

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This study is an enquiry into the growth and development¹ of peasant agriculture as well as the transformation and commercialisation of the peasant sector in Sanyati on the basis of irrigation.² It primarily investigates the extent to which rural differentiation³ emerged at varying stages in the history of the area under review. The consequences of differentiation are also examined. It is important to document the differentiation process in this particular period and its consequences because the period reveals a number of continuities in the manner the Sanyati peasantry struggled to progress economically under the colonial regime. Although the first decade of independence ushered in a new era of prosperity for these irrigation and dryland farmers, the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) and events afterwards revealed several consistencies with the past as the progress achieved since 1980 was gradually whittled away. This period is characterised by a cotton boom followed by a decline in production of the same crop in Sanyati. Sanyati is a vast and marginalised communal area situated approximately 100 km northwest of Kadoma Town - formerly Gatooma in the Mashonaland West Province of Zimbabwe (See Maps 1, 2 and 3). Because irrigation was preceded by a preoccupation to settle evicted African farmers⁴ from the Rhodesdale Estates, a former

¹ Economic development is a complex process in which economic and non-economic factors are closely interwoven. It can best be defined by its major objective: the exploitation of all productive resources by a country or region in order to expand real income. A broader definition of development emphasises that development concerns not only man's material needs, but also the improvement of the social conditions of his life. Development is therefore not only economic growth, but also growth plus change: social, cultural and institutional as well as economic. For this definition which will apply to this study see Paul Alpert, *Economic Development: Objectives and Methods*, (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1963), 1.

² Irrigation is much discussed and is often clearly defined. Irrigation has been defined by Israelsen as the artificial application of water to soil for the purpose of supplying water essential to plant growth and that it is also essentially a practice of supplementing natural precipitation for the production of crops. See O. W. Israelsen, *Irrigation Principles and Practices*, 2nd Edition, (New York: John Wiley, 1950), 405 and C. Barrow, *Water Resources and Agricultural Development in the Tropics*, (Harlow: Longman Scientific and Technical, 1987), 199 and 356. H. Ruthenberg, *Farming Systems of the Tropics*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), 163, states that irrigation describes those practices that are adopted to supply water to an area where crops are grown, so as to reduce the length and frequency of the periods in which a lack of moisture is the limiting factor to plant growth. Similarly, FAO/UNESCO, *Irrigation, drainage and salinity*, (London: Hutchinson, 1973), 1 and 510, state that irrigation and drainage are processes which aim at the maintenance of soil moisture within the range required for optimum plant growth, and when the moisture available is not sufficient artificial application of water to the land by human agency is called irrigation. These definitions bear close resemblance to each other and for purposes of this thesis any of them is applicable.

³ Social differentiation examines the economic, political and normatively defined relations that underlie the construction of social categories. Social differentiation, embedded in inequalities of power, status, wealth, and prestige affects life chances of individuals as well as the allocation of resources and opportunities. This study explores specific strands of differentiation, that is, socio-economic and to some extent political that are integral aspects of non-irrigated and irrigated agricultural development. The question whether dryland agriculture or irrigation farming produces distinct forms of socio-economic inequality in Sanyati is an important one. This is because most studies of differentiation in Zimbabwe have been carried out on the dryland area but not much has been written about it in the irrigated sector. For this definition see Danielle Juteau, *Social Differentiation*, http://policyresearch.gc.ca/page.asp?pagenm=pub_trends_social

⁴ Africans were evicted to Sanyati in 1950 under the Native Land Husbandry Act (NLHA), which was passed by the colonial government in the same year, but was formally implemented in Sanyati in 1956. See

white ranching area owned by the British conglomerate, LONRHO, (See Map 4) the study starts in chapter two by analysing the historical evolution of Sanyati agriculture since the outbreak of the Second World War. The chapter provides the necessary background to the establishment by the District Commissioner (DC) for Gatooma, R. L. Westcott, of the Gowe⁵ Pilot Smallholder Irrigation Scheme in the late 1960s and the Main Irrigation Scheme by the Tribal Trust Land Development Corporation (TILCOR) around the mid-1970s.

The Tribal Trust Land Development Corporation was mandated in 1968 to spearhead rural development in this former British colony. This corporation was unique because it approximated in its structure and its functions to the type of organisation which J. Blume and other scholars have categorised as a “Development Agency” in that it had a monolithic managerial structure and, at the same time, engaged in commercial activities.⁶ A large proportion of these activities involved the production of agricultural products for sale. It differed from many development agencies in other African countries in that it did not concentrate on a single type of production, but had embarked on a variety of enterprises. The scope of the corporation’s activities was very wide. For example, it was involved in the agricultural, industrial, commercial and mining spheres of the country’s development.

On the whole, this study traces the development of irrigation in Sanyati instituted under the auspices of the then Ministry of Internal Affairs which entrusted the office of the DC with all the administrative and managerial responsibilities relating to the operations of the scheme. It also examines the resultant socio-economic relationships that emerged since the inception of irrigation up to the end of the second decade of independence. The mandate to develop and operate rural schemes was subsequently bestowed on TILCOR, now the Agricultural and Rural Development Authority (ARDA).

ARDA’s irrigation activities in Sanyati are represented by the Gowe Plottolders or Smallholder Scheme and the Sanyati Main Irrigation Estate. At inception in September 1967 and March 1974, respectively, the two schemes adjacent to each other were operated and managed (save for the brief period the DC was in charge) by TILCOR whose parallel organisation in South Africa was the Bantu Investment Corporation (BIC).⁷ It was after independence in 1980 that the parastatal organisation adopted the

NAZ, S160/LS/103/1A/50, Additional land required for occupation by natives, unassigned area, report of 25 August 1950 and NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158077, Location C19.2.10R, File: LAN 9 Sanyati and Ngezi: 1951 – 1964, “Land rights – LHA,” G. A. Barlow (NC Gatooma), 8th July 1958.

⁵ N.B. In this study, Gowe refers to ARDA’s smallholder irrigation scheme in Sanyati (Mashonaland West Province) whereas Gokwe (Midlands Province) is an adjacent district to Sanyati.

⁶ J. Blume, *Organisational Aspects of Agro-Industrial Development Agencies*, (Munich: Weltform Verlag, 1971) and A. J. B. Hughes, *Development In Rhodesian Tribal Areas: An Overview*, (Rhodesia: Tribal Areas of Rhodesia Research Foundation, 1974), 247.

⁷ NAZ, GEN-F/TRI, *Tribal Trust Land Development Corporation (TILCOR): Sanyati Project Report*, (Salisbury, Rhodesia: TILCOR, January 1974). The BIC effectively became a “Native” Corporation in 1961. Under and by virtue of the powers vested in the Governor-General of the Union of South Africa by section twenty-five of the Native Administration Act, 1927 (Act No. 38 of 1927) read with section twenty-one of the Native Trust and Land Act, 1936 (Act No. 18 of 1936), he declared the BIC of South Africa Limited, constituted by section two of the BIC Act, 1959 (Act No. 34 of 1959), that it shall, for the

name ARDA. These schemes, which constitute my major area of investigation, are located in Sanyati – a northwestern part of Zimbabwe that is highly susceptible to drought. (For the specific geographical location of Sanyati Communal Lands and the aforementioned irrigation projects, (See Maps 5 and 6). Sanyati is a malarial, tsetse-infested lowland region with patchy and variable rains and was considered to be unsuitable for crop cultivation or animal husbandry by whites.⁸ The area's ecosystem is typified by sparse vegetation, predominantly poor sandy soils and some domesticated animals in the form of cattle, goats and other livestock. In the early times, animal husbandry had been rendered almost impossible by the presence of tsetse fly (See Tsetse Map 7) but by 1950, tsetse control campaigns had registered significant successes.

The first people to inhabit this area are of Shona extraction and belong to the Karanga sub-ethnic group derogatorily referred to as “Shangwe.”⁹ Since the Rhodesdale evictions, the area is now inhabited by an assortment of both indigenous (“Shangwe”) and “immigrant” populations (“Madheruka”) who fall under paramount chiefs Neuso and Wozhele. (See Map 8 showing Neuso and Wozhele's areas of jurisdiction). Up to the 1940s the economy of the people of Sanyati consisted of a combination of subsistence agriculture and pastoral pursuits. To a certain measure, they also gathered fruits and hunted animals then abundant in the area. However, subsistence farming was the chief sustainer of human life in the area which was created from people originally residing on the Rhodesdale Estates in the Midlands Province who were targeted for forced resettlement in the sparsely populated frontier regions of Sanyati and Gokwe.¹⁰ Three hundred and fifty six families were accommodated on the 28 000 hectare Sanyati “Reserve” (now Sanyati communal land) alone, each with an allocation of eight acres of arable land and ten head of cattle.¹¹ However, by 1950/51 the exact number of cattle belonging to the new settlers who had been moved from Rhodesdale to Sanyati was not known,¹² but some farmers already sold maize for cash and a total of 1 083 and 571 people in the Neuso and Wozhele chieftainships, respectively, were taxpayers by 1966.¹³

purposes of sub-section (2) of section one of the Natives Land Act, 1913 (Act No. 27 of 1913) and paragraphs (a) and (a) bis of sub-section (1) of section twelve of the Native Trust and Land Act, 1936 (Act No. 18 of 1936), be deemed to be a “Native” Corporation. See NASA (UA), BAO 1153/400 – 1166/400 Vol. 8066: File: 1160/400, Bantu Investment Corporation of SA – Enquiries, “Proclamation by His Excellency the Honourable Charles Robberts Swart, Governor-General of the Union of South Africa,” Department of Bantu Administration and Development, 46/12/2/1, 3.

⁸ Eric Worby, “ ‘Discipline Without Oppression’: Sequence, Timing and Marginality in Southern Rhodesia's Post-War Development Regime,” *The Journal of African History*, 41(1), (2000), 104.

⁹ Worby, “What Does Agrarian Wage-Labour Signify? Cotton, Commoditisation and Social Form in Gokwe, Zimbabwe,” *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 23(1), (October 1995).

¹⁰ Worby, “Discipline Without Oppression,” 111.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 114.

¹² LDO Monthly Report, December, 1950 in NAZ, S160/DG/105/2/50, Gatooma district: sub-division: Sanyati reserve: 1950-1951, LDO Monthly Reports (Native Agriculture). N.B. LDOs were Land Development Officers working for the Agriculture Department, which fell under the Native Department in the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

¹³ NAZ, MF 557: Mashonaland South Province: Gatooma District (Internal Affairs), 10 and 20. N.B. What is referred to as Mashonaland South in this Microfilm (MF) is now Mashonaland West Province of Zimbabwe.

The migrant labour system had also begun with the discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand and diamond in Kimberly in South Africa towards the end of the nineteenth century. Local and foreign labour migrants from Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia), Nyasaland (Malawi) and Portuguese East Africa (Mozambique) were also attracted to Southern Rhodesia's (Zimbabwe) farms, mines and industries owned by the white settlers since the occupation of the country in 1890. The dire need for cheap labour led to massive recruitment of workers under the notorious "chibaro"¹⁴ system in Southern Rhodesia and by the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association (WNLA or WENELA)¹⁵ in South Africa. Since 1894 the need to raise money for various forms of tax, ranging from hut, dog, cattle and poll taxes, which were primarily instituted to procure African labour for European-owned enterprises, forced many men to search for work on the white farms and mines. The process of labour migration brought cash back into the community. Apart from utilising the cash to pay tax, migrant wages were also invested in cash crop farming. This in itself is enough testimony that the "Shangwe" economy was not traditional but quite commercialised.¹⁶ This study argues that between the late 1930s and the early 1960s, the inhabitants of Sanyati were differentiated in socio-economic status on the basis of dryland agriculture. However, from the late 1960s onwards they became more differentiated with the advent of irrigation as a new wave of "immigrants" was encouraged to take up land as plottolders at Gowe.

Thus, the Sanyati smallholder project (Gowe), in particular, was construed with some major policy issues in resettlement, irrigation and water development in mind. As the population grew and with limited urban industrial opportunities to absorb it, because Rhodesian industry was still in its infancy, access to and use of water in rural areas targeted for resettling hordes of people being moved from white designated areas by the Land Apportionment Act (LAA) of 1930 and the Native Land Husbandry Act (NLHA) of 1950 became a paramount policy issue. The idea was not to create a differentiated

¹⁴ The word chibaro was widely used by Africans throughout the regional economic system and is synonymous with contract labour, forced labour and slavery. Throughout most of Central Africa, work secured through a specially created labour recruitment agency, the Rhodesia Native Labour Bureau (RNLB), became known as chibaro ("slavery" or forced labour). Chibaro-labour for the mines between 1903 and 1912 was obtained by outright coercion. Thus, chibaro was a system of excessive coercion in recruiting semi-skilled labour used in Southern Rhodesia since the turn of the twentieth century. For more detail on Chibaro-labour see Charles van Onselen, *Chibaro: African Mine Labour in Southern Rhodesia 1900-1933*, (London: Pluto Press Limited, 1976), 104-108.

¹⁵ Since 1900 the Southern Rhodesian mining industry faced competition from the Rand mines. Rhodesia was worried by the recruitment of locals by agents of the Transvaal industries particularly after the Boer War. After this war Rhodesian mines were faced with renewed and even stronger competition from the Rand. Hence, the Rhodesian authorities tried to safeguard their labour supplies through the *modus vivendi* agreement of 1901, in terms of which the WNLA agreed not to recruit in Rhodesia, Ngamiland or Zambezia, and, in return for exclusive recruiting rights in Portuguese East Africa (now Mozambique), to supply 12,5 % of the workers recruited there to Rhodesia. See Van Onselen, *Chibaro*, 85 and *The Rhodesia Herald*, Salisbury: August 4, 1900.

¹⁶ The commercial advancement in the "Shangwe" peasant areas can be gleaned from B. Kosmin, "The Inyoka Tobacco Industry of the Shangwe People: The Displacement of a Pre-Colonial Economy in Southern Rhodesia, 1898-1938" in R. Palmer and N. Parsons (eds.), *The Roots of Rural Poverty in Central and Southern Africa*, (London: Heinemann, 1977) and D. N. Beach, "The Shona Economy: Branches of Production" in Palmer and Parsons, *The Roots of Rural Poverty*.

peasantry. As will be demonstrated in this study, differentiation emerged as an unintended outcome of governmental policy.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aims of this study are, *inter alia*:

- (a) To trace the history of growth and development of peasant agriculture in the Sanyati communal lands from the 1930s to the 1960s;
- (b) To examine efforts to transform and commercialise the peasant sector on the basis of irrigation from the 1960s to 2000; and in the main,
- (c) To analyse how and measure the extent to which Sanyati residents were socio-economically differentiated before and after the introduction of irrigation schemes.

This study shows how far dryland and irrigation farming were instrumental in fostering development and rural differentiation in Sanyati. Irrigation was introduced in Sanyati in 1967 by the then District Commissioner for Gatooma, R. L. Westcott. Soon it was to progress under the directorship of TILCOR which was a corporate body which fell under the ambit of the then Ministry of Internal Affairs. Irrigation, though, was not a novel phenomenon in Zimbabwe as a whole, as smallholder peasant farmers established their own schemes since the early twentieth century.¹⁷ Although government intervention in smallholder irrigation began in the late 1920s, it is important to note that prior to the 1960s, Sanyati was not perceived as an area which was conducive to irrigation farming due to its semi-arid nature and the fact that the people of Sanyati had adapted relatively well to their ecological environment.

The study focuses on whether the introduction of cotton at the Gowe smallholder irrigation project as well as the Sanyati Main Scheme revolutionised life in and outside the schemes. It also examines the impact of government intervention in agriculture and government agrarian policies between 1939 and 2000 and how these affected society. An analysis is made of which peasants emerged winners and which ones became losers in this whole effort to use the new crop to accumulate wealth.

This study's prime purpose, therefore, is to assess the impact of the two irrigation schemes and cotton on the material and other cultural aspects of the people concerned. It tests the hypothesis whether the total effect of state-run irrigation enterprises ushered in new socio-economic and political relations or not in both the irrigated and dryland area from the 1960s to 2000. It seeks to investigate if irrigation affected different people in different ways and created heterogeneous groups in Sanyati who were more clearly differentiated than before. The question whether the colonial and post-colonial state deliberately intended to promote social differentiation in the rural areas or not is an important one. This is so because the state, in the two periods, always remained silent on its intentions, but legislation such as the NLHA, coupled with the adoption of the

¹⁷ W. Roder, *The Sabi Valley Irrigation Projects*, Department of Geography Research Paper, (99), (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965).

Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) after independence, heightened speculation that the state was not inclined to promote rural differentiation.

One can also investigate whether the post-independence period (1980-2000) represented a break or continuity with the past in the manner ARDA's irrigation projects were run. This will be done by exploring and making a comparative assessment of how people were differentiated in Sanyati in the colonial and the post-independence era and examine whether the gap between rich and poor continued to widen after independence, thereby creating "a crisis of expectations."

In this study, differentiation patterns that emerged in the pre-irrigation era as well as in the period after the introduction of this new technology are examined. This is done in an attempt to answer the central question in the study i.e. To what extent did rural differentiation take place in Sanyati on the basis of both rainfed and irrigation agriculture? Thus, the study evaluates peasant agriculture in two very important periods in the history of Sanyati communal lands.

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE OF TOPIC

Background:-

Sanyati's ecology and its location in a semi-arid region, among other things, influenced the colonial government to implement various agricultural reforms in the 1930s through to the 1960s that were to impact positively and sometimes negatively on the lives of the general populace at large; a people whose traditional culture and economy determined acceptance or denial of colonial agrarian prescriptions. This also signalled how the people were going to be socially differentiated.

A number of changes occurred in agriculture at the end of the Second World War. Both the peasant and commercial farming sectors underwent considerable development since 1945. It is important to observe that, in Zimbabwe, the government has constantly been redefining its agricultural roles, policies and missions. Government policy from the 1940s to the 1960s seemed to have a deliberate bias towards large-scale commercial agriculture, which was largely dominated by whites. The period 1960s to 2000 seems to have experienced a dramatic "shift" in policy in favour of the smallholder agricultural sector, although large-scale agriculture continued to enjoy a dominant position. This was so particularly after the Unilateral Declaration of Independence by the Smith regime in 1965. There was an invigorated drive to develop irrigation projects in communal lands in a move that was intended to curb the massive rural to urban drift by hordes of people in search of employment opportunities. From 1980 onwards, support to the small-scale sector was not only perpetuated but also intensified by the new government to stimulate African farming and participation in the economy, which previously had not been perceived as essential.

For example, On New Year's Eve, 1982, the then Prime Minister (PM) of Zimbabwe (now the Executive President, Robert Gabriel Mugabe) declared 1982 the "Year of

[National] Transformation” and announced a ten point policy plan.¹⁸ Of the ten points, one was specific to water and irrigation development: “The provision of water, as a basic domestic utility also crucial to Zimbabwe’s agriculture - especially in dry areas, will be accelerated in all communal areas [through the construction of new dams and canals], a move which should also boost irrigation schemes.”¹⁹ The Five Year Development Plan that was developed by the pre-independence government in 1978 had emphasised the vital role irrigation played in national development. It, among other things, included provision for a Z\$147 million irrigation development programme.²⁰ This commitment to irrigation was also adopted by the government after 1980. Thus, irrigation in the communal areas has been an important issue with successive colonial as well as independent governments. This is because of the inherently low developmental potential in these areas due to poor rainfall distribution and poor infrastructural development.

Apart from Sanyati, a similar shift was also occurring in Manicaland and Matabeleland where irrigation schemes such as Chisumbanje and Ngwezi were set up which led to the emergence of irrigation-driven differentiation. The promotion of differentiation, however, was not the government’s original objective. In spite of this there has been heightened interest among scholars in studies on differentiation in many parts of Zimbabwe.

From the 1930s to the 1960s, the agricultural history of Sanyati was characterised more by dryland production of such crops as maize, groundnuts, sorghum and rapoko. These were grown mainly for subsistence purposes and there were few differential gaps among people then. An element of commercialisation was adopted with the introduction of cotton in the 1960s and this led to the widening of the social and economic gap between people. Sanyati is now one of the most renowned cotton producing areas in the country. The area is highly prone to drought and therefore cotton, which is a drought resilient cash crop, thrives under these conditions.

Apart from the settlement objective, it is the incessancy of droughts in some parts of Zimbabwe, including Sanyati, that prompted the then Ministry of Internal Affairs to consider implementing irrigation enterprises countrywide in the 1960s. In the global context, irrigation (both small-scale and large-scale) can be perceived as a panacea to a host of economic and social problems besetting areas that are particularly susceptible to the ravages of the weather like drought.²¹ Whether there was drought or not, this situation did not prevent the emergence of rural differentiation. Greater forms of differentiation still occurred in the two schemes operated and managed by ARDA, formerly known as TILCOR.

¹⁸ Rukuni, “An Analysis of Economic and Institutional Factors Affecting Irrigation Development in Communal Lands of Zimbabwe,” 37.

¹⁹ “Year of Transformation: Mugabe Sets Out 10-Point Policy Plan,” *The Herald*, (Harare: January 1 1982), 1. See also “State Steps Up Drought Fight,” *The Herald*, (Harare: Thursday June 23 1983), 1.

²⁰ Rukuni, “An Analysis of Economic and Institutional Factors Affecting Irrigation Development in Communal Lands of Zimbabwe,” 38.

²¹ A. Gaitskell, *Gezira: A Study of Development in the Sudan*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1959) and E. Manzungu and P. van der Zaag, (eds.), *The Practice of Smallholder Irrigation: Case Studies from Zimbabwe*, (Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications, 1996).

Any full understanding of TILCOR's or ARDA's operations and activities as well as differentiation in Sanyati must, therefore, include a detailed knowledge of the growth and development of the two irrigation schemes and the reasons for their emergence. The origin of these schemes can be explained in the context of the enormous influence exerted by one of the most prominent proponents of irrigation in the mainly drought-prone communal areas of Sanyati. This man as stated earlier was R. L. Westcott, the former DC Gatooma. On the basis of a preliminary study conducted by Nyandoro in 1997, it emerged that Westcott was the principal figure in charting the beginning and destiny of irrigation enterprise in Sanyati since UDI. The experiments he embarked upon were to differentiate the Sanyati community in many ways.

Significance of topic:-

The proposed topic is a significant area of study for several reasons. For instance, the contribution of the peasant sector and irrigation to economic growth cannot be overlooked. Whilst dryland farming is not a novel phenomenon in Sanyati, irrigation enterprise is definitely a relatively new idea in the area. This is so because it was never envisaged that irrigation would be a viable proposition in Sanyati with its arid history. Thus, when TILCOR was formed the aim of this government agency entrusted with the management, operation and development of the region was to increase productivity and improve production stability in this arid area in accordance with national objectives enunciated by the then Ministry of Internal Affairs.

It is important to note that, in the global context, much has been written on peasant agriculture as well as on irrigation farming, particularly large-scale irrigation schemes. Social differentiation as an academic discipline has also received its fair share of debate and criticism. However, the nature of differentiation that emerges in the Sanyati communal lands particularly with the introduction of irrigation does not seem to have generated much scholarly attention yet. As already indicated, a number of changes were introduced to the agricultural sector at the end of the Second World War. A new dimension of this study is that it demonstrates that the commonest forms of differentiation in Zimbabwe's rural areas since or prior to 1945 have been on the basis of access to land, labour and gender. Nevertheless, the irrigation era (the 1960s onwards) ushered in new types of social relations. Because irrigation plotters were allocated standardised plots (plots of the same size), socio-economic and political relations were no longer necessarily determined by access to land mainly but access to inputs. For instance, inputs such as capital and labour as well as the ability to pay the water rent and land rent tended to differentiate people more than access to land.

A common feature of smallholder irrigation development in Zimbabwe is that irrigators tend to farm the dryland (rainfed) lands as well. This practice is discouraged by government on the grounds that irrigation is intended to relieve land pressure on dryland resources and also that dryland activities depress the productivity of farmers on irrigated plots. However, a significant omission in the works that have been written on irrigation is a discussion of the relationship between irrigated and dryland farming. This study is a modest attempt to fill this void, but there is need for detailed follow up research on this

relationship which is construed in the literature as either symbiotic, exploitative or parasitic.

The major reasons justifying a study on development and differentiation in Sanyati can be found in the fact that, no detailed study exists on ARDA activities that attempts to explore the largely peculiar forms of socio-economic or rural differentiation wrought by irrigation technology in a very remote area of the country like this one. Most research projects on Zimbabwe have focused on the wider political economy and agrarian conditions but they have provided limited detail about ARDA irrigation in the northwest. Likewise, research, which has focused on Zimbabwe's irrigation systems, has provided limited information on the peculiarities of irrigation schemes and about the context within which these operate in a frontier locality. What is needed is research that incorporates the inter-connectedness between the farmer/plotholder, the irrigation system, scheme management, the market, the surrounding community and the state and its many institutional facilities. Such an approach is essential because it leads to the co-ordination of irrigation enterprise, which, in turn, promotes sustained development, which is not only in line with government policy but also in line with the needs of the people. For example, the government through the former Ministry of Internal Affairs has identified irrigation farming as one of the opportunities for spearheading the development of low potential frontier communities of Zimbabwe such as Sanyati - a previously neglected communal agricultural sector – but not much effort has been made to encourage peasant participation in management. For development to take place it needed to integrate these elements, which are key to the realisation of this goal. This is arguably, the most important contribution of this study. The study has attempted to piece together the very scattered socio-economic data on TILCOR/ARDA schemes like the Sanyati Main Irrigation Estate and the adjoining Gowe Smallholder Irrigation component as well as the surrounding dryland to demonstrate the development of agriculture and the extent to which it influenced different forms of rural differentiation in Sanyati from the pre-irrigation era right through to the irrigation period. It focuses on ARDA because ARDA is the largest single irrigator of land in Zimbabwe.

The relationship that exists between the smallholder scheme and the Main Estate is peculiar compared to other schemes. What is particularly fascinating about this relationship is that, unlike most of the settler schemes initiated and run by TILCOR/ARDA, for example, Chisumbanje, Ngwezi, Antelope and Katiyo/Rumbizi, the Gowe Irrigation Scheme did not start off as an outgrowers scheme to an ARDA Core Estate (i.e. the Sanyati Main Estate). It was a pilot scheme. The Core Estate was only established almost ten years later, which affects social differentiation in its own significant way. In fact ARDA-Sanyati has had different experience from conventional settlement schemes such as Dande (Mashonaland Central), Tsovane (Masvingo) and the tea estates in the Manicaland Province of Zimbabwe where the main scheme preceded the smallholder or outgrowers scheme. Consequently, there are differences in social differentiation in Sanyati compared to the other schemes²² run by the same corporate

²² There were three other TILCOR schemes, namely Mushumbi, Muzarabani and Tjotjolo, but these were composed of a core estate (state farm) only with no plotholding settlers or outgrowers. For Muzarabani and Tjotjolo the land for their respective smallholder schemes had been demarcated but no actual allocation was

body. This makes the relationship between Gowe and the core estate the exception rather than the rule. Equally interesting was how growth point status would be achieved in Sanyati on the basis of irrigation and how a “black capitalist entrepreneur” started to emerge as the most influential economic class in this area. In fact, ARDA’s scheme at Sanyati is a successful example of a “Growth Point” and it serves to illustrate the Authority’s strategy of integrated development in the area. Thus, the study is a milestone in revealing how an irrigation-based growth strategy operated.

In the next section, an overview of irrigation development in Zimbabwe and Africa as a whole is presented in order to put the study in its national and continental context.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO AFRICAN IRRIGATION SCHEMES

The evolution of smallholder irrigation schemes in Zimbabwe - General background:-

Irrigation development has been a peculiar feature of many regions in Africa. Colonial and post-colonial Zimbabwe has also adopted similar irrigation experiments. R. Chambers who has examined in detail various settlement schemes in tropical Africa including irrigation projects has noted that, in general, “governments in less developed countries, whether still under colonial rule or independent, have launched projects for the re-organisation of agriculture and for the introduction into agriculture of more advanced technology.”²³

A number of studies on the development of irrigation schemes in Zimbabwe exist. These include works by R. Max, E. Musiiwa and M. Rukuni.²⁴ For M. Rukuni, irrigation has played a more critical role in the success of commercial agriculture than on smallholder farms.²⁵ He maintains that a major distinction between large-scale and smallholder irrigation is that the former is privately owned while the latter is largely government owned and administered.²⁶ Undoubtedly, large-scale schemes emerged as an integral part

made to settlers in the TILCOR days. N.B. Originally, there were only 8 TILCOR schemes namely Sanyati, Chisumbanje, Katiyo, Antelope, Ngwezi, Tjotjolo, Mushumbi and Muzarabani. Initially, Middle Sabi (which also has an outgrower section) was not a TILCOR scheme. It was incorporated into ARDA from the Sabi-Limpopo Authority. By the end of the TILCOR era only 5 schemes had outgrowers and these were Sanyati, Chisumbanje, Katiyo, Ngwezi and Antelope. N.B. This information was collated from Liberty Mhlanga, (Chairman, Land Settlement Board – Ministry of Lands and Land Resettlement), Telephone Discussion with Nyandoro, 11th November 2006. Mhlanga is the former ARDA General Manager.

²³ R. Chambers, *Settlement Schemes In Tropical Africa: A Study of Organizations and Development*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), 3.

²⁴ Rukuni, “An Analysis of Economic and Institutional Factors Affecting Irrigation Development in Communal Lands of Zimbabwe.” See also R. K. Max, “The Sabi-Limpopo Authority: Its Origins, Functions And Activities in Relation to African Irrigation Schemes,” BA Honours dissertation, Harare: UZ, 1986, and E. Musiiwa, “The Origins and Development of Small Holder Irrigation Schemes in Manicaland, 1928-1960,” MA dissertation, Harare: UZ, February 1988.

²⁵ M. Rukuni, “An Overview of Smallholder Irrigation in Zimbabwe” in G. Ruigu and M. Rukuni (eds.) *Irrigation Policy in Kenya and Zimbabwe*, (Nairobi: University of Nairobi, 1991).

²⁶ M. Rukuni and C. K. Eicher (eds.) *Zimbabwe’s Agricultural Revolution*, (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1994), 127.

of the commercialisation of agriculture whereas smallholder schemes were largely instituted by the government to provide food security in the drought-prone areas of the country.²⁷ In some instances, smallholder irrigation schemes like Nyanyadzi, Nyamaropa and Nyachowa were established to settle blacks displaced from land taken over by white farmers, especially after the passage of the Land Apportionment Act (LAA) in 1930.²⁸

Since agriculture was the dominant industry in Zimbabwe, every effort was made to ensure that it remained the cornerstone of development in the country for some time to come.²⁹ This partly explains the amount of emphasis put on developing large-scale commercial and later small-scale irrigation agriculture. Irrigation has always had a clear political content as it embodies land and water, two of the most contentious issues in Zimbabwean history in which colonial injustice is very obvious. Obviously, the pre-occupation with economic growth and development and the economic problems of low-income countries has led to more general recognition of the crucial importance of the agricultural sector, both in providing for rapidly increasing human populations and in generating productivity in other sectors.³⁰ Under these circumstances, what has been termed “smallholder” agriculture³¹ could not continue to be ignored any more, hence the focus in this section of the introduction on the development of smallholder irrigation farming in Zimbabwe which complements the bigger schemes.

The history of smallholder irrigation in Zimbabwe must be analysed within the broader context of a colonial power developing an agro-economic structure to control the vast majority of the black smallholder farmers.³² In cases where the colonial state created small-scale irrigation farms adjacent to a major estate it was driven among other things by the need for labour. The estate would exploit and exercise its legal monopoly³³ over this labour. Because plotters often owed their existence to the estate (Gowe was an exception to this rule only at inception before the advent of the Main Estate) they were obliged to provide it with labour. This meant that the plotter was situated within a social and economic dynamic similar to sharecropping (where tenants worked for landowners in return for staying and growing their crops on that land) because an estate would not be a profitable venture without the aid of African tenants.³⁴ However, contrary

²⁷ “Native Irrigation Schemes Remove Fear of Famine,” *The Rhodesia Herald*, Salisbury: Tuesday, October 16 1956, 7 and “Sabi – A Multi-Million Pound Scheme: Vast Quantities of Basic Foods the Main Aim,” *The Rhodesia Herald*, Salisbury Show Supplement, Salisbury: Wednesday, September 9 1959, 13.

²⁸ L. H. Gann, “The Southern Rhodesia Land Apportionment Act, 1930: An Essay in Trusteeship.” The National Archives of Rhodesia and Nyasaland Occasional Paper, (1), June 1963. See also M. L. Rifkind, “Land Apportionment in Perspective,” *Rhodesia History*, 3, (1972), 33-62 and “The Nyanyadzi Irrigation Scheme is a Show Place,” *The Rhodesia Herald*, Salisbury: Thursday, October 11 1956, 9.

²⁹ W. Margolis, “The Agricultural Problems.” *The Rhodesian Journal of Economics: The Quarterly Journal of the Rhodesian Economic Society*, 4(2), (June 1970), 18.

³⁰ W. O. Jones, “Director’s preface,” Stanford: California, August 1968 in B. F. Massell and R. W. M. Johnson, *Economics of Smallholder Farming in Rhodesia: A Cross-Section Analysis of two Areas*, Food Research Institute, (California: Stanford University, August, 1968).

³¹ Massell and Johnson, *Economics of Smallholder Farming in Rhodesia*, 1-2.

³² Rukuni and Eicher (eds.), *Zimbabwe’s Agricultural Revolution*, 127.

³³ The TILCOR Act of 1968 gave estates recourse to the labour of the settler or outgrower schemes that were established in their vicinity.

³⁴ Charles van Onselen has written the most recent and incisive studies on sharecroppers in South Africa.

to sentiments expressed by some Euro-centric scholars such as Gelfand, it is an erroneous view that irrigation was brought to Zimbabwe by European settlers.³⁵ W. Roder has amply demonstrated the presence of irrigation systems in Zimbabwe that were initiated by indigenous cultivators (farmer-initiated irrigation schemes) and still run by them.³⁶ Roder's observation is important because, until very recently, irrigation was viewed to be a European introduction in Zimbabwe and no indigenous irrigation tradition was believed to exist in pre-colonial times.³⁷ D. N. Beach, citing a publication in 1923 by J. Machiwenyika, provides a definitive refutation of this belief by arguing that the Manyika people, for example, practised irrigation before the coming of the Europeans.³⁸ Thus, pioneer irrigation work in Zimbabwe was not the brainchild of white settler governments.

Clearly, from 1912 to 1927, smallholders constructed and operated their own irrigation projects.³⁹ Government intervention in smallholder irrigation began in 1928 mainly in Manicaland. In fact, the first involvement of the colonial government in irrigation followed the appointment of Emery D. Alvord as an "Agriculturalist for the Instruction of Natives" in 1926. Alvord promoted the development of irrigation in eastern Zimbabwe (then eastern Southern Rhodesia), by helping farmers develop small irrigated plots of about one hectare or less (i.e. the so-called "comma-hectare" schemes),⁴⁰ while they continued to rely heavily on rain-fed farming for the bulk of their family food supply.⁴¹

See Charles van Onselen, "The Reconstruction of a Rural Life From Oral Testimony: Critical Notes on the Methodology Employed in the Study of a Black South African Sharecropper," *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 20(3), London: Frank Cass, (April 1993), 494-514 and van Onselen, "Race and Class in the South African Countryside: Cultural Osmosis and Social Relations in the Sharecropping Economy of the South-Western Transvaal, 1900-1950," *American Historical Review*, 95(1), (1990), 99-123 and van Onselen, "The Social and Economic Underpinning of Paternalism and Violence on the Maize Farms of the South-Western Transvaal, 1900-1950," *The Journal of Historical Sociology*, 5(2), (June 1992), 127-160.

³⁵ Gelfand, "Who is Rich and Poor in Traditional Shona Society."

³⁶ Roder, *The Sabi Valley Irrigation Projects*.

³⁷ J. M. Watermeyer, "An Outline of the History and Development of Irrigation in Zimbabwe." *Development Magazine*, Harare: January 1981. See also M. Rukuni, "State of the Art of Irrigation Research in Zimbabwe, a Historical Bibliography." *Zimbabwe Agricultural Journal*, 3(82), (1985), 85.

³⁸ D. N. Beach "Archaeology and History in Nyanga, Zimbabwe," quoted in Manzungu and Van der Zaag (eds.), *The Practice of Smallholder Irrigation*, 4.

³⁹ Roder, *The Sabi Valley Irrigation Projects*, 6.

⁴⁰ The government of Zimbabwe differentiates between two broad types of schemes, namely "Supplementary schemes" and "Productive schemes." The former are designed as a form of drought relief. Their economic justification is that other forms of drought relief are less efficient and more expensive. The latter are justified in terms of increased agricultural productivity and are intended to be financially viable. On the "supplementary schemes" farmers are allocated plots as small as 0,1 ha (hence "comma-hectare" schemes). These schemes are established in grain deficit areas for food security. Some of these areas have up to four years out of five of drought. The aim is to supplement what farmers produce on dryland. All other schemes (including ARDA schemes) are viewed as vehicles to increase agricultural production (i.e. "Productive schemes") of both food and industrial crops/cash crops. These schemes are expected to create employment for rural people, improve their nutritional status and be a vehicle for introducing improved agricultural technologies. Where there are high population levels and consequent pressure on land resources like in Sanyati, irrigation schemes are expected to enable the intensive settlement of farmers. N.B. For more detail on these schemes see Department of Rural Development (DERUDE), *Policy Paper on Small Scale Irrigation Schemes*, (Harare: Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rural Development, 1983) and Rukuni, "An Analysis of Economic and Institutional Factors Affecting Irrigation Development in Communal Lands of Zimbabwe," 42.

⁴¹ Rukuni and Eicher (eds.), *Zimbabwe's Agricultural Revolution*, 128.

Since most of these schemes were introduced in low-altitude and low-rainfall areas, the initial justification for government aid to smallholder irrigation was famine relief or food security. Such a view was also supported by the Indian Irrigation Commission, which was appointed in 1901 and proceeded to recommend in 1903 that the extension of irrigation as a means of protection against famine in areas of insecure and precarious cultivation was essential. Whilst the Commission acknowledged that putting up expensive irrigation works might not be directly remunerative to the Government, it advised that “the net financial burden which such schemes would impose on the state would not be too high a price to pay for the protection against famine which they would afford.”⁴² On the basis of this recommendation several projects were immediately undertaken throughout the world including Zimbabwe.

From 1928 to 1935, Alvord’s priority was to assist schemes that had been established by missionaries. However, irrigation policy changed after he had returned from a study tour of irrigation projects on Indian reservations in the United States of America (USA) in 1935.⁴³ More schemes which included Mutambara, Nyachowa, Dewure/Devure and Nyanyadzi, located in the Sabi Valley in Manicaland, were constructed in the 1930s.⁴⁴ The period 1935 to 1945 was characterised by active but restricted development.⁴⁵ This was a war-driven policy objective. From 1946 onwards the government started to preoccupy itself with resettling Africans under the LAA.⁴⁶ In fact, after the Second World War there was a drive to expand Manicaland irrigation schemes.⁴⁷ It is imperative to note that by that time Sanyati was only inhabited by a few people from Neuso or was not yet settled officially. The intention of government then was to settle peasant farmers from designated white areas to so-called African Reserves/Native Reserves. In the period 1935-1956, the government’s grip on smallholder irrigation became stronger, culminating in attempts to implement the Native Land Husbandry Act (NLHA) in 1951.⁴⁸ Primary consideration now shifted towards increasing the productive and carrying capacity of the schemes.⁴⁹ As a consequence, farmers were required by the government to

- (a) give up rain-fed crop production and other non-irrigation activities;
- (b) produce surplus food crops for the market, and later cash crops;
- (c) practise prescribed crop rotations, and plant on specific dates; and
- (d) pay water rates.⁵⁰

⁴² Hagan, Haise and Edminster (eds.), *Irrigation of Agricultural Lands*, 5-6.

⁴³ Rukuni and Eicher (eds.), *Zimbabwe’s Agricultural Revolution*, 129.

⁴⁴ Roder, *The Sabi Valley Irrigation Projects*.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ Although the LAA was introduced in 1931, it was only in 1950 when its amendment into the NLHA specified removal of black farmers from white areas within a five-year period.

⁴⁷ Rukuni, “An Analysis of Economic and Institutional Factors Affecting Irrigation Development in Communal Lands of Zimbabwe,” 34.

⁴⁸ Roder, *The Sabi Valley Irrigation Projects*, 103-117.

⁴⁹ E. Punt, “The Development of African Agriculture In Southern Rhodesia With Particular Reference To the Interwar Years,” MA thesis, Durban: 1979, 74.

⁵⁰ Manzungu and Van der Zaag, “Continuity and Controversy in Smallholder Irrigation” in Manzungu and Van der Zaag (eds.), *The Practice of Smallholder Irrigation*, 5. See also Emery D. Alvord, “Annual Report of the Agriculturalist for Natives.” *Report of the Secretary for Native Affairs and Chief Native Commissioner*, (Salisbury: Government Printer).

The rationale behind this policy was that it was only through the provision of close government supervision that yields could be significantly raised. It was axiomatic, therefore, that a number of irrigation schemes had to be re-organised under government control.

Thus, after the amendment of the LAA in 1950, new irrigation projects were constructed as a means of absorbing the displaced African population. The following statement from a report by the Director of Irrigation, Southern Rhodesia (1950) lends support to the dualism perceived by government between irrigation development and resettlement objectives in the post-war period:

It is a truism that only land which will support a dense rural population is flat, irrigable land. We have neither large areas of flat land nor unlimited water resources in this country, but to accommodate the growing native population every available acre will have to be put to maximum use. There are extensive dry areas particularly in the Southern and South-Western parts of the Colony where the only means of bringing land to proper use will be by large scale gravity, or where gravity is not possible, by large scale pumping. These schemes will be very costly, and by ordinary standards, uneconomic, but it may well be found that any other solution to the population problem will be still less economic and far more undesirable.⁵¹

Subsequently, an Irrigation Policy Committee was set up in 1960 to examine the justification of irrigation as a means of settling black farmers.⁵² The recommendations of this Committee, which were released in 1961, can be summed up as follows:

- (a) Irrigation was not the best way of settling displaced farmers. The population pressure in black areas was temporary and would slacken as more found employment on white farms.
- (b) It would be more productive for government to invest in the industrial sector than irrigation.
- (c) Future projects should be based on voluntary agreement of settlers (smallholders themselves), where the settlers will be able to meet the costs of construction, operation and maintenance.⁵³

Following the Committee's findings there was, thus, a brief period up to 1965 when further construction of irrigation projects was halted.⁵⁴ Rising costs of construction and maintenance prompted the then Department of Native Agriculture to review its irrigation

⁵¹ Report of the Director of Irrigation, Southern Rhodesia, 1950 cited in Rukuni, "An Analysis of Economic and Institutional Factors Affecting Irrigation Development in Communal Lands of Zimbabwe," 34-35.

⁵² Rukuni, "An Analysis of Economic and Institutional Factors Affecting Irrigation Development in Communal Lands of Zimbabwe," 35.

⁵³ Irrigation Policy Committee, *A Report of the Irrigation Policy Committee for African Areas in Southern Rhodesia*, (Salisbury: 1961).

⁵⁴ Rukuni and Eicher (eds.), *Zimbabwe's Agricultural Revolution*, 130.

development programme. However, after the Unilateral Declaration of Independence there was a new commitment to developing irrigation projects in Communal Lands, formerly Tribal Trust Lands (TTLs), as part of developing rural growth points in African areas to ensure the separate development of the races.⁵⁵ With this in mind, the government set up a parastatal (TILCOR), to develop, among other things, irrigation-based growth points in the communal areas.⁵⁶ As already indicated, by the middle of the twentieth century the process of promoting irrigation development in the rural areas had gathered momentum. Thus, in the northwestern frontier regions of the country the culmination of this process was the establishment by the DC for Gatooma initially of the Gowe Plotters Scheme as a pilot project in September 1967 – a development which was subsequently followed by the inception of the Sanyati Main Irrigation Estate by TILCOR in March 1974.

As will be seen in the next section the promotion of small-scale irrigation originated as a backlash to the poor performance of the large-scale schemes in Africa between the 1920s and 1960s. It is now generally acknowledged that these schemes were a failure. The causes of this poor performance can be explained in terms of shortcomings in the design, management, operation, efficiency, equity and agricultural productivity of such schemes.

The small and big schemes in Africa: Contextual framework:-

In the global context, irrigation is an ancient technique, which dates back to 5000 years in Central Asia and a great deal further in Mesopotamia. It was used in Imperial China, in old Laos, in ancient Africa - entailing the use of the shaduf in Egypt, in Tanzania, in Zimbabwe and in old America before the advent of the Spanish. For millennia, farmers have used aqueducts, ditches and furrows with crude sluices to divert the water to their crops, giving them increased yields and lessening their dependence on the caprices of the weather.⁵⁷ Sometimes the practice of irrigation is considered to be more of an art than a science. Nevertheless, there is sufficient contemporary literature to belie this concept. New scientific and technological advancements in soils, water, plants and engineering have transformed irrigation into a modern science. Whilst traditional irrigation systems are still in operation in some parts of Africa it is an undeniable fact that since the beginning of the twentieth century small to large-scale, centralised and technology-driven schemes have emerged, but for illustrative purposes only a few well known examples will be used.

A historical background of African irrigation enterprise is essential to this discussion. Although it would appear to be an over-ambitious task to try and situate the ARDA Sanyati irrigation schemes in a wider African context because of their smallness relative to such grandiose schemes as Gezira (1925), the Cameroon Development Corporation

⁵⁵ Rukuni and Eicher (eds.), *Zimbabwe's Agricultural Revolution*, 130.

⁵⁶ T. Mushayavanhu, "The Tribal Trust Land Development Corporation (TILCOR): Impact on Rural Development," MA dissertation, Harare: UZ, May 1989.

⁵⁷ Marq de Villiers, *Water Wars: Is the World's Water Running Out?* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1999), 165. See also a pamphlet by M. S. Basson, "Overview of Water Resources Availability and Utilisation in South Africa," Pretoria: Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, 1997.

(CDC) of 1947, the Kenyan Rice Project (MWEA) and the Gonja Development Company in Ghana (all instituted in the 1950s),⁵⁸ an examination of these schemes reveals several similarities with the Sanyati projects as far as their immediate and long-term objectives are concerned. Sanyati, just like Gezira and many other projects, can be used to show how colonial agricultural philosophy determined the success or failure of irrigation as a whole. In both the big and small schemes land, water and finance were and are still the basic factors of production and indeed indispensable resources in the formulation of irrigation strategy.

It can be noted that African initiated irrigation schemes were forerunners to the schemes which were established on the continent by white settler governments. Colonial governments' interest in irrigation only manifested itself later than most indigenous projects. A multiplicity of views has been advanced to explain why colonial governments in Africa were pre-occupied with establishing irrigation schemes. From the onset, their motivation was quite clear. In J. F. Munro's opinion, such schemes were meant to increase "imperial self-sufficiency" in raw materials, particularly cotton.⁵⁹ A typical example, although it is far bigger than the Sanyati Main Estate and Gowe put together, is the Gezira Scheme in the Sudan, which emerged as the centre-piece of British cotton growing promotion in Africa in the 1920s. Gezira was designed, primarily, to reduce British dependence on American sources of raw cotton.⁶⁰ This is contrary to the popularly held view that the ultimate objective of all work in the field of irrigation is to help in raising the agricultural productivity of African peoples and, at the same time, increasing the tempo of economic development.⁶¹ This, notwithstanding irrigation was still going to be a major area of interest in Africa because of the fact that rainfall in many parts of rural Africa is erratic.⁶²

According to A. Gaitskell, under conditions of erratic rainfall, the creation of irrigation projects was bound to have a beneficial effect on the Africans.⁶³ In this regard, the colonial state embarked on a drive to establish irrigation schemes for the following reasons:

- (a) to have water conservation in a bid to fight hostile immutables like erratic rainfall and massive run-off as central and pivotal to developmental policies;
- (b) to have irrigation schemes as an insurance against the dry years, and as a local source of famine relief in the drought-stricken areas;

⁵⁸ Barnett, *The Gezira Scheme*, 6. See also F. A. Wells and W. A. Warmington, *Studies in Industrialization: Nigeria and the Cameroons*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 245; R. Chambers, *Settlement Schemes in Tropical Africa: A Study of Organizations and Development*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), 7 and S. La Anyane, *Ghana Agriculture, its Economic Development from Early Times to the Middle of the Twentieth Century*, (Accra: Oxford University Press, 1963), 171. N.B. Gezira is about 2,8 million hectares and Sanyati Main Estate is a paltry 1 000 hectares in size. Sanyati would be a section of a section in Gezira and the two's levels of operation are not comparable.

⁵⁹ J. F. Munro, *Africa and the International Economy 1800–1960: An Introduction to the Modern Economic History of Africa South of the Sahara*, (London: J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1976), 128.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ Wells and Warmington, *Studies in Industrialization*, 245.

⁶² Barnett, *The Gezira Scheme*, 3.

⁶³ Gaitskell, *Gezira*, 49.

- (c) as an altruistic endeavour “to give the natives some educative example of realising both subsistence and surplus produce so as to uplift them”;
- (d) as a way to cope with population explosion by having the schemes as safety-valves; and
- (e) to avoid the rural-urban drift by providing the surrounding people with employment.⁶⁴

It is true that schemes such as the Gezira provided employment and livelihood to a very large number of people.⁶⁵ However, many shortcomings afflicted it throughout its years of operation. For instance, although the whole undertaking was depicted as a commercial partnership between the government, the Sudan Plantations Syndicate (the British Conglomerate which managed it) and the tenants, in reality it was only a partnership between the government and the Sudan Plantations Syndicate.⁶⁶ Lamentably, the tenants had no direct say in the running of the scheme, save for being “a factor of production” (labour).⁶⁷ A thorough evaluation of the evidence reveals that the concept of a business partnership was misplaced here. The fact that the Gezira Scheme formed a part of the capitalist system of production is indisputable. Equally discernible is the point that the scheme in its incipient stages or even later was responsible for the development of dependency and underdevelopment relationships between the Sudanese satellite and the metropolitan economies. This was particularly so because the greater percentage of the profits yielded by the cotton schemes were repatriated to further the commercial interests of the Lancashire manufacturers.⁶⁸ In the process, African tenants could hardly extricate themselves from grinding poverty.

The irony of the situation was that the Gezira Scheme was established in 1925 with the object “to serve as a duplicate model for later irrigation schemes in Africa”⁶⁹ high on the agenda. That one of the pioneer irrigation schemes had failed to ameliorate the spectre of rural poverty was, however, likely to militate against the success of similar projects in future. The cases of the CDC, MWEA and Gonja,⁷⁰ to mention only a few, bear enough testimony to this fact.

In a nutshell, African farmers were not the major beneficiaries of the above irrigation schemes. There was nothing humanitarian about them. State-run irrigation schemes in Sanyati (the Main Estate and Gowe) were not altruistic ventures either. These schemes were not designed to benefit the plottolders at Gowe but the Estate or the State. The

⁶⁴ Gaitskell, *Gezira*, 49.

⁶⁵ T. Barnett, “The Gezira Scheme: Production of Cotton and the Reproduction of Underdevelopment” in I. Oxaal, T. Barnett and D. Booth (eds.), *Beyond the Sociology of Development: Economy and Society in Latin America and Africa*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1975), 186.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 194. N.B. In fact, the whole concept of a business partnership is alien to Africa. In all its facets it is a part of the entire Western industrial culture.

⁶⁷ Barnett, “The Gezira Scheme: Production of Cotton and the Reproduction of Underdevelopment,” 194 and 199.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 206. See also Barnett, *The Gezira Scheme*, 14, 23, 93 and 161.

⁶⁹ Barnett, *The Gezira Scheme*, 6.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.* See also Wells and Warmington, *Studies in Industrialization*, 245; Chambers, *Settlement Schemes in Tropical Africa*, 7 and La Anyane, *Ghana Agriculture, its Economic Development from Early Times to the Middle of the Twentieth Century*, 171.

appointment of a political functionary of the State (in the person of the DC) to oversee the running of the schemes meant that the primary responsibility for the two schemes lay with the State and not with the people of Sanyati. The latter did not have any decision-making powers regarding planning, ploughing and planting. Thus, just like most British officials in the Sudan the colonial state in Zimbabwe was not in favour of creating an independent peasant class but was interested in eliminating it. Whatever schemes were embarked upon anywhere in Africa, therefore, were tailor-made to appease the African farmers by showing them that the colonial governments were concerned with improving their welfare. However, as already indicated, the elimination of the vicious circle of poverty among the Africans was not a paramount consideration. Instead, the white settlers were merely engrossed in efforts to boost agricultural production (food and industrial crops) to meet the insatiable needs of a growing urban and rural population as well as the industrial sector.⁷¹ Thus, these projects were generally a pacifying tool - a bulwark against the potential revolution by the few master farmers, shop and lorry owners who approximated to the Gezira's rural African middle-class.⁷²

Clearly, in social and economic terms, the record of past schemes has not been very impressive.⁷³ Not only have they given rise to many problems, but they have also been outright failures. Many large-scale irrigation schemes in Africa in most cases give a very poor return on investment. For Jim Rowland the contribution of such schemes to overall food supplies in sub-Saharan Africa is small, though it may be very important locally.⁷⁴ In Ghana, for instance, the Gonja Development Company, formed in 1950 with a share capital of £1 million and with village settlement as one of its aims, folded up in 1956 having achieved, in the words of one authority, "nothing except extravagant expense for the Ghana Government."⁷⁵ Therefore, this scheme, taken together with the Gezira and many others, failed to achieve sustainable agricultural development among the peasant communities in Africa. ARDA's successes and failures as an irrigation authority will also be examined in this study.

HISTORIOGRAPHICAL SURVEY (LITERATURE REVIEW)

Nyandoro's 1997 study of Gowe in the Sanyati communal lands did not deal with differentiation as a major theme, but it revealed that most peasant households involved in dryland and irrigation farming were allocated approximately between 3 and 10 acres of land by the colonial state under the Native Land Husbandry Act (NLHA) of 1951.⁷⁶ The

⁷¹ T. J. Manyumbu, "Madzivadonto Irrigation Scheme: A Survey of Production and Marketing, 1958-1988," BA Honours dissertation, Harare: UZ, October 1988, 4.

⁷² Barnett, *The Gezira Scheme*, 47.

⁷³ Chambers, *Settlement Schemes in Tropical Africa*, 7.

⁷⁴ J. R. J. Rowland (ed.), *Dry Land Farming in Africa*, (London: MacMillan Press Ltd, 1993), 11.

⁷⁵ Chambers, *Settlement Schemes in Tropical Africa*, 7. See also La Anyane, *Ghana Agriculture, its Economic Development from Early Times to the Middle of the Twentieth Century*, 171.

⁷⁶ Mark Nyandoro, "The Gowe Plottolders Scheme: Growth and Development of an African Irrigation Enterprise in the Sanyati Communal Lands (1960s-1990s), MA thesis, Harare: Department of Economic History, University of Zimbabwe, June 1997. See also V. E. M. Machingaidze, "Agrarian Change From Above: The Southern Rhodesian Native Land Husbandry Act and African Response." *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 24(3), 1991, 557-589. The obsession by the Act with increasing the productive and carrying capacity of communal areas has been dealt with at length by Eira Punt, "The

pre-independence era brought despair and almost insurmountable economic hardship to Sanyati farmers because they were deprived of land, agricultural loan facilities, operational autonomy and flexibility of action on their pieces of land. This made them very poor but it did not preclude social differentiation from emerging in the area. In an attempt to survive and realising that land was the chief resource of production, a handful of peasant farmers by independence, were utilising more than 10 acres, droves were frantically searching for land and a lot more others such as women and sons of both dryland and irrigation farmers were virtually landless. The few farmers who were cultivating more than 10 acres had manipulated the system of land allocation to have dual ownership of land (i.e. farmers hoped to maximise their economic gain by the dual possession and cultivation of dryland and irrigation holdings). Nyandoro's study of Gowe confirms this, but as this study will demonstrate, land was not the only variable that influenced the occurrence of differentiation in rural Sanyati. This investigation in 1997 did not explore land issues in detail. It did not go beyond examining the growth and development of Gowe. The new study incorporates the element of class and social differentiation in Sanyati and contends that land was one of the bases of such differentiation. In his 1982 study of the Munyati area of Gokwe communal lands, L. de Swardt postulates that redistribution of land occurred through various "informal" land transactions involving marriage, share cropping, payment in kind and an exchange economy.⁷⁷ This could have determined social differentiation in Gokwe. Similarly, a variety of factors constitute the major causes of differentiation among the Sanyati peasantry. For example, a combination of farm and non-farm (off-farm) activities shaped the course of class differentiation.

In fact, the commonest forms of differentiation in Zimbabwe's rural areas since and indeed prior to 1945 have been on the basis of access to land, labour, gender and off-land income, for example, migrant earnings. Nevertheless, the irrigation era (the 1960s onwards) ushered in new types of social relations in Sanyati. Because irrigation plotters were allocated standardised plots, socio-economic and political relations were no longer necessarily determined by access to land mainly but access to inputs. For instance, inputs such as capital and labour tended to differentiate people more than access to land. The transition from dryland farming to irrigation agriculture by some farmers and how it enhanced or denigrated their societal standing (status) will be accorded emphasis. It is argued that irrigation significantly boosted levels of commercialisation. The rapid commercialisation of agriculture shaped people's strategies to gain economic ascendancy. Both dryland and irrigation agriculture were manipulated by different groups within the Sanyati community to manoeuvre their way to relatively higher social positions. Large-scale commercial agricultural enterprise, introduced with the inception of the Sanyati Main Irrigation Scheme in 1974, in turn, determined patterns of socio-economic differentiation in the Sanyati region.

Development of African Agriculture in Southern Rhodesia with Particular Reference to the Interwar Years," MA Thesis, Durban, 1979.

⁷⁷ L. de Swardt, "Agricultural Production in the Gokwe Farming Area," (Harare: Department of Land Management, University of Zimbabwe, 1982), 3 and 7. See also P. S. Nyambara, "A History of Land Acquisition in Gokwe, Northwestern Zimbabwe, 1945-1997," PhD dissertation, Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University, June 1999, 1.

For a long time since colonisation in 1890, most historical writings on the agricultural sector and agrarian differentiation in Zimbabwe focused on the racial division of land and the inequalities between white “commercial” farmers and an increasingly marginalised “subsistence” sector. The rural population was usually conceptualised as a “peasantry” or “proletariat.”⁷⁸ In posing two mutually exclusive categories, scholars tend to assign each Zimbabwean farmer to one or the other idealised, homogeneous category, with the result that all farmers took on the stereotypical and unrealistic attributes to their category. These conceptualisations tend to assume agrarian homogeneity with a single class identity, which, according to M. Neocosmos, is problematic.⁷⁹ Even the new Zimbabwean leadership, while it has been acutely aware of the racial disparities and some associated rural-urban differences, has shown little awareness of differentiation or inequalities within the communal areas themselves. In Sanyati, master farmers and successful cash crop farmers are held up as models to be emulated, without taking into cognisance that whole communities could not be made up of master farmers alone. In the dryland farming zone of Sanyati, such farmers possessed more agricultural land and accumulated more cash than their irrigation counterparts. According to Coeraad Brand, it is, therefore, important to ask introspective questions about how some of these farmers (Master Farmers) managed to gain access, not only to more arable land than others in the community,⁸⁰ but how they used resources at their disposal, for instance, land and labour to realise more income and set themselves as a class apart (own emphasis).

Recent writings on Zimbabwe, however, enhance our understanding of the process of agrarian change⁸¹ and differentiation in the rural areas. These include Phimister’s *Economic and Social History of Zimbabwe*, Worby’s “Remaking Labour, Reshaping Identity” and Nyambara’s “History of Land Acquisition in Gokwe.” They have argued that most rural areas experienced considerable commercialisation during and after the colonial period and that commercialisation gave rise to various forms of socio-economic differentiation among rural households and communities. Scholars in this group have advanced various arguments about how differentiation occurred in rural Zimbabwe. They have pointed to differences in access to land between freehold and communal areas and within communal areas; differences in households’ access to off-farm income; the privileged position and political manoeuvrings of chiefs; differences in quality of land and differential access to labour, which is again related to other factors including access

⁷⁸ The most influential exponent of this view is Giovanni Arrighi, “Labour Supplies in Historical Perspective: A Study of the Proletarianisation of the African Peasantry in Rhodesia,” *Journal of Development Studies*, 6(3) (1970). See also Colin Bundy, *The Rise and Fall of the South African Peasantry*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), Robin Palmer and Neil Parsons, *The Roots of Rural Poverty in Southern and Central Africa*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977).

⁷⁹ Michael Neocosmos, “Homogeneity and Differences on Swazi Nation Land” in M. Neocosmos (ed.), *Social Relations in Rural Swaziland: Critical Analyses*, (Manzini: University of Swaziland, 1987).

⁸⁰ C. Brand, “Will Decentralization Enhance Local Participation?” in A. H. J. Helmsing et al (eds.), *Limits to Decentralization in Zimbabwe: Essays on the Decentralization of Government and Planning in the 1990s*, (The Hague: Institute of Social Studies, September 1991), 83.

⁸¹ For more detail on the process of agrarian change see various articles in *The Journal of Agrarian Change*, 1(4), (October 2001). See also R. Chambers, *Rural Development: Putting the Last First*, (UK: Longman Group Ltd., 1983).

to off-farm income, polygamy and various forms of co-operative labour.⁸² However, none of these studies has alluded to the colonial state's interest in Sanyati and how TILCOR and ARDA influenced and engendered particular forms of differentiation i.e. not only based on patterns of differential land holdings but ability to pay the water rate, land rent, ability to access Agricultural Loan Fund (ALF) loans, Agricultural Development Fund (ADF) loans, Agricultural Finance Corporation (AFC) loans, Co-operative Society loans and labour utilisation (permanent or seasonal/contract labour). This study will attempt to fill in these gaps in existing literature on peasant agriculture and social differentiation in Sanyati, hence give it its point of departure from the said works. These exceptionalisms precisely make Sanyati valuable as a test case for the study of development and differentiation.

It is important to note that some of the basic structural features constraining the differentiation process in Sanyati were developed in the so-called African reserves (now communal areas) during the colonial period. In this period, the state made stout effort to "flatten"⁸³ or eliminate social differentiation in the countryside. It actually undermined existing patterns of differentiation. In Sanyati differential access to land existed but it tended to be overshadowed by the situation that obtained in neighbouring Gokwe. Differential access to land in Gokwe, for example, was quite pronounced. In this region, which Pius Nyambara studied, most households hold between 2 and 100 acres of farmland whereas in most communal areas of Zimbabwe the range is between 2 acres and 10.⁸⁴ In Kandare village of Mt Darwin where Masst did her research, most men have between 7 and 10 acres of farmland, a few have between 10 and 15 acres, a situation which is akin to most rural households in Zimbabwe.⁸⁵ In Gokwe, as Nyambara has noted, not only do some peasant households have land holdings far above the national average, but also the land disparities are fairly large.⁸⁶ In Sanyati this is true of the dryland farming area. However, in the TILCOR/ARDA irrigation schemes such disparities do not exist as the Gowe plotters or outgrowers were allocated standardised plots, a situation synonymous with egalitarian land holding. The only significant disparities arise when the size of land occupied by a smallholder irrigation farmer is compared to the enormous piece of land possessed by the Main Estate. This exceptionalism makes Sanyati valuable as a case for the study of differential and sometimes non-differential land holdings. State-run irrigation schemes in Sanyati,

⁸² Literature on differentiation among the Zimbabwean peasantry is numerous. E.g. Ian Phimister, *An Economic and Social History of Zimbabwe, 1890-1948: Capital Accumulation and Class Struggle*, (London: Longman, 1988); Angela Cheater, *Idioms of Accumulation: Rural Development and Class Formation*, (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1984); Nick Amin, "State and Peasantry in Zimbabwe since Independence," *European Journal of Development Research*, 4(1), 1992), 112-162; Mette Masst, "The Harvest of Independence: Commodity Boom and Differentiation Among Peasants in Zimbabwe," PhD dissertation, Roskilde University, 1996 and essays in N. D. Mutizwa-Mangiza and A. H. J. Helmsing (eds.), *Rural Development and Planning in Zimbabwe*, (Brookfield: Avebury, 1991).

⁸³ More detail on how the colonial state attempted to undermine rural differentiation is provided by I. Phimister, "Rethinking the Reserves: Southern Rhodesia's Land Husbandry Act Reviewed." *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 19(2), (June 1993).

⁸⁴ Nyambara, "A History of Land Acquisition in Gokwe," 9.

⁸⁵ Masst, "The Harvest of Independence" and Nyambara, "A History of Land Acquisition in Gokwe," 9.

⁸⁶ Nyambara, "A History of Land Acquisition in Gokwe," 9.

therefore, present us with an opportunity to study the role of land differentiation and other forms of differentiation in the area.

Historical studies on Zimbabwe have noted that both pre-colonial and colonial societies were highly differentiated. With reference to the pre-colonial period, David Beach argues that “modern Shona traditions tend to stress Shona economic equality in the past,” and yet available archaeological and documentary evidence “make it clear that, from the greatest ruler at Zimbabwe to the poorest slave, there was a tremendous range of wealth and poverty ... not all villages were equally wealthy and because of differences of the environment and other factors, some communities would be much worse off than others.”⁸⁷ “Thus, while some families and communities were becoming richer, others were collapsing as independent groups and being forced to enter the service of others as *varanda* (bondmen) or even as slaves.”⁸⁸ Angela Cheater also points to the existence of the term *hurudza* in Shona language (a large-scale agricultural entrepreneur), and states that representatives of this class had, by the turn of the twentieth century, expanded their production, selling their produce to white and Indian traders (trader-producers), as well as to farming and mining compounds.⁸⁹ This persisted and became even more conspicuous during the twentieth century. T. O. Ranger’s writings have demonstrated that throughout the colonial period “there was nothing ... to prevent the emergence of differential land holdings and wealth disparities among rural communities.”⁹⁰ He describes the process by which some people gained differential access to land, and points out that the 1930s witnessed the emergence of a significant number of large-scale plough-using entrepreneurs in the “reserves” (communal areas). Because of the wealth they had amassed, the “reserve” entrepreneurs could easily call upon the communal work parties for assistance in harvesting.⁹¹ Communal work parties were a common feature in Sanyati particularly during ploughing, weeding and harvesting. They are affectionately referred to locally as *humwe* (co-operatively-performed agricultural work).

Probably in response to the rapid proliferation of the “reserve” entrepreneurs, the enactment of the NLHA witnessed the intensification of demands to reduce the size of land and the number of cattle the people owned. In spite of this requirement, recent research on the impact of the NLHA on rural communities has shown that a great number of “reserve” entrepreneurs managed to avoid having their fields and cattle herds reduced. According to Phimister, richer cultivators generally refused to comply with state directives to limit the size of land they could plough and the number of cattle they could own. Hence, “a significant number managed to cling to [their] extensive plots which they

⁸⁷ D. N. Beach, *The Shona and Zimbabwe, 900-1850: An Outline of Shona History*, (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1984), 30.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 30.

⁸⁹ A. Cheater, “The Ideology of Communal Land Tenure in Zimbabwe: Mythogenesis Enacted?” *Africa*, 60(2), (1990), 188-205 and Nyambara, “A History of Land Acquisition in Gokwe”, 21-22.

⁹⁰ T. O. Ranger, “The Communal Areas of Zimbabwe” in T. Bassett and D. Crummey (eds.), *Land in African Agrarian Systems*, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993), 354-388 and Nyambara, “A History of Land Acquisition in Gokwe,” 13 and 22. See also Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness and Guerrilla War in Zimbabwe: A Comparative Study*, (Harare: Zimbabwe Publishing House/ZPH, 1985).

⁹¹ Ranger, “The Communal Areas of Zimbabwe” and Nyambara, “A History of Land Acquisition in Gokwe.” 22.

continued to work more or less as they pleased ... Owners of large cattle herds also continued to enjoy some success in blunting the worst of the state's offensive."⁹² Although they were forced to reduce the number of cattle they could own (through culling and destocking), they succeeded in placing a big proportion of their herds beyond the reach of the state through leasing (kuronzera or mafisa) to members of extended families and to other clients.⁹³ As will be seen in chapter two Ngwabi Bhebe, in his book entitled, *Benjamin Burombo*, describes the experiences of his own family in a way that confirms Phimister's findings that the Bhebe family flouted many stipulations of the Act in order to survive.⁹⁴ They fought very hard, not only to keep large herds of animals, but also to grab more land.⁹⁵ This is a clear demonstration of people's resistance to the totalitarian nature of the NLHA. In Sanyati, the people also resisted the dictates of the colonial state by either clandestinely or openly denouncing the small pieces of land allocated to them and destocking. They felt they had lost a fortune (livestock) before the campaign against tsetse bore fruit and they were not prepared to lose a lot more animals through destocking.

In his analysis of the performance of African agriculture during the NLHA, A. A. Le Roux found out that between 1948-1949 and 1950-1960 there actually emerged a more unequal pattern of land holding in the African "reserves" with 30% of "reserve" producers working 63% of all cultivated land.⁹⁶ Le Roux argues that the trend towards an unequal distribution of the area under cultivation was in fact more pronounced at the end of the 1950s than it had been at the beginning of the decade. This is synonymous with what happened in Sanyati's dryland area, as a number of farmers also held bigger pieces of land than others. This is clear indication that, to a large degree, Sanyati residents successfully resisted colonial attempts at social "engineering" during the 1950s and 1960s. Thus, differentiation in the countryside survived colonial efforts to stamp it out. Hence, according to Phimister, the actual impact of the LHA may have been overestimated, at the same time as the extent of differentiation among the peasantry was underestimated.⁹⁷ Roux also discovered that cattle ownership had become more unequal: "As with crops two types of cattle owners had developed by 1960. One was a small-scale owner with a subsistence herd, the other was a large-scale owner who supplied the beef market."⁹⁸ In a more recent re-evaluation of the effects of the NLHA on rural communities, Phimister has similarly noted that "far from the LHA checking entrepreneurial individualism, the wealth gap between these two classes of farmers [the rich and the poor] actually increased during the 1950s."⁹⁹ Cattle ownership as a yardstick to measure rural differentiation was, nevertheless, more applicable to Sanyati dryland

⁹² Phimister, *An Economic and Social History of Zimbabwe*, 279.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ N. Bhebe, *B. Burombo: African Politics in Zimbabwe, 1947-1958*, (Harare: College Press Pvt Ltd, 1989), 5-6. See also Phimister, "Rethinking the Reserves: Southern Rhodesia's Land Husbandry Act Reviewed," 236-237.

⁹⁵ Bhebe, *B. Burombo*, 5-6.

⁹⁶ A. A. Le Roux, "A Survey of Proposals for the Development of African Agriculture in Rhodesia," *Proceedings of the Geographical Association of Rhodesia*, 3, (1970), 34-38.

⁹⁷ Phimister, "Rethinking the Reserves," 225.

⁹⁸ Roux, "A Survey of Proposals for the Development of African Agriculture," 39.

⁹⁹ Phimister, "Rethinking the Reserves," 237.

farmers as the irrigation plotters at Gowe and the Estate were prohibited from rearing animals in the state-run irrigation schemes since they did not have any provision for grazing.

The colonial system since the passage of the Land Apportionment Act supported the existing pattern of small land holdings in the rural areas. In this connection, Masst asserts that “land holdings in the communal areas are small, are mostly located in infertile natural regions, and are situated far from the large markets.”¹⁰⁰ In Sanyati peasants cultivated small plots of land. The area is dominated by poor sandy soils and the distance to markets mainly in Kadoma (formerly Gatooma) was an inhibitive factor to economic progress. There are similarities between Masst’s observations in her recent study of socio-economic differentiation among peasants in Kandare village in northeastern Zimbabwe with the situation that obtained in Sanyati, but the concurrence with Masst ends there because not all peasants in Sanyati had small land holdings. Others, through various means, managed to gain access to more or bigger pieces of land. Farmers in this latter category, therefore, became a more distinct and outstanding class of people because of the significant disparities in land holdings that existed.¹⁰¹

In stark contrast to Zimbabwe, Tim Keegan, in his study of sharecropping and African class formation in South Africa’s maize belt, contends that little detailed empirical research has been undertaken on the nature and significance of the peasant economies in different areas of white settlement in South Africa, and on the precise mechanism of capitalisation and class formation which have transformed agrarian society and economy in the twentieth century.¹⁰² State intervention which took the form of loans for such purposes as fencing, dam construction, stock importation, seed and equipment grants, the extension of the railway network, the building of creameries and experimental farms, and action against animal and crop diseases and pests¹⁰³ was often heavily skewed in favour of the white commercial sector and not the peasant sector.¹⁰⁴ The latter scenario was, in many ways, replicated in colonial Zimbabwe.

¹⁰⁰ .Masst, “The Harvest of Independence,” 382. See also E. N. S. Chicheko, “A History of Cotton Growing in Sanyati (1968-1990),” BA Honours dissertation, Harare: Economic History Department, U Z, 1992; P. S. Nyambara, “Colonial Strategies and Peasant Response and Initiatives: The Development of Peasant Cotton Agriculture in Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), c. 1904-1953,” MA thesis, Evanston: History Department, Northwestern University, June 1994; O. Cluer, “An assessment of Rural Development and Planning in the Tribal Areas of Zimbabwe Under the Rhodesian Settler Government 1890-1980,” PhD thesis, Department of Anthropology and Sociology, University of Queensland, 1980.

¹⁰¹ Ben Cousins (ed.), *People, Land and Livestock*, (Harare: University of Zimbabwe, Centre for Applied Social Studies, 1989); Sam Moyo, *The Land Question in Zimbabwe*, (Harare: SAPES, 1995); Nick Amin, “Peasant Differentiation and Food Security,” New York, working paper, (1), SSRC Project on African Agriculture, 1989.

¹⁰² Tim Keegan, “The Sharecropping Economy, African Class Formation and the 1913 Natives’ Land Act in the Highveld Maize Belt,” in Shula Marks and Richard Rathbone (eds.), *Industrialisation and Social Change in South Africa: African Class Formation, Culture and Consciousness 1870-1930*, (London and New York, Longman Group Ltd., 1982), 195.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 201.

¹⁰⁴ N.B. In apartheid South Africa peasant farmers were derogatorily referred to as “Kaffir farmers.”

Writing about land tenure on the Arabie-Olifants Small-Scale Irrigation Scheme in South Africa's Northern Province Edward Lahiff argues that one of the rural pillars of apartheid was the so-called communal form of tenure.¹⁰⁵ The forced removal of millions of black people from "white" farms and towns to the "reserves/homelands," which began in earnest in the Free State with the Native Land Act of 1913, and which accelerated dramatically throughout the country in the 1960s and 1970s was another pillar of apartheid. Augmenting his argument, Lacey, Haines and Cross and Hendricks assert that communal tenure was an essential component of the migrant labour system, facilitating the concentration of the maximum possible number of Africans in the "reserves/homelands," preventing the emergence of a stratum of rich peasants or capitalist farmers, and providing the basis for a high degree of social control through the "tribal" leaders who controlled access to land.¹⁰⁶ This is very similar to the ordering of people and the social engineering that took place in Zimbabwe under the NLHA when large numbers of Africans were forced out of Rhodesdale. On this irrigation scheme state and parastatal agencies provide irrigation management and farmer support services in the same way ARDA does in Zimbabwe. However, since 1996 these agencies have been in severe decline, leading many plottolders to suspend or abandon agricultural activities. According to a report of the Water Research Commission, South African farmer irrigation schemes are beset by problems which include security of tenure, size of units/plots, debts, product prices, marketing, inputs and services concerned with extension, mechanisation and other types of support.¹⁰⁷ In Sanyati similar problems occurred and these have led to some plots lying idle or vacant.¹⁰⁸ The major difference though was that whilst plot sizes ranged between 2 and 4 ha in Sanyati in the Arabie-Olifants Scheme the range was from 1 to 5 ha and in the latter scheme the plottolders

¹⁰⁵ The communal tenure system found in South Africa is "communal" in the sense that an individual's entitlement to land flows from membership of a socio-political community (a village or ethnic group), rather than from private property. See Edward P. Lahiff, *Land Tenure on the Arabie-Olifants Irrigation Scheme*, South Africa Working Paper (2), (Colombo, Sri Lanka: International Water Management Institute/IWMI, 1999), 10, Fred T. Hendricks, *The Pillars of Apartheid: Land Tenure, Rural Planning and the Chieftaincy*, (Uppsala: University of Uppsala, 1990), 162 and T. W. Bennett, *Human Rights and African Customary Law Under the South African Constitution*, (Cape Town: Juta, 1995), 168.

¹⁰⁶ Marian Lacey, *Working for Boroko: The Origins of a Coercive Labor System in South Africa*, (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1981); Richard Haines and C. R. Cross, "An Historical Overview of Land Policy and Tenure in South Africa's Black Areas" in Haines and Cross (eds.), *Towards Freehold: Options for Land and Development in South Africa's Black Rural Areas*, (Cape Town: Juta, 1988) and Hendricks, *The Pillars of Apartheid*.

¹⁰⁷ G. R. Backeberg et al, *Policy Proposals for Irrigated Agriculture in South Africa*, Discussion Paper/WRC Report No. KV96/96, (Pretoria: Water Research Commission, July 1996), vii.

¹⁰⁸ Vacant plots (unoccupied allotments in any given farming season) were created as a result of death to a plottolder who did not have a successor or an heir. Most plots fell vacant when farmers voluntarily moved back to their dryland holdings, purchased land in the small-scale commercial farming areas (formerly NPAs) or when inactive holders or beneficiaries were forcibly evicted for various farming offences ranging from loan refusals by the AFC or other finance houses because of indebtedness which was a reflection on performance (no loans were granted to poor performers) to failure to abide by scheme rules and regulations. For example, ARDA settler schemes were mandated to strictly follow set out irrigation discipline, which among other things entailed conforming to stipulated ploughing, planting, disposition of cotton stalks and watering schedules. N.B. The vacant plots were sometimes cultivated by the Sanyati Main Estate for its benefit and this did not go down well with the outgrowers who were always clamouring for more land but in vain.

were allowed to keep restricted numbers of livestock whereas the rearing of animals was strictly forbidden in the former.

In his 1988 study entitled, *Land Struggles and Social Differentiation in Southern Mozambique: A Case Study of Chokwe, Limpopo 1950-1987*, Kenneth Hermele, tried to come up with a condensation of rural development in Southern Mozambique. He argued that, from the mid-19th century onwards, some colonial attempts had been made to encourage immigration, including extending loans, technical assistance and social facilities to those who decided to settle in the countryside.¹⁰⁹ However, in terms of national development, this policy was catastrophic because whole provinces were practically deprived of male labour at crucial times in the agricultural productive cycle. Many men had left Mozambique and were working in South Africa's gold and diamond mines.¹¹⁰ This does not conform to what happened in Sanyati during the colonial era. "Immigrants" with master farmer certificates were welcomed not with a view that they would return to their original homes to provide labour. They would be permanently settled and start a new life altogether. Most of the "immigrants" in Sanyati came from Rhodesdale, Chivi, Shurugwi, Chivhu, Gutu, Mhondoro-Ngezi and Filabusi. In Mozambique, such peasants struggled to acquire decent pieces of land for settlement compared to their counterparts in Zimbabwe's Sanyati region especially those who had attained master farmer status. Nonetheless, agricultural loans were not so easy to access. Loans were extended on the basis of excellent agricultural performance. However, consistent performance was difficult to achieve in Sanyati due to lack of loans and the recurrent spates of drought. The selective granting of loans, thus, gave birth to two social scenarios where the recipients of the loans comprised the class of "haves" and those who were not beneficiaries of this facility, the "have nots."

Historical studies on rural differentiation in Zimbabwe by T. O. Ranger, I. Phimister and N. Bhebe have tended to concentrate their focus on differentiation on the basis of land and cattle ownership, labour, gender and age.¹¹¹ Pius Nyambara's PhD dissertation entitled "A History of Land Acquisition in Gokwe, Northwestern Zimbabwe, 1945-1997," is no exception to this rule. Nyambara has written most recently and most incisively on Gokwe, a nearby district to Sanyati. The central focus of his study is the

¹⁰⁹ K. Hermele, *Land Struggles and Social Differentiation in Southern Mozambique: A Case Study of Chokwe, Limpopo 1950-1987*, Research Report (82), (Sweden: The Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 1988).

¹¹⁰ The effects of the migrant labour system from Mozambique to South Africa has been chronicled adequately by Patrick Harries in his article, "Kinship Ideology and the Nature of Pre-Colonial Labour Migration: Labour Migration from the Delagoa Bay Hinterland to South Africa, up to 1895," in Marks and Rathbone (eds.), *Industrialisation and Social Change in South Africa*, 142-166 and E. Webster, "Background to the Supply and Control of Labour in the Gold Mines," in E. Webster (ed.), *Essays in Southern African Labour History*, (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1978), 9-12. See also T. R. H. Davenport, *South Africa: A Modern History*, 2nd Edition, (Johannesburg: MacMillan South Africa Publishers Pvt Ltd., 1977), 353-369.

¹¹¹ The following are the works that have been written by these scholars: T.O. Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness and Guerrilla War in Zimbabwe: A Comparative Study*, (Harare: Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1985); I. Phimister, *An Economic and Social History of Zimbabwe, 1890-1948: Capital Accumulation and Class Struggle*, (London: Longman, 1988) and N. Bhebe, *B. Burombo: African Politics in Zimbabwe, 1947-1958*, (Harare: College Press Pvt. Ltd, 1989).

role of differential access to land resources within the broader context of socio-economic differentiation in Gokwe. It only makes passing references to Sanyati. Differentiation constitutes the main theme of this study. Like Nyambara's work, it acknowledges the importance of land, labour, gender and age to differentiation discourse and a developmental approach is emphasised. However, its greatest point of departure from Nyambara's work is that it is an investigation of the extent to which socio-economic differentiation emerged in Sanyati, which like Gokwe also lies in a frontier region of Zimbabwe, on the basis of TILCOR/ARDA irrigation activities (See Maps 9 and 10 showing ARDA's agricultural and non-agricultural operations).

Studies on peasant agriculture in Zimbabwe in general are numerous. Eric Worby's PhD thesis entitled "Remaking Labour, Reshaping Identity: Cotton, Commoditization and the Culture of Modernity in Northwestern Zimbabwe" is a recent addition to this rather very broad field of study. His central argument is that, in order to understand the implications of smallholder farmers becoming involved in a commodity crop like cotton, it is counterproductive to predict in advance that there is going to be a single process of class differentiation, but what actually transpires depends on questions of labour, identity and the culture of modernity. Throughout his thesis, Worby is invariably preoccupied with who deserves to be labelled a "modern" farmer? For him, labour forms and commodity relations are continually remade as farmers, traders, ethnographers and administrators argue over the signs of modernity and its antitheses. He makes spatial and sporadic allusions to Sanyati. Contrary to Worby's central theme, this study is an examination of the extent to which socio-economic differentiation occurred in Sanyati on the strength of TILCOR or ARDA-operated irrigation schemes and how irrigation interacts with the dryland farming community to produce certain forms of social inequality.

Although Worby refers to ARDA's major irrigation projects in Sanyati, the Main Estate and the Gowe Smallholder Scheme, this is done more or less in passing. He concentrates more on dryland farming in Tazivana Village of Goredema Ward (Gokwe) which is his major area of study. Using this small village as his springboard, Worby examines relations of power, labour and identity in time and social space. A detailed analysis of irrigation is, therefore, lacking in his work. A more significant difference with this study is the very small sample on which his work is based and the limitations of the time period he covers. This study, contrary to Worby's illustrates the range of different insights which one working as an historian and not an anthropologist, brings to bear.

In fact, one of the major contributions of this study is that it helps rewrite the story of rural differentiation in an irrigation sector compared to what Nyambara and Worby have found in the dryland sector. It makes a very strong case for the different intensities of differentiation between dryland farming and irrigation farming settings, which is not captured by Nyambara and Worby in their works. Clearly, irrigation agriculture produced much broader forms of socio-economic differentiation than those found under dryland farming. This was so because irrigation facilitated cropping throughout the year whereas under rainland conditions crops can only be grown in summer and on a less productive or extensive basis. Dryland farmers' chances of generating cash throughout the season were thus either very limited or non-existent. In most instances, this made them poorer than

their irrigation counterparts even during the boom period. The agricultural boom in Zimbabwe after independence intensified the socio-economic inequalities between the irrigators and the dryland farmers because the former had better access to credit and extension services than the latter. This dichotomy will be explored in detail in chapter five.

Other scholars who recently have written on Zimbabwe agriculture include William Masters and Friis-Hansen. In *Government and Agriculture in Zimbabwe*, Masters evaluates the impact on farmers of the government's economy-wide policies, focusing particularly on employment regulations and restrictions on international trade.¹¹² He examines how policies towards land, credit and other inputs affect different types of farmers within the agricultural sector. Furthermore, Masters discusses the part played by markets for the main agricultural products and state marketing agencies like the Grain Marketing Board (GMB), Cotton Marketing Board (CMB – now the Cotton Company of Zimbabwe/COTTCO) and the Dairy Marketing Board (DMB – now Dairibord Zimbabwe Limited/DZL). In analysing the role of major agricultural product markets he shows how prices and marketing arrangements are sometimes favourable to but often undermine farm production. In particular, he emphasises how low-potential communal area farmers or smallholder farmers residing in remote, low-rainfall areas realise reduced real incomes compared to their large-scale commercial counterparts. He refers to irrigation only as a major type of economic investment in agriculture. He largely glosses over ARDA Estate and smallholder irrigation as well as the type of tenure applicable to settlers on parastatal schemes. The latter would bring out how smallholder irrigators' productive capacity and initiative was constrained not by the general land tenure policy in the communal areas on the one hand and land tenure policy in the commercial areas on the other but by the lease agreement. This study covers ARDA leases in detail. On the whole, Masters addresses economic aspects but does not quite address the social impact of government intervention in smallholder agriculture and how that stimulated rural differentiation as this study does. Although Masters' book mainly focuses on a limited period (i.e. the 1980s) and is very 'economic' in its approach it provides useful contextualising material for this study.

Friis-Hansen's work, which is a case study of Silobela communal area not far from Sanyati, is important in illustrating issues pertaining to the importance of breeding and expeditious supply of inputs in particular seed prior to the planting season. The extent to which plant breeding satisfies the seed requirements of peasant or communal area farmers is discussed. He also analyses in a very small section the social differentiation of seed use by crop and variety which is a very limited form of differentiation compared to the one examined by this study which goes beyond merely looking at seed as a key differentiating factor. Besides this limitation, his work is important because in Zimbabwe there is growing awareness of the need for a broader and deeper understanding of the relationship between government and farmers. The seed sub-sector has assumed tremendous value in the light of the country's stagnating crop yields and mounting food deficits.¹¹³ Although

¹¹² William A. Masters, *Government and Agriculture in Zimbabwe*, (London: Praeger Publishers, 1994), 1-236.

¹¹³ Esbern Friis-Hansen, *Seeds for African Peasants: Peasants' Needs and Agricultural Research - The Case of Zimbabwe*, Publication (9), Centre for Development Research in co-operation with the Nordic

the study is not on Sanyati but on Silobela, it also provides similar insights on the vulnerability of peasant communities if their input requirements (e.g. seed) are not delivered on time or are exorbitantly priced to a point that the end users would not afford them. He further contends that better adapted use of plant genetic resources and a wider perspective for plant breeding will be crucial to increasing productivity of crop production/output not only in Silobela but also in Zimbabwe as a whole. Nevertheless, whilst ARDA has great potential to produce seed for its Estates and outgrowers as well as the nation at large not much is being done in this field hence the settlers have to rely on the GMB, COTTCO, Seed-Co and other companies for the supply of essential inputs such as seed. In an area like Sanyati specialising in a commodity crop the timeous delivery of appropriate cotton seed varieties was central to development. The success of cotton based on appropriate seed varieties also stimulated the process of differentiation although this was not intended by the state.

Another scholar who has explored the importance of cotton commodity production in stimulating socio-economic differentiation though writing on Tanzania is Raikes. He illustrates that rural differentiation thrived on cotton especially in areas that were suitable for its cultivation.¹¹⁴ This study focuses on rural differentiation (socio-economic differentiation) wrought specifically by irrigation agriculture in rural Sanyati and contrasts it with the forms of differentiation that characterised the surrounding dryland area both in the pre-irrigation and irrigation periods. It challenges the “Chayanovian” proposals about an undifferentiated peasantry in the colonial and post-colonial contexts.

Just like in the area of Tanzania studied by Raikes, rural differentiation in Sanyati, as elsewhere, cannot be adequately studied in isolation from the development of commodity production, the emergence of different socio-economic categories of farmers and the nature of the state as a whole which to a large extent has prompted responses to its policies which have heightened specific processes of differentiation. Because income distribution is less unequal for certain categories of farmers (e.g. the resource-poor) it can be assumed that rural differentiation is not significant in irrigation schemes. Such an argument has no solid basis when applied to Sanyati schemes. In Raikes’ words it clearly represents a static analysis which considers only the level of differentiation in terms of measurable material wealth and ignores the processes involved.¹¹⁵ The processes were informed by the irrigators’ political connections, their relations with Estate management which sometimes determined preferential access to state resources such as loans/credit as well as direct accumulation emanating from individual investment in terms of time, capital/money and labour.

Africa Institute, formerly the Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, (Copenhagen, Sweden: Uppsala, 1995), 10-228. N.B. For a broader analysis of the seed sub-sector in Sub-Saharan Africa see Elizabeth Cromwell, *Governments, Farmers and Seeds in a Changing Africa*, (London: CAB International in association with the Overseas Development Institute, 1996), 1-174. See also E. Friis-Hansen, “Seeds of Wealth, Seeds of Risk – Vulnerability of Hybrid Maize Production in the Southern Highlands of Tanzania,” *Project Paper* (88.3), (Copenhagen: Centre for Development Research, 1988).

¹¹⁴ Philip Raikes, “Rural Differentiation and Class-Formation in Tanzania,” *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 5(3), (April 1978).

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 286.

This study argues that in Sanyati rural differentiation was significant and that the possession of access to the means of production influenced the process of accumulation. Access to resources (land, capital and labour) varied from farmer to farmer. These variations can be used to attest to the emergence of rich and poor categories of farmers. This is an integral part of the “classic” process whereby the peasantry is internally differentiated with the emergence of rich peasants or *kulaks* gradually transforming themselves into capitalist or commercial farmers whose labour needs are provided by the poor peasantry. The latter are poor because they are either landless or lack the requisite farming resources to compete with their richer counterparts. In the colonial period rural differentiation was not considered to be a significant factor in Sanyati. The development of commodity production indicated important turning points which were related to different processes of socio-economic differentiation. In fact, it is difficult to talk of commodity production without differentiation.

Social differentiation, it can be observed, was also gendered. The plight of women in Zimbabwe’s agricultural industry in general and Sanyati in particular has been more pronounced than that of their male counterparts. Whilst women make a significant contribution to the success of agriculture as the major tillers and cultivators of the land, on the whole, they are given a raw deal by policy makers. With respect to colonial Lesotho as a British Resident Commissioner once remarked: Basotho women are “the breadwinners [since] the bread is usually earned by the women and the fields are cultivated by them.”¹¹⁶ Because many men from Lesotho were migrant workers on South African mines, in the words of a Basotho woman: “The work belongs to men but we do all the work.”¹¹⁷ The plight of women in agriculture is well documented. In Zimbabwe, for example, they are neither made recipients of agricultural loans nor controllers of the land which they spend so much time tending which also affects their social standing in society vis-a-vis that of their male counterparts. Women were generally not considered for plot allocation at Gowe-Sanyati because of reasons related to the system of tenure applicable to ARDA schemes. None or very few women were allocated plots. Under the system instituted by the DC as well as that adopted under the ARDA lease agreement a woman was assumed to have land once an allocation was made to her husband. This system was similar to the one applied to dryland agriculture where no or very few women were allocated land in their own right. Weinrich has confirmed this when she stated that most women had no land rights in their own name.¹¹⁸ In this connection, while traditionally land was construed as an asset that belonged to all the people, Ruth Weiss’s contention that men exercised almost monopolistic control over it is also true for Sanyati. Hence, “Women worked the land, but had no say as to what should be planted or sold.”¹¹⁹ Thus they were deemed to be a servile class of people.

¹¹⁶ British Resident Commissioner cited in Marc Epprecht, *This Matter of Women is Getting Very Bad: Gender, Development and Politics in Colonial Lesotho*, (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 2000), 2.

¹¹⁷ A Basotho woman cited in Epprecht, *This Matter of Women is Getting Very Bad*, 2.

¹¹⁸ A. K. H. Weinrich, *African Farmers in Rhodesia: Old and New Peasant Communities in Karangaland*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), 78.

¹¹⁹ Ruth Weiss, *The Women of Zimbabwe*, (Harare, Zimbabwe: Nehanda Publishers Pvt Ltd, 1986), 104.

This perception of women was endorsed and entrenched by the colonial system which frequently sought to subordinate females to their male folk. Men were invariably considered to be the major decision-makers in nearly all fields of human endeavour, including agriculture. According to Schmidt, colonial officials were responsible for lending credence to this rather warped view of women's role because they, "... accepted the premise that African females were perpetual minors under the tutelage of a male guardian, be it a father, uncle, husband or son."¹²⁰ However, this study is a clear departure from scholarship that eclipses or trivialises an objective understanding of women's contribution in agriculture. Weinrich should, therefore, be applauded for denouncing, "... peasant farmers [who] make a concerted effort to prevent the emancipation of their women ..."¹²¹ and want them to remain a subordinate class. Such gender divisions, though, should be seen as an illustration of the existence of social differentiation.

Viewing women as "the silent farm managers in the small scale commercial areas of Zimbabwe,"¹²² "Unsung heroines in Tanzania,"¹²³ and as "A neglected factor in social development"¹²⁴ does underscore one significant point that women's role in farm and non-farm activities can no longer be down played. Clearly, considering the fact that the less-to-do rural women are the major participants not only in child-rearing but also in the tillage of the land, planting of crops, weeding and harvesting, it should be acknowledged that "... they are the people who keep agriculture going in the rural area ..."¹²⁵ and thus should be accorded the right to own and control land in their own right. In fact, contrary to this, some Sanyati women, particularly those who adopted cotton earlier, due to their agricultural enterprise and acumen, have become wealthy and very powerful social figures, thereby disputing the premise that women cannot ascend to important positions in society.

J. Guy, speaking about the South African situation from the pre-colonial period to 1945, says that: "... it was the labour of women in agriculture supported by their domestic labour in the homestead, be that chiefly or commoner, which provided the subsistence base upon which society depended and the surplus upon which it was structured."¹²⁶ Indeed, the production of a surplus was an essential determinant of differentiation among the Sanyati peasantry as a whole. Similarly, Ruth Weiss contends that, "Its their sweat and blood that's mixed into that soil... [so] they should have the right to decide on the

¹²⁰ E. Schmidt, *Peasants, Traders and Wives: Shona Women in the History of Zimbabwe 1870-1939*, (Harare: Baobab Books, 1992).

¹²¹ A. K. H. Weinrich, *African Farmers in Rhodesia: Old and New Peasant Communities in Karangaland*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), 167-168.

¹²² D. Mungate, "Women: The Silent Farm Managers in the Small Scale Commercial Areas of Zimbabwe (based on study of the Mashonaland West Small Scale Commercial Areas of Zimbabwe)," *Zimbabwe Agricultural Journal*, 80(6), (November-December, 1983).

¹²³ M. K. Ngaiza, and B. Koda (eds.), *Unsung Heroines, Women's Life Histories from Tanzania*, (Dar-es-Salaam: WRDP Publications, 1995).

¹²⁴ S. K. Kachingwe, "Zimbabwe Women: A Neglected Factor in Social Development," *Journal of Social Development in Africa*, 1(1), (1986).

¹²⁵ Weiss, *The Women of Zimbabwe*, 127.

¹²⁶ Jeff Guy, "Gender Oppression in Southern Africa's Pre-Capitalist Societies" in E. Walker (ed.), *Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945*, (Cape Town: David Phillip, 1990), 35.

crops, on their disposal ...”¹²⁷ In this sense, women’s experiences as cultivators were distinct in spite of the fact that they “... were exploited and [the] surplus value they produced was appropriated by the men.”¹²⁸ The role of Sanyati women in agriculture is, therefore, judged against this background. However, the complementarity of men and women’s roles should be acknowledged to come up with a more objective assessment of the two’s roles in agriculture and how they fit into the existing differentiation discourse.

A new dimension to the literature on gender has been provided by A. K. H. Weinrich (Sister Mary Aquina) who argues that rural women were not only denigrated to inferior roles on the basis of gender but also on the basis of race [racial discrimination against women] and generally low levels of academic attainment. In *Women and Racial Discrimination in Rhodesia* Weinrich examines the effects of social and economic structures in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) on women as well as women’s roles in what she terms traditional society and in the future of Zimbabwe. Because she was writing at the height of the liberation struggle (i.e. in the 1970s) by “future” she is referring to the post-independence period. The book, in the main, analyses from an anthropological perspective the effects of Rhodesian discriminatory policies on African life and in particular women. However, whilst she has done commendable work by highlighting the plight of women the book’s major limitation is its attempt to cover so many aspects about women ranging from politics (i.e. role in the struggle for independence), marriage, employment and so on. Although she has carried out nation-wide surveys of all the major settlement types including irrigation schemes among other things she has dismally failed to capture or mention in her analysis the position of women in the TILCOR type of settlement which was organised on the basis of a core estate and an outgrower or settler scheme. In fact, she does not address the extent to which women’s (i.e. the ploughing strata of women) experiences as cultivators were distinct in such schemes as Sanyati where the lease conditions tended to affect women more than men. Presumably, in protest against society’s portrayal of the rural strata of women, Weiss argues: “women have moved away from [merely] demanding equal rights - they want more rights than men ...”¹²⁹ as they perceive themselves not only as an integral part of the cog but as pivotal to the regeneration and success of agriculture as a whole.

In the Sanyati district where economic activities outside agriculture are virtually non-existent, it is argued in this study that differentiation was mainly on the basis of agriculture and, to a less extent, on the basis of non-farm activities and gender. Acknowledgement of this reality, according to Jean Bonvin, in his study on Burundi agriculture, paves the way for the identification of relevant features in the transformation of rural life and brings out the hidden mechanisms of economic and social change or provides the basis for the formulation of a strategy for the harmonious development of rural society.¹³⁰

¹²⁷ Weiss, *The Women of Zimbabwe*.

¹²⁸ A. K. H. Weinrich, *Women and Racial Discrimination in Rhodesia*, (Paris: UNESCO, 1979), 14.

¹²⁹ Weiss, *The Women of Zimbabwe*, 127.

¹³⁰ J. Bonvin, *Social Attitudes and Agricultural Productivity in Central Africa*, (Paris: Development Centre Studies, 1986).

To date, some important and insightful works on smallholder irrigation farming in Zimbabwe have been written. These include W. Roder's research paper, *The Sabi Valley Irrigation Projects*, N. Reynolds' PhD thesis entitled, "A Socio-Economic Study of an African Development Scheme," E. Manzungu and P. Van der Zaag's book, *The Practice of Smallholder Irrigation: Case Studies From Zimbabwe*. Roder argues that the Sabi Valley Irrigation Projects in Manicaland were initiated in the 1930s when the government began to take an active role in the promotion of irrigation schemes in the rural areas. Such schemes, as Reynolds (based on his investigations of the Nyamaropa irrigation schemes) concurs with Roder, were justified, in the early years, on the grounds that they would provide a local source of famine relief. During the next two decades they continued to be regarded as having this as their primary role, but greater emphasis came to be laid on their value as a means of relieving population pressure.¹³¹ Whilst this is true for the Sabi Valley and Nyamaropa projects, the implementation of similar schemes in Sanyati coincided with UDI, one of whose objectives was appeasement of the peasantry probably in an attempt to pre-empt possible rural resistance to the government. Nevertheless, government motives were far from being altruistic. Manzungu and van der Zaag's book is a compilation of various essays on smallholder irrigation agriculture. Whilst this book gives some insights into smallholder irrigation farming, its greatest shortcoming is the general portrayal of irrigation issues and the tendency to focus more on the Manicaland projects to the exclusion of schemes in other parts of the country. It recognises the importance of water as a finite resource and discusses the imposition by the government of the water rate, land rent and some such fiscal measures, but analytical weaknesses permeate this book as it often glosses over important issues and stages. For example, it does not deal with the socio-economic impact of irrigation in detail. In fact, none of these works has attempted an in-depth analysis of the social differentiation wrought by the introduction of irrigation in Sanyati and how the Sanyati people responded to this new economic situation.

Furthermore, much has been written on the bigger schemes in Africa such as the Gezira in Sudan, the CDC, the MWEA¹³² and the Gonja Development Company. The following are some of the most important works done in this field: A. Gaitskell, *Gezira: A Story of Development in the Sudan*; F. A. Wells and W. A. Warmington, *Studies in Industrialisation: Nigeria and The Cameroons*; S. La Anyane, *Ghana Agriculture, its Economic Development from Early Times to the Middle of the Twentieth Century*; R. Chambers, *Settlement Schemes in Tropical Africa: A Study of Organizations and*

¹³¹ W. Roder, *The Sabi Valley Irrigation Projects*, Department of Geography Research Paper, (99), (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965). See also N. Reynolds, "A Socio-Economic Study of an African Development Scheme", unpublished PhD thesis, Cape Town: University of Cape Town, July 1969.

¹³² For more information on irrigation, agriculture and differentiation and the reasons for the adoption of irrigation in Kenya and Ethiopia See R. Hogg, "Settlement, Pastoralism and the Commons: The Ideology and Practice of Irrigation Development in Northern Kenya", in D. Anderson and R. Grove (eds.), *Conservation in Africa: People, Policies and Practice*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); L. H. Brown, *The Development of the Semi-Arid Areas of Kenya*, (Nairobi: Ministry of Agriculture, Government Printer, 1963); L. H. Brown, *Conservation for Survival: Ethiopia's Choice*, (Addis Ababa: Haile Sellassie University Press, 1973); R. Hogg, "Irrigation Agriculture and Pastoral Development: a Lesson from Kenya," *Development and change*, 14, (1983), 577 – 91 and P. D. Little, "Social Differentiation and Pastoralist Sedentarization in Northern Kenya," *Africa*, 55(3), (1985), 243 – 61.

Development and T. Barnett, *The Gezira Scheme: An Illusion of Development*. Wells and Warmington argue that groundnuts, cocoa, palm produce and rubber - Nigeria's four most important export crops - are all dominated by small-scale or peasant producers. Whilst this focus on peasant agriculture is quite refreshing (because large-scale schemes have often been emphasised), they quickly turn to the Cameroons' lucrative plantation business. They point out that "plantation agriculture has become established in certain areas of ... Nigeria, and in the ... Cameroons it was ... the dominant form of commercial activity."¹³³ For example, the plantations account for virtually the entire palm oil, rubber and banana exports of the Cameroons.¹³⁴ The CDC, more or less operated like ARDA in Zimbabwe in the manner in which it directed and co-ordinated plantation agricultural activities. Although not concerned exclusively with the labour aspect of industrialisation,¹³⁵ this phenomenon features quite prominently in their book in which they imply that some form of differentiation might have emerged as a result of differential wage earnings in the agricultural sector. In the main, they do not espouse differentiation discourse in a similar manner to how the labour of the outgrowers, for instance, was utilised in the Sanyati case study.

La Anyane, writing about Ghana agriculture, stresses its economic development from the colonial up to the post-colonial period. He discusses the development of some irrigation projects although, the Gonja Development Company is emphasised. Chambers tries to incorporate smallholder schemes into his analysis. He examines the role of organisations in instituting irrigation-based development, but concentrates more on the MWEA and Gonja. However, it is from Barnett and Gaitskell's works, although dealing with one of the biggest irrigation schemes in Africa, the Gezira in the Sudan, that this study draws a lot of inspiration to examine how irrigation agriculture engendered certain forms of economic and social differentiation quite diametrically opposed to those found under dryland agriculture. Tony Barnett in particular has made a detailed documentation of how the proceeds from cotton cultivation in the Sudan's Gezira Irrigation Scheme were unequally shared among various stakeholders who included the Government, the tenants, the Local Government Councils, the Social Development Department and the Sudan Gezira Board (SGB). He states that

Four social categories can be distinguished in the Gezira. These are the administrators (who form part of the bureaucratic apparatus of the state), the *nas tayyibin* [which] include[s] rich tenants, merchants, lorry owners, money-lenders and other entrepreneurs, those tenants who are more dependent on their tenancy than upon any other source of income, and the labourers, those who depend mainly upon the sale of their labour in order to live.¹³⁶

¹³³ F. A. Wells and W. A. Warmington, *Studies in Industrialisation: Nigeria and the Cameroons*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 127.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 245.

¹³⁶ Barnett, *The Gezira Scheme*, 178.

In his view the tenants' financial position was tenuous and they did not consider that they received an adequate return from their cotton.¹³⁷ They felt relatively deprived and experienced poverty, both as individuals and as members of households.¹³⁸

The tenants in the Gezira Scheme occupy a position that is analogous to that of the Gowe plottolders in Sanyati where cotton profits were also unequally distributed between the smallholder irrigation farmers, the Sebungwe Co-operative Society and the TILCOR Estate to whom the DC Gatooma often ceded his management role.¹³⁹ Broadly speaking, the Gezira tenants can be divided into two major categories, namely those who have resources (both economic and social) and those who do not. The first are tenants who are fairly wealthy. The latter category are those that feel relatively disadvantaged. According to Barnett "there are relations of credit and debt between these categories. But both categories, in their turn, stand in a common contractual relationship with the Gezira Board."¹⁴⁰

However, whilst all these works are important to irrigation studies as a whole, they tend to focus more on the "Big Schemes" to the detriment of their smaller counterparts such as Gowe in Sanyati. A relatively new dimension in this study is the comparative analysis of the relationship between ARDA's main irrigation scheme at Sanyati and its smallholder component (neighbour), Gowe, and how this determined or influenced social differentiation, an aspect which has not been fully covered by any of the works referred to above. How the attainment of growth point status¹⁴¹ engendered further forms of differentiation is quite striking.

In Sanyati, differentiation caused by the unequal relationship between Gowe and the Main Estate is pronounced. Not only do land disparities exist between Gowe and the Main Estate, but their income base also differs. Although the Main Estate often demanded the synchronisation of activities i.e. ploughing, planting and fertiliser application in order to achieve efficiency and viability, in reality, the relationship between the two schemes was more exploitative than mutually beneficial and differentiation, while it emerged, was an unintended consequence of irrigation. It is precisely this exceptionalism and others alluded to earlier, which make Sanyati valuable as a test case for the study of class and social differentiation. The area, therefore, provides an opportunity to study the role of dryland and irrigation farming in a process of sustained commercialisation of peasant agriculture. The development and progression of

¹³⁷ Barnett, *The Gezira Scheme*, 113.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 89.

¹³⁹ S. C. Pazvakavambwa, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Lands, Land Reform and Resettlement, Office of the President and Cabinet, Personal Interview, Makombe Government Complex, Harare, 10th September 2004.

¹⁴⁰ Barnett, *The Gezira Scheme*, 88.

¹⁴¹ M. Rukuni and C. K. Eicher (eds.), *Zimbabwe's Agricultural Revolution*, (Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications, 1994). See also T. Mushayavanhu, "The Tribal Trust Land Development Corporation (TILCOR): Impact on Rural Development," MA dissertation, Harare: University of Zimbabwe, May 1989; R. M. Drinkwater, *The State and Agrarian Change in Zimbabwe's Communal Areas*, (London: MacMillan Academic and Professional Ltd., 1991); G. Ruigu and M. Rukuni (eds.), *Irrigation Policy in Kenya and Zimbabwe*, (Nairobi: University of Nairobi, 1991).

the area from peasant production to irrigation enterprise is a significant event in the history of this frontier region. This is the gap that has been identified. By helping fill the gap in the existing literature on development and differentiation the study will thus make a relevant and significant contribution to knowledge.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research for this study has been primarily conducted in two countries, Zimbabwe and South Africa. On the one hand, extensive research was conducted in the National Archives of Zimbabwe and other libraries dotted around Harare and Kadoma. On the other, further research was carried out in the Union Archives, University of Pretoria (UP), University of South Africa (UNISA) and Department of Agriculture Libraries located in and around greater Pretoria.

In analysing the theme of development and differentiation in rural Sanyati this work adopts a case study approach. A variety of methods were used to solicit for information to bolster this case study. These ranged from the use of direct observation in data collection, secondary sources (including electronic and Internet resources) to archival research. To complement the major secondary sources on the topic newspapers and magazines on rain-fed and irrigation agriculture were consulted. Legislative debates and statutory instruments were also important in putting the proposed study in its proper policy framework.

Research leading to problem statement and hypothesis formulation, the writing of the research proposal and chapter synopsis started towards the end of 2003. This study commenced in earnest in 2004. Because of the need to visit the Records Centre (RC) section of the Main Archives in Harare, which is the main repository of ARDA records and the need to conduct field research in the rural areas of Sanyati, the author was, after some difficulty, able to get three key letters which paved way for more detailed research to start. The first was written by the ARDA CEO in August 2003 authorising the author to access parastatal records and books from the RC and ARDA Library. The ARDA Library in Harare has been a useful resource centre for this project. The second (June 2004) was written by the DA (Kadoma) introducing me to the political and traditional leadership in Sanyati. It opened the door for a reconnaissance visit of the study area and subsequently to carry out interviews with key individuals who included Gowe ploholders, Chiefs Wozhele and Neuso, some village heads and local Department of Agricultural Research and Extension (AREX), formerly the Department of Agricultural Technical and Extension Services (AGRITEX) officials. The open-ended interviewing method used in oral discussions with relevant people from the Sanyati and Gowe Irrigation Schemes, Sanyati dryland farmers, former and present TILCOR/ARDA management, the former DC for Gatooma, the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture and Rural Resettlement officials and the former Director of the District Development Fund (DDF) was fruitful. The method allowed the author to collect as many “life histories” of individuals selected to represent key categories as possible, for example, chiefs, headmen, young men/labour migrants, women, older established farmers, newcomers and richer/poorer farmers. The third letter (April 2005), written by the ARDA Human

Resources Manager, introduced me to Sanyati Estate management. Earlier on another letter had been written granting the author access to Parliament Library in Harare.

Research progressed smoothly after the author had signed (in August 2003) a confidential clause with the Authority (ARDA) in line with the provisions of the Official Secrets Act of 1970, Section 4. It became easier after that to approach national, provincial and district offices requesting information on the ARDA Sanyati schemes. By visiting several of these offices the author was able to collect important data on ARDA's irrigation schemes in the northwestern part of the country, which has helped put together a regional specific study. The reconnaissance visit helped the author to map out major strategies on the categories of people to interview. This was followed by several visits to solicit for more specific and detailed information on the socio-economic development of the area on the basis of irrigation. These survey visits allowed considerable understanding of the operations and activities of ARDA in the area and how the community responded to the new technological changes in agriculture. It was at this stage that some of the most useful hypotheses were developed. A major outcome of irrigation development was the emergence of levels of differentiation which transcended those hitherto known in the study area.

The preliminary stages of this research focused on reviewing secondary literature on rural development, peasant agriculture, irrigation and differentiation in the global, continental, national and regional contexts. This broad perception was quickly narrowed down to looking at development and differentiation in Sanyati. Given the imposing presence of the two ARDA irrigation schemes in this predominantly drought prone frontier or backwater region of the country and the information emerging from the literature, the study was therefore specifically concerned with exploring development and differentiation processes in an irrigation context.

The broader strategy was to use archival research (both public and oral) to come up with detailed information on ARDA-Sanyati which is the main subject of this study. Whilst the field survey used in-depth open-ended interviews to collect data from plotholder households, the Estate management, Estate employees and dryland farmers, the information gleaned from ARDA Library in Harare, the District Administrator's office in Kadoma and the National Archives of Zimbabwe (NAZ) was invaluable.

The author initially planned to study the growth and development of the TILCOR (now ARDA) Main Irrigation Estate at Sanyati established in 1974. However, the initial stages of the survey revealed that studying the scheme in isolation to the adjoining smallholder component (the Gowe Plottolders Irrigation Scheme) and how this impacted on the surrounding dryland communal sector presented a major limitation for policy formulation. A survey of the Estate alone would be inadequate to unravel the particular forms of development let alone differentiation which irrigation enterprise engendered in this area. The freedoms and constraints of participating in irrigation agriculture, the author felt, could not be adequately analysed in a context that overlooked the existence of other players in the community, notably the dryland sector. In fact, the performance of plotholder households, the Estate and the dryland farmers combined to reveal some

significant socio-economic developments. For example, irrigation led to the emergence of greater forms of inequalities and it also produced a complex developmental scenario centred on the growth point theory. It was at this stage that it was decided to incorporate both development and differentiation as the main theme.

It was originally not intended to use the questionnaire method because of its known limitations. However, after contacting the ARDA Chief Executive Officer and a former ARDA General Manager the two preferred that the author sends them a questionnaire to which they would respond. This was done, but knowing that more detailed responses could be extracted through face-to-face discussions the author insisted and ultimately prevailed on these officers to grant him oral interviews. Due to some official technicalities, however, some questions pertaining to policy issues were either evaded or were not fully answered. Instead of using inference to get the answers, the RC in Harare was used to get nearly all the archival information required to accomplish this project.

A very important stage in my research was when the former DC for Gatooma, R. L. Westcott, (who established the Gowe scheme as an officer in the then Ministry of Internal Affairs) agreed initially to respond to a questionnaire which was sent by post because of distance from Harare where the author is usually based and Ramsgate (South Africa) where the former DC was staying. He also agreed to give a telephone interview, but the cost of using this method was prohibitive. Subsequently, when a study grant for this project was made available, it became possible to visit him for an oral interview which shed a lot of light on the origins, operational and managerial aspects of the scheme. Because of the general lack of descriptive data on this scheme, the author decided to embark on many face-to-face interviews which were complemented by telephonic interviews. Telephonic and oral interviews were conducted with a number of other informants in Zimbabwe. Indeed, the greater part of the information that has shaped this study has been acquired through oral interviews with respondents who are too numerous to be mentioned by name and from documents housed in the RC of the NAZ. The information solicited by this survey augmented work on this case study scheme. The selection of the case study was based on a previous study on the area which was rather narrow in scope because it did not deal with the two irrigation schemes and the relationship between irrigation and dryland agriculture which this one is focusing on.

It is important to note that the preceding section comprises a historiographical survey of the secondary literature encountered on peasant agriculture in general. The literature that has been reviewed for the study was obtained during a process of sustained and extensive comparative research during and before survey design. Although existing main studies on irrigation like Roder's *Sabi Valley Irrigation Projects* and Barnett's *Gezira Scheme* were useful in formulating study ideas (in particular the hypothesis), it was still necessary to employ other information-gathering techniques at both national, provincial, district and scheme levels.

Methodological limitations and problems encountered during the research:-

The major problem, at least at the beginning of field research, was to convince respondents that the work was not being carried out to further the political ambitions of any party but that it was purely for academic purposes. This was necessary in the wake of the fact that this study commenced in earnest in 2004 a few years after the formation of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) – the main opposition party in recent years to the Zimbabwe African National Union, Patriotic Front (ZANU PF). The standoff between Britain (the former colonial power) and Zimbabwe, which was a manifestation of the bilateral dispute between the two as a result of the adoption by the latter of contentious agrarian reforms in 2000, was reaching fever pitch. Because of the tense political climate, it was officially desirable for researchers to seek written authorisation before embarking on research projects particularly in the rural areas. It was also not easy to assure respondents that the material gathered would not be used for any purpose that was prejudicial to the spirit within which it was rendered. However, this hurdle was eliminated by the various letters the author carried around, the more readily accepted of them being the DA's. On one field tour of Ward 23 in Chief Wozhele's area, the DA's letter diffused a near catastrophe for the author when after interviewing a group of headmen prior to their meeting at "Old Council" or Wozhele Business Centre which was to discuss the modalities of distributing inputs for the 2005 growing season a certain man who identified himself as a local or district ZANU (PF) chairman demanded to know the purpose of this visit. It was only on production of the DA's letter that permission was granted.

Transport to some respondents especially those living far from the major road network was also a problem. Another problem was the apparent reluctance on the part of some illegal occupiers of Estate land to explain in full the circumstances that drove them to take this action. Their unwillingness to yield information might have been informed by the crude way which had earlier been used to force them out of ARDA land. Police actually set their makeshift homes on fire in an effort to make them comply with an order to vacate ARDA property, but the author was not aware of this incident. However, through interviewing various irrigation plotters and dryland farmers it emerged that some local peasants and Gowe tenants illegally occupied Sanyati Estate land in their quest to have bigger plots for their cultivation arguing that the 2 to 4-ha plots allocated to them at Gowe were too small for their needs.

Apart from this, two other obstacles ought to be mentioned here. There were some financial constraints encountered during this study. These were mainly due to spiraling inflation in my home country (Zimbabwe). It was also difficult to gain access to the DC Gatooma's Annual Reports on Gowe as these were permanently withdrawn by the issuing Ministry (Internal Affairs). Save for the information derived from oral interviews, most of the pertinent detail is contained in Estate files, which were not always so generously availed to the author during the course of this research. However, the problems encountered by the author have not prejudiced the quality of argument in this study.

STRUCTURE OF THESIS (OUTLINE OF THE THESIS)

The study is divided into seven major chapters conforming to specific time frames. The periodisation of the study is significant in that it encompasses major landmarks in the history of peasant agriculture in Sanyati. Chapter one which is the main introduction highlights the problem statement and hypothesis. It also reveals the study's aims and major justifications. The literature review, research methodology and structure of the thesis are covered here. It also, on the one hand, gives a brief background history of the evolution of small-scale irrigation schemes in the communal areas of Zimbabwe. This helps put irrigation at Gowe in its local perspective. On the other, it tries to situate irrigation enterprise in its African context.

The second chapter focuses on peasant production in Sanyati prior to the inception of formal irrigation schemes. Agricultural development and earlier rural class formations are examined to discern their origins and how government emphasis on promoting the master farmer category impacted on socio-economic progress in the area. A major feature of this chapter is the forced eviction of Africans from Crown Land to Sanyati "Reserve" under the NLHA of 1950. This Act attempted to scuttle the process of rural differentiation by allocating the peasantry small and uneconomic land holdings. Numerous measures were adopted to deal with population pressure and "improve" the carrying capacity of the "Reserve." These included the implementation of the centralisation policy and the enforcement of conservationist measures such as contouring and destocking. Opposition and resistance to these state measures whose central basis was the NLHA was rife. The chapter shows that a number of peasant farmers were able to overcome some of the prescriptions of the Act which militated against accumulation and became relatively wealthy rural producers. The advent of cotton commodity production enhanced their status even further. It was against this background that irrigation was introduced.

The factors leading to the establishment of the scheme, government motives or justifications for the creation of Gowe as a pilot irrigation scheme in the Sanyati communal lands in conjunction with its colonial objectives are presented and analysed in chapter three. The emergence of estate agriculture, which was spearheaded by TILCOR and later reinforced by the adoption of the ADA Act in 1971, is discussed. The wide-ranging debates culminating in the formation of ADA which was renamed ARDA in 1978 are an integral aspect of this chapter. In the main, the chapter focuses on state policy or strategies which informed the agricultural developmental trend in rural Sanyati throughout the period covered by this study.

Chapter four examines the impact of the establishment and development of the Gowe and Sanyati Main Irrigation Schemes as well as how various institutional factors (for example, the availability of loan facilities and extension personnel) determined the tempo of development and the extent of differentiation. The relationship that existed between the two schemes is also explored. Since the Unilateral Declaration of Independence in 1965 the role of irrigation (compared to dryland agriculture) in boosting food productivity and allaying fears of hunger and starvation is emphasised. Because of its potential to generate cash for the growers and due to its resilience under arid conditions

cotton became a very popular crop in the Sanyati communal lands. In fact, it became as the chapter argues one of the major bases of peasant differentiation. The differential impact exerted by the cultivation of this crop on the community was enormous as distinct categories of rich and poor were created. It is also argued in this chapter that cotton commodity production broadened the income and social disparities between the core estate and the smallholder component as well as between the plotters and their dryland neighbours. Clearly, irrigation agriculture in Sanyati engendered forms of economic and social differentiation which are different to those experienced under dryland agriculture. In addition, the chapter also argues that whilst classes existed in Sanyati before the 1960s the element of class started to emerge in a more distinct manner during the irrigation era. Various criteria distinguish the rich from the poor. For example, irrigation plotters were not only differentiated on the basis of land ownership or gender, but also on their ability to pay the water rate, land rent as well as their ability to access Agricultural Development Fund (ADF), Agricultural Loan Fund (ALF) and Co-operative Society loans.

An examination of how the Gowe plotters were battling to survive on small tracts of land since the inception of the scheme in 1967 is also a major feature of Chapter four and indeed subsequent chapters. Little effort was made to increase their plot sizes. The problems of the Gowe irrigators were compounded by the fact that they were subjected to the whims of the Agricultural Development Fund, the Agricultural Loan Fund and an invariably bankrupt Co-operative Society.

Attention is also focused on why Gowe was accorded very high priority since the 1970s. On the one hand, projects such as Gowe were generally meant to be a pacifying tool or a bulwark against the potential revolution by the rural African middle-class. On the other, however, with the envisaged and later formation of the Sanyati Main Estate, it became clear that colonial policy would shift from a mere attempt to control and pacify the indigenous population to a more protracted move towards the entrenchment of settler hegemony under the auspices of TILCOR. The intricacies of this paradox will be examined in this chapter. Chapter four provides the setting for chapter five.

Chapter five analyses the development of Gowe and the Main Estate in the post-independence era (especially the first decade of independence). With particular reference to the operations of the plotters and the role of ARDA at Gowe, it raises and tries to answer the question whether there were either continuities or a break with the past in the manner in which the schemes were developing. The reactions of the Gowe irrigators to their plight become more manifest in this Chapter.

Government post-colonial objectives and the intended and unintended outcomes of government interventionist policies in the ARDA Sanyati irrigation schemes are examined. It is argued that the good rainy seasons and the availability of technical and financial resources after independence contributed to the cotton boom. During the boom period as a result of the intensified commercialisation drive differentiation as a process assumed major proportions in rural Sanyati. The chapter analyses in detail the tenuous or fragile relationships between the plotters and the Estate on the one hand and the

government on the other. The major bone of contention was the inadequacy of the small plots allocated to the farmers and the highly detested lease agreement. Inconsistencies with people's aspirations after independence led to a "crisis of expectations" among those who believed independence would bring more land and no charge (land rent) for utilising the land. This partly led to the unilateral seizure of vacant plots by land hungry plotters. Possession of vacant plots coupled with access to other productive resources such as capital and labour enhanced some farmers' productive capacity and enabled them to amass more wealth than their poorer counterparts. Clearly, cotton production levels rose to unprecedented levels under irrigation especially during the agricultural boom. Irrigation experience thus demonstrated that the technology can produce additional dimensions to rural differentiation.

Chapter six focuses on the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) in Zimbabwe and its deleterious impact on Sanyati irrigation agriculture. Cotton, for years the mainstay of Sanyati agriculture, had declined in importance due to a combination of horrendous droughts and ESAP-related factors, primary among which were extremely low and uneconomic prices and the lack of markets for the crop. Due to the insistence on liberalisation of markets by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) the Gowe plotters were adversely affected. The chapter argues that since marketed produce is a key aspect of the Gowe Irrigation Scheme, the lack of market outlets during ESAP reduced the economic viability of the project. The problem of marketing channels for inputs presented similar limitations. Many farmers, for example, were not able to access and use fertiliser hence yields were also low. A number withdrew from the scheme thereby leaving in their wake more vacant plots than ever seen at Gowe since the establishment of the scheme. The Estate withdrew its usual services (i.e. tillage, extension and transportation), whilst state subsidies dried up at the peak of these economic reforms.

Desperate plotters, therefore, embarked on seizure of both vacant plots and Estate land in order to make ends meet. A major emphasis of this chapter is that differentiation as a process was arrested between 1991 and 2000 because of the many socio-economic problems wrought by this adjustment programme. These problems invariably persisted in the post-ESAP era. Irrigation Management Transfer (IMT) was made even more difficult by ESAP and the unhealthy state of the economy. The state or ARDA needed to bequeath the scheme in a sound state for the plotters to take it over and manage it effectively, but due to serious financial constraints this was not possible.

Chapter seven summarises and highlights the most important conclusions to emerge from this study.