



Gendered Dimensions of Land & Rural Livelihoods

The case of new settler farmer displacement at Nuanetsi Ranch,
Mwenezi District, Zimbabwe

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Abstract

Nuanetsi Ranch had been invaded by villagers from different parts of Mwenezi, Chiredzi and Chivi communal areas since 2000. In February 2010, the government announced that the settlers had to be removed and resettled in other 'uncontested lands' in the area, compromising their rights to sustainable livelihoods, human development and land acquisition. The perceptions of the men and women resident at Chigwizi has had a bearing on understanding the nature of gendered land and rural livelihoods in the context of biofuel production in Zimbabwe, after fast track land reform.

About the author

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Acronyms

ASAUK	African Studies Association of the UK
CSIR	Corporate Social Investment Responsibility
DTZ	Development Trust of Zimbabwe
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
UNRISD	United Nations Research Institute for Social Development
ZANU PF	Zimbabwe African Union Patriotic Front
ZBE	Zimbabwe Bio Energy
ZLR	Zimbabwe Law Reports

Table of Contents

1	Introduction	1
2	Methodology and description of study area	3
3	Livelihood configurations at Chigwizi.....	5
4	Conceptual frame	5
5	Gendered impacts of land acquisition and settlement at Chigwizi.....	6
6	Biofuel activities of the Zimbabwe Bio Energy Project at Nuanetsi.....	10
7	Gender and the politics of biofuel concession making	11
8	Conclusion.....	14
	References.....	16

1 Introduction

Land is at the heart of the political, social and economic organisation of most African states, which rely heavily on agriculture and natural resource use for a significant percentage of their national gross domestic product. Biofuels¹ require large tracts of land for production and the land acquisition programmes by the various state, non-state actors and individuals have been termed as 'land grabbing' (Matondi *et al* 2011; Cotula *et al* 2009; Sulle & Nelson 2009). Biofuel land acquisition mechanisms are seen as the continuation of imperialism (Palmer 2010). Biofuel land acquisition has also synonymously been equated with the concept of foreignisation of space (Zoomers 2010). All this terminology has been coined as a result of the positive and negative impacts of biofuel production on the livelihoods of men and women who either face displacement or loss of livelihoods in order to pave the way for the large scale conglomerates, individuals or governments who often invest in developing countries to engage in biofuel production on a large scale. Borrás *et al* (2010) have referred to this interplay of various state and non-state actors as the 'biofuel complex', as it leads to positive and negative outcomes for the various actors concerned, particularly the rural poor, who cannot be part of the biofuel treaty regulation.

The main drivers behind government support for biofuels in developed and developing countries are concerns about climate variability and energy security, and the political will to support the farming sector through increased demand for bio energy agricultural products. Energy security and access to energy is a longstanding concern in many countries. The recent increases in oil and other energy prices have increased the incentive to promote alternative sources of energy. Strong demand from rapidly developing countries, especially China and India, is adding to concerns over future energy prices and supplies. There is increasing concern about human-induced climate change, and the effects of greenhouse gas emissions on rising global temperatures. Bioenergy is often seen as a way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and also as a cheap renewable source of energy; hence its attraction.

The biofuel boom has become a core issue in Zimbabwean land and development debates; Zimbabwe has the potential for biofuel production due to its climate, biotic factors and low population density, which makes it attractive, compared to other countries within the Southern African region (Von Maltitz & Brent 2008). It should be observed that the gendered biofuel, livelihoods and displacement discourses operate within Laswell's (1965) definition of politics as being who gets what, when and how. David Easton (1953) defines politics as the authoritative allocation of goods valued in society. It is the resource distributors and policy makers who have the capacity, through political and economic legislation, to ensure that men and women in society can access land and improve their livelihoods. In this paper, gender refers to the social and cultural roles and variables that are prescribed by society, guiding the behaviour and actions that men and women should conform to. It also reflects the structural relationship of inequality between men and women, as manifested in households, labour markets and political structures.

Zimbabwe has produced biofuel since the 1960s, mainly out of sugar cane. The biofuel produced in Zimbabwe has been from sugar cane plantations in the South Eastern Lowveld, but the production of the sugarcane for biofuel production was affected by the land reform process, which led to the acquisition of some of the sugar estates; now run by medium scale farmers who have not been able to meet the demands of producing large scale sugar cane for fuel purposes, hence ending up investing in other crops, such as maize. In 2003, there were efforts to produce jatropha, which led to the building of a huge bio-ethanol plant. This has not yielded much gain as most communal and newly resettled farmers have not been interested in large scale production of the crop due to recurrent droughts and the economic problems that have been experienced in the country, forcing the farmers to concentrate on maize and other food crops. However, the aftermath of the land reform programme has led to notable changes in the political economy of land relations with regards to biofuel production, and this has led to the need by the government to revitalise the production of biofuels at Nuanetsi ranch.

This study seeks to answer the following key questions:

- How does displacement due to the large scale biofuel production at Nuanetsi Ranch affect the land rights and livelihoods of the men and women settlers who have been resident on the land since 2000?
- What are the perceptions of the men and women with regards to their displacement from Chigwizi village?
- What role has the district land committee; the provincial land committees; and other institutions involved in land management, played in the displacement of the men and women settlers at Nuanetsi ranch?

¹ In this study I define biofuels as the liquid fuels produced from agricultural products and manufactured out of bio mass. They are mainly used for cooking and heating.

- Has biofuel production at Nuanetsi led to a shift in policy by the government from smallholder farming back to the pre-fast track land reform phase?
- What has been the role of the 'new elites' in biofuel production?

The increasing global demand for biofuels has different gender specific socio-economic and environmental effects in Zimbabwe. Males and females in the biofuel producing zone may face a differential risk matrix, comprising different issues — described below. A better understanding of gender as a variable in rural livelihood systems can be gained by using a variety of methodologies and analytical tools that fall under the rubric of gender analysis. Men and women have different activity and control profile outcomes when natural resource access is dealt with. Differences can be seen in the access and control of various productive resources, including land and participation levels in various socio-economic activities and in decision-making, with women mostly confined to the domestic sphere and men controlling the access and activity profiles in terms of land access and labour use in most agricultural based societies. These are important issues in an analysis of how the displacement of the men and women at Chigwizi affects their livelihoods and capability as farmers.

In order to understand the complexity of the issues surrounding biofuel production in Zimbabwe, it should be borne in mind that the fast track land reform led to the occupation of farms by men and women settlers from various communal areas. This was also the case in southern Zimbabwe where Nuanetsi Ranch was also occupied by the settlers. A point to note is that during the occupation of Nuanetsi Ranch, the government of that time did not condemn the action of the settlers due to the policy and legal prescriptions which emphasised notions of correcting historical and colonial injustices. However, due to the lack of policy clarity in January 2010, it was announced that the government had crafted a policy that recognised the illegality of the settlers at Nuanetsi Ranch. The policy became a bone of contention with regards to the displacement of the settlers since the various actors involved in policy processes — the provincial land committee; the district land committee; the Mwenezi Development Trust; and the government — did not formally engage the settlers in the negotiation process.

However, the position surrounding the settlers' displacement and livelihoods should also be viewed within the politics of terminology and definitions. Scoones *et al* (2010) term them 'informal settlers' as they occupy land which has controversial overtones with regard to resettlement during the fast track programme and they also lack offer letters which serve as evidence of land ownership in the post fast track land reform phase. The government did not want to accord them the offer letters as the land reform programme has legality deficiencies. The settlers are confined to the land without formal recognition by the government. This leads the settlers to be recognised and addressed as 'informal' within the Zimbabwean land law system; I beg to differ, the settlers occupied this land in 2000, which is the same as what happened on most commercial farms in Zimbabwe. Labelling the men and women informal settlers creates a need to understand how changes in the economic, political and social climate, includes these men and women as beneficiaries of the land reform programme.

The then government did not oppose the settlement of the communities at Nuanetsi (on the 15 July 2000) when the fast track land reform programme officially commenced in Zimbabwe. It also led to the problem that ten years after land reform in Zimbabwe we still cannot categorise the settlers as informal as they have already established systematic and permanent agricultural livelihoods. Zimbabwe does not have a formal displacement law which advises on how land beneficiaries, who face eviction from land after fast track land reform should be dealt with, which makes it difficult to talk about a formalised, coherent and coordinated displacement of settlers from land under conflict, such as Nuanetsi Ranch. However, in order to deal with this complex situation, the government decided to resettle the settlers in another part of the province, which forms part of the Tokwe River in Mwenezi. The government has said that the settlers have to move to this new land expeditiously. However, there are no clear cut parameters as to how the new land resettlement process will take place.

These events can be viewed as forced displacement by the government, which encouraged the men and women to settle on that land in 2000. The outcomes of this displacement have compromised the right to livelihood, the right to land and the right to sustainable human development of these men and women because they have not been given any voice in the matter, which is being regulated by the government. I conclude by suggesting that the biopolitics² —

² I define bio politics as referring to the economic, socio, technological and political aspects that a government considers in regulating its governing style of its citizens.

rooted in the creation of a Zimbabwean bio-economy which has been defined as an economy based on ecologically sensitive products and services produced by technology and renewable energy sources (World Biotechnology Report 2008) — has had rather negative consequences on the land based livelihoods of the men and women at Chigwizi. This has also compromised the gendered livelihoods of settlers at Chigwizi village, with women being more disadvantaged as they have difficulties with land access and utilisation in rural Zimbabwe, which is based on male primogeniture, political and cultural considerations. Policy makers should craft gender transformative policies in agro-fuel projects that do not jeopardise the livelihoods of agriculturally based communities, especially in cases where land reform is justified in terms of distributional justice. A gender analysis of displacement, biofuels and rural livelihoods increases our understanding of land reform in the light of the political, economic and social forces shaping rural societies.

2 Methodology and description of study area

Data for this study was based on ethnography. It should be noted that ethnography is partly a science and partly humanism. As a science, it requires detailed on the ground observations. In terms of humanism, it is based on the premise that observations are mediated by the intuitive researcher. Insights were generated through immersion in data and a re-evaluation of all experiences, buttressed with the case study approach.

I was a resident at Merrivale farm, 40km from Nuanetsi Ranch from April 2009–August 2010. I had to clear myself with the provincial and district authorities — which involved many negotiations — as Nuanetsi is currently under government protection. This allowed me to engage in participant observation and I could interact with the members of the Chigwizi village in a more direct way. I undertook an in-depth study of 20 households. In terms of social differentiation, the households comprised of either: female headed households, due to either death of the husband or the husband working in South Africa; male headed households, in which a wife was present; or single women headed households, where the women had never been married or had been divorced. The social differentiation of the households was important in the study as it helped express the views of men and women, who are not a homogenous group, in their conceptualisation of the energy project at Nuanetsi. Their conceptualisation of the project was also not homogenous in terms of: understanding the differential impacts of the displacement; their ultimatum to move out of the area; and how they now viewed the ruling elites with regards to the displacement of the land they had successfully acquired during the land reform process in 2000. It also helped in my understanding of how the control and activity profiles, with regards to land use by the men and women at the village, was understood by the villagers themselves.

I spent six months in the village, working with the men and women so that I could understand the family management systems of land; the crops grown; other livelihood systems; and how they viewed the biofuel project as either a threat or a positive attribute in their community. This was done within the period February 2010–August 2010. In-depth interviews were conducted with the senior civil servants in Mwenezi district which comprised: the office of the district administrator; the forestry commission; and the Environmental Management Agency. I also conducted in-depth interviews with the local men and women resident in Chigwizi village. I had the opportunity to interact with nongovernmental organisation officials from Care International and the Netherlands Development Cooperation (SNV Netherlands). This enabled me to understand how the biofuel project at Nuanetsi Ranch was being understood by these various actors and how the issue of displacement was viewed in the light of rural livelihoods.

Focus group discussions were also central to this study. The participants were divided into three groups: a stand-alone women's group; a men's group; and a mixed group that constituted both men and women. In these group interviews I was able to dwell upon how displacement affected the men and women; the gender roles of the respondents; the politics of resettlement; and the solutions they had worked on to ensure that they would not be displaced. I was also able to discern the nature of tenure arrangements that existed amongst most of the men and women. This helped in broadening my reflections on the issue of livelihoods and gender differences. Multi-stakeholder conferences and meetings in the district also helped me gain more information on the land and biofuel issues in Mwenezi. I analysed the data using the coding process, where themes that emerged from the data sources were built and numbered on small cards. Revisiting the interviews; responses from focus group discussions; and my observations of this community, led to the development of the themes, which became the guiding premise in the writing of this paper.

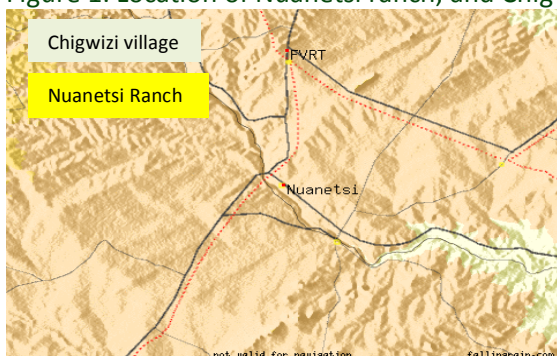
Nuanetsi ranch is located in Mwenezi East in the Southern part of Zimbabwe, in Masvingo Province, 3km from the Chirundu-Beitbridge R1 highway which connects Zambia, Zimbabwe and South Africa. It is approximately 500m from the Mwenezi Rural District Council, where the offices of the district administrator; environmental management agency; the Ministry of Constitutional Affairs; and the district agricultural extension are located. Nuanetsi is situated in ward thirteen and covers more than 376 995ha of land (Mwenezi district files, February 2010), which constitutes more

than 1% of Zimbabwe's total land area. Nuanetsi Ranch was the biggest cattle ranch in Zimbabwe until 2000, when the land reform process led to the occupation of some parts of the ranch. It was the biggest supplier of beef to the Cold Storage Commission of Zimbabwe, the leading state run beef marketing company. Nuanetsi is located between agro-ecological regions (iv & v), with a mean annual rainfall of between 450mm–650 mm per annum (Meteorological office files, Rutenga, April 2009); it is one of the driest and hottest areas in Zimbabwe. Chigwizi village, situated in the southern part of Nuanetsi Ranch, was an informal settlement used by settlers as a model for the A1 villagised farming settlements, after fast track land reform.

The A1 resettlement scheme is characterised by the settlers each having 6ha of arable farming land and 30ha–50ha of common grazing lands. The A2 scheme consists of the indigenous, medium commercial farming that has replaced the large scale commercial farming that existed before fast track land reform. The area became known as Chigwizi village in August 2000, when villagers from Chivi, Maranda, Lundi, Neshuro, Matibi, Gold star and Chiredzi communal areas moved onto the farm during the fast track land reform. There are 232 settlers (population files of settlers at Chigwizi village) that presently occupy the part of Nuanetsi Ranch that has become known as Chigwizi village. Chigwizi is characterised by red alluvial soils, black soil and white sand soils. The settlers' homesteads form the nuclear settlement pattern of households based on the concept of the village book (*mubhuku rekwa Chigwizi*), under a village head. The British, under indirect colonial administration, affected the concept of the village book so that it would be easier to know the number of households in a village for tax collection purposes. It has continued today as a system for local village governance and is important as a land monitoring and controlling mechanism in the new resettlement areas. This concept was used in the village as a way of creating order during the fast track process and also to establish the number of the settlers in each village, so that when registering the land, it would be known who occupied a certain plot of land. There was also need to create a local governance structure in the new resettlement areas.

Chigwizi shares borders with Mwenezana Estate and Uswaushava, an informal settlement within Nuanetsi on the Chiredzi side. Uswaushava is in the northern sphere of the farm (Scoones et al 2010)³. The ranch is protected by the state, aided by police officers, soldiers and security guards; in order to enter the ranch one is subjected to heavy searching and formal clearing procedures. It is currently being run by the Mwenezi Development Trust of Zimbabwe, an indigenous organisation, in conjunction with a consortium of former white commercial farmers and one individual, Billy Rautenbach⁴. These actors have formed the Zimbabwe Bio-energy Company, whose vice-chairman is Dr Liberty Mhlanga. The biofuel deal involves various high-level political and economic stakeholders in Zimbabwe, whose position in the land deal has not really been exposed to the public; which has led to the tensions that exist between male and female settlers and the various institutions involved in the push for the displacement of the farmers. The area has savannah vegetation which is mainly composed of riverine forests, Misasa and Marula trees. A railway line connects Nuanetsi with Rutenga and is currently under construction to enable sugar production in the 2011 harvesting period. The aerial photograph shows the location of Nuanetsi ranch, and Chigwizi village:

Figure 1: Location of Nuanetsi ranch, and Chigwizi village



Source: Environmental Office, Mwenezi Rural District Council, Mwenezi, September, 2010

³ These authors have also provided a rich explanation about how the Nuanetsi ranch has been a controversial entity in the Southern part of Zimbabwe's land reform.

⁴ It has always been argued that Billy Rautenbach is the largest shareholder in the Zimbabwe bio-energy project. He has also acquired land in the Chisumabanje area where he is growing sugar cane for biofuels. This has been done through partnerships with the government and other individual actors.

3 Livelihood configurations at Chigwizi

The settlers at Chigwizi village are semi-subsistence farmers, who depend on rain-fed agriculture. They grow cotton, maize, ground nuts, Bambara nuts, sorghum and sun flowers. Women mainly farm groundnuts and Bambara nuts, while men dominate cotton and maize farming. The settlers also keep cattle, donkeys and goats. Men own most of the cattle, while women own mostly poultry; five women in the study sample owned cattle, which were gifted to them by sons-in-law as a sign of appreciation to the mothers for giving birth and looking after their wives. This is known in the Shona tradition as *mombe yeumai*. Cattle tending is done by men, women and the youth, depending who is available at home, and on the seasons. Women normally look after cattle during the dry season when they go to fetch water for household use. They also take the cattle to the watering points, especially when children are at school.

Some households employ male labourers to look after their cattle, but most labour on the plots is family based, although some also hire labour to help pick and pack cotton in bales before selling it to private contract buyers or the state owned Cotton Company of Zimbabwe depot at Ngundu growth point. However, as the settlers are located on the ranch, they also rely on legally prohibited game hunting game, though the fauna is strictly protected by ranch guides. The villagers always evade the security guards and park officials who protect the wildlife in the ranch.

The male settlers have crafted their livelihoods through hunting, which demonstrates the multi-dimensional land use of the farm. Because it is not only agricultural activities that sustain them, the farmers are currently opposed to the idea of being resettled at the area north of the Tokwe River. Livelihood niches are also carved through circular migration to South Africa, Botswana or Mozambique; women are involved in circular migration to these countries to sell ground nuts, Bambara nuts, baskets and mopane worms. Men also migrate to South Africa, mostly during the off farming season, to work in construction jobs or to sell artefacts manufactured out of wood. Remittances from these livelihood international trips enable the men and women to buy farming implements, purchase food and pay for school fees. In some households, children are involved in migration, particularly the young men, whose wives stay at home to help with farming activities; upon marrying, most of the sons would have been given a field of their own by their parents. Scoones *et al* (1996) observed that livelihood portfolios in southern Zimbabwe are dichotomised along gender lines. Women are mainly involved with vegetable gardens, while men are engaged in livelihood options that require more capital.

4 Conceptual frame

The gender analysis matrix is essential to understanding the complexities surrounding Zimbabwe's biofuel production, displacement and gender based livelihoods in Mwenezi, since it emphasises the activity and control profiles in relation to how men and women cope with the everyday challenges of access, control and threats to land use. Thomas-Slayter (1993) and Razavi (2009) point out that women's and men's responsibilities differ according to the specific situations which guide their living environment. Circumstances are shaped by household governance, environment, occupation, class, culture, national history, religion and legal structures. These issues are juxtaposed with the frameworks of sustainable livelihoods; policy science theories, centred on the politics of public policymaking; and the gender analysis of land based livelihoods in Zimbabwe. Land access and use is difficult for men and women, given it being such a highly politicised sphere in Zimbabwe. The sustainable livelihoods framework aims to give men and women access to physical resources like land, in order to create other livelihood options and achieve livelihood security.

Thomas-Slayter (1993), Moser & Moser (2005), Nemarundwe (2003), and Tsikata & Golah (2010) note that gender analysis serves as the basis for understanding the control and activity profiles of land-based livelihoods. Gender analysis can be used to ensure that men and women are not disadvantaged by development activities to enhance the sustainability and effectiveness of activities or identify priority areas for action to promote equality between women and men. During implementation, monitoring and evaluation, gender analysis assists to assess differences in participation, benefits and impacts between males and females, including progress towards gender equality and changes in gender relations — economic and social relationships between males and females are constructed and reinforced by social institutions. I use this frame in the broader sense to understand issues of social differentiation, class, ethnicity and activity and control profiles in managing land acquisition in an era of biofuel production. The men and women under study were not a homogenous class as they had different resource bases and placed themselves in different class categories. Men believed they had a superior class position to women — based on men's outright land ownership and user rights which most women did not have. Notions of gender-based discrimination tend to fuel ethnic and class tensions and affect land access. The control function in a rural society should be understood with regard to how resources are shared, owned and distributed. Women are mostly not part of the negotiating process, and this leads to their disadvantaged position in accessing land, compared to men, who are in charge of the

institutions that regulate land access and are also involved in the making and remaking of customary norms in order to continue having a foothold in land access and tenure security issues.

Men and women have different needs and these are reflected differently in the way they carve out their livelihood styles. Accessing of resources by men and women depends on a plethora of factors that are rooted mostly in cultural considerations; however, at times their livelihoods can both be threatened by unavoidable issues such as displacement, which tends to affect them in similar ways, but affects mostly women since they have to carry out the roles of production and reproduction, and engage in other livelihood options and pathways in order to ensure food security and feed their families (Makura-Paradza 2010), even in situations of land uncertainty.

Izumi (1999) reports that land should be understood in terms of gender, ethnicity and class interests, and this requires one to understand the dynamics surrounding African land based management structures rooted in colonial legacies, and how this has affected formal and informal functionality. These systems have had an impact on the capability of women to access land, and have, in a way, promoted men's access to land at a faster pace than that of women. The ethnicisation of land is a constant phenomenon in African land holding systems and affects women's land rights as women do not play a central role in land adjudication processes. The concept of 'tenure' is a social construct that defines the relationships between individuals and groups of individuals, in which rights and obligations are defined with respect to control and use of land (Economic Commission for Africa 2004). The social construction and reconstruction of land tenure has given men more power and authority over land rights than women. The different structures used to coordinate men and women's access to land tend to be gender blind, and hence the need to create liberalised gender institutions at national and local levels. In Zimbabwe, parallel structures have existed side by side with the formal structures in order to regulate the land and displacement of settlers at Chigwizi. However, these institutions have demonstrated the overlaps that exist in their functions. This leads to the need to re-examine the concepts of formal and informal institutions in the Zimbabwe biofuel agenda in relation to gendered livelihoods, displacement and the politics of public policy making.

Gender analysis, in terms of this work, is important because it exposes the daily realities and perceptions of how men and women who depend on land in rural areas are affected by changes in government policy, which have been influenced by large scale agro fuel projects that involve the need to acquire large tracts of land. The methodology used reveals the potentially different effects of applied research on women or men; which can often be masked or obscured. When gender is explicitly considered in biofuel research, previously hidden implications of the effects of biofuel production on the lives of men and women come to light. Gender analysis challenges the assumption that men and women are affected by displacement and land access in the same way, regardless of their situation.

5 Gendered impacts of land acquisition and settlement at Chigwizi

The gender lens is important because biofuel expansion implies rapid growth in cash/export crop production, where men tend to dominate and women lag behind. The men and women who settled at Chigwizi in Nuanetsi ranch acquired plots of land during the fast track land reform programme, using various land acquisition mechanisms, with mostly men coming to Muzhanjire base⁵. Mwenezi East's land reform base was run by the war veterans⁶, who strategised on which farms to permanently settle, while other public members of different communities assembled at the base. At these bases, while men and women were both involved in land acquisition, men occupied the organisational roles, while women were mainly mobilisers of other women in communal areas, cooks and singers at the base (roles women dominate even during the liberation struggle of Zimbabwe). There were differences with regards to plot acquisition because some women acquired land as individuals for example, war veterans and other ordinary women, but they were less than 10% in Mwenezi East district (Scoones *et al* 2010 & Matondi 2011), compared to men, who emerged as the largest group of beneficiaries of the fast track land acquisition process. The following case study demonstrates how a male settler at Chigwizi acquired his current plot of land at Nuanetsi:

⁵ This was the central point of a land reform organisation. A register of participants was kept, and the war veterans and other prominent Zimbabwe African National Patriotic Front (ZANU PF members) organised the villagers and led them to the farms that they gazetted for acquisition under land reform. Various acquisition methods were used by the people in selecting the farms for resettlement in Mwenezi East. The land acquisition strategy at Muzhanjire base has been critically discussed in Mutopo (2012).

⁶ These are the men and women who joined the liberation struggle of Zimbabwe before 1962 and fought against white colonial domination, which later led to Zimbabwe's independence in 1980. For a deeper analysis on the role of war veterans and the war veterans as a social movement during the fast track land reform, see Moyo and Peros (2005) and Sadomba (2008).

Box 1: Accessing land at Chigwizi Nuanetsi by a male settler

Mr X, 45 years old and married with four children, came to Chigwizi, Nuanetsi in 2000 and has been farming on the land since then. He is originally from Gold Star, in Neshuro communal area. He participated in the taking over of farms as he was a war collaborator (*mujibha*) during the war of liberation:

'We moved to Muzhanjire base in January 2000, after we were told by Mr S that we had to take over white farms. I left my family at our home, where my wife had to continue with the farming activities as I joined the war of land acquisition, since the land in my home was no longer productive and I needed a bigger portion of land to grow more cotton and ground nuts. At Muzhanjire we were taught about the reasons of taking the land, the strategies to use, and I was one of the people tasked with mobilising people from my own community in joining the rush for land. In April 2000, I went with other community members and I was assigned a portion of an A1 plot at Nuanetsi Ranch by the other war veterans. I do not have the offer letter as proof that it is my land. This area was not being used for anything and it is far from the Nuanetsi administration and activities. I started clearing the land and built three pole and daggas huts. By August 2000, I had finished and the government officially told us to stay permanently on the land. I went home and permanently moved here with my family and my old mother, whom I look after. It only came to my attention end of February 2010 that the government said that we had wrongly settled on the land and we had to be resettled in the North of Tokwe dam. Why now after all these years? This is what my family knows as home and I had started building more huts.'

Field notes, May 2010.

This case study demonstrates how the process of land acquisition during the land reform programme was organised. Mr X built a permanent home and engaged in agricultural production at an A1 farm, where he had more land than at his previous communal home but where the land was less productive; his desire was to have more agro-productive land that could sustain his farming operations. Ten years later, it comes to light that Mr X had to vacate the land because he acquired it illegally. To him the land symbolised his historical heritage and was a livelihood resource. Because he was asked to move away from the land, he questions the motive of the fast track land reform process, which he sees as a way of pushing the poor out of the new land and into further land poverty. Hammar *et al* (2003) and Marongwe (2008), argue that the land reform programme was about entrenching the political power base of ZANU PF after the 'No' vote in the constitutional referendum of 2000. ZANU PF realised that it was losing power and so land became its campaigning tool, and the citizenry, especially in the communal areas, welcomed this development as a way of climbing out of the web of poverty and creating a new farming livelihood system, based on virgin land. The goal of winning the election was then achieved and hence, this could possibly explain a shift the land use policy direction. The displacement of Mr X and his family reflects that the livelihood security he had created through his new farm was short-lived due to the biofuels project now taking centre stage. The settlers were not part of the government process of decision-making, when it decided to move the men and women at Chigwizi.

Box 2: Widowed woman settler under threat of losing livelihood sources when displaced

Mrs Z is 62 years old. When her husband, who was active in politics, had been at Muzhanjire base since its inception and acquired an A1 plot of land, she had remained behind in Maranda communal areas where they had their home. She came to Chigwizi in September 2000. Her husband died in 2004 after a long illness. When they moved to the new farm, they gave their old communal home in Maranda to one of their sons, since they now had more virgin land and more pasture for their cattle. Since 2000, she has farmed on this land growing cotton, maize, ground nuts and round nuts and keeps cattle, goats and donkeys. She stays on the farm with two of her young children who still attend school, and four grandchildren. The six older ones have gone to South Africa, where they work as farm labourers. 'They only send money and food once in a while'. With the issue of displacement she is facing, she is very worried as she does not know what will happen to her and the children.

'I feel very much afraid and do not know who will help me build new huts, how I will relocate and whether I will not lose the property and livestock that I have acquired at the farm during the past years that we have stayed at Chigwizi. I feel that the government should have been considerate and allowed us to continue staying on the farm since this is the only home that I now know and have.'

Her livelihood security is under threat as it is still not clear whether they are being moved to a new farm or to the communal areas north of the Tokwe River.

'I wish that my husband was alive and we could help each other. Being alone, I feel more let down by the government and helpless. I am afraid of going to Maranda because people there want the property that my husband left, the cattle, donkeys and other assets. I know they still want to grab this property forgetting that I am alive and I have children who also need the wealth.'

This displacement does not only affect men at Chigwizi, it also affects women, who are already more vulnerable to land disputes under the regulation of customary law⁷ and male brotherhood in land matters, which always overrides codified Roman Dutch law in Zimbabwe. At Chigwizi, most women are more vulnerable to land displacement than men as they lack a strong voice for objecting; cultural norms emphasise total subjugation to male authority in land and family law affairs. At Chigwizi, these different categories of women are more vulnerable to displacement as some of them are too old to build other homes for themselves or lack the resources because they are being looked after either by their sons or daughters. Women in most African societies pool cash resources for family sustenance, unlike men, who are at liberty to use their financial resources without answering to any one; women have to be answer to their husbands or other male guardians. For the past decade, Chigwizi women have made their livelihoods from agriculture, but now, with their removal to another dry area north of the Tokwe River, their sustainability is under threat. The following case study clearly demonstrated the lived realities of an elderly woman settler:

Box 3: Land acquired through inheritance

Mrs Z acquired land through inheritance, which raises difficult user rights dimensions, since the family of the husband and her sons might also have interests in acquiring the land, rendering her land security situation shaky. This case serves as evidence that widowed women are more vulnerable to being displaced in communities according to the Victorian ideology which strongly influences Zimbabwean rural societies. For Mrs Z, it is not only livelihood security that is under threat, but also the sense of belonging and being part of a community. Izumi (2006) has pointed out that after fast track land reform, livelihoods have been compromised, and widowed women face the most adverse discrimination as they really do not know how to solve their predicament in the currently volatile and malfunctioning state judiciary in Zimbabwe. The widow at Chigwizi is facing imminent displacement, which has already been approved by the government, affecting her socially and psychologically. She is also afraid of her former community, which comprises her husband's family, who might grab the property she has acquired, based on the pretext that it is their late brother's or relative's property. This leads her to being more vulnerable as she has to deal with complex social arrangements that are categorised as part of culture and can lead to the loss of her livelihood assets. These societal arrangements are regulated by men through family informal courts (*dare remusha*) where they are approved by the elder male members of the family.

The policy of displacement, of the people at Chigwizi, for the biofuel project does not take into account the political, economic and social trajectories that displaced women, particularly widows and single women who are the social and economic coordinators of their homes in an ever changing environment. The women also feel that the displacement has not been human-centred; it further entrenches them in the pit of poverty, and kills the livelihood security they have known on their farms since 2000. Daley (2010) notes that in Zambia, displacement of communities for biofuel production, affected women negatively as they had to walk long distances in the new settlement area to search for markets, and they struggled to revitalise their land economies, which were destroyed, thus further entrenching the women in poverty.

Several NGOs' officials echoed that

... the removal of the families from the current land will pave way for new land conflicts because the community to which the farmers are being moved to is perhaps overcrowded. There is need for careful handling of the issue ...

Interviews: Officials from Care International Mwenezi District and SNV Netherlands Development Cooperation.

This reflects the fact that the displacement of the men and women at Chigwizi can lead to new high level land related conflicts that can affect the whole province if the issue is not solved amicably between both parties. Women provide labour on most of the farms, and, as such, even during moments of displacement they are overburdened because they

⁷ In *Magaya v Magaya* (ZLR) 1999, Venia Magaya could not inherit her father's communal home and the house in Harare because she was a woman. A lower court had ruled that she had a right to her father's property but the decision was challenged by the brother in the supreme Court. The Supreme Court ruled that Venia had no right to the inheritance of the property, and therefore the judges, all in the brotherhood of customary law, said the brother was the heir to the estate. Tsanga (1999) provides a critical analysis of this case on a livelihood and rights based premise.

have to provide alternate food baskets for their family in the new areas as well as walking long distances to access water and other forest products; hence investing a lot of time in household management activities.

It is important to take note of the complex gender social settings that different categories of women face, and within which gendered access to land is constantly negotiated within households and communities as part of the conjugal contracts that exist within communities, as part of negotiations around customary laws and living laws. O'Laughlin (2008); Whitehead (2007); and Tsikata & Golah (2010), have all pointed out that the complex scenarios that exist in agrarian settings should be understood in the light of the hidden dimensions of women's lives that are constantly reshaped by living laws that are meant to give men more power and authority over land acquisition and agricultural production. Whether women happen to be married, young, old or widowed, they still face the customary systems that affect their land based livelihoods; compared to men, who are better able to manoeuvre because they are also part of the male brotherhood that shapes societal norms.

In the interviews, focus group discussions and my personal observations at Chigwizi, the men and women expressed dissatisfaction as they felt let down by the same government that had encouraged them to settle on the farm and was now going against its own policy of land reform.

We are so powerless about this displacement that is meant to pave way for the sugar cane and crocodile farming. Giving space to crocodiles is not fair.

Reaction by Mr and Mrs R, during a visit to their home, August 2010.

People felt the animals were being prioritised over their day to day lives, which were grounded in farming and much more important than the bio-energy project, which would only benefit those directly involved in the project. However the officials from the bio-energy project have pointed out that:

(T)he settlers have to moved to the north of Tokwe River where 60ha of land for their resettlement has been set aside.

Lilian Muungani, Public Relations Manager, Zimbabwe Bio Energy Project, Sunday Mail, 7 February 2010.

In as much as the villagers are against their displacement, they will not be able to continue settling at Chigwizi because The Zimbabwe Bio-Energy Company, being an indigenously owned company, has the right to acquire the present land occupied by the settlers. This right was codified by the government and major political actors in their bid to create a biofuel plantation at Nuanetsi in the late 1990s and was revitalised in 2008 when the company came into partnership with other individual actors. The aim has been to create a viable biofuel company to the benefit of other investors and other Zimbabweans; however it is only the elite who form part of this indigenisation drive as they enjoy more of benefits. The benefits do not trickle down to the poor rural men and women in these communities where the indigenisation drives are meant to be undertaken.

Ordinary rural men and women at Chigwizi were left out of the policy equation, contradicting the government policy on indigenisation. Lahiff (2003:3) notes that

Zimbabwe is seen as the exceptional case in southern Africa, the country that has succeeded in putting radical land reform back on the political agenda, an anachronistic revival of socialist intervention, but will it survive in a capitalist world?

Kinsey (1999) describes policy considerations about poverty alleviation and redistributive justice in the resettlement programmes as being diluted over time. Kinsey's assertion now applies in the post fast track resettlement phase. Scoones *et al* (2010:169) have noted that 'Nuanetsi remains a very controversial area, given the investments that have been done (*sic*) by notorious Billy Rautenbach, a fugitive businessman with strong connections with ZANU PF elite.' The role of political elites in the displacement of the farmers at Nuanetsi ranch is also clearly brought out. Scoones *et al* (2010) clearly describes the role of political elites in the displacement of farmers at Nuanetsi Ranch. It is still too early to evaluate the post displacement resettlement process to the North of Tokwe River since it is still in progress, and more modalities are being put in place by the various actors concerned in the biofuel project.

6 Biofuel activities of the Zimbabwe Bio Energy Project at Nuanetsi

The Nuanetsi Ranch is currently involved in the production of sugar cane, with irrigation mechanisms and refurbishment already under construction. There are also crocodiles, a large herd of beef cattle, and the construction of tourism chalets currently underway at the ranch. This is evidence of the agro and biofuel production, animal husbandry and tourism ventures that are meant to be part of the land use.

Corporate social responsibility leads to the undermining of people's livelihoods, particularly in cases where men and women feel attached to the land and face displacement. The Zimbabwe Bio-Energy Company has developed a people centred development plan, but it still has negative impacts on the everyday lives of the men and women farmers whose right to livelihood and land is jeopardised. The energy company is increasingly becoming more powerful and self-regulating; as such land appropriation will escalate to even higher levels. The development of the programme requires vast amounts of land; this actually affects the resettled families at Chigwizi as they will have to give up their land, because there have been no formal discussions with them. It has mainly been a top-down approach where the policy makers informed the public about what was going to happen. Zimbabwean society has not embraced the bottom-up policy process; policies still emanate from the 'black box', where only the elites have an idea of what is happening in the policy process. My analysis is based on the systems theory of the policy making process. The 'black box' is usually in the administrative centre of the state in which rural people will never have a chance to participate. This makes it difficult for them to negotiate their livelihood outcomes, as the policy making process is not consultative. Herbst (1993), points out that in Zimbabwe, although the state talks of decentralisation, the policy making process is centralised. Investment laws always favour those who have knowledge of the law, and in Zimbabwe, the law has not really been taken to the people when it comes to the issue of biofuel regulatory mechanisms. The World Bank Report (2010) on rising interest in farmland and biofuels has been criticised for lack of a clear analysis of gendered livelihoods and how bio-energy production impacts negatively on men and women who rely on land based livelihoods.

Box 4: Nuanetsi Ranch's land investment, biofuels and development in Mwenezi

The vice-chairman of the Development Trust of Zimbabwe board, who is one of the shareholders in ZBE, Dr Liberty Mhlanga, said that the company would diversify into crocodile farming, cattle breeding and wildlife. As part of the package by ZBE, Dr Mhlanga said there were plans to create Africa's largest crocodile rearing project at Nuanetsi, which when at full throttle, would be home to over 600 000 crocodiles that would be processed mainly for the export market. 'Besides production of sugar cane, we also have an interest in crocodile rearing and the breeding ponds are being built at Nuanetsi. At the moment, we have between 60 000 to 70 000 crocodiles and we hope to increase the figure to over half a million. ZBE is also into beef rearing and wildlife farming and at the moment we have over 500 buffaloes for our wildlife programme,' said Dr Mhlanga. ZBE at the moment has in stock over 100 000 crocodiles in artificial breeding ponds out of which 1 000 of them are already ready for harvesting. The firm has also constructed an artificial river course, which is home to nearly 700 crocodile artificial breeders at the moment. As part of its long-term plans, ZBE has also expressed a keen interest in raising finance for the construction of Runde-Tende Dam. The company has undertaken to complete the construction of the stalled giant, Tokwe-Murkosi Dam which is to supply irrigation water for at least 100 000ha of cane to make sugar and bio-fuels.

Recorded from Political Leaders meeting, Masvingo, March 2010

Biofuel projects are seen as a positive development which warrants the removal of the families at Chigwizi. However, the men and women at Chigwizi feel that the developments must not lead to their displacement, but that rather the settlers and the company should share the land together. The tenure arrangement of land sharing between the government and the settlers is not an option as the Zimbabwe Bio-Energy Company's public relations spokespersons clearly point out, 'These families settled illegally on Nuanetsi in the hope that the ranch would be acquired for resettlement. However Nuanetsi is an indigenously owned property belonging to DTZ, which was owned by Joshua Nkomo until 2000, when he died.'⁸ This demonstrates that the policy of displacing the settlers could affect more farms in the near future as the government is redrawing its policy boundaries in terms of land acquisition and land use, as evidenced by the Chigwizi case. A new government policy has been initiated, which centres on the illegality of settlers at Nuanetsi Ranch and their removal in order to pave the way for biofuel production. The policy document has not been in the public eye, but it blames the settlers for illegally occupying the land. This compromises the land entitlement of the men and women as they have no formal title to land and will eventually be displaced to pave way for biofuels, deeply affecting their land based livelihoods.

⁸ Ms Lilian Muungani, Zimbabwe Bio Energy Public Relations Manager (Chiremba 2010).

7 Gender and the politics of biofuel concession making

The concession making process with regards to biofuels is surrounded by political considerations that have an overall effect on the outcome of the actual treaties enforcing biofuel production in Zimbabwe. Concessions with various actors have been made in order to allow large companies, such as the Mwenezi Development Trust, to engage in biofuels production. The government has announced that the settlers have to be removed and resettled in other 'uncontested lands' in the area. This doctrine of eminent domain is itself contested, as it raises the classical controversies of the power that the state yields in terms of development over men, women and their livelihoods (Nhantumbo & Salamao 2010). I define development induced displacement as: the forcing of communities and individuals out of their land, homes and often their homelands, for the purposes of economic development⁹. It is important to note that the women and men at Nuanetsi Ranch pointed out that they were never consulted by the government or district officials about the land being acquired by the government. This leads to Anderson's (1999) assertion that, public policies are purposive courses of action that governments will undertake in dealing with a problem. It became visible to the people at Nuanetsi that the provincial land committee and the district land committee had agreed that the families were living on land that was not supposed to be used for human habitation, when this was pointed out by the district officials. The following focus group responses from Nuanetsi men and women in June–August 2010 demonstrate the villagers' reactions regarding consultation on their displacement and the treaty inception of their removal at Chigwizi village:

We were never consulted that the land had been given to other white people in conjunction with the government. This has been the land of our ancestors and we should have been at least notified. We have just been given an ultimatum to move away from this farm.

Mr X.

It is painful for us because the government is the one that allowed us to settle here. Now a few years down the line we are being forcibly removed to pave way for development. What kind of development affects the indigenous owners of land?

Mr K.

I am not happy because we as villagers were never invited to Masvingo, Mwenezi district council, or Harare to negotiate our fate. It has been a unilateral decision from above.'

Mrs M.

'It is unfair because we have not been part of the concession making and so why should we move? Those who are coming should be taken to that land.'

Mrs C.

'The gains of the third chimurenga (land reform) are being compromised again with these concessions. We now have to move because of the concession without our voices being considered.'

Mr R.

Concession making has always been the domain of the political elites; rural men and women were never given a chance to be part of the process of negotiating the treaty outcomes. Concessions (*chibvumirano*) exist in most African communities, but in the case of Nuanetsi, the villagers were never exposed to the negotiations about their displacement. Negotiations were held between the high level political incumbents, demonstrating how difficult it is to separate concession making and politics in biofuel production. The state's multiple and contradictory interests are mainly within the ambit of economic and political aggrandisement, which will lead to financial gains, without taking into account the effects of the displacement on livelihoods of the men and women who are settled at the land. In 2008, President Robert Mugabe, held a rally in Mwenezi East and promised the settlers that they would not be removed from the land, but a year later the settlers saw massive construction and refurbishment in Nuanetsi, which were signs that the biofuel project was now officially underway, and they could possibly be affected.

Scoones *et al* (2010) have pointed out that the settlers at Nuanetsi are in constant conflict with authorities from the Zimbabwe Bio Energy Company, who at times are accused of driving their cattle into the settlers' fields, which destroy

⁹ For further critical reflections on development induced displacement, such as the Mwenezi Development Trust, see Pablo Bose, *Development, Induced displacement and Participation* at www.ochr.org (accessed 25 September 2010).

their crops. The men and women interviewed also highlighted the fact that the government and the bio-energy company do not recognise the importance of their access to land and livelihoods; they are only concerned about their own development and not the self-development of the men and women who have been resident on the land since 2000. Nuanetsi is a politically contested area, where the politics of land and biofuel production is emerging as the primary consideration, rather than the residents' livelihoods. During the program and project design, gender analysis should be involved in the process of assessing the impact that a development activity may have on females and males. It is mainly women affected by developmental projects, as they are mostly confined to the private sphere, rather than men, who have other livelihood niches due to their greater capacity to engage within the public sphere.

The families have not even been promised any compensation for the homes they had already constructed:

We have not been told of any monetary or any other form of compensation with regards to the developments we have done on our plots. Even for the movement out of Chigwizi here in Nuanetsi to the new land. There is not any communication about transportation; it seems it is our own problem, yet someone up there created it.

Interview with Mrs M, Chigwizi Village, May 2010.

Such a desperate response serves as evidence that the community is aware that they will have to move to the new settlement area in the Tokwe Murkosi area, without any form of help, as the question of compensation has not been communicated to them. In cases of large scale agro-fuel investments, it is important for governments to develop gender-aware policies on biofuels so that imminent displacement does not raise emotions with regards to land, which is an emotive issue in Zimbabwe due to the political, historical and social trajectories which shaped its importance in society.

Land concessions are negotiated as a result of political processes, whether these are acknowledged or not. The outcomes are usually policies that affect the ordinary men and women who are not accorded the opportunity to negotiate for their livelihoods and wellbeing. The question of the bio productivity of the new farming area, to which the men and women farmers have been assigned, emerged as a critical factor that would affect the household food self-sufficiency, further driving the families into hunger and poverty.

We are very sure that we have been moved to the driest soils that are difficult to farm and require lots of fertilisers that we cannot afford. Here we have not been using any fertiliser but cow dung only.

Discussion with village head, August 2010.

Policy makers have a different view of the biofuel scheme at Nuanetsi ranch. The ZANU PF MP of Mwenezi East applauded the project as viable and improving the livelihoods of the villagers and a Zanu PF legislator said:

The people of Mwenezi fully support the bio-energy project because already we are beginning to see some benefits like employment for the locals. This district has not been able to record any meaningful investment since independence, so it is our hope that at last we might begin to appear on the Zimbabwean economic map,' said an apparently ecstatic Cde Bhasikiti. 'Indeed, I have every reason to be happy because, once it is fully operational, the bio-energy project has the potential to create a conurbation stretching from Masvingo city to Rutenga Growth Point, right in the Mwenezi hinterland and extending to engulf the Lowveld towns of Triangle and Chiredzi'. Once fully operational, the bio energy project would provide the missing impetus to Masvingo's economic engine which has been struggling to take-off the ground due to incessant choking by the inertia-induced forces that are attributed to lack of investment.

I argue that the elites' facilitated concessions with various actors that can harm the men and women who do not have the negotiating power to dispute the outcomes of the concessions due to a lack of appreciation of their rights as citizens to participate in development¹⁰. Policy makers are concerned with the creation of bio economies that will respond to the needs of the global world. The men and women at Chigwizi are not interested in the new bio economy

¹⁰ Article 2, Declaration on the Right to Development (1986): 'The human person is the central subject of development and should be the active participant and beneficiary of the right to development. It is the responsibility of states to ensure that national development programmes do not compromise the right to enjoy development of the citizens and their access to and use of natural resources.'

façade as it compromises their right to land, their sense of belonging and affects their food security¹¹ and food self-sufficiency needs¹². Cousins (2008: 3), notes that ‘control over land means not only control of productive resources, but also power over people’. In as much as the biofuel project will lead to infrastructural, tourism based development and the creation of jobs, these benefits will not trickle down to all the communities because such foreign based developments always lead to dual development. Matondi & Mutopo (2011) assert that, foreign direct investment in biofuel spaces has been seen as compromising and leading men and women, who rely on land based livelihoods, into further poverty as issues related to farmers’ rights and tenure rights are negotiated by the elites, who do not take the plight of the poor seriously in the policy process.

It is not just about resources, but also about how access to, and control over resources leads to the further entrenchment of unjust displacements, and impacts negatively on the livelihoods of men and women, especially in the Zimbabwean case, where most rural men and women feel that the land reform programme brought about independent use of land and a new ownership paradigm. Peters (2004) points out that processes of change are uneven and often contradictory in character, and frequently lead to the reassertion of the elite’s needs. What should be observed, is that alongside any change in society, there is often continuity when it comes to land use and administration arrangements that are determined by the quest for economic and political development, more often than not ignoring the social development of rural men and women's livelihoods.

Points of divergence between the affected men and women and the political actors reflect the power dynamics that often affect the poor in their fight for recognition in land related matters. Political elites view the bio-energy project as more viable than small-scale farming and carrying many comparative gains for the district; hence Matondi (2011) states that ‘It seems that access to higher political authorities provides leverage to manoeuvring the political land mine with regard to Zimbabwean land’. A cost benefit analysis has not been effectively applied in order to ascertain how the affected community feels about the project. Concessions can be entered into and satisfy a few, to the detriment of the greater number of men and women whose livelihoods depend on land, a key resource for development, sustainability and life. Differences in views between the villagers and the policy makers mostly create animosity, which can fuel violent conflict, if not managed properly.

Land governance has been one of the major challenges of the fast track land reform programme in Zimbabwe. The programme gave birth to a new land governance regime in Zimbabwe that has spilled into the current biofuel frenzy. Parallel structures have emanated, which are meant to further guide the juridical and political governance of the land issue. There has been an emergence of provincial land committees which are meant to deal with all land matters at the provincial level and whose representatives come from the civil service; the governor; provincial district administrator; the chiefs of the areas concerned; a representative from the Ministry of Gender and Youth Affairs; an official from the criminal investigation office; and senior war veterans in that particular province. This same composition applies to the district land committee which has popularly become known as ‘The Committee of Seven’. The task of these committees is to manage land relations within their jurisdictions and solve any land related disputes that involve settlers and other entities. Village heads have also emerged as a central point for land management and dispute resolution at the new farms. A gender analysis of the institutional governance reveals that land is a resource controlled by men, as evidenced by the institutional arrangements. This leads to complex social arrangements that affect most women in their quest to have secure land rights and livelihoods, as social engineering in land matters is heavily calculated and regulated by men.

At Chigwizi, the village head proved that he had not been given much authority in the issue concerning their eviction from their village:

I started hearing of it from other villagers, who said they got the information on the radio and later I was told that it was a possibility that we could be moved by the councillor. It is now clear after they had a meeting in Masvingo that we are going to leave this land and be settled elsewhere, but I have informed the villagers to fight for the land.

Interview with village head of Chigwizi, Mr K, June, 2010.

¹¹ Eide (2008:9) defines food security as the situation that exists when all people, at all times have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active healthy life.

¹² Here defined as the ability of a household to fulfil its food production needs based on its own ability to use the land and produce food without mishaps.

This reveals that the village head was not informed of the prior meetings and lacked knowledge on the displacement process. Wider historical trajectories of land, settlement, mobility and livelihoods form the basis of the new biofuel revolution in Zimbabwe. Land politics are always rooted in Machiavellian discourse in Zimbabwe; the powerful and strong wield the authority that leads to the final outcome. In as much as the institutions exist to manage land relations, they are dominated by the powerful elites, who always emerge as victors.

Thus, finding a political answer to these demands requires a deep understanding of the complex web of rights, claims, actors and institutions. These competing demands serve as evidence of how rural livelihoods can be undermined and negatively affected, as reflected by the men and women from Chigwizi, by what has been termed (Evers *et al* 2005) as 'competing jurisdictions.' Ntsebeza (2005) reinforces this argument in the South African context, where he points out that traditional leadership has always been contested, and has been, throughout its history, since the advent of colonialism dependent on the support of the state. It should be noted that the concept of the state in post-colonial Africa is constantly changing. Within the domain of land outsourcing and biofuel production, there has been much political, economic and social re-engineering of the concept of the state, particularly in Zimbabwe; this evokes new meanings and roles in the livelihoods of men and women at Chigwizi. The different actors, institutions and individuals all have different ways of dealing with the displacement of the men and women at Chigwizi, and this emanates from the different power bases they wield in land management. Even the Mwenezi district land committee has played a notable role in the displacement of the men and women.

We decided to move the families away from Nuanetsi because a commission of enquiry recommended that all the families who have settled at Chigwizi since 2000, and who are more than 2000 families within the whole ranch, be resettled elsewhere. We will start with the 232 families at Chigwizi. The land has already been identified where the families will be resettled.

Mr Z, Mwenezi District Lands Committee, February 2010.

This demonstrates how the different actors (institutional, formal, informal, individual, collective and national) adjudicated the displacement of the farmers at Chigwizi. Tensions exist between the government and the rural people from the Chigwizi village, where the people are still adamant not to move despite the directive from the government, due to land management and displacement.

8 Conclusion

The Zimbabwe Bio-Energy project, has led to a complexity of feelings amongst the men and women at Chigwizi. This reflects how public policies are whatever governments choose to do, or not to do. Questions of people's livelihoods, and their rights to economic, social and political issues are totally subjugated in favour of what is termed as 'development for the people and the state'.

Tenure security has not been dealt with sufficiently in the land reform discourse of Zimbabwe, in the light of the biofuel developments threatening the women and men's source of land based livelihoods, which affects them as they can be pushed out of the land willy-nilly. The majority of men and women in rural Zimbabwe depend on agriculture as a source of livelihood; loss of land negatively affects the livelihood of both actors. An analysis of the control and activity profiles in households reveal that women's land based livelihoods are affected more because they face structural discrimination in land access in most Zimbabwean communities. Livelihoods are about maintaining dignity and the right to sustainable development of individuals and communities. The men and women at Chigwizi, as evidenced by their perceptions, demonstrate that they feel that questions of identity, class, ethnicity and belonging, as Zimbabweans with rights to land, are being compromised by the politics of displacement and the need for multinational development by the government, whose policy model on land and agriculture is difficult to explain as it is characterised by elements of political and economic considerations that are not clear.

The political elites have been clearly seen as dominating the policy arena, where decisions about resource use are negotiated in the 'black box', where the rural men and women have no input in the policy process. Sustainable livelihoods can only be achieved if the farmers' rights are respected and displacement is negotiated with a pro-livelihood approach that is not a zero sum game, as evidenced by the Chigwizi case. Both men and women face notable effects of displacement but women are more vulnerable, especially the old and widowed, and they face the recent displacement developments differently. This is due to the customary norms and state led judicial notions that affect their access to, and use of land in terrain where competing jurisdictions exist in the allocation and management

of land in Mwenezi district. The fact that women are able to create other livelihood portfolios must not be seen as applying to all women and men; the widowed and old cannot straddle livelihoods involving farming and other activities due to lack of financial resources and aging. The young and middle aged women can combine farming and non-farming livelihoods, due to their capacity to enter the public sphere just like men, with the aim of livelihood diversification. They might be affected by the displacement less severely, but still face the same threats with regards to customary regulation of livelihoods. Biofuel as an alternative livelihood option in Zimbabwe needs rethinking on land administration; land institutions; tenure rights; and gender policies — which ought to be transformative and appreciative of men and women's livelihoods in a rural context.

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LDPI Working Paper Series

A convergence of factors has been driving a revaluation of land by powerful economic and political actors. This is occurring across the world, but especially in the global South. As a result, we see unfolding worldwide a dramatic rise in the extent of cross-border, transnational corporation-driven and, in some cases, foreign government-driven, large-scale land deals. The phrase 'global land grab' has become a catch-all phrase to describe this explosion of (trans)national commercial land transactions revolving around the production and sale of food and biofuels, conservation and mining activities.

The Land Deal Politics Initiative launched in 2010 as an 'engaged research' initiative, taking the side of the rural poor, but based on solid evidence and detailed, field-based research. The LDPI promotes in-depth and systematic enquiry to inform deeper, meaningful and productive debates about the global trends and local manifestations. The LDPI aims for a broad framework encompassing the political economy, political ecology and political sociology of land deals centred on food, biofuels, minerals and conservation. Working within the broad analytical lenses of these three fields, the LDPI uses as a general framework the four key questions in agrarian political economy: (i) who owns what? (ii) who does what? (iii) who gets what? and (iv) what do they do with the surplus wealth created? Two additional key questions highlight political dynamics between groups and social classes: 'what do they do to each other?', and 'how do changes in politics get shaped by dynamic ecologies, and vice versa?' The LDPI network explores a range of big picture questions through detailed in-depth case studies in several sites globally, focusing on the politics of land deals.

Abstract

Nuanetsi Ranch had been invaded by villagers from different parts of Mwenezi, Chiredzi and Chivi communal areas since 2000. In February 2010, the government announced that the settlers had to be removed and resettled in other 'uncontested lands' in the area, compromising their rights to sustainable livelihoods, human development and land acquisition. The perceptions of the men and women resident at Chigwizi has had a bearing on understanding the nature of gendered land and rural livelihoods in the context of biofuel production in Zimbabwe, after fast track land reform.



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