

City University of New York (CUNY)

CUNY Academic Works

Dissertations and Theses

City College of New York

2019

The Importance of Property Rights In The Developing World: A study and comparison of Zimbabwe and Botswana

Luke A. Scarpa
CUNY City College

[How does access to this work benefit you? Let us know!](#)

More information about this work at: https://academicworks.cuny.edu/cc_etds_theses/802

Discover additional works at: <https://academicworks.cuny.edu>

This work is made publicly available by the City University of New York (CUNY).
Contact: AcademicWorks@cuny.edu

The Importance of Property Rights In The Developing World: A study and comparison
of Zimbabwe and Botswana

Luke Scarpa

April 2019

Master's Thesis
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of
International
Affairs at the City College of New York

COLIN POWELL SCHOOL FOR CIVIC AND GLOBAL LEADERSHIP

Advisor: Professor Nicholas Smith
Second Reader: Professor Jean Krasno

Table of Contents

	Page
Abstract.....	3
Intro.....	4
Literature Review.....	5
Argument.....	11
Research & Design.....	14
Case Study: Zimbabwe.....	16
Case Study: Botswana.....	29
Conclusion.....	39

Abstract

African states in the post-colonial era have undergone notably different rates of economic growth and development. I argue that creating a strong legal framework to prevent state over-interference in private property is one of the most important public policy initiatives African states that have seen high levels of growth have taken. I've come to this conclusion by studying and reviewing relevant economic and historical literature about the relationship between economic growth and strong property rights regimes and property rights in Africa since the end of colonialism. I have centered my study around Zimbabwe and Botswana because those states have implemented and articulated opposing positions regarding property rights, which make them valuable states to study in great detail. From this analysis, I've concluded that the Botswana government has historically exhibited a distinct legal policy position regarding private ownership of property. This position has created a series of outcomes which has been largely responsible for the high level of economic prosperity Botswana has experienced since its independence in nineteen sixty-six. The Zimbabwean government has articulated a distinctly different position on the value of securing private property, and this has led it to a series of public policy initiatives regarding private property very different than the private property regime established in Botswana. This analysis helps

establish a future framework useful for governments in establishing economies looking to develop, and a historical way of judging the utility of large scale redistributions of private property. I look for this analysis to help establish a more useful form of analysis and rhetoric.

Intro

In the post-imperial era, African states developed economically in profoundly different ways. A thread woven into all their post-colonial struggles, however, is how to deal with past injustices, particularly the imperialist exploitation of land appropriated from Africans. When colonialism ended, post-colonial African states were left with high levels of poverty, extreme land and wealth inequality benefitting the descendants of their white European settlers, and authoritarian and repressive political structures influenced by colonial institutions. Modern African states dealt with their colonial legacies by pursuing radically different development policies and engaging in different kinds of political rhetoric regarding the pace of reform or colonial injustices.

Much persuasive evidence suggests that African countries which pursued political reform to what they viewed as the lingering effects of colonialism in a gradual manner, and relatedly and crucially enforced strict protections of property rights, saw relatively successful political and economic development. In contrast, countries which made rapid attempts at correcting colonial injustices and did not protect property rights experienced significant development issues. Why have

strong property rights protections had such positive results, and why have certain African countries undermined property rights in attempting to solve the economic issues created by imperialism? If property rights are so important for enabling economic prosperity, why have some governments undermined property rights?

To answer these questions, I examine the cases of Botswana and Zimbabwe - respectively, a country that has consistently grown its economy since the end of colonialism and a country that saw initial economic promise follow colonialism fall apart. In examining the two cases, I find that economic divergences like these cannot be explained by one factor. Rather, they must be understood by understanding certain elements such as ideas, histories of individuals, elements of international economics, and great power politics. I argue that these elements pushed Botswana and Zimbabwe onto the development paths which they followed, and understanding the divergence between Botswana and Zimbabwe is valuable to understanding patterns of international development generally.

Literature Review

Individual leaders, especially in developing states, play a critical role in the formative economic policies of those states. In the post-independence period African states were often led by revolutionaries who were formed intellectually by a struggle against European powers, while others were led by pragmatists whose motivations

were distinctly non-revolutionary. In Botswana and Zimbabwe, founding leaders Seretse Khama and Robert Mugabe fit this dual paradigm, but each man is a broader example of a specific type of leadership character. They shall be studied by examining literature relating to the role of leadership in developing states.

The temperament of the leaders in post-independence developing states is critical. Their rhetoric plays an important role in helping their states create a political culture and political tradition. I argue that Seretse Khama and the Botswanan tribal leadership, out of which he emerged, is characteristic of the sort of political leadership capable of protecting property rights and, therefore, sustained economic development. I also argue that Robert Mugabe's political character, much of which was formed during a brutal war with a colonial occupying power, is representative of the sort of political leadership which rejects gradualist post-colonial political development and the concept of property rights, and partially from this does not see sustained development.

As exemplars of revolutionary and pragmatic leadership, Mugabe and Khama, help illustrate the importance of leadership for postcolonial development. Yet, they also show that the choices they made as leaders must be understood in historical context. Examining their choices has the additional advantage of shedding light on two of the key theories used to explain divergent developmental paths: Modernization Theory and Dependency Theory. Modernization Theory is essential to understanding

property rights because it emphasizes the power of gradual development. In Modernization Theory developing nations are in many ways similar to developed nations. The major difference is that developing nations haven't had as much time to develop because they are often newly independent following their years of imperialist control. If Western levels of development are achievable for all countries, under the modernization paradigm Western methods and, more importantly in this frame of thought Western models of development should be practiced by developing countries.

In contrast to modernization theories, dependency theory leads to an entirely different set of assumptions, some of which might lead to a different perspective of property rights in development. Scholars of Dependency Theory such as Leslie Stein argue that the Global South is structurally imbalanced in its relationship with the Global North¹. She persuasively argues that conventional economists have neglected the influence of dependence of weak states on strong states which has a deep influence in the form of the international economy. This assumption reasonably leads to the notion that these imbalances prevent Western policies for development from working in the global South. The underdevelopment which leads to a system of

¹ "Dependency Theories and Underdevelopment", *Journal of Economic Studies*, 1979, Vol. 6 Issue: 1, pp.64-85.

dependency has been explored in the work of Andre Gunder Frank². Frank argues that the economic logic of the Western development model is pointless in the development of the global South because developed countries maintain a mercantile-like relationship with the global South which is inherent to the disparate amount of power the developed world holds over it in international politics. This neo-mercantilist relationship hinders market oriented development in the developing world, and requires action and acknowledgement from the international community to be resolved.

No theory is a perfect representation of the complexity of human circumstance, but I find these theories crucial to my argument. Although I find property rights protection to be successful to economic development, dependency theory offers a compelling logic that old Eurocentric systems and arguments for property rights are unjust and hypocritical. The non-gradualist is compelling and often humane. All theories of development, however, look to help African countries build successful public institutions. The World Bank has been mocked by some for calling on countries to “add institutions and stir³,” as economist Deirdre McCloskey says. But without acknowledging the importance of public institutions all development theories lose coherence. This is important to understand in the context of Africa. I argue that institutions in all of post-independence Africa were created abruptly. Therefore, they did not have long periods of development as institutions in countries in the West did,

²Andre Gunder Frank, *The Development of Underdevelopment* (New England Free Press: 1966)

³ Deirdre McCloskey, *Bourgeois Equality*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), 224

institutions which had the liberty of a long period of trial and error. African countries becoming independent nation states in the 1960's needed institutions crafted rapidly to meet the needs of the twentieth century economy, and the urgency of this process made African public institutions crucial to their countries development paths.

Much has been written about the evolution and failure of African institutions such as courts, elections, and state economic agencies, but not all African countries have seen their institutions breakdown. The question, which is inadequately answered in the existing literature, is why certain African countries have developed institutions so much more successfully than others. I argue that Botswana's property rights protections are a product of its colonial institutions which evolved during a period when Britain governed under a policy similar to general neglect⁴. Zimbabwe's institutional development was profoundly different than Botswana's. Many of its institutions are alien to its indigenous culture. Some are even the direct legacy of colonial authoritarianism.

The legacy of colonialism in Africa cannot be broken purely into the logic of institutions and resources extracted. The nature of the colonial state is beyond something that can be viewed through a pure sort of cost benefit analysis. The states themselves had a fundamental character. The Rhodesian leadership was

⁴ Daren Acemoglu and James Robinson, *Why Nations Fail*, (Crown Publishing House, 2012), 272

quasi-totalitarian and deeply racist. It broke from the British government because of its extremity, and viewed itself as a bulwark as what it saw as barbarism. This totalitarian culture political did not die when Rhodesian prime minister Ian Smith gave control of the government to Robert Mugabe. Mugabe and Smith are different men. Mugabe did not model himself after Smith but the ramifications of decades of quasi-totalitarian political cultural in Rhodesia for postcolonial politics must be explored. This political climate created the struggle in which modern Zimbabwe was founded and the nature of it is linked to Zimbabwe's modern political culture.

The territory of Botswana was governed more liberally by the British government as its tribal leadership cunningly avoided domination by the ruthless British diamond magnate Cecil Rhodes. The differing relationships between the colonial regime and the local population in each case, I argue, has had long-term impact on property rights in each instance and how that impacted economic development in each country.

Property Rights regimes in Africa are not created by one factor. They are influenced and created by many elements. Policy is important, but policy would be meaningless without distinct leaders, countries' political cultures, international economics, and history. Thus, I argue, each of these factors have played a role in forming the property rights regimes of modern African states. These factors should not be viewed hierarchically. They are independently important in different ways. certain mixes create property rights regimes and others lead to regimes attacking

property rights. This begs a prior question, though: why are property rights important? I turn to that question in the next section.

Argument

Property rights have a simple definition. Property rights, economist Armen Alchian said, are “a method of assigning to particular individuals the ‘authority’ to select, for specific goods, any use from a nonprohibited class of uses.”⁵ As suggested in the preceding remarks the concepts of “authority” and of “nonprohibited” rely on some concept of enforcement or inducement to respect the assignment and scope of prohibited choice. I define property rights in my argument as protection against other people’s choosing how to use resources owned by another.

States securing property rights, in all sorts of structurally varying economies, helps create economic growth. Why is this so? According to the economist Ronald Coase, in his seminal theory of property rights, where there is a conflict of property rights, parties can bargain or negotiate terms that are more beneficial to both parties than the outcome of any assigned property rights⁶.

⁵ Gerald P. O Driscoll, Jr, “Economic Freedom: The Path to Development.” *Foundation For Economic Freedom*, April 1, 2005.

⁶ Coase Theorem, Encyclopedia of Law and Economics, 1-6.2016.Springer New York

This essentially means that individuals can come to agreements about best use of their property on their own more efficiently than any outside institution can. The logic and theories behind the importance of property rights all rest upon the same principle. Individuals use resources they've cultivated themselves with more care than those who have no relationship to them. This principle applies to the developing world as it does to the developed. Capital, as much as it can vary from agricultural economies to industrial ones, is taken better care of by those who depend on its uses than a third party without the same level of interest in the capital. People care about and understand the strengths and deficiencies of their own property. This idea is an assumption about human psychology which is universal. It would apply to all individuals and all sorts of non-financial capital which they might utilize.

These theoretical assumptions often bear out empirically. For example, countries with strong property rights on average are significantly wealthier than countries with weak property rights. In 2003, the GDP per capita in countries with strong property rights was twice that of countries with weak property rights. The International Property Rights Index each year ranks every country in the world by their commitment to property rights. The countries with the ten highest rankings all have GDPs Per Capita above \$40,000 which puts them among the richest countries in the world.⁷ To be sure, correlation is not causation. Finland and Singapore, are not rich

⁷ *International Property Rights Index*, International Property Rights Index 2017. Accessed February 28, 2018. <https://www.internationalpropertyrightsindex.org/countries>,

only because their governments gave their citizens authority to use specific goods and neither is Botswana. Yet, I argue that the correlation between property rights and economic growth is large enough to suggest that they do contribute to growth. Property rights in many African countries, to the limited extent that they've been enforced, show a relationship with successful economic policy similar to the one found in the rest of the world. For instance, Rwanda has the 33rd most secure property rights (According to the International Property Rights Index) in the world and is growing at a rate of 7.18% per year. Botswana has the 44th most secure property rights in the world and has grown at extraordinary rate for decades since independence.

Given its history with colonialism, however, property rights on the African continent have often had a more complicated history than property rights protections in the European countries from which the original economic models were developed. Throughout African history arguments for property rights have been hypocritically used by colonialists who deprived native Africans of their property. Wealthy white settlers came upon their property through expropriation with little if any recompense and they justified the inequality this expropriation created using the arguments for property rights. This injustice is historical fact, and it is a dilemma for any proponent of property rights. How can a government not take action to quickly remedy an

injustice perpetrated against its people? Property rights as a concept do not argue against the justice of this sentiment. The logic for them does not even necessarily call for a fair-minded and justice-centered redistribution of property but all attempts, if they are to be done, call for gradualism. This is the key to property oriented gradualist development. My research and exploration of my test countries examines historical examples of developing-world property decisions and give clarity to how they came to be.

If the empirical evidence for property rights is solid and difficult to take issue with, why would a state consciously undermine them? This is the heart of my question. There are two obvious reasons which are well connected to each other. The first is to gain moral support by appearing to promote fairness. This might be done to resolve the perceived cruelties of the past. The second is to create a certain sort of efficiency. In the opinions of post colonial governments, land inequities might be bad for their current economies and a more equal distribution of land might make more of their people successful which would improve the efficiency of their economies as whole entities. Developing countries want to prove that their solving past injustices while benefiting their countries economies in the future. I argue that these motives are evident in my case studies, but they were overcome by the economic argument for property rights.

Research Design

I explore why some governments in former British colonies protected property rights and why some have not through the cases of Botswana and Zimbabwe. These countries have gone through periods of development which will illustrate the benefits of protecting property rights and the costs of sabotaging them. Botswana and Zimbabwe have seen drastically different levels of post independence economic development, which would have been hard to foresee from analyzing their material conditions when each country reached independence. Since independence, Botswana has had one of the highest rates of economic growth in the world averaging about 9% growth from 1966 to 1999.⁸ This growth started immediately after its independence. In 1960, while Botswana was still part of the British Empire, its GDP per capita was about \$60 making it one of the poorest countries in the world.⁹ Twenty-six years later, in 1986, its GDP per capita was about \$1,200 which represents a 2,000 percent increase.¹⁰ This is a remarkable trend and one of the greatest short term periods of economic success in human history. Botswana is vital to this analysis because its sustained economic growth started almost immediately at its independence. In 1966, at its independence, Botswana's GDP per capita was \$80 and in 1976, ten years after its independence, it was \$500¹¹.

⁸ "Botswana GDP," Trading Economics, Accessed March 24, 2018. <https://tradingeconomics.com/botswana/gdp>.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

Zimbabwe's GDP per capita rose from 1966 to 1976 as well, from \$297 to to \$543. But in the ten years after its independence in 1980, Zimbabwe's GDP per capita actually shrank by about fifty percent, and is today the same as what it was in 1980.¹² The difference between Botswana and Zimbabwe is stark. The effects of these divergent post-independence paths are even clearer when viewed through the Botswanan and Zimbabwean labor forces. Unemployment in Botswana is consistently under 20%, which is one of the lowest in Africa.¹³ Thirty years ago Botswana's illiteracy rate was over seventy percent and now it has the fourth highest literacy rate in Africa.¹⁴ Zimbabwe failing in essentially every metric which measures public wellbeing. The human cost of this is intense.

How can this difference be explained? I argue in the remainder of the thesis that Botswana's respect for property rights in its development played a major role in its economic success. By contrast, the failure of Zimbabwe's ruling party to protect property rights and its ideological attack on them as a concept has been a driving reason for its failure to see any real sustained economic growth. We shall see this divergence in the cases that follow.

¹² "Zimbabwe GDP" Trading Economics. Accessed March 28, 2018.
<https://tradingeconomics.com/zimbabwe/gdp>

¹³

¹⁴ "The Ten Most Illiterate Countries in Africa." World Atlas. Accessed April 2, 2018.
<https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/the-10-most-literate-countries-of-africa.html>

Case Study Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe was formed by exploitative and nationalistic elements within British society and a deep understanding of those elements is necessary to understand the way independent Zimbabwe treated property rights. However, there is no single reason for why Zimbabwe pushed the sort of property rights regime it did. Rather, a multifaceted account of the actions of the actors that created its early politics is necessary for understanding why the post-colonial regime ultimately chose to violate the country's property rights regime.

The necessary place to start this exploration is with Cecil Rhodes, one of the most influential capitalists in the history of the British Empire. Cecil Rhodes was hugely important to the development of the western world. He was a British diamond magnate crucial to the founding of Zimbabwe. An influential British editor met him in 1892 and characterized him in a telling way. "Size was the first external impression you received of him. There was something in his rather leonine head and massive loose pose which raised him to heroic proportions."¹⁵ Although admired by this particular reporter, Rhodes isn't typically described in admiring terms today. He was a ruthless in his practices and his accumulation of power. However, his importance to history cannot be ignored.

¹⁵ The Founder: Cecil Rhodes and The Pursuit of Power by Robert I. Rotberg. 1988. Oxford Press, 4.

Cecil Rhodes formed Rhodesia, contemporary Zimbabwe's predecessor, in a rush for gold, which was found in its southern Mataberland. The Mataberland chief Lobelunga was a valuable asset for Rhodes to influence. Similar to Belgium's use of the Congo as a corporate enterprise, Cecil Rhodes' new territory was technically beholden to the British government, which halfheartedly attempted to govern its imperial properties under a set of standards which they tried to enforce on Rhodes' settlers. The British administration of Mataberland was supposed to offer some benefit to its Natives. Yet, despite Rhodesia's value to the Crown, the British government's standards of governance were poor. It could call for the humane governance of a corporate territory but it couldn't enforce its declared principles. Perhaps most importantly, the settlers attacked the Mataberland tribal government, setting an early division among settlers and indigenous groups over land.¹⁶ This was the beginning of a striking pattern similar to Robert Mugabe's nationalistic form of governance nearly a century later. Thus, modern Zimbabwe was formed in a series of conflicts.

The next conflict to control Rhodesia was between Cecil Rhodes' company and the settlers inhabiting it. "For several decades after the occupation of Mashonaland and Mataberland, members of the settler bourgeoisie were clearer about what they were not than what they were. They claimed they were neither slaves of the

¹⁶ The Zimbabwe African People's Union, 1967-1981: a political history of incursion in Southern Rhodesia. Sibanda, Elikiam. 2005. 40-70.

chartered company or passing adventurers.¹⁷ The British government thought they could regulate the actions of Cecil Rhodes, and Rhodes thought he had could control the passions of his own employees. Neither notion was entirely true. Thousands of miles from London the political passions of a group of settlers overcame Rhodes's interests in large part because of the value of Rhodesian land. The settlers followed a form of nationalism of a nation that they created. They saw themselves as the rightful settlers of an independent nation, despite their interference in the property of the indigenous Africans.

British control through Rhodesia's charter was legally strong. The British government gave itself a veto over all of Cecil Rhodes' actions. His corporate state was under political control, which theoretically offered some protections to the local African population, but Cecil Rhodes died at the age of forty nine. Skeptical of the British government, Rhodesian settlers took governance into their own hands. Since Rhodesian settlers interfered with the initial agreement Rhodes made with the Mataberland tribal leaders, they'd created a legislative council and twenty years after Rhodes' death the Rhodesian settlers voted to establish themselves as an independent political entity, separate from the deceased Rhodes' organization and separate from South Africa. Mirroring other independence debates, Rhodesians voted against obvious economic benefits offered to them from South Africa as the South African government offered Rhodesia significant development as an incentive for it to form a union. The

¹⁷ Jeffrey Ira Herbst, *State Politics in Zimbabwe*, (Zimbabwe: University of Zimbabwe Press), 1-37.

South African government, however, was attacked by the Rhodesian labour movement with the Secretary of the Rhodesian Railways Workers Union saying, “General Smuts has been held up by the Capitalistic press as a saviour of nations . . . [but] the footsteps of the Prime Minister drip with blood. In 1913 the strike and shooting followed by the illegal deportations of labour leaders . . . The only crime of these labour leaders was that they struck for a living wage . . . The next was the native trouble at Port Elizabeth, which required more shooting; then Bulhoek, which ‘victory’ was won by more shooting. Now the Rand trouble — shooting once more . . . These are the usual tactics employed by this great statesman to educate the working man.”¹⁸

This new Southern Rhodesia immediately codified restrictions on the property rights of black Africans. The South Rhodesian government was deeply fixated on the quality of Rhodesian land. Geographically, the arable land in Zimbabwe receives different amounts of rainfall. The low rainfall areas are hard to farm, while the high rainfall ones are extremely valuable. The Land Apportionment act of 1930 gave legal rights to the more favorable land and a majority of all Rhodesian farmable land to white Rhodesians. This law, along with many other Rhodesian actions was interwoven with a state focused nationalism which grew stronger as Rhodesia developed.

What role did this nationalism play in the forming of Rhodesia and what effect did this have on the nature of the post-colonial state? How did this history, both legal and cultural, affect the property rights regime of the Zimbabwean nation driven by Robert Mugabe? What combination of laws and culture were pushing at Robert Mugabe when

¹⁸ Elaine Lee, “An Analysis of the Rhodesian Referendum, 1922.” The Journal of The Central African Historical Association, Vol 8. 1977, 81

he interfered with his state's property rights? Answering these questions provides clarity on the post-colonial era, which can be understood by exploring the legacy of Rhodesian Prime Minister Ian Smith, an infamous imperialist and dark symbol for the debate about how Zimbabwean property rights should be protected.

Ian Smith came to power in a coup as a representative of the most hardline white nationalist element of the Rhodesian government¹⁹ and immediately broke from Britain. The BBC article about him on the day of his claiming independence opens, "Prime Minister Ian Smith, has illegally severed its links with the British Crown."²⁰ This was a profound moment. Britain was imperialist but proved itself committed to certain legalistic norms or at least a certain legalistic aesthetic. By contrast, under Smith, Rhodesia represented a bulwark against the possibility of a legally-regulated, multi-racial democracy. He did so in rather flamboyant language proclaiming, ""There can be no happiness in a country while the absurd situation continues to exist where people, such as ourselves, who have ruled themselves with an impeccable record for over 40 years, are denied what is freely granted to other countries."

The British government at the point was asked by Zimbabwean opposition organizations ZANU and ZAPU to intervene in the Rhodesian declaration of independence but Britain instead issued a series of sanctions. In the face of worsening repression and seeing little hope from Britain, the liberation forces took to armed struggle. The struggle only served to harden the resolve of hardliners like Smith. As he said, "There can be no solution to our racial problems while African nationalists believe

¹⁹ Dan van der Vat, "Ian Smith," *The Guardian*, November 21, 2007.

²⁰ BBC, *On This Day 1950-2005, 1965: Rhodesia Breaks from UK*.

that, provided they stirred up sufficient trouble, they will be able to blackmail the British Government into bringing about a miracle on their behalf by handing the country over to irresponsible rule.”²¹

For Smith, this was a kind of “civilizational” struggle. He said at the time, “We have struck a blow for the preservation of justice, civilization, and Christianity; and in the spirit of this belief we have this day assumed our sovereign independence. God bless you all.” He associates the Rhodesian nation with civilization in the abstract. His sentiments contain a deeply nationalist tone, one which was the logical culmination of the fundamental, distinct, nationalist character of the Rhodesian state.

This is the third of three historical pressures pushing on what was then soon to be Zimbabwe. Its settlers were nationalistic. Its laws were deeply oppressive and restrictive and its politicians promoted a white nationalism which was central to the founding of its state. These elements fueled nationalist forces like ZANU, led by Robert Mugabe, which ultimately toppled the Rhodesian state. It also helps us understand why, after attaining power following Zimbabwean independence, he attacked settlers’ property rights in the totalizing manner that he did.

In 1980, Robert Mugabe and his political allies underwent the messy process of coming to a political solution with the white Rhodesian government. Assisted by the British, they worked out a political solution. A primary question was how Mugabe’s government would treat the white Rhodesian farmers. He had said that “none of the

²¹ “Modern History Sourcebook: Rhodesia: Unilateral Declaration of Independence Documents, 1965.” Fordham University, Accessed April 12, 2018.

white exploiters would be able to keep an acre.”²² This was an issue that the international economy was concerned with. Ian Smith’s government had been sanctioned by the United Nations and a massive land reform would hurt independent Zimbabwe’s ability to export its resources. The British government convinced Mugabe to include a crucial condition to the new Zimbabwean constitution. The Zimbabwean government agreed to wait ten years to attempt land reform.²³

Despite the agreement to hold-off on land reform, the agreement had a series of adverse effects. Under the original constitution and waiting period the Zimbabwean government could offer just compensation to the white farmers for their land but their options were still limited by the initial decree. The new Zimbabwean government initially offered a slowly paced land reform, and its GDP did not suffer. This relative stability would prove to be an anomaly, however. The Mugabe regime remained oriented towards an aggressive redistribution of property, despite the early gradualism with which it approached the issue. They were fighting people they viewed as an enemy. The war was not over politically for Robert Mugabe and many other individuals in the Zimbabwean ruling party. Mugabe was initially conciliatory towards white settlers and even some old elements of the Ian Smith regime. Smith even praised him when they met in Smith’s old age. This is what must be understood about Robert Mugabe’s character. He showed charm and even rhetorical brilliance. Ian Smith led a war against Mugabe’s forces but when he met him after the British orchestrated peace agreement

²² Chris McGreal, “The Trail from Lancaster House,” *The Guardian*, January 15, 2002. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2002/jan/16/zimbabwe.chrismcgreal>

²³ Ibid.

he said, "Here's this chap, and he was speaking like a sophisticated, balanced, sensible man. I thought: if he practises what he preaches, then it will be fine."²⁴

Despite Mugabe's strength of personality, there were two questions that Zimbabwean government had to answer, which were fundamental to the sort of post colonial land reform that all newly independent nations faced: What sort of policy towards landowners who benefited from racist-imperialist laws is just and what effect would property redistribution have on their economies? The two questions are related. Zimbabwe was barred from the uncompensated taking of property in its initial constitution but it could buy white landowners' land at a fair value with funds offered by the British government.²⁵ This constitution offered a number of forms of protection against the taking of private property and the government did not immediately attempt a large scale redistribution of land. In the 1980s, when Robert Mugabe was killing his political rivals in Matabeleland, Zimbabwean wealth had not been completely destroyed as it later was to be. In 1980, when Robert Mugabe came to power Zimbabwean GDP per capita stood at about \$1100. In 1990, one it had grown to \$1300.²⁶

Yet, in the ten years after Mugabe came to power the land question loomed large in Zimbabwean politics. Distribution of land was a major issue for Zimbabwe throughout its history as a nation state. The mechanisms of governance by its white settlers were more intrusive than in other parts of Africa, and its independence was fiercer and more violent than in many other post-colonial countries. The colonial figures of Rhodesian

²⁴ Marian Tupy, "Botswana and Zimbabwe A Tale of Two Countries. May 14, 2008. Cato Institute/The American.

²⁵ Martin Meredith, "Mugabe, Power, Plunder, and The Struggle for Zimbabwe,(PublicAffairs; 1st edition: September 25, 2007), 122.

²⁶"Zimbabwe GDP" Trading Economics. Accessed April 20, 2018.

history cut psychologically jarring symbols, and Mugabe was schooled by war. But Zimbabwe's unique history gave the land reform itself its distinct characteristics which were important to the economic well-being and property rights of its people.

When Robert Mugabe came to power in 1980 white farmers were disproportionately responsible for Zimbabwe's national production. "6,000 white farmers grew 90 percent of marketed maize, the main staple; 90 percent of cotton, the main industrial crop; and virtually all tobacco and other export crops, including wheat coffee, tea and sugar, accounting all and all for one third of total exports. White farmers employed about a third of the labor earning force, some 271,000 people in 1980."²⁷ And the constitutional protection against land reform stood. However, 1990 was an election year for Mugabe and in the context of land in Zimbabwe's history, he appeared to see the redistribution of it as an issue he could use to gain popularity. The scope of the Zimbabwean government's legal power grew over time. In December 1990, the Zimbabwean parliament amended its constitution to allow the government to confiscate land and fix the price of that they would buy it for. Four thousand white farmers met with Agriculture Secretary Witness Mangwende in January of 1991. Mangwende told them, "The land question is a time bomb which must be solved now. The time for energy-consuming debates on the desirability or otherwise of this programme has run out. The only useful debate that the government is willing to entertain is about implementation modalities."²⁸ "Bomb" implies a belief that something worse would

²⁷ Martin Meredith, "Mugabe, Power, Plunder, and The Struggle for Zimbabwe,(PublicAffairs; 1st edition: September 25, 2007), 111.

²⁸ Martin Meredith, "Mugabe, Power, Plunder, and The Struggle for Zimbabwe,(PublicAffairs; 1st edition: September 25, 2007), 123.

happen if the government failed to issue some sort of land reform and the reference to implementation modalities begets a certain understanding of practicality by Mangwende. But in this analysis implementation and scope define the meaning of the term “land reform.” This concept of land reform devolved further, and the Zimbabwean constitution was further amended. The Zimbabwean constitution initially gave anyone whose land was taken away a means of petitioning the government. Article III Section Sixteen D of the Zimbabwean constitution stated, taking land “requires the acquiring authority, if the acquisition is contested, to apply to the High Court or some other court before, or not later than thirty days after, the acquisition for an order confirming the acquisition.” This was amended out of Zimbabwe’s constitution in 1990 because the Zimbabwean high court was very critical of Zimbabwe’s plans. Just retired Supreme Court Justice Enoch Dumbutshena said Mugabe’s land reform “flies in the face of all forms of modern society and the rule of law.”²⁹ And land reform was progressing rapidly. The scope of the control the government gave itself and the size of the disruption of capital for farm owners increased dramatically throughout the 1990s. In 1993, Mugabe gave a speech saying, “If white settlers took the land without paying, we can in a similar way take the land without paying.”³⁰ This statement is an attack on the principle of legality. It is a justification of behavior using the actions of the white Rhodesian settlers. But with this ideology and rhetoric, as the conception of the scope of the land reform grew so did the corruption of those implementing it. Witness Mangwende, who

²⁹ Martin Meredith, “Mugabe, Power, Plunder, and The Struggle for Zimbabwe,(PublicAffairs; 1st edition: September 25, 2007), 122..

³⁰Martin Meredith, “Mugabe, Power, Plunder, and The Struggle for Zimbabwe,(PublicAffairs; 1st edition: September 25, 2007), 126

threatened the landowners of a time bomb, was caught leasing a farm taken from a white farmer which the government claimed was given to landless peasants.”³¹ This was also at a time when Mugabe gave his inner cabinet large pay raises. “In 1995 the cabinet awarded all Mugabe ministers and members of parliament large pay raises of 133 percent.”³² The Mugabe land reform increased the political power of the central government but it materially benefitted them as well. They saw it as the purest political question the country had to answer. And Zimbabwe’s economy (in terms of GDP per capita) actually shrank as the land reform continued. In the year 2000, the GDP per capita of Zimbabwe was slightly smaller than it was in the year 1990.³³

In the first decade of the 21st century the scope of Zimbabwe’s land reform would grow larger than it had in the last decade of the twentieth. One of its largest issues is that it gave outsized benefits to Zimbabwe’s elite. The rhetoric around land reform was populist but the policy often failed to benefit those who many would argue had been most harmed by Rhodesian history. Catherine Boone writes about the top down nature of Zimbabwe’s land efforts, the “Fast Track program was not a grassroots initiative driven by organized constituencies of small scale farmers struggling with problems of land access and and landlessness. Fast Track farm takeovers of 2000-2005 happened as a government initiative.”³⁴ Land became what Zimbabwe based its idea of international economics around. In the year 2000 Mugabe’s political

³¹Martin Meredith, “Mugabe, Power, Plunder, and The Struggle for Zimbabwe,(PublicAffairs; 1st edition: September 25, 2007), 126

³²Martin Meredith, “Mugabe, Power, Plunder, and The Struggle for Zimbabwe,(PublicAffairs; 1st edition: September 25, 2007), 127

³³ “Zimbabwe GDP” Trading Economics. Accessed May 10, 2018.

³⁴ Catherine Boone, *Property and Political Order in Africa: Land Rights and the Structure of Politics*, (Cambridge University Press: 2014), 297.

party campaigned on the slogan: “land is the economy and the economy is land.”³⁵ This logic contradicts the argument for property rights. But on Mugabe’s terms the Fast Track addition to land reform was quite successful. In 2004, more than ninety percent of white owned land had been transferred to black farmers.³⁶ This led to a reduction in Zimbabwe’s economy and a reduction in Zimbabwe’s productive capabilities. In the year 2008, Zimbabwe’s GDP per capita was about half as much as it was in 2000.³⁷ This coincided with a massive decrease in Zimbabwean production. “The tobacco industry, which was Zimbabwe’s single largest generator of foreign exchange and accounted for almost a third of Zimbabwe’s foreign exchange earnings in 2000, has almost completely collapsed. The crop that earned some US\$600 million in 2000 generated less than US\$125 million in 2007.”³⁸ The period of the accelerating land reform saw Zimbabwe fall behind and deeply harm its attempts for successful economic development.

Zimbabwe’s government acted in its land reform to solve a situation it did not cause and many would argue deserved government action. But all attempts to take and redistribute physical property, in varying degrees, contradict the argument for the economic benefits of property rights. Mugabe’s land reform was not done legalistically. This uncertainty increased its economic issues. It was also driven by political actors who were working to solve political concerns. The rhetoric of violence by the government blurred the line between attack on old enemies and necessary redistribution. This

³⁵ “Property and Political Order in Africa: Land Rights and the Structure of Politics.” Catherine Boone. (Cambridge University Press:2014), 303.

³⁶ “Property and Political Order in Africa: Land Rights and the Structure of Politics.” Catherine Boone. (Cambridge University Press:2014), 305.

³⁷ “Zimbabwe GDP per capita” Trading Economics. Accessed May 15, 2018.

³⁸ David Coltart. Development and Policy Analysis No. 5. David Coltart “Cato Institute,” March 24th 2008, 2.

rhetoric also protected large-scale opportunities for corruption by Zimbabwean political elite, which were opportunities they took. These actions greatly harmed Zimbabwe's productive capabilities and economic output, which had deeply negative consequences for the real wealth of its citizens. This offers much to be learned in understanding land reform and development.

Botswana

Botswana's development history has been markedly different from Zimbabwe's. Its history in colonialism was different and less severe. The English had far less influence in Botswana than they did in Zimbabwe. Botswana was not viewed as an asset for resources in the same way Zimbabwe was. It was also governed as a protectorate of the British government not as a territory of Cecil Rhodes. This history allowed it to incorporate some of its indigenous traditions into its modern style of governance. It created a political culture which was markedly different from Zimbabwe's. This culture saw public policy and particularly a perspective on property rights that was more open and liberal than Zimbabwe's. Botswana's protection of property rights is one of the major reasons it never had a two decade period of economic regression as Zimbabwe did after its attempted land reform. It also one of the most important reasons why Botswana has seen dramatic GDP growth since its founding. Analyzing Botswana, therefore, helps understand how political culture and its relationship to property rights can be so valuable to a developing country

The path to developing property rights protections extends far back in African history, specifically in the relatively light colonial presence in Botswana compared to Zimbabwe. As in Zimbabwe, Cecil Rhodes was important to the founding of the Bechuanaland Protectorate, though he never actually gained political control of it. As Rhodes tried to take control of the territory, Batswana tribal leaders made a pragmatic political decision. They embraced the British government. "The chiefs knew that only disaster and exploitation lay ahead for territories if they fell under the control of Rhodes. Though it was impossible for them to defeat Rhodes militarily, they were determined to fight him any way they could. They decided to opt for the lesser of two evils: greater control by the British rather than annexation by Rhodes."³⁹ They were successful and Bechuanaland was put under the protection of Queen Victoria who's government proclaimed, "The Queen shall appoint an officer to reside with them. The chiefs will rule their own people much as at present."⁴⁰ This dynamic was partially the luck of British disinterest. It was a subtler form of colonial governance than in other parts of Africa. Botswanan citizens were exposed to relatively less colonial violence than elsewhere Africa, but British neglect allowed their pre-colonial African governance institutions to develop with comparative freedom. People indigenous to Bechuanaland interacted with British settlers but the political context to their early interactions was very different than interactions between Africans and Europeans in much of Africa.

British missionaries were active in Bechuanaland. They were active in much of Africa but in Bechuanaland they were to practice a sort of liberal internationalism. They

³⁹ Daren Acemoglu and James Robinson, *Why Nations Fail*, (Crown Publishing House, 2012), 272

⁴⁰ *Ibid*

wanted the British government to take a strong hand in protecting the Tswana people. "What should be, however, emphasized is the fact that the power to which the missionaries looked was the secular force of British imperialism. Already since the middle of the 19th century they called upon the British government to preserve their mission field from Boer expansion from the Transvaal."⁴¹ The missionary rhetoric repeatedly called for a peaceful form of British protection of the Tswana people from other threats. This may have involved a certain self interest by the missionaries. The English could not preach safely in German territory but the British government was largely uninterested in control of Beuchanaland and did not deify its land the way Rhodes did to his other conquest. At the end of 1882 the British Lord Deby even declared: "Bechuanaland is of no value for us... for any Imperial purposes ... it is of no consequence to us whether the Boers or Native Chiefs are in possession."⁴² These competing influences played a crucial role in understanding the largely unobtrusive role that the British government was to play in the future governance of Botswana.

The British influences in Botswana did not destroy Botswana's institutions which developed politically in ways similar to successful nation states. They were marked by a period of pragmatic economic cooperation with the British. The Botswanan tribal leadership was able to exploit British realpolitik as a force for the pragmatic protection of their society. In direct contrast to Rhodesia, Ian Smith's "fight for civilization" was not to take place in Botswana.

⁴¹ Henryk Zins, "The international context of the creation of the Bechuanaland Protectorate in 1885," *Pula Journal of African Studies*. Vol 11. No 1. 1997, 56.

⁴² Henryk Zins, "The international context of the creation of the Bechuanaland Protectorate in 1885," *Pula Journal of African Studies*. Vol 11. No 1. 1997, 59.

This was to lead to the coming of a political leader very different in temperament than Robert Mugabe. Seretse Khama was a different sort of person than Robert Mugabe, but the differences are more meaningful than just that of their mere individual psychologies. Khama came to power in a society that experienced a very different rhetorical understanding of property. This history denied Botswana's leadership of any rhetorical justification of a massive land reform effort. Seretse Khama is famous for his bold marriage to the English clerk Ruth Williams, but he should also be remembered for implementing a governmental system which borrowed from the English democracy while conservatively allowing some pre-imperial Botswanan institutions to flourish. Khama is also important, however, in that he was uniquely able to link Botswanan tribal history to public policy lifted from European liberal democracy. Seretse Khama was the grandson of Khama III, the king of the Bamangwato people. He studied at Oxford. Like his ancestors, Seretse Khama was a notable pragmatist. And he suffered no war. There was no individual enemy to foster trauma and concentrated antipathy.

Khama was able to unify Botswanan society partially because of his heritage. The tribal leaders of his country were comfortable supporting a man of his background. "The chiefs' disempowerment was eased by Seretse Khama himself being the chief of the country's largest tribe."⁴³ Khama instituted a parliamentary democracy while keeping Tswana democratic councils and some elements of their customary law. While doing this, formal tribal power was taken away in a series of legislative acts. This is

⁴³Valentin Siedler, "Why did Botswana End Up With Good Institutions: The Role of Culture in Colonial Rule" V Institute for Economic and Social History. Vienna University of Business, 25.

meaningful because it suggests that Botswana would be capable of acting legalistically while seeing its institutions act in an orderly and gradualist fashion.

Botswana was not as overtly nationalistic as Zimbabwe. This created a political culture which helped create a pragmatic form of governance. This allowed for an allowance of foreign labor. "In 1964, four years after Botswana's independence expatriates filled 75% of all senior and middle management positions in public services."

⁴⁴ This is similar to other African countries which very often saw members of their former colonialist countries remain in key roles in their emerging post-colonial nations. This culture and history contributed to the reasons that Seretse Khama acted in as gradual a manner as he did in his country's early post independence period.

For example, in 1970, five years after Botswana achieved its independence Seretse Khama gave an address in Sweden in which he said,

"African countries have formally stated that their guiding ideology is socialism. This label, even if qualified by the adjective "African" can have little meaning for the majority of our people. Furthermore socialism is an ideology to which leaders as various as Stalin and Dubcek, Ulbricht and Willi Brandt, Nasser and Ben Gurion, Harold Wilson and Fidel Castro have all laid claim."⁴⁵

This is a critique of large scale redistribution as a method of reform and it is a sign of a commitment to gradualist development.

In a similar vein, Khama discusses inequality in his country:

"Our concern to reconcile economic development with social justice poses many such dilemmas. Botswana is justly famous for its cattle, and every Botswanan is popularly supposed to own cattle, yet this is not the case.

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵ Seretse Khama, "Botswana A Developing Democracy In Southern Africa," Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 5.

Over half the national herds is owned by men with more than fifty cattle, and nearly, 14,000 out of a total of nearly 48,000 farmers in the tribal areas, where 86 percent of our cattle are grazed, have no cattle. But this does not mean that we are divided up between big ranchers and landless peasants. The traditional system has a strong welfare element which helps to offset the apparent economic imbalance. Thus under the mafia system poorer people who suffered disproportionately during the drought can go to someone who is better off and ask him to let them look after some of his cattle."⁴⁶

This is an ideological rejection of the urge to act rapidly but it is also misleading without being properly viewed through Botswana's history. Khama's rejection of large state oriented redistribution of property is really an acceptance of the range of public policy options available to him. The history of Botswana did not force it to counter a state-oriented narrative. It could develop its institutions in ways similar to liberal democracies partially because it was not as abused by imperialists as violently as Zimbabwe. This is a great difference in states like Botswana and Zimbabwe. Botswana did not have a forced need to answer. It could view its development in terms of empirical economic growth instead of having to fulfill the needs of a subjective social justice which was only realized through trauma. Seretse Khama was a unique historical individual but history and the nature of post imperial politics did more to shape his and Robert Mugabe's actions than perhaps anything else. However, Botswana was also formed by its resources, which influenced the formation of a very different style of governance than that created by the post-independence leadership in Zimbabwe.

⁴⁶ Seretse Khama, "Botswana A Developing Democracy In Southern Africa," Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 12.

This difference in governing needs helps us account for the different role the state played in the economy in each country. Botswana has a substantial amount of diamonds, which has been a major part of its economy since its initial independence. “Over the past ten years, the mining sector has contributed 38.5% to GDP. Diamond exports, Botswana’s main source of foreign exchange, averaged 75% of total annual exports over the past ten years.”⁴⁷ This is important to Botswana’s growth, but just having mineral wealth is no guarantee of economic success. We have seen, for instance, how Zimbabwe’s land was considered to be extremely valuable by the Rhodesian settlers, but it has slid into poverty. Botswana, by contrast, managed its natural wealth effectively, in part I have suggested because it experienced a political evolution different from Zimbabwe. Botswana’s history and culture created incentives demonstrably different than those that were given to Zimbabwe’s leadership after independence and these Botswanan incentives were crucial to its formation as a country.

We see this difference in the leadership of the two countries. As as important as Seretse Khama’s governing philosophy was, he articulated an attitude which respected the interests of the Botswanan elites. It made sense for the Botswanan political elites to respect property rights. They had the property and they had corresponding political power. “After independence, cattle owners were the most important economic interest group and they were the most politically influential. The majority opinion was that

⁴⁷ Oliver Basedvant, “Are Diamonds Forever? Using the permanent income hypothesis to Analyze Botswana’s Reliance on Diamond Revenue.” March 1, 2008. Working Paper No. 08/80.

Botswana's government was a government of ranchers."⁴⁸ This is different than in Zimbabwe where there was a social and political rift between the government and the white property owners - a rift which was influenced by factors historical and outside of economic reasoning. Robert Mugabe began his land reform in election year, when he sought to rally popular support and also placate his political allies. Botswanan political culture never experienced the violence that Zimbabwe's did, and conflict and the language of it was less meaningful. This analysis helps explain why there was never racial and political tension in Botswana the way there was in Zimbabwe. But why was the Botswanan political elite protected from populist economic anxiety? It had a disproportionate amount of property. The questions to be asked are why were there not calls for a Botswanan land reform act firstly and secondly why did Botswana's elite not exploit the political and economic factors which together were very beneficial to them? These questions deserve exploration.

Botswana's socio-economic condition can be understood by examining the words of Seretse Khama himself. As early references Khama said, "Over half the national herds are owned by men with more than fifty cattle, and nearly, 14,000 out of a total of nearly 48,000 farmers in the tribal areas, where 86 percent of our cattle are but this does not mean that we are divided up between big ranchers and landless peasants. The traditional system has a strong welfare element which helps to offset the apparent economic imbalance."⁴⁹ This element of Botswana's culture is significant. Botswana's

⁴⁸ MIT Economics Department, "An African Success Story," Daron Acemoglu, Simon Johnson, James Robinson. 2002. CEPR Discussion Paper No. 3912.

⁴⁹ Seretse Khama. Botswana A Developing Democracy In Southern Africa. Scandinavian Institute of African Studies.

institutions were not destroyed by its relatively light colonial occupation. Botswana's relationship with its past, cherished by the country's political elite, offer a cultural safeguard and convincing counter-narrative to thoughts of mass action to reconcile perceived economic imbalances.

Botswana's political leadership has been competent and has lacked the corruption exhibited in other countries. It is currently one of the least corrupt countries in Africa and has exhibited less corruption than some parts of Europe⁵⁰. This character trait of Botswana's governing class is partially explained by how safe from political harm it is. "First, it is important that elites did not oppose or feel threatened by the process of growth--they did not fear becoming political losers." There was no need, in Botswana, for a redistribution of land to placate political groups. They were not struggling like those in Zimbabwe, whose political prominence was developed in a violent war with intrusive and symbolic colonial enemy. In the logic of the earlier established argument for property rights, overall production, as evidenced by Botswana's high growth did not falter. These factors led to politics and economic development promoting each other. Botswana's post-independence political elites have benefited from economic conditions that they've had no incentive to change. As Acemoglu, Johnson and Robinson put it, "no group wanted to fight to expand its rents at the expense of 'rocking the boat.'⁵¹" This is notable different from other African countries such as Mugabe's Zimbabwe where the idea of a sort "rocking the boat" was instrumental to their conceptions of government policies.

⁵⁰ Transparency International. Paul Banoba. "A Defining Movement for Africa. February 21, 2018.

⁵¹ An African Success Story. Acemoglu, Johnson, Robinson. 2002. CEPR Discussion Paper No. 3912.

The relationship between Botswana's upper and lower classes is still problematic. In 2015, Botswana was the third most unequal country in the world.⁵² This social system was partially created by the system of economics shaped by the decisions of Botswana's elite economic actors. But the stability, respect for property rights, and gradualist competence of Botswana's governmental institutions have played a role Botswana's economic success. Botswana's inequality has not prevented it from making a massive reduction in its overall poverty. "The poverty gap eased from 11.7 percent in 2002/03 to 6.2 percent in 2009/10, indicating that consumption has improved among the poor. Real consumption per capita rose 47.6 percent in rural areas compared to a nationwide real consumption per capita increase of 13.3 percent during the same period." Botswana's historical circumstances are unique. It had a unique colonial history, and it was governed by a tribe of individuals with special tastes. The incentives given to its elites contributed to poverty-reducing growth in Botswana but the distinctions between political cultures are both subtle and deeply meaningful. However, it holds true that Botswana's development is important and bears a deep understanding.

Conclusion

Property rights are important to a country's development for the simple fact that individuals who've cultivated their own productive capital understand use that capital

⁵² "Income Growth in Rural Botswana Lifts Thousands Out of Poverty and Decreases Poverty." World Bank. Press Release. December 8th 2015.

more productively than those who haven't. This is why countries that, for the most part, don't interfere with their citizens right to own property freely typically see high levels of economic growth. This is easy to understand in Africa. African countries which have respected property rights have experienced relatively high levels of economic development. African countries which haven't have seem economic stagnation. This is true in Botswana and Zimbabwe. Botswana, which protected property rights through its institutions, has seen high levels of economic development and Zimbabwe, which attempted to redistribute massive amounts of land, has seen economic stagnation and a lack of growth. If interferences in property rights do happen, their specific nature is fundamental to their success.

Zimbabwe and Botswana had very different experiences as English colonies. Zimbabwe was colonized by ruthless resource driven exploiters who fought a brutal war with the indigenous population. The Rhodesian government was an open and visible symbol of hatred which galvanized local groups against it. The Rhodesians war against the leaders of what would be independent Zimbabwe created a powerful narrative to justify land reform. This land reform was rhetorically focused around resolving past issues with a wealthy white minority. The Zimbabwean leadership and much of the country's violent history with that white minority pushed Robert Mugabe's government to attempt to do too large a reform too quickly and gave rhetorical justification to governmental incompetence and corruption. Botswanan locals had a much less violent relationship with its white settlers than Zimbabweans did. This allowed its post-independence leadership to cultivate the country's native pre-colonization

traditions. Botswana's government did not stress retribution against the English. It was also greatly influenced by powerful agricultural influences which had no desire to see a redistribution of land. In direct contrast to Zimbabwe, Botswana's agricultural property owners had a clear role in its political process while the white farm owners were seen by the government as an enemy in Zimbabwe. The countries were also driven by the characters of their two post-independence leaders. Seretse Khama was part of a tradition of political leaders who pragmatically adapted to English imperial power while Robert Mugabe spent much of his early years being politically oppressed by the Rhodesian government. Both countries, like many other new nations, are products of economics, political culture, and certain important individuals.

I argue that the narrative I explored gives credence to the policy idea that developing countries should respect the property of individuals, and not attempt major political redistributions of land. I've drawn this conclusion from two major reasons. The first is that well utilized property such as arable land gives its largest benefit from merely being used well. In a country with a market economy production is distributed to the entire country which benefits its economy as a whole. I believe evidence for this can be found in the drop in agricultural Zimbabwe experienced after its largest attempt at land reform. Botswana refused major land redistribution, and its GDP per capita and many of its overall standards of living have increased dramatically. I also argue that the skill of a country's bureaucracy is incredibly important, and it often takes many years for a country to develop independent and competent administrators. Even if Zimbabwe's attempt at land reform was not inherently corrupt, its implementation of it was marred by

the corrupt and self-serving actions of Robert Mugabe's government. From my research, I've come to the conclusion that developing countries should avoid putting the means of production under political control because government agents are often flawed, and increasing production by letting people use capital they've cultivated efficiently is the most important necessity to any developing economy.

