

ABSTRACT

This MA research report analyses the nature of private property using the backdrop of Zimbabwean land reform and a series of political theoretical arguments on private property. This research report analyses if (and if so, how) the fast track land reform process in Zimbabwe provides the basis or ground-spring for rethinking private property. It would have been quite easy to mount a defence of land reform in Zimbabwe based upon Marxist principles or those found amongst some versions of communal land ownership as espoused in various parts of Africa and beyond. What marks out this research report's approach is that it takes two doyens of liberal political philosophy – John Locke and Robert Nozick – and shows that the refined position of the latter, most often used to defend private property, amongst other rights, constitutes in fact a basis for justifying land reform in Zimbabwe.

By examining the knowledge and being sensitive to the way land reform has been politicised and corrupted on the ground in Zimbabwe, this liberal justification for land reform ends up producing a much more forceful justification for land reform, by means of rethinking private property than an 'external' justification may have produced. Somewhat amazingly, there even seems to be evidence that versions of Nozick's position were in fact mobilised by ZANU PF. Considering the consequences produced by the Fast Track Land Reform Programme in Zimbabwe, this paper adopts the position that discussions around private property needs to be determined not by natural rights, human rights or by things that are above politics but by a consequentialism informed analysis of needs. This position offers a holistic account of property and in a way, progressive.

Keywords: *Private property, Fast Track Land Reform*