working for peace?

- The fundamental economic argument rests on the IR – the inverse relationship between farm size and productivity per hectare
- The argument/explanation rests on the social efficiency of smaller farms – they use more labour per hectare and in labour abundant economies this is efficient.
- In war to peace contexts, this may also help build peace

Critique of the IR as the basis for post-war land reform

- The evidence is messy: it often holds but is not a universal law
- What is 'small'?
- Is there an assumption of homogeneous 'smallholder' sector vs big bad corporate?

Critique of the IR as the basis for post-war land reform

- What are the institutions and social relations that sustain the apparent efficiency in terms of labour absorption?
 - Is it efficient? Or is it an ‘over-allocation’ of labour to own farms?
 - Is it family labour or wage employment?
 - How do gender, age, and interlinked markets influence returns to labour?

Critique of the IR as the basis for post-war land reform

Land reform now takes place within a context of agrarian globalization

- the ‘global business revolution’ affects farming
- The industrialization of freshness leads to intense competition and makes small scale independent farming harder

=> Pauline Peters: the ‘most significant reassertion of the primacy of struggles over the global politics of land since the early 1950s’

Critique of the IR as the basis for post-war land reform

- Liberalization makes for tougher conditions for small farmers
- Contrast with the great successes of land reform, which are war to peace reforms: South Korea, Taiwan, Japan...
 - Fundamental to success was public investment and support

Troubled transitions

SOUTH AFRICA AND ZIMBABWE

South Africa:

‘narrative of loss and restoration’

- 1913 Native Land Act – institutionalized segregation: 87% of the land for whites (land *as* conflict)
- 1960-80 3.5 million people displaced (land *in* conflict)
- By 1990s 82 million ha owned by 60,000 white farmers

South Africa:

land reform 'on a road to nowhere'

- Target in 1994: transfer 24.6 million ha (30% white-owned land) by 1990
- By 1999 – 1 m ha transferred and target shifted to 2011 (then again to 2025)
- 1994-2014: 8 per cent transferred
- Restitution painfully slow; stuck in legal morass, rival claims
- Funds allocated have never been > 1% budget

=> a quantitative failure

LAND REFORM

THE PROSES

IS TO SLOW

±5% IN 16 YR

2.1 MILLION HA
FOR MA...

BE
NCE



The worst of all worlds

- Elite inclusion – beneficiaries are not the poor
- Redistributed land poorly farmed
- ‘cases of dramatic improvements are few and far between’
- In ‘successful’ lease-back schemes, 'flows of benefits to restitution claimants and land redistribution beneficiaries have been limited, and/or have been captured by a narrow segment of the people involved'

Failing to pay for peace; failing to work for peace

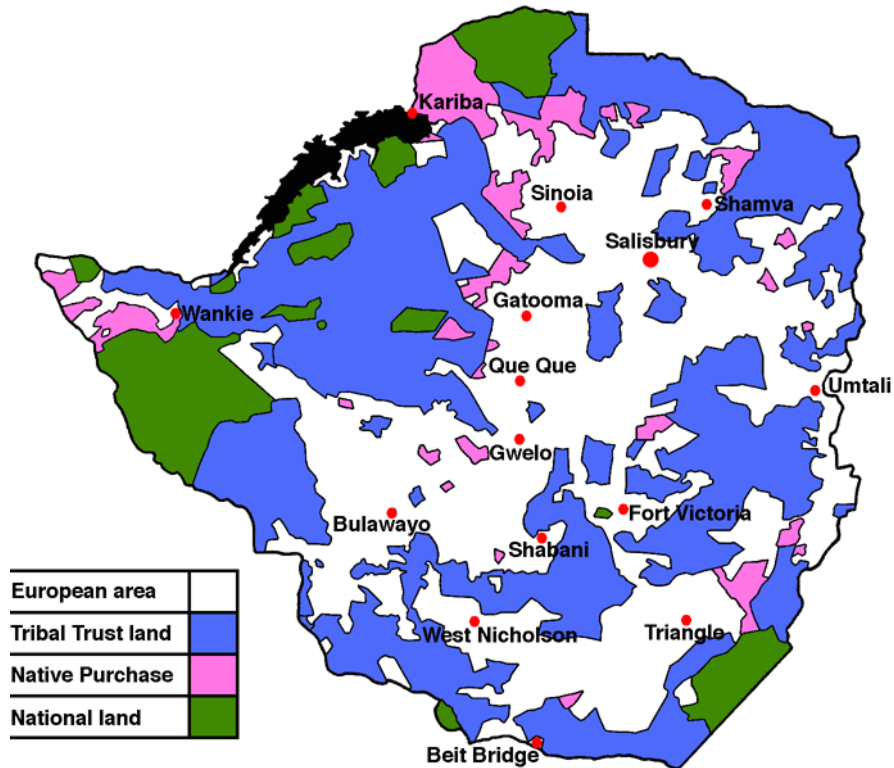
- Lack of support to large (increasingly concentrated) commercial agri-business
- Lack of support to 2.5 million households in the former 'bantustans', where people struggle to get by
- Astonishing lack of investment in rural infrastructure (irrigation, transport, power) and R&D
- Fall in rural wage employment

Zimbabwe:

Rounds 1&2 slow reform

- 6,000 white farmers on 42 per cent of the land by the end of the liberation war, 1980
 - 75% output
 - 96% sales
 - Two thirds of national formal wage employment
- 1980 Lancaster House: Land Reform and Resettlement Programme (willing seller/willing buyer, plus support)
- 20 years later, still a minority controlling 20 per cent of the land

Zimbabwe: Colonial land distribution



Zimbabwe:

justice *seen* to be done

- 2000-2010 maybe 10 million ha redistributed, often through violent occupations
 - 145,000 A1 and 20,000 A2 beneficiaries
 - Two dynamics
 - Govt tried to derive legitimacy from occupations but lost control to local politics of land reform
 - Land markets post-war extremely active, new elites
- => Politics & markets trump law & technical approach

Zimbabwe: whose restitution?

- Winners – heterogeneous group, in some areas a matter of patronage, and there productivity lowest; some beneficiaries losing out to new grabs by others
- Losers - ‘little doubt that farm workers lost out’ (Scoones, 2014) and they struggled with ‘uncertain and ambiguous power relations and threats from all sides’ (Rutherford, 2008)

Zimbabwe: outcomes

- some 'accumulation from below'
 - Rapid fall in output post-2000 for all crops
 - Difficult to attribute since overall economic crisis (40 per cent fall in GDP 2000-08)
- ⇒ again, failure to pay for, produce, or work for peace
- ⇒ If justice done, more about power/coercion than productivity and poverty reduction

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I GIVE UP...
DO YA MIND
SHOWING ME
HOW TO WORK
THIS THING?

Any alternative?

A major effort towards land restitution and tenure reform may be a fundamental condition of peace if justice is to be seen to be done.

President Santos: this is 'what the countryside needs; we have to do this with or without the FARC'.

i.e. peace is framed in terms of land

What justice, whose justice?

- But are property rights the embodiment of inclusive justice?
 - Without adequate investment & support
 - In a globally concentrated & industrialized agriculture
 - When the comparative (& historical) evidence suggests outcome will fall short of promises
 - (SA, Zim, Kenya, El Salvador...)

The state foundations of agrarian peace

- Public investment in infrastructure and R&D
- Incentives conditional on demonstrable gains in
 - Foreign exchange
 - Employment
 - tax
- ‘Reciprocal control mechanism’ especially important given land *in* conflict and war to peace dilemmas

Conclusions

- Post-war agrarian reform is political (national/local)
- ‘Beneficiaries’ is a heterogeneous group
 - Whose restitution?
 - Who is included, on what terms?
- The logic of markets may cut across the logic of redistribution
- Restitution and reform are typically slow and inadequate
- Access is as important as rights; and wage employment matters to agrarian reform as much as property rights

Is this reactionary?

- Albert Hirschman and the intransigence of debate. Robinson and the futility thesis.
- Ron Herring on the ‘impossibility theorem of agrarian reform’
- There is more than one way to skin the cat of agrarian progressive reform
- Ownership and property *rights* may be less important than the ‘bundle of powers’ associated with *access* (for farmers & workers & urban consumers)

