



Gendered Dimensions of Land and Rural Livelihoods: The Case of New Settler Farmer Displacement at Nuanetsi Ranch, Mwenezi District, Zimbabwe

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Gendered Dimensions of Land and Rural Livelihoods: The Case of New Settler Farmer Displacement at Nuanetsi Ranch, Mwenezi District, Zimbabwe

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Abstract

The bio fuels boom has recently been gaining much currency in Zimbabwe. This revolution has had different impacts on the lives of men and women who occupied land during the fast track land reform programme. A notable hectrage of land that was acquired for resettlement and given to beneficiaries has in recent months, from February 2010 until the present moment, been deemed to be land that was wrongly gazetted for resettlement during the mayhem (jambanja) phase by the government of Zimbabwe, through its line agencies at national, provincial and district level. The change in policy by the government of Zimbabwe was to pave way for large companies engaged in bio fuel production such as the Mwenezi Development Trust in conjunction with a consortium of former white commercial farmers regaining entry into large scale commercial production of bio fuels, crocodile farming and cattle ranching at Nuanetsi Ranch, in Zimbabwe. 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 bio fuel production in Zimbabwe after fast track land reform.

The events that have happened 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 the displacement has compromised the right to livelihood, the right to land and the right to sustainable human development of the men and women as they have not been given any

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voice in the matter, which is being regulated by the government. I conclude by suggesting that the bio politics² rooted in the creation of a Zimbabwean bio economy, which has been defined as an economy based on ecological sensitive products and services produced by bio 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 in land access and utilization in rural Zimbabwe 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 agricultural based communities especially in cases where land reform is justified in terms of distributional justice. A gender analysis of displacement, bio fuels and rural livelihoods increases our understanding of land reforms in light of the political, economic and social forces shaping rural societies.

1.0 Introduction

Land is at the heart of the political, social and economic organization of most African states, which rely heavily on agriculture and natural resource use for a significant percentage of their national gross domestic product. Bio fuels³ require large tracts of land for production, the land acquisition programmes by the various state, non state actors and individuals has been termed, land grabbing, (Matondi, Havnevik and Beyene, 2011), (Cotula, 2009), (Sulle and Nelson 2009). Bio fuels land acquisition mechanisms are seen as the continuation of imperialism, (Palmer 2010). It has also been synonymously 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 bio fuel production on the livelihoods of men and women who either face displacement or loss of livelihoods in order to pave way for the large scale conglomerates, individuals or governments, who often invest in the developing countries to engage in bio fuel

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 citizenry.

³ In this study I define bio fuels as the liquid fuels produced from agricultural products and manufactured out of bio mass. They are mainly used for cooking and heating.

production at a large scale. (Borras, McMichael and Scoones 2010:575) have referred to this interplay of various state and non state actors as the “bio fuel complex,” as it leads to positive and negative outcomes to the various actors concerned, particularly the rural poor who cannot be part of the bio fuel 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. Bio energy is often seen as a way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and a cheap renewable source of energy hence its attractiveness.

The bio fuels boom has become a core issue in Zimbabwean land and development debates. This has been due to the fact that Zimbabwe has potential of bio fuel production due to its climate, biotic factors and low population density which makes it attractive as compared to other countries within the Southern African region, (Von Maltitz and Brent 2008). It should be observed that the gendered bio fuel, livelihoods and displacement discourses operate within the definitions of politics ascertained by (Laswell 1965) who defines politics as, 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 as guiding the behavior and actions that men and women should conform to in society. It also reflects the structural relationship of inequality between men and women as manifested in households, labour markets and political structures.

Zimbabwe has produced bio fuels since the 1960s, mainly out of sugar cane. The bio fuels produced in Zimbabwe have been from sugar cane plantations in the South Eastern Lowveld but the production of the sugarcane for bio fuel production was affected by the land reform

process which led to the acquisition of some of the sugar estates and are 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, they were efforts to produce jatropha that led to the building of a huge bio ethanol plant which 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 the economic problems that have been experienced in the country and recurrent droughts, 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 bio fuel production and this has led to the need by the government to revitalize the production of bio fuels at Nuanetsi ranch.

The study seeks to answer the following key questions, how does displacement due to the large scale bio fuel production at Nuanetsi ranch affects 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? Has bio fuel production at Nuanetsi led to a shift in policy by the government from small holder farming to back to the pre fast track land reform phase? What has been the role of the “new elites” in the bio fuel production?

The increasing global demand for bio fuels has different gender specific socio-economic and environmental effects in Zimbabwe. Males and females in the bio fuel producing zone may face a differential risk matrix comprising of different issues that are 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 viewed in the access and control of various productive resources including land, participation levels in various socioeconomic 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 the bio fuel 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 then government did not condemn the action of the settlers due to the policy and legal prescriptions which emphasized 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 recognized 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 thus the provincial land committee, the district land committee, the Mwenezi Development Trust and the government did not formally engage the settlers to be displaced in the negotiation process.

However the position surrounding the settler`s displacement and livelihoods should also be viewed within the frame of the question of the politics of terminology and definitions, with (Scoones et al 2010) terming them as informal settlers since they occupied the land which had controversial overtones with regards to resettlement during the fast track programme, and lack of offer letters which the government did not want to accord them. Hence the settlers are confined to the land without formal recognition by the government. This leads the settlers to be recognized and addressed as informal within the Zimbabwean land law system. However I beg to differ with this notion because the settlers occupied this land in 2000, just like what happened on most commercial farms in Zimbabwe such that labeling the men and women as informal settlers, leads to the need to understand how the change in economic, political and social periodisation makes these men and women part of the beneficiaries of the land reform programme.

The then government did not oppose the settlement of the communities at Nuanetsi on the 15th of July 2000, when fast track land reform programme officially commenced in Zimbabwe. It also leads to the problematique that, ten years after land reform in Zimbabwe we cannot still

categorise the settlers as informal when 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 of a formalized, coherent and coordinated displacement of settlers from the land under conflict such as Nuanetsi ranch. However in order to deal with this complex situation the government pointed out that it has decided to settle the settlers in another part of the province, which forms part of the Tokwe river in Mwenezi. The government has pointed out that the settlers have to move to this new land expeditiously. However there are no clear cut parameters of how the new land resettlement process of the new settlers will take place.

2.0 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 the observations are mediated by the intuitive researcher. In sights are generated through the form of immersion of oneself in the data and a reevaluation of all experiences and insights which I buttressed with the case study approach. I was resident at Merrivale farm, a farm which is 40 km from Nuanetsi ranch since April 2009 until August 2010. I had to clear myself with the provincial and district authorities; this involved a lot of negotiations as Nuanetsi is currently under government protection. This gave me the capacity to be engaged in participant observation. I could interact with the members of the Chigwizi village in a more direct way as I had access to the community.

I undertook an in depth study of 20 households. In terms of social differentiation the households, comprised of female headed households due to either death of the husband, or the husbands working in South Africa and male headed households, in which a wife was present and single women headed households were the women had never been married or had been divorced. The social differentiation of the households was important in the study because it helped bring out the views of men and women who are not a homogenous group in their conceptualization of the bio energy project at Nuanetsi, 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 spend six months at the village, working with the men and women in the village so that I could understand the family management systems of land, the crops grown, other livelihood systems and how they viewed the bio fuel project as either a threat or 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 organization officials from Care International and the Netherlands Development Cooperation (SNV Netherlands). This enabled me to understand how the bio fuel project at Nuanetsi ranch was being understood by these various actors and how the issue of displacement was viewed in light of rural livelihoods.

Focus group discussions were also central in this study. They were divided into three groups, that is a standalone women's group, a men's group and a mixed group that constituted both men and women. In these group interviews I had the capacity to dwell more into how displacement affected the men and women, the gender roles of the respondents, the politics of resettlement and the solutions they had worked on ensuring 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 stake holder conferences and meetings in the district also helped me gain more information on the land and bio fuel 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. I would revisit the interviews, responses from focus group discussions and my observations of this community. This 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. It is located 3 km from the Chirundu- Beitbridge R1 highway which connects Zambia,

Zimbabwe and South Africa. It is approximately 500 metres 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 located in ward thirteen. It covers more than 376 995⁴ hectares of land, which constitute 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 situated between agro ecological regions (iv and v), with mean annual rainfall of between 450mm to 650 mm per annum.⁵ It is characterized as one of the dry and very hot areas in Zimbabwe.

Chigwizi village is located in the southern part of Nuanetsi ranch, it is an informal settlement which the settlers have modeled their settlement pattern along the A1 villagised settlement farming models in Zimbabwe after fast track land reform. The A1 resettlement scheme is characterized by the settlers each having 6 hectares of arable farming land and between 30-50 hectares of common grazing lands. The A2 scheme is 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. They are 232 settlers⁶ that presently occupy the part of Nuanetsi ranch that has become to be 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 concept of the village book (*bhuku or raini rekwa Chigwizi*) has been a system that was effected by the British under indirect colonial administration 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. In the new resettlement areas it

⁴ Mwenezi district files, February 2010.

⁵ Meteorological office files, Rutenga, April 2009.

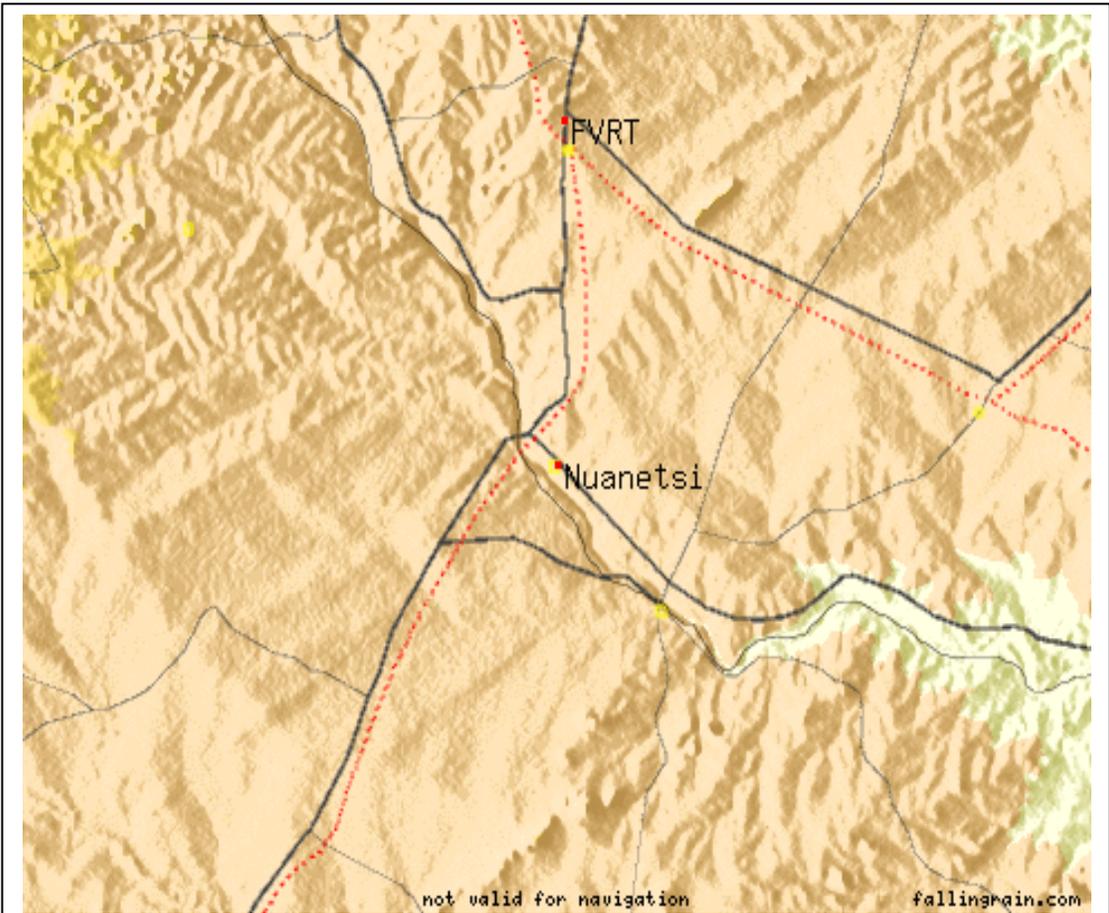
⁶ Mwenezi District Council, population files of settlers at Chigwizi village. Files accessed at the district Council on the 17th of May 2010.

is important as a land monitoring and controlling mechanism. This concept was used in the village as it way of creating order during the fast track process and also establish the number of the settlers in each village so that when registering the land it could be known as to who occupied a certain plot of land. There was also need to create a local governance structure in the new resettlement areas.

It shares borders with Mwenezana Estate and Uswaushava an informal settlement within Nuanetsi on the Chiredzi side. Uswaushava is in the northern sphere of the farm⁷. The ranch is protected by the state with the presence of police officers and soldiers and security guards, that in order for one to enter the ranch you are subjected to heavy searching and formal clearing procedures. It is currently being run by the Mwenezi Development Trust of Zimbabwe, an indigenous organization in conjunction with a consortium of former white commercial farmers and an individual Billy Rautenbach⁸. These actors have formed the Zimbabwe Bio energy Company, whose vice chairman is Dr Liberty Mhlanga. The bio fuel 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 hassled to the tensions that exist between the male and female settlers and the various institutions involved in the push for the displacement of the farmers. The area has savanna vegetation which is mainly composed of riverine forests, misasa and marula trees. There is a railway line that connects Nuanetsi with Rutenga and it is currently under construction to enable sugar production in the 2011 harvesting period. The following ariel photograph shows the location of Nuanetsi ranch, and Chigwizi village,

⁷ Scoones, Marongwe 2010, in *Myths and Realities: The Land Reform Programme in Zimbabwe*. These authors have also given a rich explanation about how the Nuanetsi ranch has been a controversial entity in the Southern part of Zimbabwe's land reform.

⁸ 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 bio fuels. This has been done through partnerships with the local communal farmers.



Key

Nuanetsi
Ranch
Chigwizi
Village

3.0 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 are mainly involved in ground nut and bambara nut farming, 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 with 5 women in the study sample owning cattle that they have acquired due to the cattle that have been paid by the sons in law as a sign of appreciating the mother of her wife for giving birth and looking after her wife. This is known in the Shona tradition as the (*mombe yeumai*) concept. Cattle tending is done by men, women and the youth depending on who is available at home and it depends on seasons. Women normally look after cattle during the dry season such that 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 have employed male labourers to look after their cattle. Labour on the plots of land is mainly family based with a few exceptions of some farmers who hire labour during the cotton season so that they can be enough people to pick the cotton and pack it in bales before selling it to private contract buyers or the state owned Cotton Company of Zimbabwe depot at Ngundu growth point. However as they are located within the ranch they also rely on hunting game in the ranch although this is prohibited by the government and protection of the fauna is strictly done by the ranch guides. The villagers always evade the security guards and parks officials protecting the wildlife in the ranch.

The male settlers have crafted their livelihoods through hunting demonstrating the multi dimensional land use at the farm. It is not only agricultural activities that sustain the farmers such that, this is why the farmers are currently opposed to the idea of being resettled at the area north of the Tokwe river. Livelihoods niches are also curved 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 in South Africa or sell artifacts manufactured out of wood. (Scoones et al 1996) writes that, livelihood portfolios in Southern Zimbabwe are dichotomized along female and male lines. Women are mainly involved

with vegetable gardens and men are engaged in livelihood options that require more capital. Remittances from these livelihood international trips enable the men and women to buy farming implements, purchase food and pay for school fees. Some households have children involved in migration particularly the young men, with their wives staying at home to help with farming activities, since upon marrying most of the seasons have been given a field of their own by the parents.

4.0 Conceptual frame

The complexities surrounding the Zimbabwe bio fuel production, displacement and gender based livelihoods in Mwenezi have to be understood within the discourses of the gender analysis matrix which emphasizes 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, Razavi 2009) points out that, women and men`s responsibilities differ according to the specific situations which guide their living environment. The circumstances are shaped by house hold governance, environment, occupation, class, culture, national history, religion and legal structures. This warrants the need to juxtapose these issues within the frameworks of sustainable livelihoods, policy science theories centred on the politics of public policy making and the gender analysis of land based livelihoods in Zimbabwe. I have drawn my reflections in this work from these conceptual frames as they add value to gender analysis and the different notions of what constitutes men and women centred livelihoods. Land access and use in the light of public policy making in a highly opaque sphere such as Zimbabwe. The sustainable livelihoods framework is about meeting the demands of men and women in accessing physical resources such as land and how this leads to other livelihood options in order to achieve livelihood security.

(Thomas- Slayter 1993, Moser and Moser 2005, Nemarundwe 2003, Tsikata and Golah 2010), have noted that gender analysis serves as the bases for understanding the control and activity profiles of land based livelihoods. It can be used to ensure that men and women are not disadvantaged by development activities, to enhance the sustainability and effectiveness of activities, or to identify priority areas for action to promote equality between women and men. During implementation, monitoring and evaluation, gender analysis assists in assessing differences in participation, benefits and impacts between males and females, including

progress towards gender equality and changes in gender relations. I use this frame in a broader sense in order for one to understand issues of social differentiation, class, ethnicity, the activity and control profiles in managing land acquisition in an era of bio fuel production. This is due to the fact that, the men and women under study were not a homogenous class as they had different resource basis and they placed themselves within different class categories, with men believing that they had a superior class position than women based on their outright land ownership and user rights which most women did not have, due to the fact that women are considered mostly as minors in land access and control in most African societies. These notions of gender based discrimination tend to fuel ethnic and class tensions and affect access to land. The control function in a rural society should be understood with regards to how resources are shared, owned and distributed within society. Women are mostly not part of the negotiating process and this leads to their disadvantaged position in accessing land as compared to men who are in charge of the institutions that regulate land access and also are involved in the making and remaking of customary norms to continue having a foot hold in land access and tenure security issues.

Men and women have different needs and these are reflected differently in the way they curve 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 tend to affect them in similar ways but, mostly women since they have to carry out the roles of production, reproduction and engage in other livelihood options and pathways, in order to feed their families, (Makura- Paradza 2010). In terms of the activity profile it is women who provide most of the labour on the land but however this is not visible to the society as men tend to overshadow this by the fact that they are the custodians of the land. In terms of the displacement due to biofuels women tend to have more activities at hand to deal with since they have the roles of production and reproduction and still have to ensure food security even in situations of land uncertainty as evidenced by displacement due to bio fuel production.

(Izumi 1999) reports that land should be understood in terms of gender, ethnicity and class interests and this requires one to understand the dynamism surrounding African land based

management structures rooted in colonial legacies and how this has affected formal and informal functionality. The 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 better pace as compared to women. The ethnocisation of land is repeatedly 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 by 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. Existence of different structures to coordinate men and women`s access to land tend to be gender blind and hence the need to create liberalized gender institutions as 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 function leading to the need to re-examine and rethink the concepts of formal and informal institutions in the Zimbabwe bio fuel agenda under the guises of gendered livelihoods, displacement and the politics of public policy making.

Gender analysis in terms of this work is important because it brings out the daily realities and perceptions of how men and women who depend on land in rural areas are affected by changes in government policy that have been influenced by large scale agro fuel projects which involve the need to acquire large tracts of land. The methodology, I used, brings out the fact that, potentially differential effects of applied research on women or men can often be masked or obscured. When gender is explicitly considered in bio fuel research, the effects of the research are revealed and previously hidden implications of the effects of bio fuel 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.

5.0 Gendered Impacts of Land Acquisition and Settlement at Chigwizi

The gender lens is important because biofuels expansion implies rapid growth in cash/export crop production, where men tend to predominate, with women lagging behind. The men and women who have settled at Chigwizi, in Nuanetsi ranch acquired their plots of land during the fast track land reform programme. Various mechanism of land acquisition were carried out by the settlers, with mostly men coming to Muzhanjire base⁹ were Mwenezi East `s land reform base that was run by the war veterans¹⁰, other public members of communities from different communal areas assembled as they strategized on which farms to permanently settle. At these bases, men and women were involved in land acquisition and had different roles, with men occupying the organizational roles, while women were mainly involved in mobilization of other women in the communal areas and the domestic roles of cooking and singing at the base, which have also been women `s dominant roles even during the liberation struggle of Zimbabwe. They were differences with regards to plot acquisition as some women acquired land as individuals for instance war veterans and other ordinary women, but they were less than 10% in Mwenezi East district,(Scoones, Marongwe et al 2010, Matondi, 2010), as compared to men who emerged as the largest group of beneficiaries of the fast track land acquisition process. The following case story seeks to evidently demonstrate how a male settler at Chigwizi acquired his current plot of land at Nuanetsi.

⁹ This was the central point of land reform organizational matters. A register of participants was kept and the war veterans and other prominent Zimbabwe African National Patriotic Front, (ZANU PF) organized 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, P `s PhD work which is still in progress.

¹⁰ These are the men and women who joined the liberation struggle of Zimbabwe before 1962 and fought against white colonial domination, that 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: 5.1 Accessing land at Chigwizi Nuanetsi by a male settler

Mr X, is aged 45. He is married with four children. He 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 mobilizing 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 3 pole and dagga 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.

Source: field notes, May 2010.

It is evidently clear how the process of land acquisition during the land reform programme was organised from the case story. Mr X, had built a permanent home and engaged in agricultural production at an A1 farm where he had more land as compared to his previous communal home, where the land was less productive and 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 symbolized his historical heritage and a livelihood source, the fact that he has been asked to move away from the land has led him to question the motive of the fast track land reform process as he sees it as a way of further pushing the poor out of the new land into land poverty. (Raftopolous 2003, Hammar 2003, Alexander 2003, 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 realized that it was losing power and so land became its

campaigning tool and the citizenry especially in the communal areas welcomed this development as way of climbing out the web of poverty and creating a new farming livelihood systems based on virgin land. The goal of election winning was achieved during that time and hence, this could possibly explain a shift in policy direction in terms of land use. The displacement of Mr X and his family reflects that the livelihood security he had created through his new farm has been short lived due to the bio fuels project that is already in place. The government has decided to move the men and women at Chigwizi to pave way for bio fuel developmental projects were the settlers are not part of the process.

The displacement does not only affect men at Chigwizi, it also affects women who are already more vulnerable when it comes to land issues due to the regulation of customary law¹¹ and male brotherhood in land matters which always overrides codified Roman Dutch law in Zimbabwe. At Chigwizi, most of the women are more vulnerable to land displacement than men because they lack a strong objectional voice, as 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, as they are being looked after either by their sons or daughters. Women in most African societies pool their cash resources for sustenance of the family unlike men who are at liberty to use their financial resources without being answerable to any one, yet women have to be answerable to husbands or in some cases to male guardians. Women`s livelihoods for the past ten years had been modeled along agriculture at Chigwizi and now with the removal to another dry area, north of the Tokwe River the sustainability they had in terms of livelihoods options is under threat. The following case is a clear demonstration of the lived realities of an elderly woman settler,

¹¹ In the *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. The Supreme Court ruled that Venia had no right to the inheritance of the property and so the judges all in the brotherhood of customary law said the brother was the heir to the estate. (Tsanga 1999) gives a critical analysis of this case in a livelihood and rights based premise.

Box: 5.2 widowed woman settler under threat of losing livelihood sources when displaced

Mrs Z, is aged 62 years. She came to Chigwizi in September 2000, after 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. 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 had got 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. They also keep cattle, goats and donkeys. She stays on the farm with 2 of her young children who still attend school and 4 grand children. The 6, 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 if 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 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.

Source: field notes, June 2010.

Mrs Z, acquired land through inheritance, which also 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. The case serves as evidence that widowed women are more vulnerable to being displaced in communities where importance of a household structure is attached with regards to the presence of men, according to the Victorian ideology which strongly influences Zimbabwean rural societies. It is not only livelihood security that is under threat, but also the sense of belonging and being part of a community for Mrs Z. (Izumi 2006) has pointed out that livelihoods have been compromised and widowed women after fast

track face the most adverse discrimination as they really do not know how to solve their predicament in a currently volatile and mal functional state judiciary in Zimbabwe. The widow at Chigwizi is facing imminent displacement that has already been approved by the government, affecting her psychologically, socially and mentally. She is also afraid of her former community, which comprises of her husband`s family who might grab the property she has acquired based on the pretext that it is their late brother or relative`s property. This leads her to being more vulnerable as she has to deal with complex social arrangements that are categorized as part of culture and can lead to her loss of her livelihood assets. These societal arrangements are regulated by men through family informal courts (*dare remusha*) were it is approved by the elder male members of the family.

The policy of displacement of the people at Chigwizi for the bio fuel project does not take into account the social trajectories displaced women particularly widows and single women will face. As they are the social and economic coordinators of their homes in an ever changing environment. The woman even feel that the displacement has not been human centred rather it is meant to further entrench them into the pity of poverty and kill the livelihood security they have known on the farms since 2000. (Daley 2010) notes that in Zambia, displacement of communities in paving way for bio fuel production negatively affected women as they had to walk long distances in the new settlement area to search for markets and they struggled in revitalizing their land economies that were destroyed further entrenching the women into poverty.

Several nongovernmental organizations 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”¹². 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 more over burdened as they have to provide

¹² Interviews with officials from Care International Mwenezi District and SNV Netherlands Development Cooperation.

alternate food baskets for the family, in the new areas and walk 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 gender aware complex social settings that different categories of women face and within which gendered access to land is constantly negotiated within household 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 and White head, 2007, Tsikata and Golah 2010) have pointed out that the complex scenarios that exist in agrarian settings should be understood in 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. In as much as women might be married, young, old or widowed they still face the customary systems that affect their land based livelihoods as compared to men who are better able to maneuver as they are also part of the male brotherhood that shape societal norms.

From the interviews, focus group discussions and my 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 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.”¹³ People felt the animals were being prioritized 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, “the settlers have to move to the north of Tokwe river were 60 hectares of land for their resettlement has been set aside.”¹⁴ In as much as the villagers are against their displacement they will not be able to continue settling at Chigwizi because being The Zimbabwe Bio Energy Company, being an indigenous owned company, has right to acquire the present land occupied by the settlers. This right has been codified by the government and major political actors in their bid to create a bio fuel plantation at Nuanetsi, in the late 1990s and has been revitalized in 2008, as the company

¹³ Reaction by Mr and Mrs R, during a visit to their home, August 2010.

¹⁴ Lilian Muungani, Public Relations Manager, Zimbabwe Bio Energy Project, 7 Sunday Mail, February 2010.

came into partnership with other individual actors. The aim has been to create a viable bio fuel company with other investors and other Zimbabweans benefitting out of it. However it is only the elite who form part of this indigenization drive and this does not trickle down to the poor rural men and women in these communities where the indigenization drives are meant to be undertaken.

Ordinary rural men and women at Chigwizi were left out of the policy equation creating a contradiction to the government policy on indigenisation since the families to be displaced are also indigenous Zimbabweans. (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 1999:23) describes such policy considerations as dilution over time of the strong poverty alleviation and the abandonment of redistributive justice in the resettlement programmes. Kinsey's assertion now applies in the post fast track resettlement phase. (Scoones, Marongwe et al, 2010:169) have noted that, "Nuanetsi remains a very controversial area, given the investments that have been done 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. It is still 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 bio fuel project.

6.0 Bio fuel activities of the Zimbabwe Bio Energy Project at Nuanetsi

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

box: 6.1 Nuanetsi ranch`s land investment, bio fuels and development in Mwenezi

The vice chairman of the Development Trust of Zimbabwe board, which 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, the company has undertaken to complete the construction of the stalled giant, Tokwe-Murkosi dam from where irrigation water for at least 100 000 hectares of cane to make sugar and bio-fuels, among other things at Nuanetsi Ranch will be drawn. Dr Mhlanga said there were plans to create, Africa's biggest 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 from where irrigation water for at least 100 000 hectares of cane to make sugar and bio-fuels.

Recorded from Political Leaders meeting, Masvingo, March 2010

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 increasingly becomes more powerful and self regulating, such that 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 in as much as they have been no formal discussions with them. It has mainly been a top down centred approach where the policy makers informed the public about what is 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 where rural people will never have a chance to participate in. This makes it difficult for them to negotiate their livelihood outcomes, as there is the policy making process is not consultative. (Herbst 1993), points out that in Zimbabwe the policy making process is centralized in as much as the state talks of decentralization. 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 bio fuel regulatory mechanisms. The (World Bank Report 2010) on rising interest in farmland and bio fuels has been criticized 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.

The bio fuel projects are seen as positive development which warrants the removal of the families at Chigwizi, however men and women at Chigwizi feel that the developments must not lead to their displacement but 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 that, "These families settled illegally on Nuanetsi in the hope that the ranch would be acquired for resettlement. However Nuanetsi is an indigenous owned property belonging to DTZ, which was owned by Joshua Nkomo until 2000, when he died."¹⁵ It 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 centers on the illegality of settlers at Nuanetsi ranch and they are removal to pave way for bio fuel 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 bio fuels, deeply affecting their land based livelihoods.

¹⁵ Ms Lilian Muungani, Zimbabwe Bio Energy Public Relations Manager, Sunday Mail, 7-13 February 2010.

7.0 Gender dynamics of the Politics of Bio fuel Concession

Making, Livelihoods and Sustainability

The concession making process with regards to bio fuels is surrounded by political considerations that have an overall effect on the outcome of the actual treaties enforcing bio fuel production in Zimbabwe. Concessions with various actors have been done to pave way for large companies engaged in bio fuels production such as the Mwenezi Development Trust. The government has announced that the settlers had 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, states yield in terms of development over men, women and their livelihoods, (Nantumbo and Salamao 2010). I define development induced displacement as the forcing of communities and individuals out of their land, homes and often their home lands for the purposes of economic development¹⁶. An important point to note is that the women and men at Nuanetsi ranch pointed out that they were never consulted by the government or district officials that the land had been required by the government. This leads to (Anderson 1999) `s assertion that public policies are purposive course of action that governments will undertake in dealing with a problem. What became visible to them was that, the district officials pointed out to them that the provincial land committee and the district land committee had agreed that the families were inhabiting land that was not supposed to be used for human habitation. The following focus group responses¹⁷ demonstrate the villagers `s reactions with regards to consultation on their displacement and the treaty inception of their removal at Chigwizi village,

¹⁶ For further critical reflections of development induced displacement see, Pablo Bose, Development, Induced displacement and Participation at <http://www.ochr.org>. website accessed 25 September 2010.

¹⁷ The focus group session was a mixed group of men and women at Chigwiza village, Nuanetsi, June, 2010.

box: 7.1 Men and women disagree with concession removal to pave way for bio energy project

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 ultimate 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)

Focus Group, Discussions, August, 2010.

Concession making has always been a domain of the political elites, the rural men and women were never given a chance to be part of the process of negotiating the treaty outcomes. Concessions (*chibvumirano*) in most African communities exist, but in the case of Nuanetsi the villagers were never exposed to the negotiations about their displacement, they were between the high level political incumbents, demonstrating how it is difficult to separate concession making and politics in bio fuel production. The state's multiple and contradictory interests are mainly within the ambit of economic and political aggrandizement that 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, the President, Robert Mugabe had 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 at Nuanetsi, which were signs, that the bio fuel project was now taking stand officially, and they could possibly be affected.

(Scoones, Marongwe et al 2010) have pointed out that the settlers at Nuanetsi are in constant conflicts with authorities from the Zimbabwe Bio Energy Company who at times are accused of driving their cattle into the settlers' fields, destroying their crops. The men and women also bring out the fact that the government and the Bio Energy Company does not recognize the importance of their access to land and livelihoods; it is only concerned about its 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 bio fuel production is emerging as the primary consideration unlike the men and women's livelihoods. During program and project design, gender analysis should be the process of assessing the impact that a development activity may have on females and males, and on gender relations (the economic and social relationships between males and females which are constructed and reinforced by social institutions). It is mainly women who are affected in developmental projects, as they are mostly confined to the private sphere other than men who have other livelihood niches due to their 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 there is no any communication about transportation, it seems it is our own problem, yet someone up there created it."¹⁸ Such a response frantically 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 bio fuels so that, imminent displacement does not raise emotional overtones with regards to land which is an emotive issue in Zimbabwe due to the political, historical and social trajectories shaping its importance in society.

¹⁸ Interview with Mrs M, Chigwizi village, May 2010.

Land concessions are negotiated as a result of political processes, whether 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 well being. Then question of the bio productivity of the new farming area, were the men and women farmers have been assigned to, 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 fertilizers that we cannot afford. Here we have not been using any fertilizer but cow dung only."¹⁹

Policy makers have a different view of the bio fuel scheme at Nuanetsi ranch. The Member of Parliament of Mwenezi East applauded the project as viable and improving the livelihoods of the villagers which was in contrast to the villagers` views of the project. The following extract demonstrate a legislator`s view of the bio energy project in Mwenezi,

"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 was 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 either 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 as citizens with rights to participation in development²⁰. Policy

¹⁹ Discussion with village head, August, 2010.

²⁰ 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

makers are concerned with the creation of bio economies that will respond to the needs of the global world. Men and women at Chigwizi are not interested in the new bio economy façade as it compromises their right to land, their sense of belonging and affect their food security²¹ and food self sufficiency needs.²²(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 bio fuel project will lead to infrastructural, tourism based development and the creation of jobs, these benefits will not trickle to all the communities because such foreign based developments, always lead to dual development. (Matondi and Mutopo 2011) assert that, foreign direct investment in bio fuel spaces has been seen as compromising and leading men and women who rely on land based livelihoods into further poverty as issues related to farmer’s 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 the resource itself but access and control over the resource leads to the further entrenchment of unjust displacements and impacts negatively on the livelihoods of men and women especially in the Zimbabwean case were 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 often 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 ignoring the social development of rural men and women `s livelihoods.

Points of divergence from the affected men and women and the political actors reflects 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 and with a lot of comparative gains for the district, hence (Matondi 2011) notes that, “It seems that access to higher political authorities

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.

²¹ (Eide 2008:9), defines food security as the situation that exists when all people, at all times have access physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active healthy life.

²² I define the term as referring to the ability of a household to fulfill its food production needs based on its own ability to use the land and produce food without mishaps.

provides leverage to maneuvering 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 at the detriment of the greater number of men and women whose livelihoods depend on land, a key resource for development, sustainability and life. Divergences in views between the villagers and the policy makers create animosity mostly that can fuel into 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 even spilled into the current bio fuel frenzy. Parallel structures have emanated which are meant to further guide the juridical and political governance of the land issue. There has been the emergence of the provincial land committees which are meant to deal with all land matters at the provincial level and whose representatives come from the civil service, with the governor, provincial district administrator, the chiefs of concerned areas, a representative from the Ministry of Gender and youth affairs, an official from the criminal investigation office and senior war veteran in that particular province. This same composition applies to the district land committee which has popularly been 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 on settlers and other entities. Village heads have also emerged as a central point of 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 councilor. 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.”²³ 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 are presented as forming the basis of the new bio fuel revolution of Zimbabwe. The politics of land is always rooted in Machiavellian discourses in Zimbabwe were the powerful and strong wield authority that leads to the final outcome. In as much as the institutions exist to manage the land relations, they are dominated by the powerful elites who always emerge as the 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 as reflected by the men and women from Chigwizi serves as evidence of how rural livelihoods can be undermined and negatively affected by what has been termed by (Evers, Spierenburg and Wels 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 that has been throughout its history, since the advent of colonialism has been 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 out sourcing and bio fuel production, there has been so much political, economic and social reengineering of the concept of the state, particularly in Zimbabwe, evoking new meanings, roles and of the state in the livelihoods of men and women at Chigwizi..

The different actors, institutions and individuals have all 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. The Mwenezi district land committee has even 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 whole ranch be resettled elsewhere. We will start with the 232 families at Chigwizi, The land has already been identified were the families will be resettled.”²⁴ This evidence demonstrates how the different

²³ Interview with village head of Chigwizi, Mr. K, June, 2010.

²⁴ Mr Z, Mwenezi District Lands Committee, February 2010.

actors (institutional, formal, informal, individual, collective and national) adjudicated the displacement of the farmers at Chigwizi. Tensions that exist from the government and the rural people due to land management and displacement are viewed from the Chigwizi village, where the people are still adamant to move despite the directive from the government.

8.0 Conclusion

The Zimbabwe Bio Energy project in as much as it is a notable development has led to a complexity of feelings amongst the men and women at Chigwizi. This reflects that public policies are just whatever governments chose to do or not to do. Questions of people's livelihoods, 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, such that in light of the bio fuel developments, it threatens the women and men's source of land based livelihoods and affects the psychological and cognitive capability as they can be pushed out of the land will nilly. The majority of men and women in rural Zimbabwe depend on agriculture as source of livelihood, and as such 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 much more affected as 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 characterized by elements of political and economic considerations that are not clear.

The political elites have been evidently 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 farmer's rights are respected and displacement is negotiated in 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 face the recent displacement developments differently. This is due to the customary norms and state led juridical notions that affect their access to and use of land in terrain where competing jurisdictions exist in the allocation and management of land in Mwenzezi 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 the capacity to enter the public sphere just like men, with an aim of livelihood diversification. The young and middle aged women might be affected by the displacement less severely, but still face the same threats, with regards to customary regulation of livelihoods. In as much as they are other livelihood systems, creation of a bio fuel economy in Zimbabwe needs a rethinking on land administration, land institutions, tenure rights and gender policies that ought to be transformative and appreciative of men and women`s livelihoods in a rural context.

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