



LOOKING BACK, LOOKING FORWARD ON LAND TENURE IN ZIMBABWE

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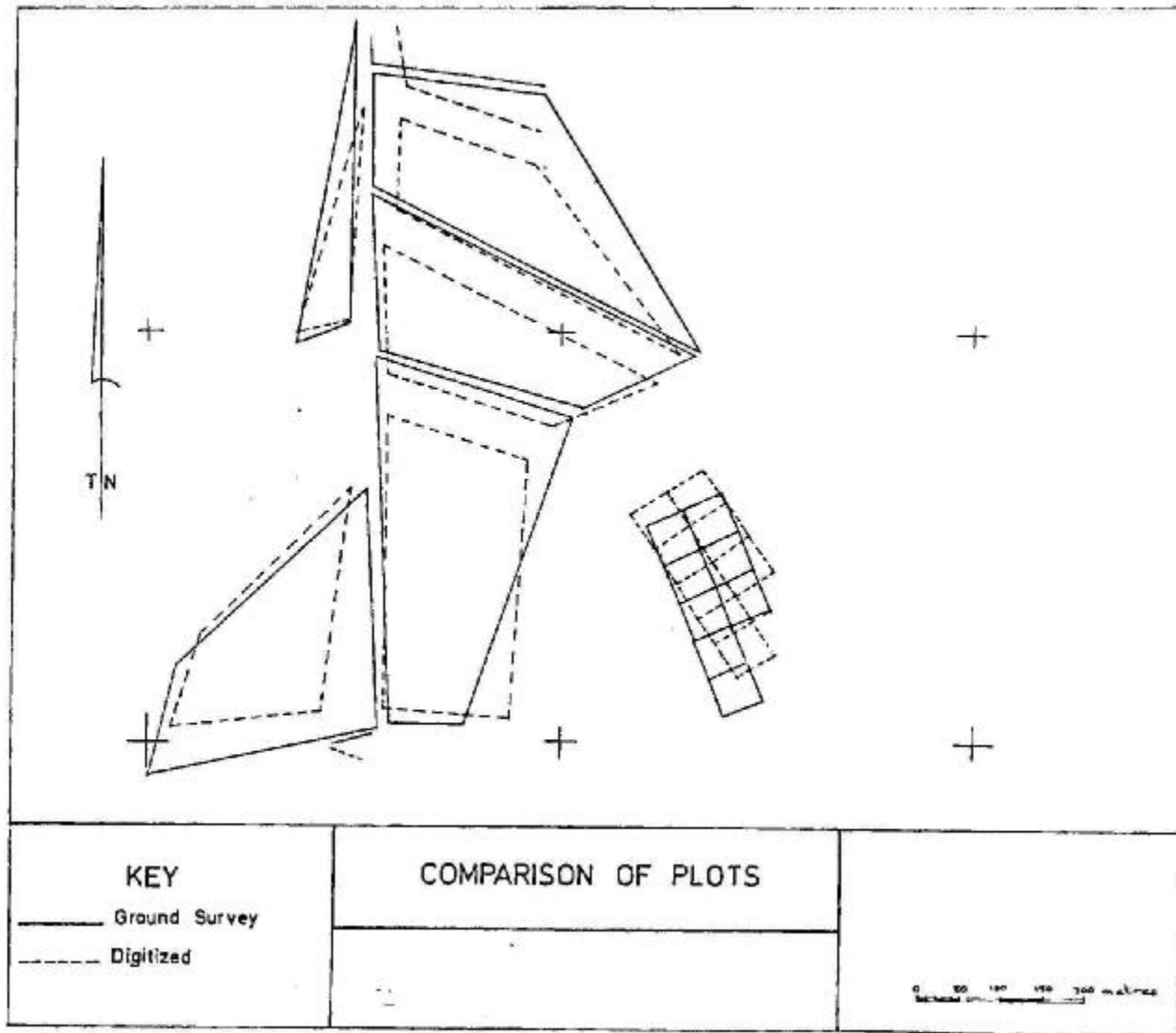


Model A Photomosaic. Small boxes=residential, large boxes=arable, thick white lines=farm boundaries

MODEL A

- mosaic is semi-controlled (approx. to scale but still has camera distortions)
- Features identified
- Parcels set out by compass and pacing
- Minimally-trained surveyors
- Fencing standards placed at turning points





Departures of up to 98m in the study area between parcels on the mosaic and parcels on the ground.

Is 98 metres good enough?

- Neither records nor survey were good enough to use land as collateral, but no title so the question does not arise
- The size of the plots is not guaranteed to be 5ha (what you see is what you get)
- However, schemes were young and human memory is short and already there were arguments
- Good monumentation to some extent compensates for poor survey \Rightarrow leads to the idea of vegetative boundaries

HOW CAN WE IMPROVE SUCH MONUMENTATION?

Some countries have used vegetative boundaries, e.g. Rubber hedge and Vetiver grass

Vetiveria Zizanioides:

- üSterile (will not invade fields)

- üWithout equal at controlling erosion

- üGoat and drought resistant



Human beings have to choose

- To spend time weeding and watering cash crops and thereby raise money for school fees and food
- To spend an equivalent amount of time weeding and watering a hedge that may or may not make boundaries safer much later on

**WE FIND THIS SORT OF DECISION
VERY EASY \Rightarrow Short term usually wins!**

DID BOUNDARIES GET TO THE BOTTOM OF RESETTLEMENT ISSUES?

- Some settlers were not committed
- Still spoke of CA's as "home"
- Off-farm incomes not permitted, cash-flow problems
- Borrowing money not possible as the land is held under permit
- Land often not going to the genuinely poor

One solution:

The Indigenous Commercial Farmers' Union (ICFU) vice-president, Davidson Mugabe, quoted in the Sunday Mail 14/2/99:

“We do not believe that land has to be given for free.” ... “We want sustainability and this means going commercial.” “In our view any commercial property has to be purchased and Government has to facilitate the process of purchasing. It can put in place schemes to help people purchase the land but what is important at the end of the day is that this piece of ground must be paid for.”

Payment would perform three functions:

- it would weed out “chancers” who wanted land for speculation [in Denmark farmers must work their land and live on it]
- even if land was subsidised and “soft-loans” offered, the exercise would be cheaper for the taxpayer
- payment would make a clear statement that this was commercial not customary land, therefore no “knockdown” aspects of customary tenure (later)

AREAS UNDER CUSTOMARY TENURE:

-WORLD OPINION GENERALLY SAYS TITLE SHOULD BE GRANTED

-NOT SO MUCH A QUESTION OF “IF” TITLE AS WHEN” TITLE

e.g. from Cambodia:

*Lack of titles threatens the poor with land grabbing, **IMPEDES INVESTMENT** and holds back development of a land market which **COULD** allocate land to those who need it most.*

HOWEVER:

- Investment generally benefits the rich not the poor
- A land market CAN allocate land to the needy, but seldom does

e.g. English Enclosure movement (c. 1800)

“By nineteen out of twenty Inclosure Bills the poor are injured and most grossly.”

Technical issues in surveying for title:

- 1994, “digital monoplotting”
- 1996, handheld DGPS with “data dictionary” to lead minimally-trained surveyors through data capture
- Today, third-party-corrected DGPS, with sub-metre accuracies in real time
- The future: who knows?

Non-technical challenges with CA land:

- CA's provide unemployment and old age security. Marketable title is questionable if no comparable social security is offered
- Population of main centres might treble in a few years if marketable title is given (irresponsible family heads, but also money needed for schools and health by responsible, women-headed households e.g. in Cambodia)
- “knocking down” aspect of customary tenure

The Kenyan Experience

- The “risk control” function of community tenure systems was overlooked
- Landlessness continues to rise
- Urbanisation has escalated
- Land is often bought for speculative purposes
- Land registries are often out of date or irrelevant
- Women’s rights have often been eclipsed

(Knox, 1998)

IMPROVEMENT WITHOUT TITLE?

- “Conservation-farming” (minimum tillage agriculture with mulching)
- Animal-Impact grazing (simulating the presence of predators, bunching animals)
- Water-harvesting (Phiri pits etc)
- “community-zoning” (create mixed density communities by taxing under-utilised and unused land highly & allowing smaller subdivision)

– But what do I feel now?
Doubt? ...

Or age, simply? ...

On the Business Page, a
score

Of spectacled grins approve

Some takeover bid ...

... It seems, just now,

To be happening so very fast;

Despite all the land left free

For the first time I feel
somehow

That it isn't going to last, ...

...

Most things are never meant.

This won't be, most likely: but
greeds

And garbage are too thick-strewn

To be swept up now, or invent

Excuses that make them all needs.

I just think it will happen, soon.

[From "High Windows"]

CONCLUSIONS

- We should not stop granting of title indefinitely, but it should be with the consent of both spouses
- Ideally, communities should move as entities towards marketable title
- “Community zoning” should forge new communities with mixed-density parcels
- Unused or under-utilised land should be taxed heavily, and smaller subdivisions allowed
- The Danish model of farmers having to farm and to live on their farms should be adopted

(cont)

- Even before some moves are possible politically, conservation tillage, animal impact grazing, water harvesting etc need to be taught and practiced
- In the absence of good records better monumentation is needed including vetiver offshoots at boundary turning points
- Technical issues are not the most difficult. Messages against greed and corruption will be at least as important as legislation in the long term
- The collective conscience of society can be enshrined in law, e.g. farmers must farm (Denmark)

ENVOI

Has wisdom ever come to maturity before it can be distilled to a “bumper-sticker” or a sign on a tree?

For example:

**FARM OWNERS
MUST FARM**

**FARMERS MUST LIVE
ON THEIR LAND**

**PAY BIG FOR
IDLE LAND**

**BIG FARMS
DON'T HAVE
TO BE BETTER**

CONSERVATION TILLAGE FOR REAL FARMERS

WATER HARVESTING FOR REAL FARMERS

ANIMAL IMPACT
GRAZING FOR
REAL FARMERS

**KEEP FARM TAXES
AT LOCAL LEVEL**