

are focusing on production levels, new class formation, and the changed social base. Its unravelling of the relations and co-dependencies between ZANU-PF and war veterans, and how these have assisted ZANU-PF's hold on power, makes the book a useful resource for readers grappling with Zimbabwe's politics today – especially given ongoing antagonisms within ZANU-PF, which are testing ties between ZANU-PF, Mugabe and war veterans, who, once again, are 'standing up to the president'.

McDonald Lewanika

London School of Economics and Political Science

mlewanika@gmail.com

doi:10.1017/S0001972018000268

Blair Rutherford, *Farm Labor Struggles in Zimbabwe: the ground of politics*. Bloomington IN: Indiana University Press (hb US\$85 – 978 0 253 02399 5; pb US\$35 – 978 0 253 02403 9). 2016, vii + 278 pp.

Since 2000, Zimbabwean historiography has been dominated by works on the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP). However, the majority of these works have fallen into two broad categories; those who view the land reform as a success and those who view it as an ill-conceived and violent land dispossession. What has been lacking in this historiography are ethnographically well-grounded studies that transcend these dichotomies. This book does exactly that. Rutherford builds on his years of research on farm labour to provide a *longue durée* perspective on everyday struggles of farm labour from the 1990s to the post-2000 period. Using ethnographic data collected from Upfumi, a horticultural farm east of Harare, Rutherford is able to weave a rich and compelling narrative on the experiences of farmworkers, especially in the aftermath of Zimbabwe's FTLRP.

The focus of the book is on how farmworkers dealt with the 'precarious livelihoods they forged out in the new agrarian landscape that has emerged in Zimbabwe since the massive, and often chaotic, land redistribution exercise that began in 2000' (p. 1). The book also examines the processes through which 'the practices and power relations of electoral politics became entangled in the configuration of livelihoods and social projects of an extraordinary farm labor struggle' (p. ix). Rutherford critiques the dominant narratives used to understand agrarian struggles in postcolonial Zimbabwe which dichotomize between those 'for' and those 'against' the land reform. This framing, as he argues, misses the actual 'ground of politics'. Rutherford goes beyond the two analytical lenses that look at politics as either oppressive or liberating to look at the place of politics in struggles for farmworkers' rights and agrarian livelihoods.

Rutherford deploys gender as an analytical lens to weave a story of farmworkers' struggles. He examines gendered relations on farms and how female farmworkers at Upfumi were subjected to various forms of gendered intimidation (p. 41). These experiences informed female farmworkers' willingness and desire to be involved in farm struggles. Rutherford's work articulates the agency of women who have often been viewed as mere victims. The key narrative in the book is the story of how a group composed largely of women workers was able to engage in a labour struggle for a very long period until victory was won. The book demonstrates that 'farm workers do not lack a form of agency but they just have a very different set of possibilities and perils operating through the changing concatenation of social relations, dependencies and power relations' (p. 253). Rutherford also uses the concept of belonging to make sense of the everyday lives of

farmworkers. He defines modes of belonging as ‘routinized discourses, social practices and institutional arrangements through which people make claims for resources and rights’ (p. 16). He argues that modes of belonging emphasize the relations of dependency through which livelihoods of farmworkers are forged. In particular, the book discusses citizenship and belonging in relation to the stereotype of farmworkers as predominantly people of foreign origin (mostly of Malawian descent) and without rural homes. The narratives of farmworkers’ struggles to acquire identity documents, for example, illustrate how struggles over citizenship and belonging continued to be part of the everyday challenges that faced farmworkers in the post-FTLRP period.

One of the strengths of the book is Rutherford’s expert use of ethnographic data to reveal intimate details of governance, livelihoods and politics on the farms. But perhaps the book’s greatest strength is also its weakness; arguably one of the weaknesses of the book is the author’s close connection with the research participants. As he puts it: ‘I found myself in sympathy with the Upfumi farm workers, their mobilization of political support, and their ambitions for improving the rights of farm workers’ (p. 4). He spent close to fifteen years interacting with the farmworkers at Upfumi and gained their trust, which made him become a key ally in their struggles. Consequently, his illumination of the agency of the farmworkers in their everyday struggles is affected to some extent by his close connections with his research participants. In spite of this caveat, *Farm Labor Struggles in Zimbabwe* is an excellent ethnographic study of farmworkers in Zimbabwe and how they negotiated their belonging and carved out new livelihoods in the context of an agrarian revolution. This book should be on the shelf of anyone with an interest in land reform, farm labour, identity and belonging in Zimbabwe and beyond.

Joseph Mujere

University of Zimbabwe

josephmujere@yahoo.co.uk

doi:10.1017/S000197201800027X

Stephen Chan and Julia Gallagher, *Why Mugabe Won: the 2013 elections in Zimbabwe and their aftermath*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (hbk £75 – 978 1 107 11716 7). 2017, 203 pp.

Despite a backdrop of economic, social and political crisis, Robert Mugabe and his ruling ZANU-PF party won the 2013 elections in Zimbabwe. The outcome left the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) battered and in disarray as election post-mortems predictably led to recriminations and another split in the party. How did it happen? Was this another instance of Mugabe and ZANU-PF *stealing* an election through what some in the opposition claimed was a potent combination involving a sketchy voters’ roll with 100,000 centenarians, ‘assisting’ voters, turning away over 300,000 voters, bussing people into key races, and intimidation, though with less overt violence? Or, did the wily politician win the election *fairly*, as ZANU-PF claimed and as was accepted, with misgivings, by observer teams from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the African Union?

In this rich and engaging analysis, Stephen Chan and Julia Gallagher challenge these simple rigging claims, suggesting instead that Mugabe and ZANU-PF won credibly, aided by some ‘judicious rigging’ and a healthy helping of ineptness on the part of Morgan Tsvangirai and the MDC. Chan and Gallagher point to several conditions – the legacies of colonialism; memories of the economic