

REVIEW ARTICLE

People and places: land, migration and political culture in Zimbabwe

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Zimbabwe's Exodus: crisis, migration, survival edited by J. CRUSH and
D. TAVERA
Cape Town: Southern African Migration Programme, 2010. Pp. iii+416,
\$39.95 (pbk).

**Crossing the Zambezi: the politics of landscape on a Central African
frontier** by J. MCGREGOR
Woodbridge: James Currey, 2009. Pp. v+237, £50.00 (hbk).

Circular Migration in Zimbabwe and Contemporary Sub-Saharan Africa
by D. POTTS
Woodbridge: James Currey, 2010. Pp. v+300, £50.00 (hbk).

Bulawayo Burning: the social history of a southern African city 1893–1960
by T. RANGER
Woodbridge: James Currey, 2010. Pp. vii+261, £45.00 (hbk).

Zimbabwe's Land Reform: myths and realities by I. SCOONES,
N. MARONGWE, B. MAVEDZENGE, J. MAHENEHENE, F. MURIMBARIMBA and
C. SUKUME
Woodbridge: James Currey, 2010. Pp. vii+288, £16.99 (pbk).

**When a State Turns on its Citizens: 60 years of institutionalised violence
in Zimbabwe** by L. SACHIKONYE
Johannesburg: Jacana, 2011. Pp. vii+121, £18.95 (pbk).

Land has arguably been the most dominant theme in Zimbabwe's history. It was at the centre of the anti-colonial discourse of the liberation struggle and has dominated the post-2000 political agenda. The present 'struggle', known as the 'Third Chimurenga' (revolutionary struggle) by Robert Mugabe and his Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF), has been presented as a fight for economic freedom from imperialist rule and used to mobilise support for the government's new and controversial land redistribution programme.

From 1999 a series of mostly white-owned commercial farms were invaded by forces which were later supported by the Zimbabwean government as part of the new fast track land reform programme. The land invasions came at a time of political uncertainty. The newly formed opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), gained significant support in the 2000 elections, posing a strong threat to the ruling liberation party, ZANU-PF. Subsequent elections were marred by violence as ZANU-PF struggled to maintain their hold on power and the country's economy rapidly declined. Events reached a climax in 2008 following disputed parliamentary and presidential elections in March, and, ultimately, a one-man presidential run-off campaign in June. Zimbabwe's political parties reached a power-sharing agreement in September, opening up negotiations for fresh elections, a new constitution and hope that peace could be restored after almost a decade of violence, political unrest and economic turmoil.

In addition to land, migration has played an important part in Zimbabwe's past. Historically, the country has experienced significant flows of in- and out-migration. Prior to the rapid urbanisation of the 1940s, thousands of migrant workers from outside Southern Rhodesia had already flocked to Zimbabwe's major towns and cities, commercial farms and mines. Internal migration from rural to urban areas became more significant in the 1940s and 1950s during a period of mass industrial growth, and again in the 1980s following independence. Over the past decade, however, Zimbabwe has lost a substantial part of its population to a new diaspora. Migration, this time, has been driven by political violence, intimidation and extreme economic hardship. The collapse of urban livelihoods and high unemployment has pushed more people out of the cities and (back) into the rural areas.

A great deal of academic writing on these themes has emerged from Zimbabwe in recent years, despite the increasingly challenging nature of conducting research in the country. Zimbabwean universities

are gradually recovering from temporary closures and the economy has picked up since the signing of the Global Political Agreement (GPA) and the formation of a unity government between ZANU-PF and the MDC in 2008. Yet the atmosphere in which political research is conducted remains tense and research funding scarce. In addition, gaining official research clearance and access to the archives can be a costly and complicated process, particularly for non-Zimbabwean residents.

Since 2000, the land invasions, government-ordered urban slum clearances, rampant hyperinflation and electoral violence have attracted attention from the international press, human rights organisations, NGOs and academics. These six books provide a range of perspectives on Zimbabwe's past and detailed analyses of more recent events based on empirical research, rigorous archival studies, and fieldwork. Zimbabwe's 'crisis' has been characterised by simplistic dichotomies and popular stereotypes. These studies point to the complexity of Zimbabwe's power struggles and identity politics, past and present, at the local, national and international levels. JoAnn McGregor, Terence Ranger, Deborah Potts and Jonathan Crush draw our attention to the continuities and breaks with the past. The remaining studies encourage the reader to consider Zimbabwe's future, in regard to policy making for agricultural lands and ending the country's cycle of political violence. Reflecting recent developments, land, migration and political culture emerge as dominant themes in recent studies of Zimbabwe.

CLAIMS TO LAND AND LANDSCAPE

Land in Zimbabwe has multiple meanings for different social groups, from one location and time to another. Land relates to identity and class, has material and spiritual value and has played a key role in the construction of state institutions (Alexander 2007: 183). The multi-faceted nature of land is powerfully illustrated in several of the books under review. Ranger touches on the theme of landscapes in Bulawayo's social history. 'White Bulawayo' interacted with a number of different surrounding landscapes and the very planning and development of the city were shaped by visions of wilderness and countryside, and rural, suburban and urban beauty (Ranger 53). Bulawayo was 'a great city in the Wilds', surrounded by bush that became 'civilised' and turned into country parks. Black Bulawayo urban identity was also constructed in relation to ideas about 'town' and 'country'. Ranger shows how understandings of landscape related to the management of space, with gendered as well as racial dimensions. For example, peoples'

recollections of the 'old location' (African township) before the 1930s highlighted its close proximity to the Ndebele (rural) settlements, and its organisation, with clusters of huts, winding paths, patches of maize and cattle grazing on the commonage creating 'the impression of an African landscape' (74). The location was viewed rather like 'a village set in a landscape of villages' (77). The settlements were later cleared as the city expanded, and the location was transformed as cultivation and grazing rights were removed and municipal brick-built housing replaced African huts erected on stands previously rented out, mainly by women. Women in Bulawayo became less and less able to exercise control over their urban lives from the 1930s. Ranger suggests that it was only really from this stage that African men and women in the location began to live more distinctly 'urban' lives. Questions of landscape, Ranger argues, cannot be omitted from urban history without detrimental cost to our understanding of urban spaces and identities at different moments in time. As urban spaces changed, people's status and identity were similarly affected.

Ownership and access to rural land is an important theme in Potts' book, which investigates livelihood patterns and migration trajectories. Potts explores circular migration in Zimbabwe and sub-Saharan Africa, and highlights a reverse trend in urban to rural migration that has occurred in the wake of declining urban economic opportunities since the imposition of structural adjustment programmes in the late 1990s, and more recently in the wake of 'Operation *Murambatsvina*' (which will be addressed below). Two chapters of the book are dedicated to 'Harare migrants' rural links and assets' and 'Social and cultural attachments to rural settings and homes'. Potts argues that cultural motivations interact with social factors to influence migration decisions, including the division of families, the wish to be buried in a rural area, or simply a preference for rural life. One of the most interesting findings of the study is that urban-born people may still leave the city to take up residence in the rural areas, thus challenging the assumption that cultural influences and social networks are necessarily weaker among the urban-born. Those without land often plan to secure a piece in the future, through various channels. These findings are also true for those whose 'rural origins' or 'ancestral homes' lay beyond Zimbabwe.

The two books which speak most directly to the theme of land and landscape are by Scoones *et al.* and McGregor. *Zimbabwe's Land Reform* examines the myths and realities surrounding the controversial 'fast track' land reform programme introduced in 2000. This work provides an empirically grounded understanding of what happened in Masvingo

Province and explores potential ways forward for policy makers. Based on ten years of research at more than 400 farms in Masvingo Province, the authors set out to challenge five widely accepted 'truths': land reform in Zimbabwe has been a total failure; land reform has led to the collapse of the rural economy; the beneficiaries of the reform have been largely 'cronies'; there has been no investment in the new resettlements; and agriculture is in complete ruins creating chronic food insecurity. The results of this study have been highly celebrated and much debated by audiences in Zimbabwe and internationally.

Land redistribution has been one of the biggest challenges facing Zimbabwe since independence. Decades after independence seemingly little had been done to redress the century old pattern of land use, dominated by a small group of large-scale mostly white commercial farmers. According to Scoones *et al.* (22), from 2000 onwards the land invasions set in motion 'a reconfiguration of the rural landscape in ways that could not have been imagined'. For some they represented a peasant-led movement, emerging from below and facilitated by war veterans and the landless, motivated by a genuine desire to achieve the promises of the liberation war and to create a new 'democratic revolution'. Others perceived the invasions as a movement (poorly) orchestrated from the top, in a desperate bid by the political elite to retain power. The real intentions behind the earliest land occupations remain an area of intense debate. What is clear is that the agrarian sector has been radically restructured.

The resettled land has taken on new and alternative meanings for those involved. *Zimbabwe's Land Reform* informs us that for some the land has become a source of private accumulation, perhaps as part of a wider range of assets and activities. Others have gained access to land for the first time in their lives, and are using it as their main source of livelihood. Land has provided people with a new source of security for later in life, or for their children. For some the land has particular symbolic value and is seen as an achievement of long-term political struggle (9–10). New farms in Masvingo are occupied by many more people now than before the fast track programme, and the composition of beneficiaries has, in fact, been more highly varied than commonly thought. The authors' findings dispel claims that the land reform was dominated by politically well-connected cronies and that war veterans have been the main beneficiaries.

However, critics of this study have observed that it does not analyse at what cost the fast track programme has been implemented. Unlike most writing on the subject, this book downplays the level of violence

associated with the land seizures and other negative consequences of the programme, such as the hugely increased poverty levels on a national scale and the detrimental impact on the country's economy. The violence and injustice associated with claims to land continue to have far-reaching consequences, not just at an individual level for victims of trauma and fear, but as Sachikonye emphasises (see below), the process in which the land seizures have been conducted has strangled personal freedoms and helped to shape a dangerous political culture of impunity. Taking a non-political stance in the debate over land reform leaves these issues inadequately addressed.

One difficult issue approached in the book concerns farm workers who have rarely been accommodated in the reform process. Estimates are of up to 150,000 workers displaced. What the reader learns about farm workers in Masvingo, in contrast to most other parts of the country, is that some of them actually became involved in, or even led, land invasions, in a bid to secure a place for themselves in the new resettlement schemes. Others 'remained loyal to employers', or feared the consequences of retribution if they joined the occupations (128). In the tobacco-growing zones of the Highveld, most employees were foreign migrants (or descendants of foreign migrants) from Malawi, Zambia and Mozambique. In Masvingo, they generally came from nearby communal lands and maintained ties and social connections with rural communities (129). Through these connections, workers evicted from their farms could pursue alternative livelihoods or accommodation. Those whose origins were outside Zimbabwe struggled to access land in the communal areas when their farms were invaded. They found themselves homeless and jobless, and left for the towns and cities, where they relied upon relatives for support. Others obtained the appropriate documentation to go (back) to Malawi, Mozambique or Zambia, and many looked south to find work on the farms in the Limpopo region of South Africa. Experiences of land reform for farm workers in Masvingo were clearly different from elsewhere in the country. This leads one to question how far the story of land reform in Masvingo can be generalised to other areas.

Claims for restitution of ancestral lands, compensation for war veterans, and wider goals relating to social equity, have emerged during the reform process. The land invasions have opened up for debate alternative visions of the land, which had previously been silenced by dominant interest groups. Policy debates surrounding the issues of displaced farm workers, compensation for those who lost land, and the way forward for new land owners on small and large holdings, are

on-going. Though controversial in its findings (and perhaps negligent in its analysis of some of the more negative costs of the fast track land reform programme), this study is important in revealing rich insights into the varied experiences of land reform among different social groups, across the categories of gender, origin, occupation, religion and more. These stories remain untold in international media reports. This book should be read by anyone interested in land reform in the context of southern Africa or more broadly.

Crossing the Zambezi is a very different book, which traces the history of claims to the landscape along the Zambezi River environs reaching from Victoria Falls to Lake Kariba from the pre-colonial times to the present. The book deploys the concept of 'landscape' in an approach that combines 'the realm of ideas with material relations' (8). McGregor's analysis offers fresh insights into the politics of difference in Zimbabwe and the long history of changing and contested 'ethnic' identities in the Zambezi Valley.

Claims to the landscape along the Zambezi were strategic for the purposes of gaining political, economic and cultural rights. Claimants often invoked 'natural, ancient and enduring mystical relationships' with the landscape through their ancestors (1). White settler claims to the landscape differed from those of local Tonga fisherman, yet for both groups landscape was intimately bound with a sense of identity and attachment to place. Over time, the Zambezi landscape was transformed symbolically and materially by the arrival of invading forces and colonial expansion, and later the impact of settlers and African nationalism. The environs of the Zambezi have changed physically with the construction of the Victoria Falls Bridge and the Kariba Dam.

Powerful idioms were used by locals to describe features of the landscape, people and places, to legitimate their claims to land and to frame their claims of ownership. European views and discourse were informed by African idioms, practices and relations of power. For instance, *Mosi-oa-Tunya* – the smoke that thunders – was actually a Kololo or Lozi name given to the falls, popularised by Livingstone, who was led through the area by Kololo porters and guides. The Kololo were actually Sotho or Tswana speakers and more recent immigrants to the area from the south. Among the local Leya the river was known by another name altogether. McGregor describes how 'Livingstone often saw through Kololo eyes', and Kololo leaders used the opportunity to collude with Livingstone, in search of protection from Ndebele attack.

Through pre-colonial times to the present, different communities have conceived of the river either as a link, a barrier or a conduit.

Physically crossing the Zambezi was important prior to European arrival in the region. It required knowledge and skill and distinguished 'river people' from others less familiar with the waters. Knowledge of the river provided a means of escape from invading forces and the term *Kasambavesi* (crossing depends on knowledge) was used by Tonga intellectuals to describe the river itself. Knowledge empowered those at risk of subordination in the area, and transformed the river from 'barrier' to 'link'. Later the river was perceived as a natural divide (or meeting point) demarcating British colonial governments in the north and east, from European domination and racial separatism to the south.

This division was crucial in forming the basis of African opposition to the creation of the Central African Federation in 1953. Africans in the north foresaw the onset of land alienation, racial segregation and loss of their 'British-protected' status under the domination of white settlers in Southern Rhodesia. Chapter 6 on 'Colonial developmentalism and the Kariba project' tells the story of displaced communities in the Zambezi region, as a result of the construction of the Kariba Dam in the late 1950s. African nationalists were able to use these communities' misfortune to gain support for their cause and to discredit the concept of 'racial partnership' used to justify the federation. This period of late colonial history has been overlooked by historians due to the ensuing liberation struggle in Zimbabwe, and the nation-building projects of independent Zambia and Malawi. Nonetheless, it was an important time in the shaping of central African nationalist movements, and this chapter is a welcome contribution to existing historiography.

The history of the Zambezi Valley is one of changing structures of authority, dramatic episodes of violence and displacement, and the transformation of landscapes and networks of political relationships extending beyond the valley. One of the central arguments of the book is that the politics of landscape along the border cannot be understood outside the broader history of state- and nation-building. McGregor carefully crafts a narrative of events, river stories, interventions, ethnic and nationalist discourse and dominant white discourses over a period of 150 years, in order to explore the politics of landscape. However, from Chapter 7 onwards, this narrative focuses much more heavily on Zimbabwean post-colonial state politics and the perspective of the Tonga and Nambya communities on the Zimbabwe side of the river than it does on Zambian politics and the Zambezi people to the north. Nonetheless, the Zambezi River and those living alongside it remain central throughout the study. A continued association and privileged

relations with the river retain a salience for those people through to the present day.

URBAN EXPERIENCES IN BULAWAYO AND HARARE:
PAST AND PRESENT

Research into the urban history of Zimbabwe brought into focus in the 1990s a number of themes which helped to reconstruct African urban experiences (Raftopolous & Yoshikuni 1999). The creation and use of urban spaces by different social groups, class and gendered experiences of the city, urban ethnicity, the imaginings of national identity, and the development of African urban politics, were among the topics explored. Ranger's new book builds on this body of work using an innovative literary and theatrical style. Moving away from studies of urban political economy, Ranger is concerned primarily with the 'moral' or 'cultural' economy of Bulawayo from its establishment in 1893 until 1960, when the city was on the brink of another transformation. Inspired by Yvonne Vera's novel *Butterfly Burning*, set in Makokoba Township, this book invokes remarkable characters, employs dramatic pauses and includes scenes of frenzied action. Ranger uses oral histories, newspapers and official archival records to illustrate how the townships were infused with local meanings. The book responds to calls for an historical, political and cultural geography of the city, taking into account the specificity of people's experiences in Bulawayo, but situating them within the context of southern African urban history.

African men and women in Bulawayo constructed identities along the lines of family and clan, language and culture, history and aspiration. Oral accounts of urban ethnicity emphasised the importance of job differentiation and ethnic hierarchies of prestige. New cultural identities were formed in the cities through cultural and political associations and everyday interactions. Africans in Bulawayo were divided by the colonial authorities into the categories of 'indigenous Ndebeles' and 'immigrants'. Ranger (27) details the experiences of African pioneers, such as J. N. Ncube who moved to the area in the 1890s from the south and later founded the Bulawayo and District African Pioneers Association. Ncube and others like him were seen as 'modernising pioneers', who had already experienced urban life in South Africa. They built homes, raised families and settled in the city on a permanent basis. These histories underline the longevity of migration between South Africa and Zimbabwe, and point to the various African identities that have comprised Bulawayo from its foundation.

The 'indigenous' Ndebele dominated the inner-city of Bulawayo, in contrast to Salisbury (Harare) where the location was overwhelmingly an area of 'northern' migrants, mostly Nyasas (Malawians), Mozambicans and Northern Rhodesians (Zambians). Foreign migrants influenced township culture in both colonial Salisbury and Bulawayo. The Pata Pata and Kwela arrived from South Africa, and styles from the Congo filled the dance halls and spilled out onto the streets of Makokoba Township. Along with new styles of music and dance, migrants brought with them church groups and other religious and cultural associations, many of which left a lasting imprint on the city's culture.

Migrant men and township women also participated in Bulawayo's urban politics. Ranger tells the story of one Nyasa migrant, Beaton Longwe, who controlled one of the African Advisory Boards in the 1950s. His experiences challenge the notion of the foreign migrant worker as temporary resident with no vested interests in urban political life. We learn that women's associations lobbied the Advisory Boards on issues of divorce, custody and home ownership, and although the prominence of African women in the city (and in politics) had declined since the 1930s (prior to which they had enjoyed greater autonomy and independence in Bulawayo), the Advisory Boards became an arena for African women to exercise a political voice. The urban political culture of Bulawayo in the 1940s and early 1950s was, like that of Salisbury, characterised by a more democratic tradition, sympathetic to the needs of urban residents regardless of gender, ethnicity or territorial origins (see Scarnecchia 2008). The interests of these various social categories were later subsumed by the nationalist agenda.

On the subject of the rise of African nationalism, Ranger supplements our knowledge by discussing the Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesian African congresses, which became more active in the city between 1955 and 1957 when the Southern Rhodesian congress was moribund. The congress movements from the north were more radical and militant in their rhetoric, which increased pressure on the Southern Rhodesian leaders to revive their campaign. In March 1957 they proposed a meeting to bring together the three congress movements in Bulawayo in a bid to form 'one African national organisation which will recognise a black man as an African no matter his tribe and place of origin' (205). The plan was unsuccessful, and the collaborative efforts of the nationalists ended following the declaration of a state of emergency and the banning of the African congress movements in 1959.

Bulawayo Burning is an inclusive history featuring many colourful characters. Ranger revisits some of the city's important events up to

1960 through the lives of influential township women such as Martha Ngano, prominent African men such as Sipambaniso Manyoba Khumalo (who Ranger describes as 'Mr Black Bulawayo' as he was involved in the political, cultural, ethnic and industrial life of the city between the 1930s and 1940s), and European officials, including white city councillor Donald Macintyre. The 1945 Railway Strike and the 1948 General Strike are narrated, but only in so far as Ranger's main characters were involved, bringing the reader a fresh perspective on previously well-documented moments in Bulawayo's past.

The book begins and ends with imagery of 'Bulawayo burning', and the final chapter is set in the context of the 1960 *Zhii* riots. By then, Bulawayo was experiencing increasing unemployment, population growth and a great deal of political uncertainty. African nationalism was exploding in the face of increasing political repression, including the banning of political parties and the detention of nationalist leaders. Unemployment led to calls for foreign migrants and women to be dismissed from their jobs in order to create opportunities for unemployed locals. Tensions arose over access to housing and jobs, and fears of ethnic conflict resurfaced. In response, the Southern Rhodesian government's migrant labour agreements with Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland were revised following protests by a delegation of unemployed indigenous Africans. Soon after, the employment of foreign Africans in the urban areas was prohibited (221). Nonetheless, 'tribalism' was dismissed by all of Ranger's informants and contemporary witness accounts as the cause of the *Zhii* riots. Francis Nehwati, committee member of the newly relaunched Southern Rhodesian African National Congress, agreed that ethnic tensions had existed, but felt that by 1960 a greater sense of 'being Bulawayan' had emerged (230). Here, Ranger's book complicates our understanding of ethnic and urban cultural identities, and the nature of relations between Shona, Ndebele, Kalanga, Nyasa and Northern Rhodesian urban residents. Ethnicity did not always dominate social relations in multiethnic urban situations. Urban associations and moments of conflict and tension cannot simply be explained in terms of ethnicity or class alone. Instead, an appreciation of the broader cultural context and the local moral and political economy can help us to find more convincing explanations for these events.

An exploration of more contemporary urban experiences is offered by Potts' book on circular migration. Based on fieldwork in Harare between the 1980s and 2000s, the data collected suggest that quality of life worsened for urban dwellers from the 1990s onwards. The 1980s saw

an improvement in many people's lives, with the political optimism of independence and a period of urban regeneration, investment and job creation. But by the mid to late 1990s, much of this progress had begun to unravel and Harare transformed from being one of the best African cities to live in to one of the worst (Potts 185). Coping with hyperinflation, rising unemployment, water and power shortages, in addition to political violence and intimidation, urban dwellers began to reconsider the option of pursuing a rural livelihood.

The events of 2005 provided an even greater impetus for many to leave Zimbabwe's cities. Houses in the overcrowded 'high density areas' of Harare had attached backyard shacks and extensions, in order to accommodate additional tenants due to housing shortages. Owners, lodgers, long- and short-term residents – a diverse assortment of people inhabited the shacks, many of whom had been born in the city. Their occupations included a mixture of formal and informal jobs, and there was an assortment in terms of birthplace, housing tenure, linkages to rural areas, political affiliation and so on. The shacks had become so commonplace that they were generally accepted by the urban authorities until 2005, when the inhabitants became the main target of a government campaign named 'Operation *Murambatsvina*' (translated from Shona as 'clean up the filth').

A number of explanations have been offered for this attack on urban residents, including that the campaign was aimed towards clamping down on illegal forex dealers (222), or that it was necessary to curb 'the growing shantytowns', which were becoming a major health hazard (223). Potts dismisses both of these explanations, and carefully analyses 'Operation *Murambatsvina*' and its causes and consequences, in an effort to understand why informal housing and livelihoods became the main targets of the government's campaign.

Since the 2000 elections, Zimbabwe's urban areas have been a strong support base of the opposition party, the MDC. ZANU-PF's initial attempts to re-educate urbanites and regain their votes failed, and the same voting trends were even more pronounced in the 2005 elections. Crucially, Potts informs us that the announcement of the operation came just forty-eight days after an election in which the urban vote had again strongly favoured the MDC. For many people, the real reason behind the 'clean-up' operation was to punish those who had betrayed the ruling liberation party. ZANU-PF rhetoric attempted to justify pushing people out of the city by depicting urban dwellers as lacking the appropriate cultural attitudes of 'true' Zimbabweans, whereas rural people were somehow more authentic and patriotic (212).

The scale of the campaign was huge, and reports suggested that up to one in seven people in Harare were affected. Thousands of illegal houses and other structures were demolished, markets were closed and livelihoods destroyed. About 150,000 people were made homeless (216). The operation was not limited to Harare, and clearances were ordered in Bulawayo and smaller towns and trading centres around the country. Ministers in Zimbabwe alluded to the idea that any true Zimbabwean would have a rural home to go back to, and their justification for the operation drew on narratives of rural–urban cultural links and narrow definitions of Zimbabwean citizenship. The main problem, besides the blatant breach of the right to choose where to reside, was that not everyone had a rural home (or indeed a viable rural livelihood) to which they could return, especially those urban-born or regarded by the government as ‘aliens’. Much has been written on the ‘anti-urban operation’, and Potts incorporates an insightful analysis of events in 2005 into her work on circular migration.

Ranger’s book closes with a ‘postlude’, commenting on Bulawayo’s more recent past. Pointing to the structural tensions between city and state, he draws parallels with the urban slum clearances of 2005, showing that ‘Operation *Murambtasvina*’ was not the first time Zimbabwean urban dwellers had come under attack from the government. Bulawayo was punished for its support of Joshua Nkomo and ZAPU (Zimbabwe African People’s Union) in the early 1980s, just as Harare came under attack from the government for voting MDC in the 2000s. Ranger also describes the less well documented incidents of oppression in Bulawayo in 2001, when hundreds of council employees were beaten and the municipal fire brigade stoned. The attack was led by war veterans and a man who was previously Minister of Home Affairs. In Bulawayo, this was one of many incidents in a larger history of struggle between the Bulawayo municipality and the state (see Ranger 2007).

Potts and Ranger both identify similarities between the urban policy exercise conducted by ZANU-PF in 2005 and earlier white settler policies in the region, such as the urban evictions and demolitions famously deployed in apartheid South Africa. Both were exercises in pushing people back into the rural areas and exerting control over the urban poor, although there were essential differences between these events and their specific contexts. In Zimbabwe in 2005, the urban population had political rights, unlike those in apartheid South Africa.

Potts’ study is more than just a book on migration. It adds to a literature exploring contemporary African urban experiences, and touches on issues of belonging and citizenship. One area on which it does not

comment, however, is migration to and from mining and farming communities, both within and across borders. Considering that a great many colonial (foreign) labour migrants first went to the mines or farms and later moved to the cities, perhaps this could be addressed. In other words, what about other places in between the cities and the rural areas? How do they fit into this pattern of circular migration in more recent years? Considering its closer proximity to South Africa, migration patterns from Bulawayo may differ considerably from those in Harare.

ZIMBABWE'S POLITICAL CULTURE OF VIOLENCE AND THE DIASPORA

Zimbabweans have been subjected to violence and discrimination as citizens in their home country and as foreign migrants in the diaspora. Violence perpetrated by the state forms the basis of Sachikonye's book. Building on previous studies of violence in Zimbabwe (Kriger 1991, 2003; Alexander *et al.* 2000; and more recently Scarnecchia 2008), Sachikonye examines state violence for the period 2000–8. He argues convincingly that violence has become embedded within Zimbabwean political culture. The history of violence is traced back to the split in the early nationalist movement in the 1960s. Throughout the liberation struggle and beyond *Gukurahundi* (translating from Shona as 'the rain that washes away the chaff', referring to the government's violent campaign in Matabeleland in the 1980s), the settler state and subsequent African majority government used violent means in order to entrench their rule.

A vast amount of data has been gathered on human rights violations and political violence abuses relating to torture, displacements, detentions, petitions and compensation cases in courts. Reports from Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights, and the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe, among others, are drawn on heavily throughout the study. Opinion surveys gauge attitudes towards political participation, democracy and transitional justice, and the Zimbabwean state-owned and independent presses are used selectively – their limitations duly acknowledged. Interviews were conducted in Harare, Bulawayo, Epworth and Mutasa, and informants were carefully selected for the study.

The period from 2000 onwards has produced an intense scramble for resources, systemic violence during elections, and the gradual crystallisation of an extremely violent political culture. Sachikonye focuses on how election violence and coercion have been used by the ruling elite

over the past decade. Violence has featured in almost every election in independent Zimbabwe, differing only in the period from 2000 onwards in terms of 'scale, intensity and the militarization of violence' (Sachikonye 18). Pre-election intimidation and violence and post-election 'witch hunting' became standard ZANU strategies in the 1980s, abating slightly during the 1990 and 1995 elections when the party was at its most popular, only to resurface with a new intensity at the time of the constitutional referendum in 1999 and delayed elections of 2000.

The first use of the military in policing and mass violation of human rights since the Matabeleland massacres between 1983 and 1987 occurred during the food riots of 1998. Rising food prices and shortages led workers, students, the poor and unemployed to take to the streets. These protests and strikes coincided with pressure from the war veterans for government to award them gratuities and pensions that had not been budgeted for. The government submitted to the war veterans' demands and the economy gradually spiralled into decline, worsened by the costs of military intervention in the Democratic Republic of Congo that same year. The war veterans became an increasingly powerful cohort in the 2000s, putting pressure on Mugabe during the land invasions.

Since the formation of the unity government there have been calls for some kind of healing commission, to work through the difficult phases of violence that the country has experienced, particularly in 2008. However, ZANU-PF remains ambivalent on the subject of violence and transitional justice, and the MDC has been accused of not pursuing the issue ardently enough. It is hard to imagine how such an exercise in reconciliation could be successful when violence 'remains the preferred instrument of choice' of a regime that still controls more than half of the government ministries (including those related to defence and security), and refuses to share power equally. National healing, Sachikonye writes, cannot begin until this cycle of violence has ended and political freedom has been restored. He advocates the development of a new paradigm of peace and civic studies as a foundation for a post-conflict Zimbabwe. The difficult question remains as to how such a programme could be implemented, and here the study might have benefited from a comparative perspective. South Africa obviously springs to mind, as a country which has struggled to come to terms or deal effectively with its own legacy of violence, but there are many examples in other African and non-African contexts.

Zimbabwe's Exodus is an edited collection that addresses Zimbabwean experiences of crisis, migration and survival beyond the borders. Since

2000, the Zimbabwean diaspora has grown substantially in South Africa, the UK and the USA (partly as a result of the violent political culture described by Sachikonye), and yet the nature of this migration has been poorly reported and its extent often enormously overinflated. This book covers a wide variety of perspectives, including migrating health professionals, gendered experiences among the diaspora in the UK, Zimbabwean farm workers on the South African borders, smuggling, media representations and more.

From Crush and Tavera's introduction (9) we learn that there are almost as many women as men migrating to South Africa, coming from 'all rungs of the occupational ladder', 'highly read and illiterate, professionals and paupers, doctors and ditch diggers'. The number of people leaving Zimbabwe increased in the 1990s and rose again sharply in the 2000s. Reliable statistics are hard to produce because many leave Zimbabwe through unofficial channels, jumping borders, swimming across rivers or by obtaining false documentation. Most migrants from Zimbabwe head to South Africa and the UK, though fewer have entered the UK since 2007 because of increased restrictions.

Alois Mlambo's chapter provides a history of Zimbabwean migration prior to 1990, setting the context for the rest of the book. Recent policy discussions on migration and development have ignored the historical trends of cross-border migration within the region. Mlambo reminds us how migration to the gold mines of South Africa from some parts of Zimbabwe, mainly Matabeleland and the eastern areas, became almost a rite of passage for young men during the colonial period. Going *kuWenela* (being recruited by the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association) for work on the mines enabled men to raise funds for *lobola* (bride price – money paid to the bride's family), to pay their taxes and to settle down and start families. Among the Ndau in eastern Zimbabwe, migration to the mines accorded a highly respected status, and those returning after many years with money and valuable goods were known as *Magaisa*.

Johannesburg was the main destination for Zimbabwean migrants in 2001 and a great deal of scholarly and media attention has focused on this, particularly since the xenophobic violence of May–June 2008. Daniel Makina's chapter 'Zimbabwe in Johannesburg' presents the results of a huge survey undertaken in 2007 in three inner-city suburbs of Johannesburg: Hillbrow, Yeoville and Berea. More than 4,000 Zimbabweans were interviewed in the study, which provides unmatched insights into the profiles, activities and behaviour of Zimbabweans in the city in recent years. From this data it would be interesting to see whether

more recent migrants have used old networks of well-established Zimbabwean communities in South Africa to ease their transition into the city/country.

From other chapters in this book we learn more about the ways in which Zimbabweans in the UK and South Africa are commonly denigrated, devalued and marginalised. In the UK the diaspora is much less diverse, socially and economically, but deskilling is widespread due to insecurity in legal status as asylum seekers and government policies restricting the rights of asylum seekers to work. New identities have emerged for women migrants in the UK, whereas men often find themselves in occupations they perceive as challenging to their masculinity.

TAKING STOCK

Each of these books makes skilful use of oral histories, biographies and personal testimonies. The use of fishermen's diaries, character profiles, personal accounts of land reform and migration, and testimonies from victims and perpetrators of political violence, all powerfully illustrate and add richness to the studies. From this new literature much can be learnt: about the politics of land and landscape, the outcomes of the government's new programme of land reform, and those on Zimbabwe's margins – the Zambezi Valley – from the pre-colonial period to the present. *Bulawayo Burning* celebrates the lively urban culture of Makokoba Township and points the way forward for future studies of urban Zimbabwe. But there appears to be a gap between where Ranger's study ends and Potts' work on urban Zimbabwe begins. During the late 1960s and 1970s, guerrilla fighting was focused in the rural areas, yet we are largely ignorant of what was happening in Zimbabwe's cities at this time. The two domains were not entirely disconnected, as supply chains originated in the towns and cities and people moved to and fro (often at great risk) to ensure the flow of goods and information. Following independence, violence erupted in Bulawayo in the early 1980s between guerrilla forces at Entumbane Township, yet these clashes have not been treated as fully by historians as previous incidents in the city's history, such as the 1960 *Zhii* riots or the 1929 faction fights. What were the repercussions of these violent outbursts in terms of ethnic relations in the townships?

Striking continuities between Zimbabwe's past and present are highlighted in several of these works, especially in regard to migration, urban governance and maintaining political control. These multi-disciplinary perspectives, on a range of themes and events, also take

into account the tangled history of Zimbabwe within the region, highlighting the presence of 'others' in the country's history. Collectively they enhance our understanding of the causes and nature of the current 'crisis' and Zimbabwean studies more broadly.

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