



Trip Report: SOUTHERN AFRICA

Zimbabwe: March 4-25, 2001

By Ragan Petrie

PURPOSE OF THE TRIP

The purpose of this trip was to delve deeper into the gender differences in land acquisition uncovered in the land census data work, which is tracking the amount of land that is being transferred from “previously advantaged” people (e.g. white) to “previously disadvantaged” (e.g. black and women) in Zimbabwe, South Africa and Namibia. An initial report from the Zimbabwe land census data work presented in July 2000 showed a growing number of women that have acquired land through cash and loan purchases in the period 1996-1998. This raised a number of questions: why are women gaining ground in cash and loan purchases (a trend not seen in South Africa and Namibia)? And, are women indeed gaining greater legal access to land through private land markets, or are their names appearing on title deeds because they are being used as fronts for land purchased and controlled by men?

Given the limited time available to explore such issues, we opted for a case study approach, rather than a household survey. My task was to design a case study protocol before arrival (which I did in collaboration with Pauline Peters at Harvard University), pretest and the refine the case study protocol with my Zimbabwean colleague during the first week of my visit, and oversee the case study interviews with my Zimbabwean colleague during the remaining two weeks. The task of my colleague in Zimbabwe, Dr. Lovemore Rugube, Department of Agricultural Economics, University of Zimbabwe, was to, prior to my arrival, arrange research assistance, arrange field work logistics, and identify and locate the sample of transactions from the census data (in the Harare region) that we would interview during my visit. During my visit, he would assist in the field work interviews.

SPECIFIC GOALS OF CASE STUDIES

The more specific goals of the case studies were to better understand the process by which previously disadvantaged women and men gain access to land through the private land market. We, therefore, drew cases across three types of land acquisition: cash purchase, loan purchase, and inheritance. We wanted to know: Are there gender differences in the strategies that people use to acquire and manage the land? What problems did men and women face in acquiring the land? How are land use decisions made? The plan was to complete 30 case studies, where the case studies were distributed over three types of legal land ownership (female owned, husband and wife owned, and male owned) and three types of land acquisition (cash, loan, and inheritance). Given the limited time to complete the work, we did not think it possible to pursue case studies of government-assisted land acquisition at this point.

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

Sunday, March 4, 2001

Arrived in Harare in the evening. Met at the airport by Lovemore Rugube. Lovemore briefed me on the current fuel shortage (which had worsened in the past week), and we talked about the sensitivity of the land issue in Zimbabwe (given the recent farm occupations) in connection with conducting interviews in which we asked people how they acquired land. Lovemore thought it would be safe to proceed with our original research plans.

Monday, March 5, 2001

Met with Lovemore at University of Zimbabwe (UZ) to start arranging the case study protocol pretest and subsequent field work. I was introduced to the three research assistants who were to be available to help with field work. One RA is also a teaching assistant and was available for roughly five days of work on the gender case study project during my visit. One RA is a student in the department and was available intermittently over the three weeks because she needed to take exams and attend classes. The last RA worked with me the entire three weeks of my visit.

One RA, Lovemore and I went over the list of transactions sampled for the field work. Many of them were too far away to interview (given the fuel shortage). I re-sampled the list of land transactions of disadvantaged people for 1996-1998 to find more transactions closer to Harare. It is this list of transactions (within 200 km of Harare) that we used as a basis to find people to interview.

As far as locating the owners of the sampled transactions to arrange interviews, this turned out to be much more difficult than the Zimbabwe team had counted on. The information that had been gathered from the Land Deeds Registry for the land census data work was only the name of the farm, the seller's name, the buyer's name, the purchase price, the loan size, and the size of the farm. At that time the 1996-1998 was gathered, the Deeds Registry information was not computerized, so this information was transcribed by hand from the title deeds to a notebook and later put in an electronic data base. This required trips to the Deed Office in Harare and Bulawayo. The information at our disposal from the census data base contained no information on how to locate the owners of the farms. The only location information that the data presented was the name of the farm (sometimes there was a lot number), which might be subsequently be found on a map. However, the problem was that even if the farm could be located on the map, the farm owner may not live on the farm.

The only step that had been taken at this point by the Zimbabwe team was to identify the government office in downtown Harare (the Chief Evaluator's office) that would need to be visited to acquire location information of the farm owners. An RA was to take the list of sampled transactions to this office on Tuesday morning to acquire more information on the farm owner's address and phone number. As it turned out, over the subsequent week, trying to locate the farm owners through government channels was a fruitless endeavor. Because the search only began after my arrival, my time in the field was cut short by about five days, and we were therefore only able to complete 15 interviews, instead of the 30 intended.

Finally, I passed on to Lovemore a separate request by another researcher on the land project in South Africa, Mike Lyne, Department of Agricultural Economics, University of Natal-Pietermaritzburg. He requested that I bring Lovemore a copy of his December 2000 e-mail request for an electronic copy of the land census data to be used in summary reports. Mike was concerned that Lovemore had not received the request by e-mail. An RA was given the task of compiling the data into the format that Mike requested. The RA sent the data to Mike near the end of my visit.

Tuesday, March 6, 2001

Went to CASS to request cash advance (US\$1000) and enquire about renting a vehicle with CASS clerk, Nicholas Phiri. Vehicle was promised to be ready for pick up by the end of the week.

RA had no luck at the Chief Evaluator's Office. He was told the information he requested was privileged and could not be shared, even to researchers. It appeared that locating and talking to people about how they acquired their land might be more difficult than originally expected.

An RA and I go to Agritek office. We talked to Mr. Machedzwe, Director of Harare Agritek Office. He was very helpful and helped us locate some farms on a map. He referred us to Mrs. Rusike, an Agritek agent, who works directly with farmers on the ground. We made an appointment to go back the next day at 3:00 pm to see Mrs. Rusike. We also went to the Survey General's office and purchase several maps for the Harare region.

Wednesday, March 7, 2001

An RA makes another attempt at getting information from government offices, and another RA and I go back to see Mrs. Rusike. She cannot help us locate any name on the list.

An RA looks for names in the phone book, yielding mixed results (some not listed). Tries to make phone calls and set up a pretest for Thursday or Friday. Many phone numbers are disconnected. Only reaches one husband and wife transaction. Wife is gone until end of month.

Meet Pamela Pozarny, LTC-CASS.

Thursday, March 8, 2001

I revise case study protocol. RAs continue to try to locate people by phone book. I consult with Chris Sukume, Department of Agricultural Economics, UZ, and he discards some transactions on our list as being in residential areas, not farms.

Friday, March 9, 2001

CASS vehicle available, but CASS cannot find diesel to fill up the tank. CASS says will look for diesel that day and we can pick up vehicle on Saturday. Talk to Phanel Mugabe about frustrations with locating people. Phanel says he will arrange a meeting with Vincent Hungwe on Monday morning. Call CASS later in day, still no diesel, promises a vehicle with a full tank on Monday.

Saturday, March 10, 2001

Had arranged to meet all three RAs to train them on how to conduct case study interviews. Only two show up. Trained both and agreed to meet one RA on Monday to start work. The other RA would not be available Monday through Wednesday because he was still grading exams.

Monday, March 12, 2001

Lovemore and I arrive at Ministry of Lands at 8:00 am for appointment with Vincent Hungwe. No appointment had been made. Lovemore schedules an appointment for that afternoon at 2:00 pm. I do not attend. Hungwe tells Lovemore to go back to the Chief Evaluator's office to get the information we are looking for. We are back where we started. We decide that we need to get into the field and try to find people. The problem is getting a vehicle with fuel.

CASS cannot find diesel for the vehicle. I call a private car hire company. They agree to supply us with a vehicle with full tank of diesel and promise to fill up the tank if we cannot find diesel elsewhere. I arrange for a pick up on Wednesday.

Two RAs and I look for farms around Harare (in RA's car). We find one person on our list, but a worker tells us the owner is out. We leave our contact phone number but are never called back. Both RAs speculate that the worker was lying and people are afraid to talk to us. We find another transaction on our list, but the owner was not on the premises. He had built low-cost housing on his land and was renting it out to tenants. Searched for another transaction on our list but could not find it.

Tuesday, March 13, 2001

RA goes to Chief Evaluator's office to see if she can find out any information about transactions in Harare. She is told to call back on Thursday.

Lovemore goes to pick up advance from CASS, but the check is not for the full amount requested and is not an "open" check, meaning we would have to wait six working days for the check to clear. We need the cash now for field work, so Lovemore requests another "open" check.

We pick up car from Truck and Car Hire. RA and I go to the Zimbabwe Farmer's Union (ZFU) to see if they can help us find the farmers on our list. Meet with Max

Uzande at ZFU. He tells us that he does not know where any of these farmer's are located but he offers to write us a letter of support that we can use in the field to get help from their field agents.

Wednesday, March 14, 2001

Finally we got in the field. Drove to Goromonzi with two RAs. We seem to have better luck outside of Harare, and got directions to several farms from the District Office of Ruwa. Tried to locate three people on our list and failed to find any of them. Went to the physical location of two farms, and the people we found in the area said no one by that name lived there. The owners of the other one farm were not at home. We conduct two interviews with women (no one on our list). Both were initially hesitant and then willing to talk to us. One inherited and is still trying to get the title in her name (husband died 3 years ago), and the other bought the land in her name in 1981.

Thursday, March 15, 2001

Go to CASS to get cash advance. Check is "open," but the check is only for Z\$35,000, still Z\$20,000 less than we originally requested. No explanation for why check is written for less than request.

In the field again. Drove to Marondera with one RA. Visited the Agritek office and they helped us located a few farms. Tried to find three farmers on our list, but people on the farm had not heard of the names we had. Conducted three interviews (no one on our list), one husband and wife (purchased in 1985), one male owned (purchased in 1981), and the mother of a female-owned (cash purchased in 1994). Interestingly, the female-owner is currently in the U.S. working (mother was not clear on what she is doing there).

Another RA arranged interview for Sunday with husband and wife in Goromonzi. RA still had no luck getting information from the Chief Evaluator's Office.

Friday, March 16, 2001

In field, drove to Chegutu with one RA. Visited Agritek office and they helped us locate several farms. The two on our list were too far away (on back roads) to visit given our time. Conduct one interview (not on our list) with the farm manager of a male-owned farm. The Agritek officer we spoke to earlier thought it was husband and wife owned.

Sunday, March 18, 2001

Drive back to Goromonzi, interview the husband and wife (from the list). He is a business consultant, and she manages a couple hotels (that they own) in Harare. They have tried various agricultural crops with varying success and now think of raising cattle and developing lodges for tourists. They are scaling back farm operations this year so that they can pay off their loan. Loan payments are currently at an interest rate of 65%.

Monday, March 19, 2001

Meet Phanual regarding cash advance and car hire situation. Phanual tells us there is no reason the cash advance was less than what we requested. He also informs us we could have hired a car through their agreements with their travel agency and billed CASS directly. Mr. Phiri did not inform us of this option.

Afternoon, go to Chief Evaluator's Office with RA to get information on Harare transactions. Find out that a number of transactions on our list (with the farm name of Letombo) may have been misrecorded. The Letombo transactions in the census data base that I was given for 1996-1998 had each Letombo transaction listed at a size of 18.3 ha. There were about 12 transactions in this category (8 female-owned, 2 male-owned, and 2 husband and wife-owned). The clerk who helps us explains that these Letombo transactions are residential and could not be of size 18.3 ha.

Tuesday, March 20, 2001

I go to Deeds Office with Fortune to check Letombo transactions. I discover that Letombo transactions have been misrecorded by previous RA. Letombo is indeed a residential area (the entire residential area of Letombo is exactly 18.3 ha), and none of the 12 transaction on our list is larger than about 0.1 hectare. These transactions should not have shown up in the census data base because none of them meet the original criteria that transactions be larger than one hectare. I do not know if there are other transactions that have been misrecorded as well. I informed Lovemore of this mistake.

Afternoon, RA and I interview husband and wife owned transaction, where the land is being used for a very successful export flower business. While both husband and wife's names are on the title deed, the woman basically runs the business with the assistance of a male farm manager. The husband is a doctor, and the wife is a trained nurse. She uses the internet to investigate new markets for her flowers.

Wednesday & Thursday, March 21-22, 2001

Trip to KweKwe with two RAs, Lovemore and myself. Conduct eight interviews, only one of which was on our list. Some highlights. It was suggested (by the Agritek agent and Lovemore's friends in the area) that we speak to several husband and wife farmers. It was assumed that since the husband and wife both farmed the land that the title deed would be in both of their names, but, in fact, the title was only in the man's name. One farm was inherited by seven sisters, but their father stipulated in his will that they could not sell or rent any part of their underutilized 365 ha farm. One woman (on our list) had inherited her farm (102 ha) but lost it to repossession when she took out a business loan and failed to service it. Another woman (divorced) bought her farm with cash in 1995 (but she still has no title deed), from her savings from working in the U.K. for 35 years.

Friday, March 23, 2001

Picked up check from CASS to pay for car hire and returned vehicle. No news on the Z\$20,000, remaining from the original cash advance requested on March 6th. Spend afternoon in field with Bill Kinsey to see resettled villages and learn about women under these resettlement schemes.

Saturday, March 24, 2001

Meet with Lovemore to finalize project costs and discuss the next steps. It was agreed that Lovemore would continue to look for the transactions near Harare on our list that we could not find and conduct interviews. His team would contact people at the Indigenous Commercial Farmers Union, the Commercial Farmer's Union, and go back to the Deed Registry to try and find more information on how to locate people. Depending on how that went, his team would also look for more transactions on our list in places further a field (like Kadoma and Chegutu). We agreed that I would call him on Friday, March 30th to follow up and we would have weekly phone calls to see how the work progresses. I agreed to send an e-mail outlining these next steps to Lovemore, Mike Roth, and Pauline Peters when I returned on Monday, March 26th.

Afternoon, met Abby Mgugu from the Women's Land Lobby. I briefed her on our case study research, pointing out how few women we were able to find. She was not surprised and briefed me on the inheritance and marriage laws pertaining to land ownership for women, whereby women have only had the legal right to inherit land since 1997. She agreed to send me some articles on Zimbabwean law as it pertained to women and land ownership.

Sunday, March 25, 2001

Petrie leaves for home.

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