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Marewo, Malvern Kudakwashe

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Belonging and Agrarian Labour Exchanges in Zimbabwe: Navigating Between Communal Areas and Fast Track Villagised Settlements

Malvern Kudakwashe Marewo

Abstract

This article examines the nature of labour exchange between A1 farmers with people in communal areas of origin based on kinship and friendship relations. While agrarian labour in Zimbabwe has attracted considerable interest in land reform debates, limited attention has been paid to agrarian labour exchange and livelihoods based on belonging to communal areas of origin under the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP). Using a qualitative case study from Mashonaland West, Zimbabwe, I argue that belonging plays an important role in labour exchange and enabling livelihoods. This article illustrates that labour exchange in farm households still matter despite changes in land distribution and the economy. The article concludes that belonging-based labour exchange enhances agricultural production and livelihoods in a new land ownership and economic circumstances.

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Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town, Rondebosch, Western Cape, South Africa

Corresponding Author:
Malvern Kudakwashe Marewo, Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town, Building, UCT Upper Campus, Harry Oppenheimer Institute Building, Rondebosch, Western Cape, 7701, South Africa.
Email: marewokm@gmail.com

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Introduction

Zimbabwe's fast-track land reform programme (FTLRP) of 2000 is one of the most radical state-led land reforms in sub-Saharan Africa to date (Marewo, 2019). FTLRP led to the transfer of land from mostly white-owned farmers to black small-scale (A1) and medium-scale farmers (A2) under two models reconfiguring patterns of land ownership (Moyo, 2011; Scoones et al., 2010). The A1 model had two variants; the self-contained and the villagised. Focus of this article is on the A1 villagised variant which allocated individual plots to beneficiaries who subdivided land for arable, household and grazing use (GoZ, 2001). The FTLRP in Zimbabwe was led by war veterans, with the social base comprising largely of people from communal areas (Moyo and Yeros, 2005). As a result, a large number of beneficiaries of the A1villagised model originated from communal areas that maintain linkages with their places of origin (Marewo, 2019; Murisa, 2009; Scoones et al., 2010).

Although much attention has been paid to the nature, social, political and agricultural characterisation of fast-track land reform (Chipenda, 2019; Mkodzongi, 2016; Mutopo, 2014; Moyo, 2010; Scoones et al., 2010), agrarian labour exchanges and belonging and its role in rural livelihoods in A1 villagised agricultural settlements in Zimbabwe have received limited attention. Post-FTLRP, the texture of agrarian labour in resettlement areas has evolved and exhibits more nuanced labour arrangements than before (Chambati, 2011, 2017; Marewo, 2020, 2022). Labour exchanges in communal areas in Zimbabwe are not a new phenomenon, in resettlement areas, labour exchanges illustrate the diversified nature of farm labour. While post-FTLRP agrarian labour has been discussed in several studies (Scoones et al., 2010; Chambati, 2017; Shonhe et al., 2022), what is mostly missing is the importance of labour exchanges based on belonging in enhancing livelihoods. Thus, this article investigates dynamics of labour exchanges and belonging with communities of origin and how this enhances livelihoods capabilities. The study demonstrates that belonging is materialised and strengthened through interactions at various levels, such as labour exchanges, which is the focus of this article.

In understanding belonging, Mujere (2011: 1125) defines belonging as "a relational concept which entails, among other things, attachment to a group, place or other categories." Thus, belonging is through the attachment to groups or people in places of origin. While belonging is an important element in rural and agrarian communities, there is a need to examine its role in enabling labour exchanges between communal areas and A1 villagised settlements. This is done using a case study of Mashonaland West, Zvimba District, focusing on beneficiaries on Machiroli Farm (A1 Villagised farm) and people in adjacent communal areas. Equally, labour exchanges are conceptualised as a joint performance by one or more individuals performing a task or series of related tasks under a minimal division of labour, whose relationship to the beneficiary

is known (Moore, 2005). In this article, I argue that belonging plays an important role in mobilising labour exchanges and enabling livelihoods.

The article is organised into five sections. The next section begins by providing a conceptual framing of labour exchanges and belonging. It illustrates how belonging is at the centre of mobilising labour exchanges between beneficiaries of the FTLRP, farm workers and people in communal areas. The second section discusses labour exchanges and livelihoods in Zimbabwe. The section that follows then proceeds to provide empirical material from the case study, illustrating how people in small-scale settlements and communal areas use labour exchanges to provide livelihoods. The fourth section discusses the implication of labour exchanges and belonging to people's livelihoods in agrarian societies. The last section of the article then concludes that belonging plays an important role in enhancing livelihoods, particularly in cases where there are labour exchanges.

Belonging and Labour Exchanges

Antonsich (2010) notes that social scientists commonly use the term belonging yet they know very little on what the concept stands for and how belonging is claimed. Despite the use of belonging across various studies such as history, political science, sociology, and critical theory, belonging remains a contested term (Anthias, 2006: 19). More so, belonging is also influenced by social, political, and economic factors through which access to various rights and resources, such as land, are sought and contested (Koot et al., 2019). The concept of "belonging" is central to the discussion of contemporary social issues, such as migration, translocation and cultural diversity amongst other factors. Belonging is based on a range of factors, including shared interests, values, beliefs, cultural, social status, and physical location. In this case, belonging is important in accessing labour in agrarian settings. Belonging is not a static phenomenon, but a set of processes that are central to the way human relationships are conducted. There is a range of actions associated with belonging, which are imbued with politics, emotions, and symbols.

Antonsich (2010) argues that belonging is known as a place where a person feels at home. For many people, home is the primary source of belonging that provides a sense of stability, safety, and familiarity, while the social and emotional connections of home provide a sense of belonging and identity (Mallett, 2004). Molz (2008) define home as the normative signifier of stability to a particular place where the transportable sentiments of comfort, security, familiarity, and control, being and belonging in the world as a whole are present. Easthope (2004) argues that belonging is the psychological state of well-being experienced by the subject as the result of the mere presence, vicinity or accessibility to a particular place. Mallett (2004) defines home as a familial realm that is differentiated from public space and removed from public scrutiny and surveillance.

Although belonging is a multifaceted concept that is defined differently by scholars, for this article, it "entails rootedness or being attached to a place being an indigene or having roots in a certain place as opposed to being a stranger" (Mujere, 2011: 1126). This also encompasses experiences or being part of a social fabric, social bonds and ties manifested in practices, experiences, and emotions of inclusion (Geschiere and

Nyamnjoh, 2000; Nyamnjoh, 2006; Nyamnjoh and Brudvig, 2014). Belonging, thus, is more relational as an attachment to the land and people, and also covers familial ties, and general social networks (Murray, 1980). Family ties comprise a person, their immediate kin and or agnatic lineage or wider kindred (Murray, 1980). The family unit also includes the extended family, which is the traditional social security system responsible for the transmission of skills, and knowledge and taking care of those in need (Kalusopa et al., 2012). These networks are important in accessing labour in communal areas for people in resettlement areas.

In the case study, family ties are important for access to labour from communal areas. The family consists of a person, his or her immediate relatives and/or the agnatic line or wider kin (Marewo, 2020; Murray, 1980). The nuclear family although not limited to includes bloodlines, totems and marital ties. In communal areas, the notion of an extended family network is not linear and also goes beyond bloodlines, totems, and marital ties. In some cases, the kinship-based familial relationships that exist in African families are influenced by cultural ties such as totems. The family thus remains one of the most important ways in which the concept of belonging is revealed. Belonging through kinship networks or family ties that connect the different members was considered important by the respondents.

Friendships and community members are valuable in affirming belonging. Social networks are "relationships outside those of immediate kin, upon which an individual can rely" (Murray, 1980: 148). Social networks constitute relational ties which denote social and personal connections that enrich the life of an individual in a given place (Antonsich, 2010). Social networks based on belonging play a key role in accessing human and social capital. These relations happen in the spatiality which includes relations in social, geographical and temporal spaces (Lähdesmäki et al., 2016). Examples of spatialities include "homes, domestic spaces, neighbourhoods, suburbs, villages or urban spaces, regions, countries, and continents" (Lähdesmäki et al., 2016: 236). These spaces are important in enabling labour exchanges within communities as in most places it is where belonging is claimed. Thus, belonging to a place becomes very similar to belonging to a group. Spatial belonging is linked to the attachment to a place called "home." Antonsich (2010) further states that place of a home can be manifested in numerous ways that include language, physical space, practices, memories, food, religion, and history. Thus, the multi-faceted nature of belonging for beneficiaries of land reform is an important element in mobilising labour exchanges with people in communal areas thereby enabling livelihoods.

Agrarian Labour Exchanges and Livelihoods

Most of the labour exchanges in rural agrarian societies are facilitated through reciprocity (Berry, 1993; Collier and Garg, 1995; Kranton, 1996; Leavy and White, 1999). Agrarian societies in Africa are mostly mixed between farming and non-farming activities and dependent on the same labour (Leavy and White, 1999). In these agrarian households, most households depend on close neighbours and relatives to enable agricultural

production and off-farm livelihoods (Tsurata, 2005). Labour exchange arrangements allow poor households to participate in labour arrangements for mutual obligations and to enhance livelihoods (Moore, 1975). Cox and Fafchamps (2007) posit that, in several African countries, labour exchanges by relatives and friends contribute to the livelihood and survival of households. These relations are based on both kin and non-kin relationships as support systems.

Labour exchanges are conceptualised as labour provided through group or individual arrangements both as kin and not related. Assistance is provided mostly either by an immediate payment system or a non-payment system, which will be reciprocated in future. Although labour exchanges often occur within groups in the same locality, in this article, labour exchanges are examined between people in communal areas and A1 small-scale villagised settlements. These labour exchanges are important in several African countries where most rural people live (Hanmer et al., 1999).

It is important to state that labour exchanges occur in various forms such as "wage labour, agency contract, provision of personalised services, self-employment, trade" (Leavy and White, 1999: 8). Further, Moore (1975) states that labour exchanges can be in multiple forms, such as traditional work parties, reciprocal labour, and collective labour, with people that have a shared connection. Moore defines these labour exchanges as

> [t]he joint performance of a task, or series of sequentially related tasks, by a group of persons practising a minimal division of labour whose relationship to the beneficiary . . . of their work is other than that of the employer to an employee. (Moore, 1975: 271)

There are some scholars, such as Berry (1993), Ponte (2000) and Suehara (2006), who argue that labour exchanges are mostly between people, who are based in communal areas, however these extend to land reform areas. Labour exchanges are closely attached to a sense of belonging because in some cases, these exchanges are through group or individual arrangements both as kin and not related. This group includes family members, an assertion made by Duncan and Howell (1992: 10) that in countries such as Kenya, Malawi, Ghana and Madagascar most rural households hire out family labour, either on a seasonal or more permanent basis and earn other livelihoods from non-agricultural livelihoods. These views show that although labour exchanges often occur within groups, they mostly occur among people that share a sense of belonging, as they are at the centre of several relationships.

Farmers in rural Zimbabwe, as in other southern African countries, mostly rely on a variety of livelihoods, which in most cases are a combination of agricultural and non-agricultural livelihoods (Lahiff, 2007). Land is an important asset associated with multiple livelihoods, especially for agricultural livelihoods and non-agricultural activities. The various agricultural livelihoods include cropping and livestock. There are few cases of farmers in Southern Africa living solely off their land, especially in communal areas, as in Zimbabwe (Scoones et al., 1996: 3). People in rural agrarian communities diversify their livelihoods as noted by Kinsey (2002: 621) "so that farm income increases, or ... out of agriculture into rural activities that are not so badly affected by a poor

growing season." This diversification also includes livestock farms and artisanal mining among other activities.

Hargreaves et al. (2004) state that livestock is central in the communal area households, providing manure to improve crop output in addition to draught power. More so, cattle provide meat and milk, which are used for domestic use and for gaining income (Hargreaves et al., 2004). As Van Schendel (2015) argues, agricultural labour is mainly used for cultivation, harvesting, livestock rearing and also for off-farm activities. Other households sell their labour for agrarian activities, and still, others substitute with selling natural resources, such as firewood and wild fruits, apart from using the natural resources only for domestic purposes (Marewo, 2020). Livelihoods in communal areas are split between meeting the subsistence needs of the households and supplementing household income (Mushongah and Scoones, 2012; Paradza, 2010).

In post-FTLRP Zimbabwe, access to land in resettlement areas has transformed the agrarian labour relations insofar as who sells or hires labour (Bernstein, 2010; Chambati, 2013; Moyo, 2011). These labour relations have resulted in labour exchanges between beneficiaries of the FTLRP in A1 villagised settlements and other people in adjacent communal areas. Labour exchanges can be categorised into two main categories; that is, public and private purposes. Matsumoto (2009) argues that labour exchanges are firstly for providing mutual help for public purposes, including activities for building and maintaining public facilities, such as village roads, school buildings, irrigation canals, meeting places, mosques, public squares, public ponds, public graveyards, and natural springs. The second category is mostly based on the notion of reciprocity: either short-term reciprocation is given and/or received immediately or long-term, when that reciprocation will be given or received during/after a longer period. These reciprocations are either cash, labour or goods (Matsumoto, 2009; Subejo dan Iwamoto, 2003).

Although Berry, asserts that "despite the continued prevalence of family labour on small-scale African farms, farmers' ability to mobilize labour through customary social institutions and relationships has declined over time" (1993: 138–139). Other scholars, such as Geschiere (1995), argue that there is a link between labour exchanges, which are tied to the social fabric [belonging], that is not always limited to kin but extends to people outside kinship relations. Ponte (2000) states that, although hired labour is easy to recruit, in cases such as Zvimba, where access to financial resources to hire labour is scarce, households must maintain ties with kin to access labour. Thus, shared labour among people that have a shared belonging is used to analyse the labour exchanges.

Methodology

This study used a qualitative approach based on a case study in Zvimba District, Mashonaland West to understand and interpret the everyday occurrences, situations, societal frameworks, and the significance individuals assign to these occurrences [belonging and labour exchanges] (Krauss, 2015: 766). This approach privileges the narrative viewpoint, that is, the lived experience of the subject and the importance attributed to the

phenomena (Scoones et al., 2010). In particular, the study was conducted in Machiroli A1 villagised farm located and adjacent ward 6 communal areas in Zvimba District. The location of Machiroli Farm and ward 6 communal areas were selected because they were easily accessible. The farm has 28 beneficiaries, and interviews were conducted with eight beneficiaries and six farm workers living on the farm and eight households from communal areas. Purposive sampling was used for the study, this allowed to select respondents that contained the required information on labour exchanges and belonging. The selection of respondents on Machiroli Farm was based on availability, on the need to balance gender, age and class. Furthermore, seven government officials and four traditional authorities (the Village Head, the Headman and the Chief) were interviewed. The field research was conducted through interviews between August 2017 and January 2020 by the author as part of a doctoral study. Follow-up interviews were conducted between June and May 2021 to deepen the case study narrative. Pseudonyms were used to maintain anonymity.

The research also benefited from observations around the farm, this was used because it helped to provide in-depth and rich understanding into labour exchanges, belonging social issues, and labour practices. Through everyday interactions and observations, I was able to establish trust. The activities I participated in, such as farming, herding cattle, attending church services, funerals, and socialising, all contributed to the building of relationships. These provided a preview of the nature of labour exchanges, agricultural production, and social-relations transactions. In addition, to further strengthen insights secondary sources such as government reports and policies were also reviewed.

The data was transcribed into English from interviews which were mostly conducted in the Shona language and photographs, into a computer. In the English transcriptions, where emphasis was required, direct quotes were in the local language, Shona. Themes were generated using NVIVO, a software for qualitative data analysis. The narratives were sorted into thematic categories and into finer sub-categories, which were mainly focussed on belonging, labour exchanges and agricultural production. Despite providing significant insights, these findings cannot be generalised to the whole of Zimbabwe from this case study.

The Texture of Labour Exchanges: the Case Study of Zvimba District

Farms, such as Machiroli Farm, for many years after independence, continued to be owned by a few white commercial farmers. On the 19th of November 2000, spearheaded by war veterans and supported by people from Zvimba communal areas, Machiroli farm was invaded. Unlike in other parts of Zimbabwe, the invasion process was not violent. After the farm invasions, there was a negotiated process of eviction with the former white farm owner which allowed him to conclude his operations and leave the farm after harvesting his crops. After negotiations between the A1 beneficiaries and the Ministry of Lands, the farm workers who lived on the farm compound were granted permission to continue staying on the farm. Respondents on A1 farms indicated that there

were limited relationships with former farm workers before the FTLRP, but most social relationships were established after the FTLRP.

After the FTLRP, the relations on Machiroli Farm were transformed, as ownership had mostly changed to inhabitants from mostly adjacent communal areas. Beneficiaries originated from surrounding wards such as Wards 1, 3, 5, 6 and 28 close to Machiroli Farm. while the remaining three, including the chairman of the farm, were from areas outside Zvimba. However, 15 of the beneficiaries originated from ward 6.

Agricultural Production and Labour Exchanges

Allocation of land to A1 farmers on Machiroli Farm by people from communal areas implied access to more land and the production of crops. People on Machiroli Farm engage in several agricultural activities, such as the production of maize, tobacco, legumes, small grains, and livestock. On average, households interviewed in Ward 6 communal areas have one-and-a-half hectares of arable land. While, on Machiroli Farm, households have an average of 6 hectares of arable land and 14 hectares of grazing land. The increase in farm size in A1 settlements implied an effect on the amount of labour that the households required. Labour exchanges are mostly for maize and tobacco production as they are the most prominent activity on Machiroli Farm.

The acquisition of land through the FTLRP enabled most beneficiaries to engage in tobacco production on various scales. Most beneficiaries that relocated to Machiroli Farm ventured into tobacco production, which, for most of them, was a lucrative agricultural farming option. When the FTLRP began, most of the A1 farmers had limited knowledge about farming tobacco; in most cases, assistance in growing tobacco was provided by agricultural extension officers and some former farmworkers. This was stated by a respondent), who noted that

> Agricultural extension officers assisted with information, some of it on seeding and curing tobacco. In the early days, labour for grading and curing tobacco was mostly offered by former farmworkers on Machiroli Farm who were more knowledgeable about tobacco. However, most labour-intensive activities utilised household labour, including relatives from communal areas. Most households on Machiroli Farm received assistance for their tobacco production from communal areas, in some cases, for exchanges of monetary or material gifts. In most cases, some of the financial output from tobacco production is remitted to communal areas where we assist families. (Interview with Mr T.X., Machiroli Farm, 2019)

Although most former farmworkers provide temporary labour to these households, in most cases, it is for grading and harvesting of tobacco as illustrated above. Family ties with the communal areas have been the dominant source of labour for tobacco production.

The economic challenges in Zimbabwe have negatively affected both communal areas and A1 farmers. Some of the challenges, such as limited access to money from the banks, make it difficult to pay for services associated with agricultural production, like fertilisers,

seeds and labour. Respondents on Machiroli largely rely on household labour and labour from extended family members to avoid the high labour costs charged by former farm workers. In most cases, household labour is utilised for harvesting, cutting down trees for fuel used in drying barns/furnaces, and harvesting and baling tobacco. In some cases, members of the extended family from communal areas assist with their labour. This was emphasised by respondents. One respondent related the following:

> I cannot afford to pay the former farm workers. As a result, I work with my family and relatives in the communal areas. Although they do not have a lot of experience in tobacco, I see this as a way that my family saves money on labour. (Interview with Mrs T.A., Machiroli Farm, May 2021)

Another respondent further highlighted the following:

> I do not have to pay for everything in tobacco production, and I have my brothers from the communal areas with whom we work as partners. This reduces the cost and expenses of tobacco production. (Interview with Mr T.A., Machiroli Farm, October 2017)

This was also emphasised by a respondent who said:

> I requested my sister's son, who had nothing to do in the communal areas, to come [and] help me. Since I am a widow, he works as the manly figure in the household and mostly on the manual tobacco production. (Interview with Mrs B., Machiroli Farm, January 2018)

The strong sense of belonging among the people of Machiroli is mainly linked to the family networks in the communal areas that provide labour for tobacco cultivation on Machiroli Farm. Even though households employ labour from the extended family, this alone is not enough to meet the demands of the crop and the time constraints. In most cases, the former farm labourers are brought in as paid labourers with their technical skills, such as in sorting tobacco.

Labour exchanges on Machiroli Farm are well illustrated by tobacco production. Tobacco is a labour-intensive crop that requires a lot of work, and several households use labour on the farm and some from neighbouring communal areas. A household on Machiroli Farm illustrates how labour exchange works on A1 farms. M.Y.'s household consists of husband and wife, their two daughters, the sons of his two brothers from neighbouring communal areas, a niece and two grandchildren. Tobacco cultivation is very labour-intensive and production starts as early as June with the preparation of the seedbed. Mr M.Y. explained that his wife's relatives from the neighbouring communal areas help with tobacco cultivation

Mr M.Y. explained that his wife's niece (from ward 6) is the one who comes to help most often. Observation revealed that most women are involved in tobacco cultivation, such as planting, pest control through fumigation with pesticides and fungicides, and fertiliser application, which apart from planting is done at various stages of harvesting and is

a crucial component of cultivation. Family labour is usually used for these repetitive activities. On Machiroli Farm, another respondent confirmed this:

> For cultivation, pest control and application of fertilisers, we normally work as a family. I prefer to ask for help from the family in communal areas. Of course, it brings challenges, such as the quality of work being reduced, but you are guaranteed that you can meet the deadlines before the rains disappear. Even some of my neighbours here depend on their extended family from their communal area's villages, who come to assist them. (Interview with Mr Z.V., Machiroli Farm, January 2018)

The M.Y. household harvests its crop five times a season. Most of the tobacco is planted in October and the harvest begins in January. Harvesting takes place in different stages: stumps, cuttings, leaves and crowns are harvested, while the ground leaves [primings] are discarded in most cases. Tobacco leaves are stored in a barn (where the tobacco is cured) before curing begins. Usually, labour is required for transporting tobacco leaves as well as harvesting the tobacco crop. Mrs M.Y. explained:

> In the first days, we used to hire former farmworkers because of [their] experience. Yes, I must agree they have a lot of knowledge about tobacco production, but over the years we have managed to become equally knowledgeable. However, after they realised that their knowledge is sought after, the amounts they charge are too expensive. Therefore, I decided to take my nieces, who finished school and are no longer doing anything, to come [and] help me. After harvesting, I give them a token to appreciate them. (Interview with Mrs M.Y., Machiroli Farm, January 2018)

The importance of belonging manifests through accessing the labour of family members in communal areas, which above all allows the cost of tobacco production to be reduced.

In comparison to other crops, the farmers interviewed stated that the financial returns from tobacco cultivation were better compared to other crops. Mr T.O.B. stated that part of the financial returns from tobacco cultivation is remitted to his parents in the communal areas. Other respondents concurred:

> The thing that I love about tobacco production is that the returns are good. Over the past years, the output and the payments have been good. Last season, the output that we had was good. Even though I have relocated, I remain connected to my parents in communal reserves. I was able to send my parents money and maize. Through tobacco production, I have been able to take care of my parents. (Interview with Mr T.O.B., Machiroli Farm, February 2018)

This was further highlighted by another respondent, who had this to say:

> One of the things I have learnt over the years is that family is important. God has been faithful to give me this lucrative tobacco farm. With the help of my extended family in communal areas, I have been able to get good returns. From the proceeds of my tobacco production, I have been able to pay [school] fees for my niece and nephew in communal areas. Through this crop, I have managed to make sure that my family is taken care of. (Interview with Mr T.R., Machiroli Farm, October 2017)

Mrs S.V also stated the following:

> I am a beneficiary of tobacco production. My children on Machiroli Farm, after every season, make sure that they send me money or food. I have realised that the FTLRP is also benefiting us as parents, particularly through tobacco production. Every year my children ensure that they send me something after every tobacco harvest. (Interview with Mrs S.V., Ward 6, May 2018)

Lastly, another respondent corroborated by stating the following:

> I do not want to lie, my brother; tobacco has been a blessing to us. Of course, not all the years are the same, but if I compare where I was and where I am now, there is a vast difference. As much as we are prospering, I have not forgotten my roots and where I belong. *Kumusha hakuchinje vabereki tinobatsira.* [Our home never changes, and we must continue taking care of parents in communal areas]. (Interview with Mr E., Machiroli Farm, November 2017)

As I have shown above, tobacco production has multiple benefits, firstly for the farmers on Machiroli and, secondly, for the family in communal areas as they received remittances from Machiroli Farm. The attachment and sense of belonging to communal areas facilitate the extension of benefits acquired from tobacco production to family members there.

Additionally, A1 households can negotiate wages with farm workers thanks to the social relations that have developed over time between former farm workers and farmers. Payments are usually made after the tobacco has been auctioned. While former farm workers are hired, the links and sense of belonging with communal areas of origin enable people to access labour. Whilst no monetary value can be attached to family labour, households acknowledged the importance of family labour from communal areas in the production of tobacco.

Although most of the land on Machiroli Farm has been dedicated to tobacco production, maize is equally an important crop. In Zvimba, as some respondents noted, maize is a staple food grown by several households. Maize plays an important role in rural households; it is used for household consumption, and family functions, as fodder for livestock, for barter trade, as food for labour and as a means of payment for labour. While other crops, such as tobacco, yield a higher financial return, maize provides food security as well as a means of payment for labour and barter. Due to the importance of this crop, it attracts labour from both communal areas and the former labour area of farmers. In

particular, households in communal areas that help with their labour receive maize as a token of appreciation. Households mostly rely on the labour of their families for production on the farms.

A1 farmers on Machiroli rely on different sources of labour for maize production. Belonging based on totemic and family relations is important in providing labour for household maize production. Households value totemic and familial relations in most cases, even when families live in both communal and A1 settlements. These family totemic networks help households to avert risks and pool their resources. One respondent noted the following:

> We as the *Gushungo* clan, are one. Whether one is in the A1 settlements, when they want help, we assist each other. (Interview with Mr M.U.T., Ward 6, 9 November 2017)

On Machiroli Farm labour requirements for the maize crop are differentiated depending on the nature of the household. The process includes planting, weeding, harvesting, shelling and storage. Maize cultivation starts in October when the rains begin, and this is preceded by the preparation of the fields, which comprises the use of hoes and ox-drawn ploughs. Households, with financial means hire agricultural equipment like tractors that is owned by the Machiroli irrigation scheme. Hiring the tractor costs an average of seventy (US) dollars per hectare and the farmer has to buy the fuel for the tractor which is beyond the reach of several farmers. As a result, most of the households do not hire a tractor; instead, they rely on family or hired labour using ox-drawn ploughs. Observations showed that tasks such as tilling the land were done by nuclear family labour. In a few cases, this included a member of the extended family from the communal areas, who would also assist with the planting of maize. A local Headman on Machiroli explained:

> We have [a] couple of households that receive assistance from families in communal areas during the harvest season. As you know, everyone would be focusing on his or her field. Those that come mostly work on a reciprocity basis. I have realised that most of these are paid in the form of maize. (Interview with Local Headman, Machiroli Farm, December 2017)

I observed in Machiroli Farm, that mostly nuclear families performed most tasks with minimal assistance from the extended families in communal areas.

The Grain Marketing Board (GMB) is the official institution that buys maize from farmers. The lack of money in the banks has led farmers to sell to side marketers who buy maize at lower prices than they are paid by the GMB. To pay for the labour used, most respondents said they sold some of their maize, to secondary marketers. More often, stored maize is shared or exchanged for favours with other family members in communal areas. Various respondents commented on this practice:

> We share our maize crop with our family members; in most cases, we send maize to our parents. Whenever I visit, I make sure I take something with me to my parents and my brothers' family, who often help me. (Interview with Mrs S.V., Machiroli Farm, 5 May 2018)

> The grain we store here is used to exchange for favours with our relatives in communal areas. Obviously, I harvest better yields than them, so, for me to continue maize production, they assist me here. I must admit, at times, it's a cheaper option, but I must beg at times for them to come even though they also benefit (Interview with Mrs Z.M., Machiroli Farm, 17 February 2018).

> I have realised that receiving this farm has helped my family. In most cases, people in the communal areas have poor soils. We came here because of better soils, and, because of that, we have managed to have better yields, as well as to supplement our families with maize. (Interview with Mr Z., Machiroli Farm, September 2017)

The quotations above illustrate that, in addition to the assistance provided during the production of maize, the gifts of maize by people on Machiroli reinforce the relations with places of origin. Maize production plays a key role in enabling labour exchanges with people from communal areas. As I have shown in this section, maize provides labour and food supplements. Belonging has been important for A1 households that benefit from labour from communal households. In turn, communal areas also benefit through remittances of maize and financial benefits.

This evidence illustrated here shows that belonging enhances access to agrarian labour. Analysis of data shows that the practice of recruiting labour from communal areas is still prevalent. Labour is provided in exchange for goods, money or services. Analysis of evidence, as illustrated above, reveals that labour from communal areas of origin is preferred because they are largely deemed as honest, cheap and loyal. Thus, labour exchanges enable both A1 farmers to benefit from labour while, at the same time, sharing the proceeds in various ways with communal areas of origin.

Given the economic meltdown in Zimbabwe, labour exchanges are engaged to avert the use of monetary transactions. This is very useful for most A1 settlers, who find it difficult to access money from banks. It also emerged as a strategy for most cash-strapped A1 households. Connections with places of origin enabled the provision of a cheaper alternative to hiring labour from former farm workers.

For some, the sense of belonging has been weakened. Even though several households still maintain social ties with communal areas of origin, the economic environment coupled with the financial crisis has affected the family fabric in Zimbabwe to some extent. Some families focus on the nuclear family and care less about the extended family. Both A1 and communal households acknowledged that the economy has affected the rural family structure as most families are slowly focusing on the nuclear family. Other respondents felt that employing a large number of family members from communal areas would affect their crops and profits, so they focused on using only labourers on Machiroli Farm.

Evidence from this study shows that labour exchange on Machiroli Farm is not confined to one particular area. Although much of the labour flows from communal areas to Machiroli Farm, people at Machiroli Farm indicated that they provided labour for their families in communal areas. However, this was done on a limited scale. Evidence

from this study illustrates that labour exchanges by people on Machiroli Farm are not limited to one area. Although much of the labour flows largely from communal areas to Machiroli Farm, people on Machiroli Farm stated that they provide labour to their families in communal areas. However, this was on a limited scale. A respondent stated that

> [a]lthough time is always [a] challenge for farmers. When we have time, we go and assist our families [parents] in the communal areas on their fields. My wife normally goes to assist my parents. (Interview with Mr S., Machiroli Farm, March 2018)

Another respondent stated that

> [b]ecause of the short distance that is between Machiroli and our communal village, it is easier to commute. When I am done cultivating I send my cattle to my brother to cultivate his plot. This is normally done by my children. (Interview with Mrs S.B., Machiroli Farm, March 2018)

This also illustrates that through maintaining belonging labour exchanges happen between people on Machiroli Farm and their communal areas of origin.

The narratives above show that these labour exchange arrangements allow poor households to participate in labour arrangements for mutual obligations. Although these arrangements are prone to the exploitation of relatives that provide labour, they serve as a survival strategy, while resettled households are eliminated, or reduced. costs associated with hiring labour from former farm workers. Essentially, data presented here show that a strong sense of belonging among people in resettlement areas and communal areas plays a critical role in mitigating risks, such as food shortages.

Agrarian Labour Exchanges and Livelihoods

The views of respondents collected for this case study illustrate that belonging plays a key role in facilitating labour exchange. Insights from this case show how people are increasingly engaging in forms of self-reliance such as agriculture to reproduce themselves through various forms of small-scale production and wage labour, which are becoming increasingly scarce. Bernstein (2010) locates the reproductive pressures faced by small-scale farmers today in the global reality of the increasing (structural) fragmentation of "classes of labour," by which he means a group of people who are directly and indirectly dependent on the sale of their labour power for their daily reproduction.

To access labour in communal areas, households, through belonging, engage extended families in communal areas in return for payments in cash or goods. Labour exchange in this case study reveal the array of transactions, informal and formal, which assist people. Equally, in Masvingo District, Scoones et al. (2010: 9–10) also states that formal channels of production miss the array of barter exchange and informal, sometimes illegal, transactions that go on. In addition, focusing on employed labour does not assess the different informal arrangements for acquiring labour, through family links, communal

arrangements, exchanges, and other informal systems. Thus, the narratives from this case demonstrated how the exchange of labour contributes towards household livelihoods, this concurs with scholars such as Hanmer et al. (1999) who states that in Sub Saharan Africa informal labour exchange is common.

The analysis of insights demonstrated in this case study illustrates that labour exchanges enhance agricultural production. More specifically, in cases where there is proximity, there is increased assistance from places of origin and strengthening of relations. However, other scholars, such as Berry (1993), argue that "despite the continued prevalence of family labour on small-scale African farms, farmers' ability to mobilize labour through customary social institutions and relationships has declined over time" (1993: 138–139). Although Berry argues that there has been a decline in labour exchanges, evidence from this study provides a different picture. Despite these challenges, evidence from Zvimba shows that labour exchanges strategies reduce the immediate financial cost of hiring farm labour (Cox and Fafchamps, 2007), which is often expensive, thus labour exchanges attest to the strong relations and sense of belonging that beneficiaries of the FTLRP seem to maintain.

Analysis of narratives also shows that belonging is through affiliation and collective action, which is a basis for labour exchanges often reliant on recognised characteristics of birth, ethnicity, or location. Morse and McNamara (2013) state that, in certain instances, affiliation may be revealed through shared labour, life experiences or intense socialisation. Scholars, such as Moyo (2009), (Moyo and Paris, 2013), state that, in other parts of Zimbabwe, labour from extended families continues to be provided to resettlement areas, with districts in the southern part of Zimbabwe relying on 81 per cent of labour from extended families. Post-FTLRP, the tendency to recruit labour from customary areas is still prevalent. This has been present in other studies in other parts of Zvimba also demonstrate that beneficiaries were engaged in the practice (see Chambati, 2009, 2013).

Labour exchange in this case is particularly one of the numerous survival strategies for households in communal and resettlement areas to maintain family links (Cox and Fafchamps, 2007). Labour exchanges also illustrate that in resettlement areas there is the extension of a communal way of life in A1 farms. Kinship relationships continue to be the fundamental structure through which kinship members can help one another in terms of finances, farming endeavours, and ceremonial events. Labour exchanges thus show the agency of land reform beneficiaries to remain connected and are relevant in the broader social fabric, which is anchored in communal areas or places of origin. Analysis of data from this case study indicates that, while resettled households primarily depend on family labour, labour exchange is used to supplement family labour and increase productivity.

Conclusion

This article has shown that the exchange of labour is important in earning a livelihood. This exchange of labour is common in rural Africa, much more common than previously

thought. The nuances in labour exchange are a transition that is partly determined by local and regional norms and other social constraints. Households, as individuals and as part of a community embedded in social relations, can transform old traditional institutions into new modified institutions that offer them advantages and enhance their livelihoods. To deal with the changes brought on by shifting land ownership and economic difficulties, it is crucial to have a strong sense of community, particularly kinship, neighbourhood, and friendship. Thus, this case study has shown the importance of agricultural labour in rural Africa and the prevalence of labour exchange. The study has shown that labour exchange remains very common in rural Africa. When kinship and neighbourhood relations overlap, the proximity of residences facilitates mutual support between relatives and neighbours. Just as in the areas of finance, agriculture, and ceremonial activities, belonging and social relations act as a way through which friends and kin members can support each other in the provision of agrarian labour.

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Author Biography

Malvern Kudakwashe Marewo is a Post-Doctoral Fellow at the Centre for African Studies (CAS) at the University of Cape Town, South Africa. His areas of research and publication include land reform, belonging and translocation, agrarian labour and livelihoods, land governance and displacement.

Zugehörigkeit und landwirtschaftlicher Arbeitsaustausch in Simbabwe: Pendeln zwischen kommunalen Gebieten und dörflichen Schnellspursiedlungen

Zusammenfassung

Dieser Artikel untersucht die Art der Arbeitsvermittlung zwischen A1-Landwirten und Menschen aus kommunalen Gebieten auf der Grundlage von Verwandtschafts- und Freundschaftsbeziehungen. Während die Landarbeit in Simbabwe in der Landreformdebatte auf großes Interesse gestoßen ist, wurde der Vermittlung von Landarbeitern und deren Lebensunterhalt auf der Grundlage der Zugehörigkeit zu kommunalen Herkunftsgebieten im Rahmen des Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) nur wenig Aufmerksamkeit geschenkt. Anhand einer qualitativen Fallstudie aus Mashonaland West, Simbabwe, argumentiert der Autor, dass Zugehörigkeit eine wichtige Rolle beim Arbeitsaustausch und der Schaffung einer Existenzgrundlage spielt. Dieser Artikel zeigt, dass der Arbeitsaustausch in ländlichen Haushalten trotz Veränderungen in der Landverteilung und der Wirtschaft immer noch von Bedeutung ist. Der Artikel kommt zu dem Schluss, dass ein auf Zugehörigkeit basierender Arbeitsaustausch die landwirtschaftliche Produktion und die Existenzgrundlage mit neuem Landbesitz und unter neuen wirtschaftlichen Bedingungen verbessert.

Schlagwörter

Simbabwe, Landwirtschaft, Zugehörigkeit, Arbeitsaustausch, Existenzgrundlage, soziale Beziehungen