

**Development and Differentiation: The Case of TILCOR/ARDA  
Irrigation Activities in Sanyati (Zimbabwe), 1939 to 2000**

By

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“Don’t sell the peasant short; he’s more malleable than his image suggests, and his ancient ways contain a deal of folk wisdom that foreign innovators must stop scorning and start adapting” - C. M. Arensberg, “Upgrading Peasant Agriculture: Is Tradition the Snag?” 63.

Although “at the core of the world’s problems of underdevelopment lies the modernization [sic] of agriculture...the literature available for serious study of this central problem is still very inadequate and in some measure reflects the relative lack of priority [African] farming has suffered in the elaboration of development strategy” – *Economist*, August 22, 1964, 273.

## **ABSTRACT**

### **Development and Differentiation: The Case of TILCOR/ARDA Irrigation Activities in Sanyati (Zimbabwe), 1939 to 2000**

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In this study, two rather distinct forms of differentiation are examined, namely class differentiation that was associated with peasant production (1939-1964) and that which manifested itself with the inception of irrigation schemes in the northwestern part of the country in general and Sanyati in particular in the period 1965 to 2000. The study is, thus, divided into two major parts.

Using a case study approach, this work particularly explores and documents the extent to which the twin processes of development and differentiation took place in Sanyati communal lands in Zimbabwe under both dryland and irrigation conditions from the beginning of the Second World War up to 2000. Research on Tribal Trust Land Development Corporation (TILCOR) or Agricultural and Rural Development Authority (ARDA) schemes in Sanyati (Gowe and the Main Estate) reveals that differentiation as a process has been understudied. This is because of the tendency among scholars and government officials alike to construe ARDA schemes as being devoid of any signs of differentiation (i.e. as homogeneous societal entities) mainly because the plottolders (outgrowers) were allocated standardised or uniform sized plots averaging 3,5 ha which they farmed on a tenantry basis. However, this study challenges this basic assumption and argues that both dryland and irrigation farming in Sanyati facilitated commercialisation and the development of significant disparities in wealth among rural households. Clear patterns of socio-economic differentiation also emerge despite the proscribing effects of the Native Land Husbandry Act (NLHA) of 1950 and the adoption in the 1960s of a lease agreement structure by ARDA which in many ways threatened to incapacitate the irrigation plottolders' advance towards accumulation. The lease agreement was the contract outgrowers entered into in order to have the right to use government allocated plots for a specified period of time (i.e. 99-year leases) at all ARDA irrigation schemes in Zimbabwe. Although such state interventionist measures threatened to arrest rural differentiation, the study argues that Sanyati peasants still had abundant initiative to blunt both the colonial and post-colonial states' offensive.

Irrigation has been perceived in state policy circles primarily as a least cost means of famine relief and as a means of settling displaced farmers from Crown Land (government owned land) in the colonial period and other types of land categories after independence. This implies that the government developed schemes in the communal areas mainly on the strength of their social desirability alone. However, this study challenges scholarship which conceives the problem of rural development as no more than moving the rural population from a subsistence economy to a cash economy. It argues that such schemes

as Gowe, on the basis of cotton commodity production, at different stages in the period under review have transcended the social desirability objective and become a source of affluence and economic progress for some innovative and commercially oriented rural farmers. Indeed, the study demonstrates that the introduction of both cotton and irrigation in the 1960s deepened socio-economic inequalities among the plotheolding households and dryland farming households in Sanyati.

The important questions the study will answer are:

1. What was the state of the peasant economy (based on dryland farming) in Sanyati prior to irrigation?
2. How far did peasant differentiation emerge in Sanyati prior to irrigation enterprise?
3. Did irrigation facilitate increased production of cotton and other crops as well as increased access to wealth/income?
4. To what extent did irrigation agriculture lead to the emergence of rural differentiation in the region?
5. Did the state (both colonial and post-colonial) promote rural differentiation?

Thus, the study evaluates peasant (especially dryland) agriculture from 1939 and irrigation farming from the 1960s and analyses how the relationship between ARDA-Sanyati and Gowe has developed since the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) up to 2000. At the same time, elements of continuity or change in the interaction of the two are addressed within the context of the colonial and post-colonial paradigms in order to demonstrate how Sanyati society was differentiated in the two major periods under review.

## **DEDICATIONS**

This thesis is dedicated to my children, Mark (Jnr), Miranda and Mike who always kept me motivated in their own little ways. I will always remember their prayers. The thesis is also dedicated to my parents Mr and Mrs Nyandoro for bringing me up and directing my academic career.

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It must be emphasised, though, that the people mentioned above should be absolved from any blame for the errors or shortcomings in the thesis. Unless, otherwise stated, opinions and conclusions expressed in this study are the sole responsibility of the author.



## **ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

AAB	Agricultural Assistance Board
ACCOR	Associated Chambers of Commerce
ADA	Agricultural Development Authority
ADC	Agricultural Development Corporation
ADF	Agricultural Development Fund/African Development Fund
AFC	Agricultural Finance Corporation
AGRIBANK	Agricultural Bank of Zimbabwe
AGRITEX	Department of Agricultural Technical and Extension Services
ALF	Agricultural Loan Fund/African Loan Fund
AMA	Agricultural Marketing Authority
AMC	Agricultural Marketing Corporation
ANC	Assistant Native Commissioner/African National Congress
APAs	African Purchase Areas
APLs	African Purchase Lands
ARDA	Agricultural and Rural Development Authority
AREX	Department of Agricultural Research and Extension
ARnI	Association of Rhodesian Industries
BIC	Bantu Investment Corporation
BP	Blood Pressure
BSACo	British South Africa Company
BSAP	British South Africa Police
CBZ	Commercial Bank of Zimbabwe

CCC	Cotton Company Committee
CCGA	Commercial Cotton Growers Association
CDC	Cameroon Development Corporation
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CFU	Commercial Farmers Union
CID	Criminal Investigations Department
CMB	Cotton Marketing Board
CNC	Chief Native Commissioner
CONEX	Department of Conservation and Extension
COTTCO	Cotton Company of Zimbabwe
CP	Centre Party
CSC	Cold Storage Commission
CTC	Cotton Training Centre
DA	District Administrator
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DC	District Commissioner
DDF	District Development Fund
DERUDE	Department of Rural Development
DEVAG	Department of Agricultural Development
DMB	Dairy Marketing Board
DZL	Dairiboard Zimbabwe Limited
ECGC	Empire Cotton Growing Corporation
EEC	European Economic Community

ESAP	Economic Structural Adjustment Programme
ESC	Electricity Supply Commission
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FIF	Farm Irrigation Fund
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GM	General Manager
GMB	Grain Marketing Board
ICC	Irrigation Co-ordinating Committee
IDC	Industrial Development Corporation
IIMI	International Irrigation Management Institute
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMT	Irrigation Management Transfer
IWMI	International Water Management Institute
LAA	Land Apportionment Act
LDO	Land Development Officer
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
MEU	Mechanical Equipment Unit
MOWD	Ministry of Water Development
MP	Member of Parliament
MWEA	Kenyan Rice Project
NAD	Native Affairs Department
NANGO	National Association of Non- Governmental Organisations

NASA (UA)	National Archives of South Africa (Union Archives)
NAZ (RC)	National Archives of Zimbabwe (Records Centre)
NC	Native Commissioner
NDF	Native Development Fund
NDP	National Democratic Party
NFAZ	National Farmers' Association of Zimbabwe
NGO	Non- Governmental Organisation
NLHA	Native Land Husbandry Act
NPAs	Native Purchase Areas
NRB	Natural Resources Board
NRZ	National Railways of Zimbabwe
PC	Provincial Commissioner
PDO	Primary Development Officer
PICC	Provincial Irrigation Co-ordinating Committee
PM	Prime Minister
PNC	Provincial Native Commissioner
POZ	Parliament of Zimbabwe
PTA	Parents Teachers Association
RAEO	Regional Agriculture Extension Officer
RBZ	Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe
RDPU	Rural Development Promotion Unit
RF	Rhodesia Front
RNFU	Rhodesia National Farmers Union

RTA	Rhodesian Tobacco Association
SA	South Africa
SADC	Southern Africa Development Committee
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
SGB	Sudan Gezira Board
SLA	Sabi-Limpopo Authority
TILCOR	Tribal Trust Land Development Corporation
TTLs	Tribal Trust Lands
UANC	United African National Congress
UDI	Unilateral Declaration of Independence
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation
USA	United States of America
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VIDCO	Village Development Committee
WADCO	Ward Development Committee
WB	World Bank
WENELA	Witwatersrand Native Labour Association
WRMS	Water Resources Management Strategy
WTO	World Trade Organisation
WUAs	Water User Associations

WW2	World War 2
ZANU (PF)	Zimbabwe African National Union (Patriotic Front)
ZAPU (PF)	Zimbabwe African People's Union (Patriotic Front)
ZBC	Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation
ZBH	Zimbabwe Broadcasting Holdings
ZESA	Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority
ZFC	Zimbabwe Fertiliser Company/Zimbabwe Farmers Corporation
ZFU	Zimbabwe Farmers Union
ZIMACE	Zimbabwe Agricultural Commodity Exchange
ZIMBANK	Zimbabwe Banking Corporation Limited
ZIMCODD	Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development
ZIMPREST	Zimbabwe Programme for Economic and Social Transformation
ZINWA	Zimbabwe National Water Authority
ZISCO	Zimbabwe Iron and Steel Company
ZNFU	Zimbabwe National Farmers' Union
ZRP	Zimbabwe Republic Police
ZUPCO	Zimbabwe United Passenger Company

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