

Unpacking the Ecological Remnants of Zimbabwe's Land Reform Using the Ecological Footprint Tool

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ABSTRACT Land ownership is a central issue to the livelihoods of the predominantly rural population of Zimbabwe. Since 1980, Zimbabwe instituted land reforms to redress colonial land policies. A successful land reform programme should incorporate land use options that galvanise ecological sustainability. Striking a balance among land redistribution, productivity and ecological sustainability is one of the vexing challenges that policy makers in Zimbabwe face. Critics of Zimbabwe's land reform have often characterised this challenge as a remnant of the government's move from the willing buyer willing seller to the accelerated approach. Through case studies and applying the Ecological Footprint tool, this paper scrutinises the ecological implications of land reform in Zimbabwe's resettled areas. Both primary and secondary sources in Chirumanzu District of Zimbabwe provided data for this paper through household questionnaires and key informant interviews. The Ecological Footprint (EF) results portray ecological sustainability. The research concludes that the major shift in the land reform approach since the year 2000 has till retained environmental sustainability.