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**FAST TRACKING LAND REFORM AND RURAL LIVELIHOODS IN
MASHONALAND WEST PROVINCE OF ZIMBABWE: OPPORTUNITIES
AND CONSTRAINTS, 2000-2013**

BY

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**THESIS SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF PHD
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL AND POLITICAL SCIENCE
UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH**

MARCH 2013

Abstract

The implementation of Zimbabwe's Fast Track Land Reform Program (FTLRP) in 2000 generated polarised debates across academia and in the media. Some commentators dismissed the FTLRP as a politically motivated 'land grab', which ruined a vibrant agrarian structure and contributed to food shortages. Landless peasants, who were the major beneficiaries of the land reform, were dismissed as inefficient and lacking the skills to work the land productively. However, empirical data gathered across Zimbabwe indicate that the outcomes of Zimbabwe's FTLRP are diverse and require a nuanced analysis. This thesis explores the outcomes of land reform in terms of its impact on the livelihoods of peasant households who were resettled under the FTLRP. The thesis utilises empirical data to argue that, despite its shortcomings, the FTLRP has allowed peasant households to access land and other natural resources which were previously enclosed under a dualistic land tenure structure which had persisted after Zimbabwe's independence from colonial rule in 1980. Data gathered in Mhondoro Ngezi District indicate that in the aftermath of land reform, resettled farmers now have access to better quality land and opportunities for employment at mines and through gold panning which have generally enhanced livelihoods. The thesis also argues that the benefits of land reform are broad and go beyond the utility of land as a means of production. Fast track land reform allowed people to recover ancestral lands lost during colonial era forced removals; it also allowed people to be reunited with ancestral graves and other symbols of spiritual significance. Overall, this has helped to address the diverse aspects of land which had remained largely unresolved due to the failure of Zimbabwe's market driven land reforms of the early 1980s. The thesis is based on a case study of 185 households who were allocated land under the A1 Scheme (villagised model) in the Mhondoro Ngezi District in Mashonaland West Province of Zimbabwe.

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own work based on original research and has not been presented for any other award. All secondary sources utilised in this thesis have been acknowledged by means of references.

Signed: Grasian Mkodzongi

Date: 28/03/2013

Acknowledgements

The development of this thesis involved a lot of people who I cannot mention all by name. I wish to particularly appreciate the support of my supervisors Alan Barnard and Sara Dorman for their support and guidance throughout the writing of this thesis. I also want to appreciate the support of fellow student colleagues and friends, in particular Maggie Dwyer for her reading through my chapters. Gareth James and Walter Chambati also provided insightful advice and conversations which shaped my thinking during my writing. I also want to thank Professor Moyo of the Agrarian Institute of Southern Africa (AIAS) for his support and advice, and for providing me with a research home while undertaking research in Zimbabwe. Ndabayezinhle Nyoni did excellent work reading through various draft chapters. Lastly, I want to thank resettled farmers at the former Damvuri conservancy in Mhondoro Ngezi, for their help and support during my stay in their villages, and for allowing me to get involved in their daily activities during the data gathering process. However, any errors and opinions in this thesis remain my sole responsibility.

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Abbreviations

AGRITEX	Agricultural Technical and Extension Services
AREX	Agricultural Rural Extension Services
ART	Anti-Retroviral Treatment
AIDS	Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome
DA	District Administrator
DLC	District Lands Committee
DCC	District Coordinating Committees
DDC	Damvuri Development Association
CA	Communal Areas
FTLRP	Fast Track Land Reform Program
GoZ	Government of Zimbabwe
GNU	Government of National Unity
HIV	Human Immuno Deficiency Virus
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
MLRR	Ministry of Lands and Rural Resettlement
MP	Member of Parliament
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NRA _s	Newly Resettled Areas
LSCF	Large Scale Commercial Farms
RDC	Rural District Council
VIDCO	Village Development Committee
WADCO	Ward Development Committee
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front
ZFU	Zimbabwe Farmers Union
ZIMPLATS	Zimbabwe Platinum Mines
ZNLWA	Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association

Chapter One

Introduction

Zimbabwe's Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP), characterised by the widespread occupation of mostly white- owned commercial farms by war veteran-led peasants, which started in the late 1990s and intensified after 2000, received widespread condemnation within academia and in the private media (Richardson 2005 and Hammar *et al.* 2003). The highly politicised nature of the land occupations and a diplomatic row between Zimbabwe and the United Kingdom overshadowed attempts at an informed analysis of its outcomes. It is not surprising then that the FTLRP was dismissed as 'Mugabe's land grab' or the 'end of modernity' in Zimbabwe (Worby 2003). War veterans and the Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) activists who led the land occupations were accused of undermining local state institutions and the rule of law (Alexander 2003 and Hammar 2003). Some commentators, particularly journalists (Smith 2010 and Bell 2012), blamed the FTLRP for ruining an otherwise vibrant agrarian sector and claimed that Zimbabwe's reputation as the so called 'bread basket' of the Southern African region had been compromised by the seizure and redistribution of white owned Large Scale Commercial Farms (LSCFs). Others such as Richardson (2005) claimed that confiscation of LSCFs had undermined property rights and contributed to food insecurity and industrial decline. An underlying assumption within criticisms leveled against the FTLRP was that peasants who were the major beneficiaries of land reform lacked the skills to farm productively. Such peasants were blamed for being interested only in natural resource extraction rather than farming and thus were contributing to an environmental catastrophe (The Zimbabwean Newspaper 13 July 2012).

While it is not the aim of this thesis to dismiss these claims, the thesis intends to highlight some of the fundamental weaknesses of such criticisms, particularly their failure to analyse the new agrarian structure that has emerged in the aftermath of land reform. Various studies based on empirical data gathered across Zimbabwe (Moyo *et al.* 2009, Scoones *et al.* 2010, Hanlon *et al.* 2012 and Matondi 2012) indicate that the outcome of Zimbabwe's land reform is complex and requires a nuanced analysis.

These studies have challenged various ‘myths’ (Scoones *et al.* 2010) popularised by journalists and other critics of the land reform. For example, data gathered across six districts of Zimbabwe by Moyo *et al.* (2009) has highlighted that the major beneficiaries of land are peasants predominantly from congested Communal Areas (CA). The study’s findings also indicate that the new agrarian structure now comprises a broader base of beneficiaries rather than a few large-scale commercial farmers who previously controlled most of the productive land under the dualistic agrarian structure inherited at independence. Similarly, Scoones *et al.* (2010: 233), who have undertaken a study in Masvingo Province in the south of Zimbabwe, argued that:

land reform ... unleashed a process of radical agrarian change. This was not just a modest process of transfer to black beneficiaries as in the past attempts at resettlement, and has been the case in other land reform efforts elsewhere in the region ..., because of its scale it fundamentally changed agrarian structure, livelihoods and the rural economy. There are now new people on the land, engaged in new forms of economic activity, connected to new markets and carving out a variety of livelihoods.

What this demonstrates is that the new agrarian structure now comprises a broader base of beneficiaries but farming on predominantly smaller farms rather than the previous agrarian structure which was dominated by a few white owned LSCFs.

Similarly, Moyo and Yeros (2005) have highlighted how the fast track land reform facilitated a process of ‘repeasantisation’ which has allowed a large number of peasant households to access land and other natural resources. Data gathered in Mhondoro Ngezi as part of this thesis indicates that access to land was but only part of the story, the new farmers are socially differentiated. Some have been able to utilise the land while others have struggled due to the difficult socio-economic environment that confronted them after resettlement. However, those who have struggled to farm are engaged in a wide variety of off-farm activities as a way of gaining some income in order to invest on their land later. Although patterns of agricultural investment and accumulation after the land reform significantly vary from one region to the other, evidence from various fieldwork sites indicate that the newly resettled households have made significant investments on their land and that

a new process of ‘accumulation from below’ is already taking place despite challenges faced by the newly resettled farmers (Scoones *et al.* 2010).

These changes in Zimbabwe’s agrarian structure warrant further empirical investigation given the highly polarised debates that have emerged in the aftermath of land reform largely based on thin evidence.

This thesis makes a grounded contribution to ongoing debates on the outcomes of Zimbabwe’s land reform by, in particular, examining the new livelihoods trajectories that have emerged in the aftermath of land reform. It utilises empirical data gathered in the Mhondoro Ngezi District to argue that, despite its shortcomings, Zimbabwe’s fast track land reform process has allowed peasant households to access land and other off-farm opportunities which previously were enclosed under Zimbabwe’s dualistic agrarian structure inherited at independence. Empirical data gathered as part of this thesis indicate that access to land and natural resources has allowed the new farmers to diversify their livelihoods and address rural poverty. The Mhondoro Ngezi case study indicates that land reform has also addressed other non-economic aspects of land such as the recovery of ancestral lands which has overall allowed people to be reunited with ancestral graves which play an important spiritual role in their lives.

Objective of the thesis

The broad objective of the thesis is to investigate the outcomes of the FTLRP and in particular its impact on the livelihoods of peasant farmers who benefited from the land reform. It seeks to achieve the objective by addressing the following questions: how and why peasant farmers joined the land occupations in the Mhondoro Ngezi District; what dynamics shaped such a process; how land occupiers made claims over land and how such claims were legitimised; how the newly resettled land is governed after land reform; what new livelihood trajectories have emerged in the aftermath of land reform and lastly how the newly resettled households are socially organised to deal with social challenges they face in the aftermath of resettlement.

Until recently, there have been very limited studies based on empirical data which sought to highlight the outcomes of Zimbabwe’s fast track land reform process (Matondi 2008, Moyo *et al.* 2009 and Scoones *et al.* 2010). However, after 2010, an

increasing number of empirical studies by both young and senior scholars have been undertaken across Zimbabwe's provinces and agro-ecological regions (Chambati 2011, Dekker and Kinsey 2011, Murisa 2011, Mutopo 2011, Zamchiya 2011, Hanlon *et al.* 2012, Matondi 2012 and Scoones 2012). Some of these studies are being undertaken by doctoral students and are still ongoing (Interviews with doctoral students in Harare). An important aspect of these empirical studies is that they have provided the much needed evidence which has been lacking in the literature on Zimbabwe's land reform. A significant number of these studies have highlighted how, despite the way it was implemented, the land reform programme has allowed peasant households to access land and other off-farm opportunities some of which were not available in communal areas. For example, Moyo *et al.* (2009) have provided a snapshot of the changing agrarian structure and how it has allowed a large number of peasants to access land. Dekker and Kinsey (2011) have utilised empirical data gathered through a longitudinal survey to undertake a comparative study of livelihood dynamics in both old resettlement schemes and areas resettled under the FTLRP. Their study has highlighted the challenges faced by both groups of farmers in establishing themselves after being resettled. The study of Masvingo Province by Scoones *et al.* (2010) has provided an analysis of the new livelihood trajectories that have emerged after the land reform. The study highlights how some of the newly resettled farmers have made relatively large investments on their land, and how a process of 'accumulation from below' is already underway. Similarly, Matondi (2012: 13) whose study covers three of Zimbabwe's districts, namely, Mazowe, Shamva and Mangwe, has highlighted how land reform 'changed and expanded the agrarian base' by allowing peasant households access to land. Others, such as Hanlon *et al.* (2012) have highlighted, *inter alia*, how the newly resettled farmers have invested on their land and how fast track land reform has enhanced women's access to land. Others studies such as that of Mutopo (2011), undertaken in the Mwenezi District in Masvingo Province, has highlighted the gender dynamics of land reform, in particular how it has allowed women to negotiate access to land.

My thesis aims to highlight the way the new agrarian structure has enhanced rural livelihoods. It utilises data gathered in agro-ecological Regions II and III to highlight changes in livelihood trajectories which have occurred after Zimbabwe's fast track

land reform. It aims to complement work already undertaken by other scholars in other parts of Zimbabwe, notably Matondi (2008 and 2012), Scoones *et al.* (2010 and 2012), Dekker and Kinsey (2011) and Hanlon *et al.* (2012) whose studies could not be generalised to other parts of the country, but enable us to paint a broader picture across Zimbabwe's provinces and agro-ecological regions.

The thesis broadens the debate on land reform by highlighting that the benefits of land reform go beyond getting land to farm. Much of the criticism (Richardson 2005 and Dale 2012) of the land reform has been informed by a narrow economic conceptualisation of land which ignores its broader meaning to local people. The findings of this thesis demonstrate that the resettled farmers attach a broader meaning to land beyond its economic value. For example, data gathered in Mhondoro Ngezi District indicate that discourses of belonging and recovery of ancestral lands significantly influenced the way the land reform unfolded and how claims over land were made by people from diverse geographical backgrounds. The Mhondoro Ngezi case study highlights that the land reform allowed people to recover ancestral lands lost during the colonial era forced removals and has thus allowed people to be reunited with ancestral graves and other symbols of spiritual significance. This demonstrates that the benefits of land reform transcend its economic value as a means of production and that local people have a broader conceptualisation of land and its benefits. According to Rukuni (2012: 2), '[F]or Africans, land is much more than an economic asset. It is also a cultural and spiritual asset. Home is where your ancestors are buried'. Thus, being reconciled with ancestral graves through land reform is an important outcome of land reform which might not be economically quantifiable, but of cultural importance to people.

Another aspect of the land reform which is highlighted in this thesis is the way it has allowed people greater mobility and enhanced their ability to straddle livelihoods across diverse locations which were previously inaccessible. In Mhondoro Ngezi, land reform opened up former LSCFs to peasant households previously barred from accessing such areas. In the aftermath of resettlement, there is improved mobility of people who are now engaged in diverse livelihood activities across areas that were opened up by the land reform. Furthermore, newly resettled people are now engaged

in gold panning, harvest and sale of wildlife, fruits and plants. These activities have overall allowed resettled households to spread risks at a time when climatic changes and the economic situation have affected agricultural investments. These new forms of mobility and livelihoods diversification were not possible under Zimbabwe's dualistic agrarian structure characterised by the enclosure of vast tracts of the most productive land and natural resources by white minority land owners during the colonial period.

Data gathering in Mhondoro Ngezi

Mhondoro Ngezi was chosen as a fieldwork site for a variety of reasons. The area is easily accessible by road and is relatively close to Zimbabwe's capital city, Harare (approximately 100 km), which made the data gathering process relatively easy to manage. Given the limitations imposed by a shoestring budget, it was affordable for me to regularly visit the study area from my area of residence in Harare. Moreover, despite its close proximity to Harare, the area has had very limited academic attention except for a few historical studies (Ranger 1985 and Nyambara 2005). In the aftermath of land reform, no study which explores the outcomes of land reform and in particular its impact on rural livelihoods has been undertaken in the area. This is despite the fact that the area is close to Zimbabwe's major towns and cities (Harare, Chegutu, Kadoma and Kwekwe are all relatively close to Mhondoro Ngezi). Apart from its close proximity to major towns and cities, the agro-ecological and geological characteristics of the broader area present an excellent opportunity to investigate the dynamics of livelihoods after land reform.

The broader area is situated in agro-ecological Regions II and III, which receive relatively high rainfall (based on rainfall isohyets) and as such are fairly representative of Zimbabwe's medium potential agro-ecological zones. Moreover, Mhondoro Ngezi is located on the great Dyke, a geological formation which cuts across Zimbabwe and is rich in mineral deposits. Thus, the area is predominantly a mining area and is home to Zimbabwe's biggest platinum mine (South African owned ZIMPLATS mine) and such mining activities have significantly shaped the livelihoods of the newly resettled households.

Another important dynamic of Mhondoro Ngezi worth noting is how the histories of forced removals and autochthonous claims influenced the way the land occupations unfolded in the area. A large number of people who occupied farms in the area claim to have been evicted from the former Rhodesdale Estate (Rhodesdale was a former large ranch) in the 1950s by the Rhodesian government. Such people utilised the fast track land reform process to return to their ancestral lands lost during the colonial era. The fact that discourses of belonging have played an important role in the way the claims over land were made by a large number of land beneficiaries in Mhondoro Ngezi highlights the salience of land restitution during the implementation of fast track land reform which is largely ignored in available literature.

Lastly, the land occupations in Mhondoro Ngezi did not take place in a 'typical' *jambanja* style as has been the case across the country. Instead, the occupations assumed a rather bureaucratic character from the start. Local state structures such as the District Administrator (DA) from the nearby Kadoma town and technocrats from key ministries such as Agricultural Research and Extension (AGRITEX) and Ministry of Lands officials were present from the beginning, supervising the occupation and subsequent demarcation of the occupied land into individual plots. As a result, the occupied land was transferred relatively peacefully with the former white owners being allowed a 'grace' period to vacate the land before its redistribution to landless peasants. The dynamics of the land occupations in Mhondoro Ngezi thus defy popularised claims of chaos and state absence during the land reform process, but highlights that in some places local state structures were not 'unraveled' as observed by some scholars (Alexander 2003:104 and Hammar 2003: 144). It also demonstrates that there were variations in the way the various actors contested control over land during the land occupations. Moreover, war veterans did not lead the process of demarcation and allocation of land as widely reported elsewhere (Chaumba *et al.* 2003), but assumed a rather subordinate role of providing support and logistics to government technocrats. This had a bearing in the way the land reform process unfolded in Mhondoro Ngezi, in particular the way authority over the newly occupied land could be claimed and how such authority could be exercised. In general, these observations highlight the nuanced nature of how the land reform process unfolded, and how generalisations about its outcomes must take

into account the diversity of experiences across Zimbabwe's countryside. Thus, Mhondoro Ngezi provides a unique case study as it brings a fresh perspective which is currently missing in literature on the land reform.

This chapter is structured in four parts: the first part is a brief introduction, which is followed by a review of literature. The third part provides a methodological outline explaining how data for the thesis was gathered and the dynamics that underpinned such a process. Lastly, the fourth part provides a chapter outline of the thesis and the conclusion.

Contested outcomes of Zimbabwe's FTLRP: Literature review

Zimbabwe's FTLRP, which was characterized by the widespread occupation of mostly white owned commercial farms by war veteran-led peasants, has generated major debates which have polarised academics (Hammar *et al.* 2003, Moyo and Yeros. 2005, Mamdani 2008 and Scarnnechia *et al.* 2008). Over a decade after implementation of the land reform programme, the debates surrounding its outcomes remain contested (Dore 2012 and Scoones 2012). Since the onset of land occupations in 2000, a wide variety of criticisms have been leveled against the fast track process, in particular the way it was implemented and its perceived impact on agricultural productivity (Richardson 2005). Most of the critics of land reform have focused on the dynamics of the land occupations such as the displacement of farm workers and political violence in the countryside rather than engage with the changing agrarian structure (Hammar *et al.* 2003, Rutherford 2003, Richardson 2005 and Hammar *et al.* 2010). Some journalists (Smith 2010) have claimed that the land reform only benefited political cronies, the so-called 'cell phone' farmers with no interest in farming. A recurrent theme underlying major criticisms of the fast track process is that the land reform turned land into 'dead capital' (De Soto 2000) as the new tenure arrangements comprising of 99-year leases and user permits were deemed to promote tenure insecurity (Richardson 2005, Tupy 2007, Robertson 2011, Mutenga 2011).

Moreover, criticisms of the new agrarian structure carry with them an implicit assumption that peasant households lack the technical skills to farm and hence could not match production levels set by former white commercial farmers. Such criticisms

lament the loss of white farmers whose removal has presumably led to food shortages and general industrial decline. However, they ignore other factors that had an impact on agricultural production such as climate change related droughts and the wider economic difficulties which have hampered agricultural production in the aftermath of land reform.

Some critics echoing colonial era ‘technical development’ discourses have blamed fast track land reform for promoting environmental destruction and land degradation. The newly resettled farmers have been accused of cutting down trees and overexploiting wildlife and other natural resources rather than farming (Masekesa 2012). Off-farm livelihood activities such as gold panning, hunting and harvesting of non-timber forest products, which have increased in the aftermath of land reform, have been ‘criminalised’ as evidence of environmental banditry brought about by the land reform (Saxon 2011 and Bell 2012).

While many of these criticisms cannot be simply dismissed, they are problematic at many levels. Firstly, they are largely based on anecdotal evidence. Secondly, some are influenced by a media representation of the fast track land reform process rather than facts on the ground. Thirdly and more important, such criticisms fail to engage with the new agrarian structure which replaced a dualistic agrarian structure which favoured a minority of predominantly white landowners in favour of a broader base of beneficiaries (Moyo 2011a).

An increasing number of studies based on empirical data gathered across various sites (Moyo *et al.* 2009, Scoones *et al.* 2010, Dekker and Kinsey 2011, Hanlon *et al.* 2012 and Matondi 2012) and data gathered as part of this thesis have helped to address various ‘myths’ (Scoones *et al.* 2010) associated with the outcomes of land reform. These studies indicate that the outcomes of Zimbabwe’s FTLRP are far more complex. Beneficiaries of the FTLRP are not a homogenous group. Although elites with political connections got multiple farms, especially in the A2 (commercial farming sector), the biggest number of beneficiaries is made up of predominantly rural people with farming backgrounds as noted by Moyo *et al.* (2009: 1):

The FTLRP transformed the agrarian structure from a bi-modal structure in which 4,500 farmers (approximately 5000 units) held over 11 million hectares

mostly on the basis of export-focused commercial agriculture, alongside one million communal area households on 16.4 million hectares mostly in drier regions of the country. The FTLRP implemented by the Government of Zimbabwe redistributed about 80 per cent of former Large Scale Commercial Farms (LSCF) to a broad base of beneficiaries including mostly peasants from across the political divide, as well as politicians, senior Government officials, private sector officials, employed and unemployed urbanites, farm workers, corporate and former white farmers. This has altered the previous highly unequal bimodal agrarian structure and created relatively more broad based tri-modal agrarian structure comprising small, medium and large farms with an estimated 170, 000 family farms created by the FTLRP.

This highlights that although distortions remain in the land ownership structure, the new agrarian structure has reversed the racialised bimodal agrarian structure inherited at independence. The new agrarian structure has broadened access to land and natural resources to a larger number of beneficiaries beyond the minority of mostly white land owners who previously owned most of the productive land. Moreover, data gathered as part of this thesis and studies undertaken elsewhere (Chaumba *et al.* 2003, Murisa 2007 and Hanlon *et al.* 2012) indicate that the FTLRP did not lead to ‘chaos’ in the occupied areas. The newly resettled peasant households are socially organised and have made significant investments on their land despite facing a wide variety of challenges after resettlement (Moyo *et al.* 2009, Scoones *et al.* 2010 and Matondi 2012).

Claims that the new tenure regime which is based on a variety of permits and 99-year leases has undermined property rights and agrarian investments (Richardson 2005) need to be qualified. This case study on Mhondoro Ngezi and other studies undertaken elsewhere (Scoones *et al.* 2010, Hanlon *et al.* 2012 and Matondi 2012) indicate that secure tenure is not a panacea for agrarian investments particularly in peasant agriculture. Data from these studies indicate that the new tenure regime has largely affected A2 farmers (commercial farm sector) who can no longer use their land as collateral to secure loans for agricultural investments. However, with A1 farmers (small scale sector) who constitute the biggest number of land reform beneficiaries, tenure security has had an insignificant influence on their agricultural activities. For example, a survey by Moyo *et al.* (2009) demonstrates that many of the newly resettled peasant farmers have invested significantly in their new properties despite the alleged tenure insecurity brought about by FTLRP. Similarly,

Scoones *et al.* (2010) in their study in Masvingo Province have also highlighted that the production of cotton and other small grains have risen in the aftermath of land reform. This demonstrates that tenure has not had an impact on agricultural production among A1 households.

One of the fundamental characteristics of Zimbabwe's new agrarian structure is that it has allowed a larger number of beneficiaries to access land previously 'enclosed' under Zimbabwe's dualistic agrarian structure inherited at independence. Data gathered across various sites (Scoones *et al.* 2010, Hanlon *et al.* 2012 and Matondi 2012) indicate that newly resettled farmers have made relatively large investments despite a challenging socio-economic context and limited support from the state and other external agencies after resettlement. For example, in their study undertaken in the Masvingo Province, Scoones *et al.* (2010: 220) have highlighted that;

Small scale capitalist farmers, successful petty commodity producers and worker peasants of different sorts, most notably in the A1 self-contained sites, are generating significant surpluses for sale, and providing a basis for continued investment in productive agriculture as well as other enterprises.

Data gathered in Mhondoro Ngezi indicate that despite the socio-economic challenges faced by the farmers which generally hampered agrarian investments, the new farmers have cleared their land and acquired new equipment and livestock. Some of the more enterprising farmers have even opened businesses taking advantage of new markets which have emerged after land reform. They have also taken advantage of new off-farm opportunities and are involved in various income generating activities such as gold panning, harvest and sale of game meat, wild fruits and plants which have overall enhanced livelihoods. This is contrary to popularised claims that the new farmers have largely failed and that they are only involved in natural resource extraction rather than farming.

Although estimates vary, it has been claimed that land reform led to the displacement of approximately 200,000 farm workers (Chambati and Magaramombe 2008). However, the new agrarian structure has allowed a significant number of former farm workers to access land and other off-farm opportunities associated with new land. In a study of changing labour relations after land reform, Chambati (2011: 1053) has observed that 'over two thirds of former farm workers remained on former LSCF

land' and that nearly 69 per cent of the former farm workers indicated that the majority of their colleagues were still resident in the compounds' (AIAS farm worker survey 2005/2006). Data gathered in Mhondoro Ngezi highlights that although land reform led to some farm workers losing employment, most of them did not necessarily become destitute or 'internally displaced', since some of them were able to negotiate access to land. Moreover, some former farm workers are now engaged in a wide variety of activities such as working as wage laborers at mine sites, gold panning and petty commodity trade rather than being bonded at farms as indentured laborers.

According to Chambati (2011: 1052), overall there has been a net gain in livelihoods, as 45,000 farm workers and 4,000 physically displaced farmers have been replaced by 170,000 farm households plus new types of employment. Critics of land reform have failed to acknowledge that fast track land reform has allowed a broader base of beneficiaries to access land. The breaking up of large landholdings into small family-run smallholder plots under the FTLRP could lead to some improvements in efficiency and productivity in the agrarian sector in the long term, with many peasant households being able to socially reproduce themselves based on secure livelihoods strategies (Moyo 2011a).

Peasants, redistributive land reform and rural livelihoods: Conceptual issues

This section discusses conceptual issues related to redistributive land reform and rural livelihoods. However, before such a discussion can be undertaken, a brief definition of peasants or the peasantry which is adopted here is provided. The peasantry as an analytical category has a long history. Competing interpretations of what 'peasants' are have influenced ongoing debates about the benefits of land reform between so-called agrarian pessimists and agrarian populists (Bryceson *et al.* 2000, Byres 2004, Moyo and Yeros 2005, Rosset *et al.* 2006, Beinsein 2009, De-ploeg 2008). The concept of the peasant adopted here is that put forward by Boltivnik (2010: 4) who defines peasants as 'smallholders that work their land, individual plots of land as their principal source of income'. Peasants are also perceived as small farmers who largely rely on family labour for their farm

production (Moyo and Yeros 2005). It is important to highlight that the concept of peasants adopted here does not denote a homogenous category. Peasants are socially differentiated; some are rich peasants and are able to invest in production and to hire labour. Others are middle peasants who generally rely on family labour. Some are poor peasants who do not have access to land and thus mainly rely on selling their labour power (Bernstein 2009:431). Below, an analysis of conceptual issues that have shaped the land reform debate is provided.

It has been argued that redistributive land reform is a *sine qua non* for the transformation of the role of various agrarian classes in struggles for development and democratization, towards equitable land ownership and social relations of production (Byres 1991 and 1996). Land rights and ownership tend to grow out of power relationships. Thus, land owners have historically employed coercive methods and distortions in land, labour, credit and commodity markets to extract economic rents from land and from peasants (Bernstein 2009). Such rent seeking behavior reduces the efficiency of resource use, undermines growth, and increases the poverty of rural populations (Binswanger *et al.* 1993). It has also been argued that land reform as a key dimension of agrarian reform is a necessary but insufficient condition for national development (Moyo and Yeros 2005), and is also key to agricultural and social transformation (Chang 2008). Within the post-colonial context of Southern Africa, it has been argued that ‘land reform and accumulation from below are necessary to reconfigure a dualistic and unequal agrarian structure which is itself a structural cause of poverty’ (Cousins 2010: 15).

In post-colonial settler economies such as those of southern Africa, the political objectives of land reform involve, *inter alia*, restructuring the ‘distribution of land ownership towards a democratic agrarian structure to promote social, economic, and political transformation which creates security of tenure for all, through legally enforceable system of property rights which does not necessarily mean private property’ (Moyo 2011: 2). Historically, agrarian elites tend to be an economically powerful and politically reactionary landed class that monopolises land and forces most of the population into the role of landless labourers and, as such, reduces incentives among landowners and workers to invest (Evans 2009). Where there is a

history of a dualistic agrarian structure such as in Zimbabwe and other former settler colonies (South Africa and Namibia), redistributive land reform is necessary since it transforms agrarian relations and enhances the ability of peasants to access ‘ecological capital’ (Ploeg van de 2010) which will enhance their social reproduction strategies. Empirical data gathered in Mhondoro Ngezi indicate that access to land and other natural resources formerly enclosed under dualistic tenure arrangements can enhance rural livelihoods and address rural poverty. It has also been argued that within the context of globalisation, access to land by small scale farmers gives them ‘food sovereignty’ (Rosset *et al.* 2006) as it helps them to gain control over agricultural value chains rather than rely on agri-businesses for their livelihoods. Within the Zimbabwean context, various empirical studies undertaken in the aftermath of land reform (Scoones *et al.* 2012 and Hanlon *et al.* 2012) and data gathered in Mhondoro Ngezi, demonstrate that the breaking up of large private landholdings is a pre-requisite for transforming the lives of marginalised rural households. Such a process takes away monopoly syndicates and their speculative tendencies, which undermine efficiency, productivity and equity in the agrarian sector.

The link between redistributive land reform and rural livelihoods has been a subject of an ongoing farm size debate historically linked to the classic agrarian question (Bernstein 2009). According to Scoones *et al.* (2010: 120), ‘for agriculture pessimists, redistributive land reform based on a smallholder model makes little sense beyond temporary welfare relief unless combined with substantial investment in off-farm enterprise development with firm links to urban areas’. Agriculture pessimists such as Bryceson *et al.* (2000) and Ellis (2000) have challenged the benefits of smallholder farming. They have argued that the countryside is experiencing a form of ‘de-agrarianisation’ and that small scale agriculture can no longer provide secure livelihoods for peasant households who are forced to engage in more profitable off-farm activities rather than farming. Others such as Byres (2004) argue that redistributive land reform ‘runs contrary to historical forces of capitalism’ and is largely based on the historical fantasy of agrarian populists.

However, these arguments run contrary to Zimbabwe's recent experience with land reform. The Mhondoro Ngezi case and other empirical studies undertaken across various locations (Moyo *et al.* 2009 and Scoones *et al.* 2010 and Hanlon *et al.* 2012) demonstrate that redistributive land reform can have a positive impact to the lives of peasant farmers. Such studies have indicated that small farmers have the capability to utilise the land and take advantage of domestic markets and value chains associated with land reform.

Moreover, it has been argued by the so called agrarian 'populists' (Lipton 1977, Moyo and Yeros 2005, McMichael 2006b and Rosett *et al.* 2006) that large commercial farms suffer from productivity inefficiencies because they require large amounts of capital and labor to operate, whereas family-run smallholder farms are more efficient and cheaper to run since they employ family labor (Binswanger *et al.* 1993). This argument is based on the fact that the reduction in transaction costs especially over the supervision of farm labor associated with small-scale family farming results in higher returns than large scale capitalist farming' (Berry and Cline 1979, Carter 1985).

This thesis demonstrates that land reform can have a positive impact to the lives of historically marginalized rural populations. For example, in Mhondoro Ngezi land reform has allowed landless peasants to access better quality land and other natural resources. Ownership of land 'represents autonomy and opportunity to create a livelihood through hard and bodily struggles with a hostile environment' (Van de Ploeg 2010: 3). Therefore land reform has provided an opportunity for peasant households to socially reproduce themselves on diverse livelihoods portfolios and is likely to have a positive impact to their lives in the long term. This study has demonstrated that, although the new farmers have faced a difficult socio-economic environment after resettlement, which has hindered agricultural investments, the new farmers have made relatively large investments and are already 'accumulating from below' (Neocosmas 1993). Those who have struggled to utilise the newly acquired land are involved in a wide variety of activities which generate capital critical for future agricultural investments.

Data gathering and research methods

This section provides a summary of how the thesis developed and the dynamics of the data gathering process. Gathering data proved to be a rather more challenging task than I had initially envisaged. In 2010 when I went for fieldwork in Zimbabwe, debates on the outcomes of Zimbabwe's land reform were largely polarised. The ongoing dynamics of the land reform debate made it difficult for me to remain focused on my initial research proposal. The publication of Mamdani's article (2008), which focused on the changes in Zimbabwe's agrarian structure, further fueled controversy as evidenced by the number of scholars who signed a 'petition' challenging his stance on Zimbabwe's land reform (Scannerchia *et al.* 2008). These heated debates demonstrated how polarised the debate on land reform was at the time. This also had the effect of forcing me to continuously think of shifting the focus of my research in order to find some relevance. My initial proposal had been to explore how competing discourses had shaped land reform policies in Zimbabwe after independence. However, while in the study site, simply exploring land reform discourses and how they had influenced the policy making process did not seem to be of much value given that a large amount of literature focusing on Zimbabwe's land reforms already existed (Kinsey 1982, Herbst 1990 and Moyo 1994 and 2000). Such literature had already highlighted the dynamics that had shaped Zimbabwe's earlier attempts at land reform.

However, at the time, debates on the outcomes of Zimbabwe's FTLRP were being largely driven by claims and counter claims based on very thin evidence. This provided me with an opportunity to undertake a study that would contribute to addressing this information gap in the literature on Zimbabwe's land reform. Furthermore, the publication of Scoones *et al.*'s. (2010) book, based on data gathered in Masvingo Province at a time when I was in the study site, significantly reshaped the debate on land reform. This also helped me to focus on investigating livelihood trajectories after land reform in a different part of Zimbabwe given the limitations imposed on a single case study by variations in agro-ecological dynamics and other localised political factors that had an impact on such livelihoods.

The beginning of my fieldwork coincided with changes in Zimbabwe's socio-economic and political environment. The onset of the Government of National Unity (GNU) in 2008 after a contested electoral process heralded a period of relative political stability in Zimbabwe, which meant that going to the study site was relatively safe unlike before when the political situation was very tense. Moreover, life became relatively easier after the 'dollarisation' of the economy. This meant that logistics such as going to the study site became relatively easier as one could get fuel, which had been a scarce commodity before 2008.

However, the changes in the socio-economic and political environment and the relative ease with which I could access my chosen fieldwork site did not make data gathering as easy as I expected. To start with, any research focusing on the dynamics of land reform in Zimbabwe was likely to encounter some challenges given the emotive and political nature of land in the country. Newly resettled areas were highly politicised during land occupations and, as a result, resettled farmers were highly suspicious of outsiders wanting to ask questions about land. Such outsiders were generally viewed as a security threat as people were never sure if one was a spy or a supporter of opposition political parties. The proliferation of authority structures in the countryside all exercising some form of authority over land meant that getting the clearance to access research informants was a daunting task. Fast track land reform reconfigured rural authority structures, despite being already a multi-layered authority structure; new authority structures such as seven member committees, ZANU PF District Coordinating Committees (DCCs) and war veterans were added. Thus, securing a clearance to undertake fieldwork was a rather complicated process which was also time-consuming. To make matters even more challenging, these authority structures were riddled with factionalism, ethno-regionalism and competed to demonstrate their authority. What this meant was that being given clearance by one authority such as, for example, a local MP or chief did not necessarily guarantee you unfettered access to research informants as other authorities could block you. The main challenge was the absence of a clear hierarchical structure which could govern how such structures function as there is often discord and competition between them. For example, my field assistant and I interviewed people in six villages out of the total eight we intended to interview; however when we arrived in

village seven, a war veteran threatened to confiscate our data and asked us to go to seek clearance from the councilor. It was after a long negotiation that he finally allowed us to proceed. This prolonged process of negotiating with a diversity of authority structures was both time-consuming and financially expensive as it meant a longer period in the study site.

Another challenge I faced was that chiefs from the nearby Mhondoro Ngezi CA who have made territorial claims over the newly resettled area (where the research site is located) are not resident in these areas although they exercise some form of authority through their proxies who are resident in the new areas. A clearance from all the three chiefs had to be secured before interviews could be undertaken. This further delayed the data gathering process and also added more expenses to an already overstretched research budget.

Moreover, in the early stages of the data gathering process, people in newly resettled areas were reluctant to discuss land issues with a stranger. Authority structures, in particular ZANU PF, were against strangers asking about land reform for fear that such people wanted to undermine the credibility of the land reform process. The main cause of this was that some academics had undertaken research which portrayed the outcomes of land reform negatively. Such research was blamed for being central to the way western countries adjusted their foreign policy towards Zimbabwe and in particular the imposition of targeted sanctions. As a result, ZANU PF officials were suspicious of any academic researcher with links to western universities for the simple reason that such academics were suspected of undermining Zimbabwe's image abroad.

Thus, research informants were very suspicious of me in the beginning despite the fact that I had clearance from higher authorities and that I was a local student. People were afraid that they might give out information that might portray land reform negatively and thus attract the attention of authorities. Since there was a general perception that security of tenure was associated with supporting ZANU PF, many people feared that interviews might leave them vulnerable to losing their land after being suspected of colluding with foreign interests. This left me facing ethical dilemmas as I did not want to expose my informants to political victimisation. As a

result, it took me longer than expected to establish some rapport before I was welcome in the villages.

There were also other problems associated with being a local researcher. One might have thought being a Zimbabwean could have made the job of data gathering easier. However, due to local political dynamics, it turned out that my Zimbabwean identity worked against me. I did not expect that my presence in the community would threaten some local politicians. For example, the local Member of Parliament (MP) suspected that my research might be a form of information gathering which I would use in the long term to campaign in local future parliamentary elections. My activities and social interactions with research informants were thus continuously monitored.

My research assistant also further complicated the situation by mistakenly telling my potential informants that I was doing research to identify the challenges faced by farmers and that I was going to link them with donors. This seemed like a typical political campaign strategy which threatened local politicians. This resulted in me being asked to address a village meeting discussing ‘development’ at which I was the ‘keynote’ speaker tasked with providing information about where the farmers could get financial resources and other technical support to address local challenges such as shortage of clean water, construction of schools, HIV/AIDS, etc. I had to spend more time explaining to the local leadership that I was not linked to any donor and that I was a doctoral researcher interested in knowing what the new farmers were doing with land and what new opportunities were available to them in terms of livelihoods; where they came from and how they came and what they thought about their new environment. I also had to convince the local leadership that I had no political ambitions and that instead I was only interested in the outcomes of land reform rather than contesting local political positions.

After addressing the suspicions and misinformation about why I was in the area, it became relatively easy to spend time with many farmers from all 8 villages at the former Damvuri conservancy and to arrange interviews with key informants such as AREX officers, chiefs, representatives of the Committee of Seven, Village

Development Committees (VIDCOs), Ward Development Committees (WADCOs), war veterans, headmen and the local ZANU PF leadership.

Gathering data had its own pitfalls which are explained below. For example, my initial interviews were with local war veterans due to the fact that they were responsible for organising the occupation of the Damvuri conservancy. In our initial interviews, these war veterans posited a narrative that was common across Zimbabwe at the time that they had taken the Damvuri conservancy in a *jambanja* (use of violence) style and had forcibly evicted the former white owner, Owain Lewis, and gave the land to the people. However, during my stay in the villages, a new story gradually began to emerge which contradicted what had generally looked like the 'official' version of what happened during the occupation of Damvuri.

Contrary to war veteran claims of a *jambanja* style of land occupations, many of my informants told me that the Damvuri conservancy had been resettled relatively peacefully with no *jambanja* at all. According to this 'alternative' narrative which was corroborated by many informants, when the war veterans arrived and occupied the conservancy, the owner approached the District Administrator (DA) in the nearby Kadoma town and requested a grace period in order for him to pack his property and vacate the land. I was also told that the DA agreed to the land owner's proposal and advised the war veterans not to interfere with the farmer's property and to guard against any criminal activities such as hunting and cutting the game perimeter fence until the former owner had vacated the land. The owner was even allowed to take some of the wild animals with him. This story was very difficult for an outsider to comprehend given the fact that war veterans and local ZANU PF activists who are the community gate keepers seemed to have their own 'official' version of the story of how the land was occupied and redistributed. This had something to do with local dynamics of authority after land reform. War veterans sought to project themselves as 'liberators of the land' in an attempt to justify their claims of authority over land. However, this had the effect of projecting a problematic narrative of what actually happened during the occupation. My experience at Damvuri is that the war veteran identity is problematic in terms of their role in land occupations and the way undue

agency has been attributed to them in some places by some scholars (Sadomba 2010).

Another challenge that emerged during the data gathering process was the issue of gender. Interviewing women proved to be a rather difficult process as it involved in some places negotiating with their husbands before clearance was granted. In one instance data that had been gathered after interviewing a woman was confiscated by the husband, who claimed that women knew nothing about land reform and that if we wanted to know anything about land reform we had to interview him instead.

Although there are a relatively big number of women who accessed land in their own right in Mhondoro Ngezi, women continue to play a subordinate role in agricultural issues after land reform, especially married women. However, their husbands did not readily allow me access to interview them. This made it more difficult to gather women's perspectives compared to those of the men. However, I was able to interview a relatively large number of women after negotiating with their husbands.

My interaction with research informants from diverse backgrounds and of both genders helped me to develop a deeper understanding of the dynamics that shaped the way the land occupations unfolded in Mhondoro Ngezi. This helped me to trace the life histories of my informants, some of whom had been forcibly evicted from the area in the 1950s and had come back through land reform. These histories were central to the way many people made claims over land. Spending time resident in the villages helped me to develop closer relationships with my informants and to improve my understanding of their life histories and how such histories had shaped their livelihoods. It also helped me to understand the broader meanings attached to land and how the farmers conceptualised the benefits of land reform. According to Gezunki (1999:2):

Fieldwork is a highly personal experience. The meshing of fieldwork procedures with individual capabilities and situational variation is what makes fieldwork a highly personal experience. The validity and meaningfulness of the results obtained depend directly on the observer's skill, discipline, and perspective. This is both the strength and weakness of observational methods.

My social interactions and personal relationships with informants improved my understanding of how land reform had shaped rural livelihoods and also helped to illuminate the centrality of land restitution in the way people made claims over land.

A large corpus of the data is based on ethnographic data gathered through structured and semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, informal conversations and personal observations. In order to complement the qualitative data, a baseline survey of 50 households was also undertaken as a way of tracing changes in ownership of property such as livestock and farm equipment which had occurred after resettlement. This was useful in highlighting how livelihoods had changed after the land reform.

Secondary sources have also been utilised to provide a background to the debate on land reform in Zimbabwe. Such sources were useful in highlighting major debates that had emerged in the aftermath of land reform. They were also useful in highlighting the outcomes of land reform in other parts of Zimbabwe and hence helped me to refine my thesis.

Lastly, some archival work was undertaken in order to provide a historical background to the Mhondoro Ngezi area, in particular the dynamics of forced removals in the former Rhodesdale Estate, which became salient in the context of land reform. Moreover, archival sources, in particular Native Commissioner Delineation Reports, were useful in highlighting the background of the three chieftainships (Benhura, Nyika and Murambwa) that have made territorial claims in the Newly Resettled Areas (NRAs) in Mhondoro Ngezi District. These reports were particularly useful in highlighting the genealogy of the chieftaincies and the dynamics of boundaries between their territories starting from the colonial era to the 2000s when such boundaries became contested. It is hoped that this combination of data gathering methods, and the use of secondary materials, improves the quality of the data and more importantly the objectivity of this thesis' findings.

Although the thesis is based on a case study of 185 households in one district, it is hoped that its findings can be generalised to other parts of Zimbabwe. It is also hoped that the thesis will complement studies already undertaken elsewhere

(Scoones *et al.* 2010, Hanlon *et al.* 2012 and Matondi 2012) and that this will eventually help to address the information gap that exists in literature on Zimbabwe's land reform.

Chapter Outline

The thesis is structured in a chronological order; each chapter explores the dynamics of land reform in the Mhondoro Ngezi District and its outcomes. Chapter One analysed major debates that have emerged in the aftermath of land reform through a review of literature. It also set out the objectives of the thesis and its contribution to the broader debates about the outcomes of Zimbabwe's land reform process. Lastly, it provided a rationale for the fieldwork site, methodological issues and thesis structure.

Chapter Two examines the dynamics of land occupations at the Damvuri Conservancy in Mhondoro Ngezi District. The first section of the chapter provides a historical background to the research area. This is followed by an analysis of the dynamics of land occupations in terms how war veterans occupied the conservancy and how the local state structures such as the DA were involved at the early stages of the land occupations. The second section explores the dynamics of the occupation in terms of how people made claims over land and the dynamics that shaped such a process. The chapter concludes by highlighting how histories of forced removals influenced how claims over the new land were made by people from diverse geographical backgrounds.

Chapter Three analyses the dynamics of land allocations in terms of technocratic processes of land demarcation and beneficiary allocation. The first section provides a profile of land beneficiaries in terms of their demographic and geographical backgrounds and how they joined land occupations at the former Damvuri Conservancy. The second section highlights how and why people joined the land occupations in Mhondoro Ngezi and their historical background and motivation for joining the land occupations.

Chapter Four analyses the reconfiguration of rural authority structures brought about by fast track land reform, in particular the role of the various structures of authority

in the land redistribution process. Firstly, it examines how authority over land is claimed by both state and local actors and how this has shaped state making processes in the countryside after land reform. Secondly, it highlights how new forms of authority have been co-opted to work with the state rather than outside it. The chapter concludes by highlighting how authority over land in the countryside is contested among a diversity of actors, both state and non-state.

Chapter Five examines new livelihood trajectories that have emerged after fast track land reform. Firstly, the dynamics of agricultural investments after land reform in terms of land utilisation are highlighted. The second section focuses on how off-farm income generating activities such as gold panning and natural resource extraction have become a key part of rural livelihoods after land reform. The chapter concludes by highlighting that the new farmers are socially differentiated and that some have invested on their land while others are involved in off-farm activities with the hope of investing in their land later in the future.

Chapter Six analyses the social organisation of land beneficiaries in the aftermath of resettlement. Firstly, how resettled farmers are socially organised in terms of new associational networks and social institutions which have emerged after resettlement is explored. Secondly, the trajectory of social organisation after land reform is discussed, particularly how people who were initially strangers have initiated associational networks and social institutions as a way of addressing the socio-economic challenges they face in the absence of government support.

Chapter Seven provides a summary of the findings and highlights how land reform allowed peasant households to access better quality land and other natural resources which were formerly enclosed under Zimbabwe's racialised agrarian structure inherited at independence. The chapter concludes by highlighting that land reform has provided peasant farmers with a basis for long-term livelihoods security if its benefits are fully utilised and the challenges facing the farmers and Zimbabwe's wider agrarian sector are addressed.

Chapter Two

Reclaiming the land in Mhondoro Ngezi

This chapter analyses the dynamics of land occupations at the Damvuri Conservancy which was occupied by war veterans in 2000 and demarcated into A1 plots (villagised model). It highlights the dynamics of the occupation in terms of how war veteran led peasants occupied the conservancy and how claims over the newly occupied land were made. The dynamics of authority during the occupation will also be highlighted.

In Mhondoro Ngezi, land occupations started in earnest largely as symbolic manoeuvres by war veterans protesting against local grievances of rural poverty and landlessness during the so called *jambanja* era (Chaumba *et al.* 2003). The first core group of the war veterans arrived at the Damvuri Conservancy in 2000 led by two war veteran leaders, Comrade (Cde) Jongwe and Cde Hunidzananiwa. Cde Jongwe came from the Bandawe old resettlement area near the Damvuri Conservancy while Cde Hunidzananiwa is believed to have come from Sanyati. They both belonged to the local Kadoma chapter of the Zimbabwe National Liberation and War Veterans Association (ZNLWVA). The war veterans were later joined by people from the old resettlement schemes bordering the Damvuri Conservancy and also by residents of the nearby Mhondoro Ngezi Communal Area (CA) and others from areas further away such as Sanyati and Gokwe.

An important dynamic of land occupations in Mhondoro Ngezi which is worth noting is that they did not follow the popularised *jambanja* style, which in some places involved violent confrontation between war veteran led peasants and the white land owners during the watershed moments of 2000 (Hammar *et al.* 2003). Instead, these land occupations were relatively peaceful and the war veterans who occupied the conservancy were forced to observe law and order before the conservancy was officially demarcated into A1 plots. The reason for the absence of *jambanja* can be attributed to the fact that the District Administrator (DA) in Kadoma was involved at the early stages of the occupation. The DA is believed to have been approached by the owner of the Damvuri Conservancy who requested time to move his property

from the occupied land before it was distributed. Thus, the DA is said to have ordered war veterans not to interfere with the farmer's property.

The way land seekers came to the occupied conservancy is another important dynamic of the Damvuri land occupations. Although a few people joined the war veterans who had camped at the conservancy in 2000, a large number of people who were officially allocated plots had formally registered with the DA in Kadoma before moving to the conservancy. Most land seekers from far off areas such as Gokwe did not join the occupation but camped first at the DA's office where they were 'processed' before being transported to the occupied conservancy. However, there were other people who came through ZANU PF networks within the Mashonaland West Province. Some people who came from as far as Harare and other cities and towns were also allocated land at the Damvuri conservancy at a later stage. This indicates that land occupations at Damvuri Conservancy were an ordered process from the beginning and that war veterans had limited authority to redistribute land. Yet another dynamic of the land occupations in Mhondoro Ngezi is that a large number of people who were resettled at the conservancy claimed an autochthonous connection with the area. Such people claimed that they had been forcefully removed from the area during the colonial era and relocated to the nearby Mhondoro Ngezi CA or to remote areas of Gokwe. For such people fast track land reform provided an opportunity to recover their ancestral lands lost during the colonial era.

The way in which the conservancy was occupied in terms of the dominance of bureaucratic processes rather than *jambanja* had a significant influence on how the newly occupied land was governed in the aftermath of the land reform process. The following section provides a historical background to the Mhondoro Ngezi area.

Historical background of the study area

The Damvuri Conservancy is located in the former Large Scale Commercial Farming (LSCF) area of the Mhondoro Ngezi District in Mashonaland West Province of Zimbabwe. The area where the conservancy is located was historically part of a large stretch of land called Rhodesdale Estate which bordered the mining town of Mvuma to the east and the towns of Kadoma, Kwekwe and Gweru to the west. The estate had

a chequered history; it changed hands from being part of the vast landholdings owned by the British South Africa Company (BSAC) when it was acquired by the London Rhodesia Corporation (LONRHO) and then sold to the Rhodesian Government in the late 1940s. Rhodesdale was acquired by the Rhodesian Government in the 1940s in order to provide land to British veterans of World War II who had emigrated to the then Southern Rhodesia (Nyambara 2005).

The sale of Rhodesdale to the Rhodesian government and its subsequent demarcation into private farms resulted in the eviction of Africans who had been allowed to live on the estate as tenant farmers, paying rent to the BSAC during the early days of colonial occupation. During this time, it was generally profitable for European land owners to collect rent as farming was not viable. However, the situation changed with time and the post-war agricultural boom led to a high demand for Rhodesian agricultural products and hence a demand for more land for European use. Moreover, an increase in net emigration to Rhodesia by Europeans further increased the demand for land to resettle such immigrants. This led to what has been generally called the 'second alienation' (Ranger 1985). During this time large numbers of Africans who, despite the requirements of the Land Apportionment Act which specified that they relocate but had remained on European areas as tenant farmers, faced forceful evictions. Under the context of the post-war dynamics which led to increased demand for land, an amendment was made to laws that had allowed the Africans to continue living on European areas as 'tenants' turned them to being 'squatters', legitimising forceful removal to 'native' areas. Most of the Africans evicted from Rhodesdale were forcibly relocated to native reserves in Sanyati and the largely uninhabited Gokwe areas. Before their evictions, such Africans had been successful tenant farmers. According to Nyambara (2005), many Africans who were forcefully removed from the Rhodesdale Estate resented the forceful relocation since they were prosperous farmers with Master Farmer certificates and had adopted 'modern' ways of agriculture and owned large herds of stock given the favourable climatic conditions that obtained at Rhodesdale. Such people found themselves being forcibly relocated to the dry and tsetse fly ridden Gokwe area where they struggled to re-establish their farming enterprises. Moreover, forced removals dislocated families

from their ancestors whose graves were left behind, livestock was lost and movable property also damaged during the process.

The Damvuri Conservancy was one of the farms that was created after Africans were forcefully removed from Rhodesdale in the 1940s. The conservancy was owned by Owain Lewis, a professional hunter who inherited the land from his late parents. In terms of size, the conservancy comprised two properties; Damvuri Ranch and the Rock Bar Ranch to the south of the Muzvezve River which was acquired by Owain's family and incorporated into Damvuri (see Figure 2). These two properties (Damvuri and Rockbar) combined together constituted an area approximately two thousand hectares. Before its occupation by war veteran-led peasants, the conservancy was operated as a safari hunting business which specialised in the lucrative but politically controversial trophy hunting industry. It attracted wealthy American tourists who frequented the conservancy during the trophy hunting seasons. By the time it was occupied in 2000, the Safari hunting industry had already suffered as a result of a dramatic decline in the number of safari hunting tourists due to political instability in the country. The onset of land invasions and the global negative publicity they generated further damaged the already declining industry, thus making the safari hunting business unsustainable and politically dangerous due to outbreaks of violence in some occupied farms. Owain left Damvuri in 2000 after its occupation by war veterans and it is rumoured that he bought a smaller piece of land in Darwendale near Harare where he is involved in some other business.

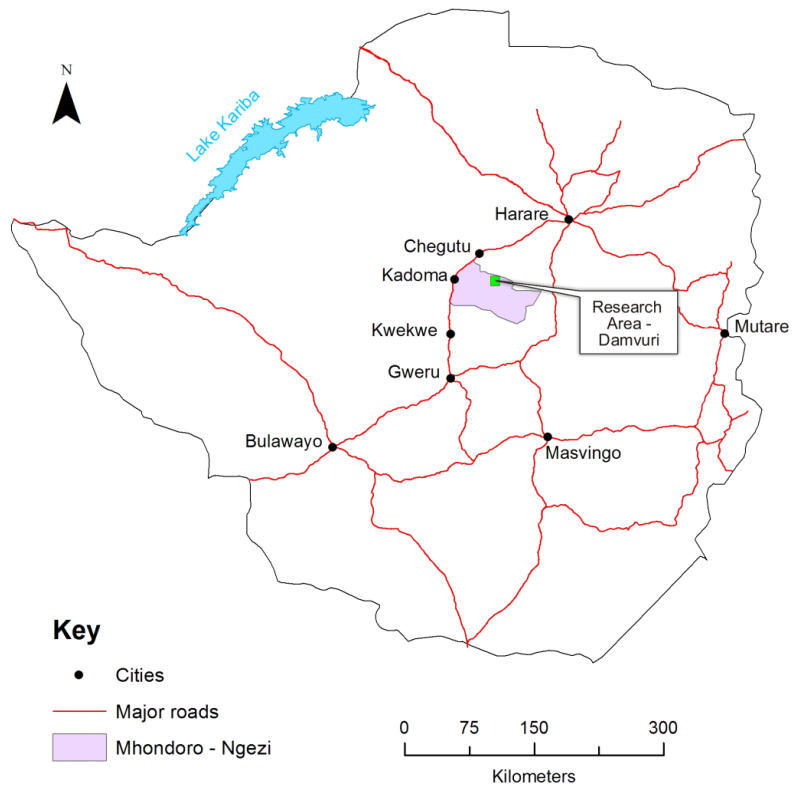


Figure 1: Map showing location of the study area

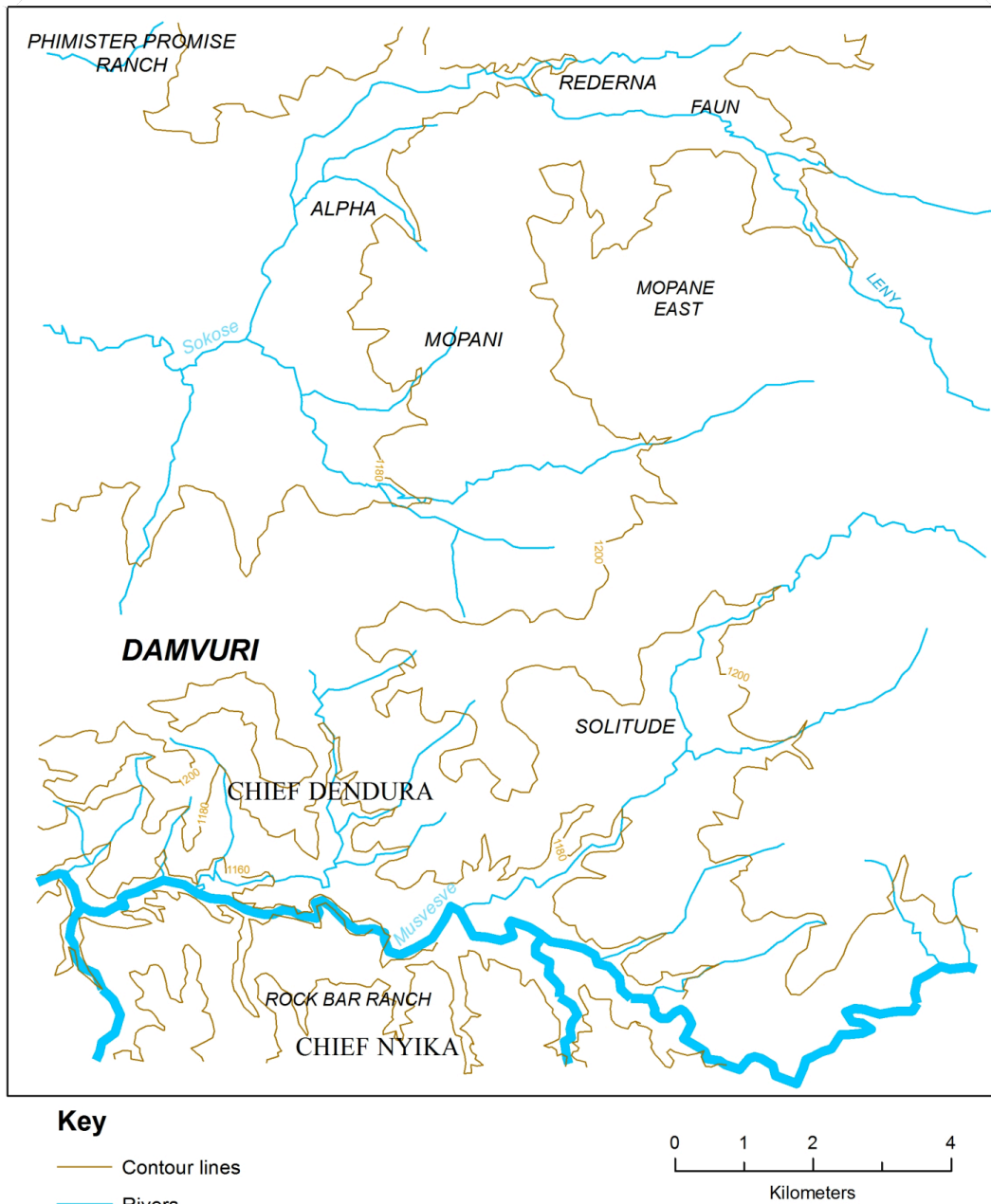


Figure 2: Map showing the former Damvuri conservancy and surrounding farms.

By the time of its occupation by war veterans in 2000, Damvuri Conservancy had remained as an isolated white owned safari hunting enclave in an area that had been largely ‘acquired’ and redistributed to peasant farmers. Most of the former white owned farms and ranches in the broader area were acquired by the Government of Zimbabwe (GoZ) on a ‘willing-seller willing-buyer’ basis and turned into resettlement areas in the 1980s. These developments left the Damvuri conservancy

vulnerable to increased incidents of poaching of both fauna and flora and hence conflicts between peasant farmers from the nearby Mhondoro Ngezi CA and the Damvuri owner as noted by a former Damvuri worker:

By the time war veterans came to occupy Damvuri in 2000, Owain had already decided his safari operations were no longer sustainable because of poachers who came from nearby resettlement areas such as Tyron to the South, Bandahwe to the south east, Mopani plots to the west and Wale Ranch to the north; all these farms had been subdivided into plots under the Government of Zimbabwe's old resettlement schemes. (Interview with Wisdom Mutanga at Damvuri 07/08/10).

Given the histories of forced removals and perceived white farmer injustices in the Mhondoro Ngezi area, land restitution discourses played a central role in the way people joined the occupation of white owned farms. During interviews, the informants claimed that the reason they occupied white owned land such as the Damvuri conservancy was that historically such lands belonged to their ancestors and that they had been forcibly evicted from the area. Moreover, histories of unjust treatment by white land owners played a role in the way some people joined the land occupations. For example, people from the Mhondoro Ngezi CA claimed that during the colonial era white land owners unfairly confiscated their livestock which had strayed into their private land. They further cited acts of injustices carried out by the white farmers such as brutal beatings of local people for petty crimes such as trespassing and natural resource poaching (snaring of wild animals, hunting with dogs and gathering of firewood) as reasons for their actions towards white farmers. Other informants cited historical grievances such as being barred from hunting while white land owners freely shot wild animals now fenced within private conservancies, excluding indigenous people from accessing such livelihoods.

In general, narratives of white farmer brutality were circulating in the local area way before farms were 'invaded'. Embedded within these narratives was a repertoire of metaphors which reflected historical tensions between Africans confined to ecologically degraded 'reserves' and their white neighbours who generally possessed better quality land. Histories of white farmer brutality in Mhondoro Ngezi are reflected by nick names given to some white farmers. For example, the owner of Mopani Ranch which is located to the north of the Damvuri conservancy was renamed '*mukanda bhutsu*' (one who kicks), since the white owner had a reputation

of kicking his workers or trespassers; the owner of Solitude Farm which is located to the east was called 'mhiripiri (Mr Hot Chillies), as the owner had a reputation for being temperamental, while the owner of Wale Ranch which is located to the west was called Rafu (Mr Rough) because of his reputation for being 'rough' with Africans who trespassed on his farm. The biographies provided below highlight how colonial injustices influenced the way people joined land occupations. Mr Phiri, a war veteran, was one of the first people who came to occupy the Damvuri conservancy in 2000. He came from the nearby old resettlement area of Tyron where he had owned a plot from the 1980s but decided that he needed more land as the area was now congested:

During the Rhodesian times, white farmers had their own laws which they exercised with extreme brutality. The white farmer was a policeman, a magistrate, the judge and the prison guard. When these white farmers came to this area they were given executive powers by the Rhodesian government to use force in order to make people work; it was generally believed that black people were lazy and that one needed to use force to make them work. The farmer paid very little in wages. During the liberation war the white farmer was a member of the Selous Scouts, that's why he always kept a gun. We came here to recover our ancestral lands lost to the whites. White farmers owned thousands of hectares of land while we were suffering in overcrowded reserves. There is nothing wrong with us taking back our land. (Interview with Mr. Phiri at Damvuri: 26/11/2010)

Mr Tichaona came to join the occupation of the Damvuri conservancy in 2001 from the nearby Mhondoro Ngezi CA; he had this to say about the former owner of the Damvuri conservancy:

'The white farmer was cruel; he did not want to see a black person walking in the farm. If a man was seen walking along the road which goes through the farm, he was told to go back or he was going to be shot; many people were afraid of being shot by the farmer, he never wanted to see a black person with meat, he used to shoot dogs belonging to black people since he suspected them of being used for poaching. We came here in order to recover our land. We were suffering in Communal Areas, with no water and pasture for our livestock while farmers in this area were sitting on many acres of fertile land. We came here to take back our land from whites who abused us for many years. (Interview with Mr. Tichaona at Damvuri: 15/11/2010).

Mr Chipango, who came to Damvuri from Gokwe in 2003, claimed to have been evicted from the area by the Rhodesian government in the 1950s:

We were forcibly removed from our land by whites. They stole our livestock and other property during forced removals. Moreover, we were dumped in Gokwe, a

hostile dry place with no water while whites gave themselves fertile land. This was no joke, people lost property such as livestock and other belongings. They came in the night, with very little warning and you were just told you are being moved to Gokwe. Old people were slapped by white boys. Boers are rubbish. We came here to recover our land. (Interview at Damvuri with Chipango 25/09/2010).

These commentaries highlight how colonial injustices influenced the way people joined land occupations in Mhondoro Ngezi. However, land occupations and resettlement in Mhondoro Ngezi oddly seemed to follow the old resettlement pattern in terms of the process being state-led and land claimants being registered with the DA before joining the land occupations. Unlike in many areas of Zimbabwe where war veterans had a free reign to occupy farms and redistribute land during the *jambanja* era, in Mhondoro Ngezi the process was state-led and followed a somewhat technocratic pattern from the beginning. Thus, the scenes of violence and chaos in occupied farms associated with the watershed moments of 2000 popularised by some scholars (Hammar 2003 and Worby 2003) does not apply to the Mhondoro Ngezi situation. After occupying the Damvuri conservancy in 2000, war veterans were forced to work with state actors rather than bypass them. Their occupation remained a ‘protest’ until state structures came to legitimise it. Local state structures such as the DA and AREX Services, Kadoma Rural District Council and Ministry of Lands which had long been involved in leading resettlement programmes in the early 1980s, were actively involved in the early stages of the occupation. The following section explores the dynamics of land occupations and the way authority over land was claimed and legitimised by the state.

Land occupations and their dynamics in Mhondoro Ngezi

“We came here through the struggle” (War Veterans leader interviewed on 13/06/10).

Zimbabwe’s war veterans were central in spearheading the land occupations after the 2000 benchmark. The role of war veterans and other non-state actors in these widespread land occupations has been extensively analysed in literature (Alexander 2003, Hammar. 2003, Chaumba *et al.* 2003 and Sadomba 2010). Any attempt to analyse and generalise the role of war veterans and ZANU PF structures during the land occupations is likely to face major challenges. This is simply because their role

and influence was largely determined by local circumstances and contingency as there was no standard formula, which was followed in undertaking such occupations. In some places war veterans emerged as powerful power brokers wielding enormous political authority. In other places the state remained stubbornly in charge at a time when some commentators claimed the state had collapsed (Worby 2003 and Richardson 2004). This inevitably makes findings based on one study area insufficient in generalising trends and tendencies of fast track land reform processes and its subsequent outcomes. Moreover, relationships between the various actors and their political roles and identities shifted with time; class conflicts, ethnicity and factionalism among such actors further complicated the situation. Geographical factors and local politics to some extent influenced how an invasion was undertaken, including its outcome. Moreover, the outcome of a land occupation also depended on the level of institutionalisation of the state locally. The situation at the Damvuri conservancy defied the ‘national’ trend at many levels: state structures actively guarded against the occupation deteriorating into chaos; land seekers sought to formalise their land claims in the early stages rather than joining the ‘illegal’ occupation; the former owner was allowed to take away his property; and farm workers were not politically victimised and were allocated land like everyone else. This localised experience complicates attempts to make any generalisations in terms of how invasions took place and their outcomes, and it also questions popularised claims of chaos, state collapse (Hammar *et al.* 2003 and 2010) and undue agency attributed to war veterans and other rural actors in recent literature on land reform (Sadomba 2010).

One of the major criticisms of the FTLRP programme was that during land occupations, local state institutions were undermined by war veterans and ZANU PF Youths. According to Alexander (2003: 104):

... land occupations required an extreme attack on institutions of the state, in very sharp contrasts to the government’s response to the occupations in the 1980s when it had sought to strengthen and insulate a modernising bureaucracy. In 2000 the judiciary was severely undermined as ruling after ruling was ignored. The police force was increasingly politicised, purged of critics and prevented from carrying their duties ... civil servants came under tremendous pressure to support ZANU PF and came under violent attack where they did not. The ministries charged with agrarian policy were meanwhile marginalised from

control of land policy in favour of an alliance led by ZANU PF and War Veterans

While such a broad analysis gives a generalised picture of the political environment that underpinned fast track land reform, it also raises serious conceptual challenges in terms of how one can better understand the often localised and nuanced experiences in terms of how individual farms located in often diverse locations were occupied and demarcated and the role of various actors in such processes as Chaumba *et al.* (2003: 3) have argued:

The broad brush representation of the farm invasion and fast track resettlement process as chaotic, violent, un-modern and unplanned obfuscates two overlapping phases underpinned by the same logic. Rather than constituting a descent into anarchy, the state bureaucracy has been able to enact a rapid return to a 'technocratic type' –if indeed this type ever went away.

Based on data gathered in Masvingo Province, Chaumba *et al.* (2003:4) have demonstrated that the land occupations and subsequent allocations were already an ordered process during the so-called *jambanja* era as 'the occupiers often went to great length to employ the formal and technical tools of land use planning' and that 'the occupiers conducted their own survey and allocated plots'. This study is useful in the way it challenges the depiction of land occupations as chaotic. The way land occupations unfolded in Mhondoro Ngezi indicates that 'state modernism' (Scott 2001) and technocracy did not just 'return' after the occupation but were present from the beginning as the local state institutions such as the DA, AREX and Kadoma Rural District Council were actively involved in the early stages of the occupation facilitating the registration and transportation of land seekers to the occupied Damvuri Conservancy.

Local ZANU PF activists, war veterans and the army (to a lesser extent) largely facilitated the mobilisation of people and helped with logistics in conjunction with state structures such as the Kadoma Rural District Council. People from remote locations such as Sanyati and Gokwe (who constitute the majority of land beneficiaries) were mobilised and made to 'formally' register with the DA in Kadoma before they could be considered for land allocation. Although war veterans were central in organising 'protests' such

as leading the occupation of the Damvuri Conservancy, their authority and political clout remained peripheral to that of local state actors who maintained a hegemonic presence during the occupation.

However, despite the hegemonic role played by the state during the land occupations, war veteran informants interviewed were keen to adopt the jambanja discourse in the way they sought to conceptualise the occupation of Damvuri. Jambanja appealed to them mainly because of its utility in their attempts to claim authority over land and that it was also a useful tool in their counter hegemonic struggles against state actors.

During interviews and informal conversations, war veterans were at pains to emphasize their important role during the occupation by appealing to broader liberation discourses. They interpreted their role as more of leading a revolution rather than mere facilitators of a state led technocratic process. This was reflected in their rhetoric whenever they were given a chance to talk in public especially at local ZANU PF political meetings. They also claimed to have forced the Damvuri owner using military style tactics although this contradicts opinions of other informants such as the former farm workers and ordinary people.

Mr Munemo a war veteran and one of the leaders of the occupation of the Damvuri conservancy had this to say:

We came here through the struggle; we took over the farm because the white farmer was a cruel racist. We came to this farm in 2000. The white farmer tried to resist but we told him that this was our soil. We went to war for it. He tried to go to court and he also tried to get help from other white farmers but it did not work. We went to the DA's office in order to get more people to come and join the occupation, the DA had a list of people who had registered to get land, the people came from various areas but mostly from Gokwe who had lost their land during forced removals. These people wanted to come back home. The farm workers changed sides and joined the occupation when they realized that the farmer was going to lose the land (Interview at Damvuri 10/10/2010).

Other war veterans were also eager to frame the occupation in military terms, for example during the interviews they claimed that they expected the farmer to 'surrender' or give up arms. The farmer was also referred as a military

‘target’. These militaristic discourses were repeatedly rehearsed during interviews with Mr Mujeki, a war veteran:

Land reform was a war. We fought for the land and without war whites were not going to surrender the land. Every Rhodesian farmer was a soldier, many of the farmers kept guns and as a result we treated them as soldiers. For us occupying the land was as good as going to war. We encouraged discipline as we were taught during the war, we were serious and ready to go to war (interview at Damvuri. 10/10/2011).

War veteran militarism was further reflected in the way the ‘Base’ at Damvuri was organised, the base commander was by default the leader of the committee of seven (although this committee is largely symbolic at Damvuri) which was the administrative organ of the land occupiers. Moreover, war veterans sought to impose a strict military regime where they became de facto military commanders. They also acted as the police (a role they were assigned by the DA before the demarcation of Damvuri), with the youth, women and other ‘civilians’ being forced to observe a strict military code of conduct including regular drilling and rehearsals of *Chimurenga* songs. An informant who joined the war veterans in the early days of the occupation had this to say:

When we came here in 2000, it was like a war, we used to sing liberation songs all night, war veterans were the big guys, we waited for them to give us land, and they were in charge of food rationing and settling disputes and criminal justice. However everybody was not allowed to touch anything belonging to the farmer until the DA came (Mr Mutaka, interviewed 08/10/2010).

Discourses of *chimurenga* (liberation war) reflected in several interviews go against counter-narratives of what happened during the land occupations. As highlighted earlier, although war veterans were central in the occupation of Damvuri, their activities were severely restricted by the involvement of the DA and other state structures such as AREX and the Kadoma District Council which did not allow the situation to deteriorate into a ‘*jambanja* phase’. According to such counter-narratives, the DA is claimed to have imposed a moratorium on hunting and other illegal activities such as interference with the white landowner’s property until he had taken his property off the occupied land. This counter-narrative was not popular with war veteran informants who instead favoured the *jambanja* discourse which they sought to popularise in the early stages of the land occupations. During interviews, war veterans depicted

the land occupations as *kutora nyika* (taking the country) rather than reclaiming the land. Such claims of ‘liberating the country’ resonated strongly with land hungry people, especially in the early stages of the land reform. Such rhetoric was also key in the way war veterans sought to legitimise their activities and claims of authority over occupied land, as Mr Shangari, a war veteran leader put it:

We came here to take the country that had been taken by Boers; these whites had kept our land since 1980 when we got independence. As former freedom fighters we remained in rural enclaves suffering without land. When the chance to get back the country came, we did not waste time because we thought enough is enough (Interview at Damvuri: 15/10/2011).

War veterans also attempted to take advantage of the absence of chiefly authority in the occupied area as Chiefs Benhura, Nyika and Ngezi, who claimed to have some jurisdiction over it did not join the land occupation but remained in the Mhondoro Ngezi CA. However, the presence of state structures meant that even though ‘chiefly’ authority was absent, it did not mean war veterans had a free reign to exercise authority over the newly occupied area. Local government structures remained in control over the affairs of the newly occupied area in terms of who could access the land and on what basis as a Ministry of Lands officer put it:

This farm was redistributed according to the law. The DA came here soon after the war veterans camped here. We did not allow disorder. People had to go and register at the DA’s office before coming here. That’s why you see this area does not have the chaos reported elsewhere (Interview with Mujakachi at Damvuri 06/02/11).

Damvuri did not experience the total collapse or absence of state structures as claimed by some scholars (Worby 2003). The state was present in the beginning and it continues to be present well after the occupation. The relatively orderly transfer of property from the former owner to ordinary people can be attributed to the involvement of state structures in the early stages of the occupation as observed by a former farm worker:

The war veterans came and camped by the farm shop, there were no incidents of violence or confrontation between the war veterans and the farmer. The process involved a smooth handover of the farm facilitated by the DA. The former owner transported his animals to Rio Tinto where he had bought a plot as well as Pamuzinda Safari Lodge. He was also able to take away most of his personal belongings except the water tank (Interview with Mtanga at Damvuri 23/09/10).

The presence of state structures (and hence absence of *jambanja*) meant that the war veterans were not able to significantly influence and reshape authority structures as their role remained largely symbolic. Their influence seemed to have remained peripheral in terms of their ability to redistribute land as Ministry of Lands officials and AREX officers took centre stage in the demarcation of occupied land into individual plots. Thus, war veterans became mere facilitators of the process rather than running the show and also lacked the prestige and authority enjoyed by their counter parts elsewhere. State presence in the early stages of the occupation meant few opportunities to loot property and to acquire assets such as the ‘homestead’ (former farm house) which became public property (it houses civil servants such as AREX officers) rather than being a *de facto* home of the base commander as reported elsewhere (Scoones *et al.* 2010).

Moreover, the war veterans did not get preferential treatment in terms of plot sizes or quality of plots. At Damvuri, getting a plot was based on the concept of *kunhonga chijeke* (picking a bottle top), a process which involved technocrats from AREX and Ministry of Lands who pegged plots and assigned them with numbers. Such plot numbers were then placed in a box and land seekers were then asked to randomly pick a bottle top with a plot number from a bucket. The process of ‘picking a bottle top’ was designed to discourage people from picking and choosing specific pieces of land or getting larger pieces of land. This ordered process was resented by war veterans who expected certain privileges in the land allocation process given their ‘assumed’ role in leading land occupations. Some informants claimed that two war veteran leaders, Cde Urombo and Cde Jongwe who were part of the group that spearheaded the occupation, reportedly left Damvuri in protest against state control of the process. A key informant representing government at the time had this to say:

Here people were given land according to the law. The government was responsible for land redistribution. War veterans and others helped with logistics and keeping law and order (Interview with Gotora at Damvuri 12/11/10).

The centrality of technocracy and bureaucratic protocol during land occupations in Mhondoro Ngezi is reflected in biographies of individual farmers gathered during the fieldwork. These biographies highlight how the land occupations and land allocations followed a rather bureaucratic trajectory rather than the *jambanja* which was popular in the early stages of the land reform programme.

Mrs Eva Ndlovu who was allocated land at the Damvuri conservancy had this to say about how she came to Damvuri:

I came from Sanyati through the DA's office. My parents moved to Sanyati in the 1950s. They were coming from Rhodesdale near Kwekwe where they had been forcibly removed by white settlers. I got this farm on 11 November 2000 and then began building, and we were transported from Kadoma in army vehicles (Interview at Damvuri: 22/11/2010).

Another informant, Mr Lozane who came from Sanyati, also highlighted the centrality of the DA's office in the way he came to the Damvuri conservancy:

My family came from Sanyati. Our parents say they were forcefully relocated from Rhodesdale near Kwekwe. We applied to the DA to get land here and we were allocated. We came on our own. Sanyati was too small for our growing family. There is plenty of land here and grazing pastures, we feel lucky that we are here although there are still problems related to being a new place (Interview at Damvuri: 22/11/2010).

Mrs Beatrice Ngwerengwe is an urbanite who left Kadoma town to join the occupation at the Damvuri conservancy. Her story further highlights the importance of the DA's office in the way people were allocated land at the Damvuri conservancy.

We came from Kadoma in 2000 through the DA's office. We went to register our interest for land and when an opportunity arose we were offered land here at Damvuri. My family is originally from Zimuto in Masvingo. Kadoma was expensive (rent, food, etc), we could not make ends meet. We came here to do farming to get food and income without anybody forcing or pushing you like we did in Kadoma. The agricultural situation is good here; we can manage to get food and then sell extra to get some income (Interview at Damvuri: 22/11/2010).

These testimonies highlight the centrality of the DA's office in the way people were allocated land at the Damvuri conservancy. The presence of local state institutions in the early stages of land occupations meant that land seekers sought to formalise their claims over land in the beginning rather than wait for the so called 'planning phase' (Chaumba *et al.* 2003). Another aspect of state hegemony reflected at Damvuri is the extent to which the state was able to maintain order after the farm occupation. For example, the former Damvuri owner was reportedly given a three-month notice by

the DA to move his private property including ‘his’ wild animals, a privilege that was not enjoyed by other white farmers elsewhere. Contrary to war veterans’ claims of having ‘forced’ the farmer off the land, he is reported to have been present (at the DA’s invitation) during the official demarcation of Damvuri and is said to have lobbied the DA to give his former farm workers first preference in land allocations. Moreover, the former farm workers claim that their former employer continues to visit them ten years after he left Damvuri, although they have discouraged him from visiting due to the security risk he poses. This illustrates the often nuanced dynamics associated with the land occupations across Zimbabwe’s countryside. It also demonstrates that the land occupations did not follow any particular phases and that in some places land occupations were a planned affair from the beginning. Moreover, claims of state collapse and chaos across the Zimbabwean countryside popularised in literature are too general and need to be qualified. Events at Damvuri demonstrate that state structures were not only present but also had an upper hand during the land occupation. Thus, it seems the cult of the war veteran as an outlaw imposing arbitrary authority in occupied areas popularised in the media and academic literature does not sufficiently capture the whole picture and is not pervasive. For example, a visitor to the former Damvuri conservancy is welcomed by a sign post reflecting modernist ideas about development rather than mob rule: *‘Welcome to Damvuri....fast tracking education for development’*.

At local ZANU PF political meetings which I attended during the fieldwork, ‘modernist’ ideas of ‘development’ and ‘progress’ were reflected in slogans which seem to castigate those who are against order and progress:

Forward with togetherness! Forward
Forward with Development! Forward
Down with those against development! Down
(Recorded at a ZANU PF meeting at Damvuri 23/07/10).

This further highlights that land occupations and resettlement in Mhondoro Ngezi followed a logic different from that of *jambanja* which was popular at the time. It also highlights that newly resettled areas are ordered spaces largely influenced by discourses of development and progress which are supported by the state. Although war veterans attempted to depict farm occupations as *‘kutora nyika’* (taking the country) as a way of leveraging authority over the newly occupied land, such

attempts were hardly successful in overriding or undermining the authority of local state institutions such as the DA and AREX. This does not mean to say their political influence can be totally dismissed, since they remain key figures in the way the state seeks to exercise authority over the area. To a large extent, they have been largely co-opted to operate side by side with official authority structures such as WADCOs, VIDCOs, Village Heads and Councillors. This dynamic interaction between the state and non-state actors in terms of how authority is exercised requires a better and more nuanced understanding of how the state functions and interacts with non-state actors as James Ferguson (2006: 103) argues:

We must not think of the new organisations ... not as challengers pressing up against the state from below, but as horizontal contemporaries of the organs of the state, -sometimes rivals, sometimes servants, sometimes watchdogs, sometimes parasites but in every case operating on the same level and in the same ... space.

Within Damvuri, the boundaries between the state and non-state authorities are sometimes blurred, the former with an upper hand in the way the affairs of the area are run and the latter regularly functioning as a mobilising force during the elections in a largely patron-client set up. The Damvuri experience requires that we move away from 'totalising' claims of state 'presence' and 'absence' or 'displacement' and 'chaos' during land occupations, but to critically engage with empirical evidence on the ground and to appreciate the diversity of experiences, as Ferguson (2006: 112) has argued: 'what is called for in other words is an approach to the state that would treat its verticality and encompassment not as a taken-for-granted fact but a precarious achievement'.

It also requires that we re-engage with debates about the nature of the post-colonial state in Sub-Saharan Africa, in particular its partial institutionalisation and how that has an impact on operations of state institutions as noted by Chabal *et al.* (1999: 8):

... the origins of African polities tend to confuse appearance with reality. The fact that all post-colonial states have been formally constituted on the modern Western state is not in itself evidence of the degree of their institutionalisation. Above and beyond the public display of the attributes of the modern state ... the reality of the exercise of power on the continent points to a necessary caution when it comes to assessing the degree to which such formal bodies do amount to a modern (Weberian) state.

There is an increasing need to problematise the often unwarranted agency attributed to war veterans in literature on fast track land reform (Sadomba 2010) and to re-engage with theories that question the ‘total’ institutionalisation of the state in Africa (Chabal *et al.* 1999 and Ferguson 2006). These can provide practical answers in the way in which one can explain the ‘spatial’ character of the state which was reflected in the way in which the state seemed to be ‘present’ in some places regulating the actions of the local actors while at some places its ‘absence’ resulted in local actors temporarily taking charge of key state functions such as land redistribution. It is useful to engage with the neo-patrimonial model (Medard 1982 and 1981) as it can help us to examine the interaction between the state and local actors. According to Chabal *et al.* (1999: 9):

... the neo-patrimonial approach seeks to make sense of the (real and imaginary) contradictions to be found in the state in Sub-Saharan Africa. From this perspective, the state is simultaneously illusory and substantial. It is illusory because its *modus operandi* is essentially informal, the rule of law is feebly enforced and the ability to implement public policy remains most limited. It is substantial because its control is the ultimate prize for all political elites: indeed it is the chief instrument of patrimonialism. The state is strong and powerless, overdeveloped in size and underdeveloped in functional size ... from this perspective the character of the state is determined by the degree to which the existing political order is institutionalised.

The Damvuri case study has highlighted the spatialised nature of the state in terms of how it interacted with local actors in various locations across the country. It also demonstrates that although local actors such as war veterans were central in spearheading land occupations, the state remained the ‘legitimate’ arbiter of land rights playing a hegemonic role in such processes. Non-state actors had to work with the state rather than by pass it. War veterans’ claims of having forced the farmer off Damvuri in a *jambanja* style operation are largely exaggerated. Evidence on the ground indicates that although they were instrumental in organising ‘protests’ such as the occupation of Damvuri, the occupation did not result in a total breakdown of law which would have allowed widespread looting of property and the dominance of new forms of authority as claimed elsewhere (Hammar *et al.* 2003). Although new forms of authority such as war veterans and the Committee of Seven are now a key part of local authorities, even though their authority and influence as independent entities is largely symbolic, they function as an informal extension of local state structures.

Farm workers and land occupations in Mhondoro Ngezi

This section analyses the experiences of farm workers at Damvuri during and after its occupation and highlights how they were not ‘internally displaced’ as they did not suffer the level of political victimisation witnessed elsewhere during the land occupations. Such former workers have become a key part of the new community after benefiting from the land reform programme.

One of the major criticisms of the fast track land reform programme was its impact on the livelihoods of farm workers, particularly how land occupations resulted in them not only losing employment but also being evicted after a farm had been occupied (Rutherford 2003 and Alexander 2003). It has also been claimed that farm workers were politically victimised (because of their presumed association with the farmer) and thus became internally displaced people. While my aim is not to dismiss such claims, I intend to problematise them at two levels: firstly, such claims need to be qualified since they do not sufficiently capture the dynamic interaction among various actors during land occupations across the Zimbabwean countryside. Secondly, such claims take away agency from farm workers by depicting them as passive victims of a changing agrarian situation. Below I will analyse the experiences of farm workers in Mhondoro Ngezi and try to locate them in a broader context of fast track land reform.

Most of the former workers at the Damvuri conservancy were of foreign origin (mainly Zambian and Malawian) and had worked at the conservancy for a relatively long time (on average about 10 years). Some of them had worked for Owain Lewis’s father in the 1970s, and later for Owain up until 2000 when Damvuri was occupied by war veterans. The conservancy had very little crop and livestock production, thus the work force was relatively small (an estimated 20 to 40 workers). Most of the workers were game rangers and general labourers; a few had specialist skills such as skinning and taxidermy which were essential in the safari hunting trade. Most of the workers with specialist skills opted to leave the conservancy with their employer rather than remain to become peasant farmers.

The relatively peaceful occupation of Damvuri seemed to have been a favourable outcome for the former workers. Most of them (93% according to the Damvuri survey) benefited from land reform except for a few (7 %) who decided to go with their employer. The experience of these former workers contrasts significantly with that of farm workers elsewhere where widespread victimisation of farm workers was recorded during farm occupations (Rutherford 2001 and 2003). There are various reasons for this, the most significant one being the involvement of key state actors such as the DA, Ministry of Lands officials and the Police in the early stages of the occupation. Another reason mentioned by former farm workers during the fieldwork was that their previous employer negotiated with the DA for them to be given land after his departure and was even present to witness them '*vachinhonga chijeke*' (picking bottle tops with plot numbers).

The experience of farm workers in Mhondoro Ngezi demonstrates the often nuanced and localised experiences in individual farms and across the Zimbabwean rural landscape. At Damvuri for example, in the aftermath of land reform, such former workers are among those who are economically doing well, having acquired property such as tractors, livestock and built better looking houses than those who came from communal areas. These former farm workers seem to have capitalised on their knowledge of the place and the technical skills they acquired during their time as farm workers. The biographies of the former farm workers below highlights their experience, particularly the way in which land occupations unfolded allowed them access to land. They also highlight how in some places white land owners negotiated with local state structures to be allowed to leave the land peacefully and at times even secured land for their former employees before they left. Mr Mabheka, who came from the Mhondoro Ngezi CA and worked for the Damvuri conservancy for 20 years as a cook, had this to say about life at the conservancy before land occupations:

Owain, the Damvuri owner, had a good relationship with us. He used to allow us to grow our own crops on one acre plots and encouraged us by giving us seeds and fertilisers. At times, he would help us with tilling. When he left he gave us pension money and livestock. I was given one cow and some money. He also

made sure we benefited from land reform after he left (Interview at Damvuri 23/06/10).

Although some informants who came from nearby Mhondoro Ngezi CA and old resettlement schemes claimed that Owain was a bad neighbour who deserved to be evicted, such perspectives are contradicted by his former workers who claim that he kept a relatively good relationship with his neighbours despite many of them poaching animals at the conservancy. They also claim that he contributed to political events in the Mhondoro Ngezi CA by donating meat and other commodities during national events such as Heroes and Independence Day celebrations as noted by Mr Mutanga who was a manager at Damvuri before land occupations:

Owain maintained good relations with his neighbours from nearby communal areas such as Mhondoro Ngezi. People would come to ask for meat donations during national events such as Independence and Heroes days. Owain never instructed us to beat or kill locals, he always instructed us to arrest the poachers or shoot their dogs (Interview at Damvuri with Mutanga 23/06/10).

Former workers also highly appreciated the fact that when Owain decided to leave Damvuri, he gave them some small pension in the form of livestock and farm implements to help them start their new life as peasant farmers. This helped them with start-up capital as one former worker put it:

When Owain was about to leave he went to the DA and pleaded with him in order to ensure that we were also given land. When land was being allocated he was actually present witnessing the process. Moreover, before the farm was taken he used to lend us his tractor for us to plough our one acre stands. He gave us inputs such as fertilisers and seeds. He also gave us livestock and other implements to help start our farming operations (Interview at Damvuri with Mutanga 23/06/10).

There are various reasons why these former workers seemed sympathetic towards their former employer, a few of which I will highlight below. Most of these former workers were of foreign origin and they faced the prospect of destitution if they were not given land after their employer had left. Hence they appreciated the noble gesture of their employer for looking after them during a period of socio-economic uncertainty. Although such former workers were largely sympathetic towards their former employer, this did not however mean they were against his departure. During interviews, they were quick to say that it was better that their former employer left.

They also appreciated having somewhere that they call their own rather than working since their former employer did not allow them to own land as reported thus:

Life has improved for me and my family; it is very different being entirely dependent on someone for survival. When Owain was here we were not allowed to keep livestock such as goats and cows, but now we have the freedom (Interview at Damvuri with Mutanga 23/08/10).

The way in which these former farm workers narrate their experiences brings new perspectives which are missing in current literature on land reform and broadens our understanding of the impact of fast track land reform on the former farm workers. Rather than looking at such former workers as victims of land reform and hence taking away their agency during the farm occupations, they could be viewed as active participants in an unfolding agrarian situation. Moreover, we should also appreciate that their experiences varied from one place to the other. Although many of these former workers were sympathetic to their employer, it seemed such sympathies did not amount to them wishing the farm was not taken for resettlement. They supported fast track land reform mainly because it opened up opportunities to own land. Moreover, since most of these workers were of foreign ancestry, many of them had no *kumusha* (rural homes) where they could go when unemployed, retired, old or infirm as noted by an informant during interviews:

We have a better life, working for another person is problematic, you are always afraid of what happens if you lose your job. We now have our own homes and somewhere to live (Interview with Chioso at Damvuri 22/04/2011).

These interviews demonstrate that not all farm workers were victims of a changing agrarian situation, but were active participants who utilised the opportunities available to them during the land occupations. Such former workers saw the onset of fast track land reform as an opportunity to officialise their 'local' identity having established stronger roots with the local area, this is explored in detail in chapter three. Former farm workers had been in an identity limbo and had been labelled *vanhu vasina musha* (people without homes) which made it difficult for them to belong to the local area. Thus, such farm workers appreciated the freedom to own a home and to belong somewhere rather than live in the farm compound.

Conclusion

The way the land occupations unfolded in Mhondoro Ngezi demonstrates that land occupations unfolded in diverse ways across Zimbabwe's countryside. Although war veterans led the land occupations at the Damvuri conservancy in 2000, the occupation did not result in widespread violence or breakdown of law and order as witnessed in other parts of Zimbabwe. Farm workers were not blatantly victimised or evicted by war veterans as claimed elsewhere, but benefited from land reform and became key members of the new community. The former white land owner did not suffer the level of political victimisation suffered by other farmers elsewhere, and was even allowed some time to take away most of his private property before the farm was officially demarcated. Moreover, the state was present in the process and acted as a controlling agent imposing law and order rather than allowing the total deterioration of the occupation into social disorder and political chaos. Thus, the occupation was more of a state-led technocratic process where the DA, AREX and Ministry of Lands officials led the demarcation of the occupied land into individual plots.

One of the major dynamics of the fast track land reform widely popularised in literature is how the state was 'unravelling' as war veterans and other non-state actors such as ZANU PF structures bypassed the state institutions as they assumed authority to redistribute land. This process, it is claimed, involved, inter alia, the breakdown of law and order, wanton destruction of property, gross human rights abuses and displacement and victimisation of former farm workers. However, such claims cannot be generalised and do not sufficiently provide a complete picture. The Mhondoro Ngezi experience demonstrates that the state was not always absent in the process of land reform, as it retained a high level of hegemony over how land claims were made, processed and legitimised. War veterans did not have a free reign to take the law into their own hands and impose a new form of 'order' free from state control. Moreover, the occupation and subsequent demarcation of land into individual plots was a 'modern' technocratically driven process overseen by state structures. Former farm workers were not victims of land reform, but they were allowed to register with the DA and were allocated land. This chapter demonstrates that the dynamics of land occupations are quite nuanced and that the state is still seen as the 'legitimate' arbiter

of land rights. War veterans and other non-state actors have been largely co-opted to work with the state rather than undermine it.

Chapter Three

Land beneficiaries and their origins

The process of land redistribution under the fast track land reform programme has been until recently a subject of contentious debates (Hammar *et al.* 2003, Mamdani 2008, Moyo *et al.* 2009, Scoones *et al.* 2010, 2012, Matondi 2012 and Hanlon *et al.* 2012). In the period immediately after land occupations in 2000, lack of evidence led to many claims being made about who benefited from the land, how such beneficiaries got the land and the wider socio-economic impact of the unfolding agrarian structure (Richardson 2004 and Scarnecchia *et al.* 2008). Theories of chaos and displacement were deployed to describe the largely negative impact of fast track land reform (Hammar *et al.* 2003, 2010 and Richardson 2004). The general picture projected by these broad claims pointed to a doomsday scenario: Zimbabwe had moved from being a 'bread basket' to a 'basket case'; land reform had not benefited peasants but politically connected cronies; peasants who occupied farms were perceived as 'environmental bandits' who lacked the skills to match the production levels set by former white commercial farmers and that such peasants did not farm but engaged in natural resource extraction.

Debates about the outcomes of land reform in terms of the composition of beneficiaries and the new agrarian structure were often undermined by the absence of empirical evidence to justify claims of elite capture and corruption (Moyo 2011). Moreover, the highly polarised political context under which the programme was implemented became a major focus of academic debates rather than an investigation into what was happening on the ground. This chapter does not aim to engage with these wider debates, but highlights how people were allocated land, how they came to join the land occupations and their places of origin.

Land allocations and resettlement

In Mhondoro Ngezi, the resettlement process was based on a rather pragmatic concept of '*kunhonga chijeke*' (picking a bottle top with a plot number), which according to technocrats from the Ministry of Lands and AREX officers, eliminated biases or favouritism. The plot numbers were written on bottle tops, which were put

in a bucket. On the official day of land allocations, the DA was invited to officiate over the land allocation process where beneficiaries queued to randomly pick a bottle top from a bucket. Whatever number was written on the bottle top they picked became their plot; user permits were then awarded to the beneficiaries at a later date. This process was then followed by people being physically shown the location of their plots, which had been surveyed and demarcated earlier by ‘experts’ from the Ministry of Lands and Rural Resettlement (MLRR) and AGRITEX.

This technocratic driven process was different from that observed elsewhere (Scoones *et al.* 2010) where in some places war veterans led the land allocation process during the so-called *jambanja* phase of land reform until technocrats came to formalise such allocations during the so-called planning phase of land reform (Chaumba *et al.* 2003). The hegemonic role played by local state structures in the land allocation process in Mhondoro Ngezi rather than war veterans had a bearing on how people accessed the land. One of the major criticisms of the fast track land reform process was that only political cronies from ZANU PF benefited from the land reform. While it is not the aim of this chapter to dismiss such claims, it nevertheless utilises empirical data to highlight the nuanced experiences which characterise the way the land reform process unfolded in various settings. For example, in Mhondoro Ngezi, one did not need to be necessarily a ZANU PF supporter or political elite to get land, especially in the A1 Sector (village model). People’s political identities were meaningless at the time since anybody who joined land occupations was by default believed to be a ZANU PF supporter. Moreover, in 2000 when land occupations started across the Zimbabwean countryside, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) was a new political party largely popular in cities and towns, but with very limited presence in rural areas. Most informants at the Damvuri conservancy comprised people whose political identities were constantly changing, demonstrating that peasants were innovative and adapted to changing political circumstances in order to gain access to land. Among such informants were people who had never joined any political party before land occupations, but became members of ZANU PF during land occupations as they sought to improve their chances of getting land, after which they secretly joined the

MDC. Thus, some people had dual political identities, which they deployed when necessary.

The resettlement process in Mhondoro Ngezi was characterised by bureaucratic procedures rather than the informal allocation of land by war veterans. This process not only minimised corruption and nepotism in the land allocation process, but also brought order to the land allocation process sooner than later. This does not, however, mean there was no corruption or nepotism in the land allocation process in Mhondoro Ngezi as such a claim will be misleading. There were incidences where people utilised ethnicity and nepotism to access land, especially during the later stages of land reform when some people had to negotiate access to land through the local authority structures such as VIDCOs and Ward Councillors who often demanded bribes.

Land reform beneficiaries interviewed during the fieldwork believed that the involvement of the state in the early stages of the land allocation process minimised corruption and nepotism. Such beneficiaries generally believed that technocrats rather than war veterans were more honest and likely to be fairer. Although war veterans enjoyed a level of authority and legitimacy based on their role of leading the land occupations, there was a general feeling among informants that their legitimacy was questionable. They were generally viewed as incompetent opportunists prone to corruption. Ethnicity played a role in the way war veterans were not trusted by some people, as they were believed to represent the interests of their own ethnic group. Since people resettled at the Damvuri conservancy came from diverse ethnic and geographical backgrounds, they generally competed against each other to access land. People trusted state agents to be less influenced by ethnicity but would be guided by their professional training since they were believed to have no vested interests in the land. The orderly transfer of property witnessed in Mhondoro Ngezi was cited as an example of how technocrats were better than war veterans because they knew how to measure land and allocate it fairly. The following section provides a profile of land beneficiaries in terms of where they came from and how they came to join the land occupations in Mhondoro Ngezi.

Who are the beneficiaries of land and where did they come from?

This section provides the demographic profiles of land reform beneficiaries in terms of their place of origin and motivations for joining the land occupations in the Mhondoro Ngezi District. People who benefited from land reform in Mhondoro Ngezi are not by any means a homogeneous group. They can be grouped into three broad categories based on where they came from. Firstly, there are those who came from the low lying areas of Sanyati and Gokwe who constitute the majority of the land beneficiaries at Damvuri. Secondly, there are former residents of the nearby Mhondoro Communal Area and the old resettlement areas within the vicinity. The third and last group consists of people from the gold and platinum mines in the broader Mhondoro Ngezi area, the urban areas of Kadoma, Kwekwe and Chegutu, former farm workers from the Damvuri conservancy and other former LSCF in the area. It is important to highlight here that land reform was a process rather than a one-off event; some people belong to the same category, but having acquired land at different moments of the land reform process. Some were the so-called pioneers who joined the initial war veteran led occupation in 2000, while others came later during the planning phase after 2004. Moreover, these broad categories constitute people of different age groups, gender, social and economic backgrounds. It is important to highlight here that women were allocated land in their own right. This was especially the case for widows and other unmarried women who joined land occupations. Those who were married but whose husbands were either working in cities or in the Diaspora were also allocated land and their names appear on the land 'Offer Letter'.

The way people joined the land occupations at the Damvuri conservancy varied depending on their place of origin. Those who came from areas further away from the Mhondoro Ngezi District such as Sanyati and Gokwe mostly followed a rather formal process by registering their interest in land either through local war veterans or the ZANU PF local branch in their place of origin. Such people then organised themselves into groups and travelled to the town of Kadoma where they camped at the DA's office for 'processing' before they were transported to the Damvuri conservancy. Such a process took days or weeks before people were finally resettled.

Those who were already on the waiting list were contacted by the DA's office and allocated land.

Those who came from areas near the Damvuri conservancy such as residents of the Mhondoro Ngezi CA, old resettlement areas in Mhondoro Ngezi district, former farm workers, urbanites and miners simply joined the war veterans who had occupied the conservancy and thereafter formally registered their interest for land. Due to the bureaucratic nature of land occupations in Mhondoro Ngezi, those who joined the occupation directly were also registered with the DA's office in Kadoma before they were allocated land. Below I provide an analysis of how people in these broad categories came to the Damvuri conservancy.

Former Mhondoro Ngezi CA residents

The Mhondoro Ngezi CA borders the former white owned farms (LSCF) within which the Damvuri conservancy is located. CA people resettled at the conservancy came from the territories of Chiefs Nyika, Benhura and Ngezi, within the Mhondoro Ngezi CA. The three chiefs did not directly participate in land occupations. Of the three of them, only Chief Nyika acquired an A2 plot (commercial farm) at the former Rock Bar Ranch, located on the southern part of the Damvuri conservancy. However, the three chiefs have made territorial claims over the former LSCF areas opened up by the fast track land reform process, an issue explored in detail in Chapter Four. There was no single motivating factor which influenced people in this group to join the land occupations. Informants in this category cited overcrowding, poor soils and the need for better pasture for livestock as reasons for joining the land occupations. However, some cited the recovery of ancestral lands lost during the colonial era forced removals as a major factor. Due to the close proximity of the Mhondoro Ngezi CA to the former white owned farms, such people historically believed that these were their ancestral lands alienated for European use during the colonial era although such claims are contested. The Mhondoro Ngezi CA was a labour reserve situated in an area surrounded by white owned farms endowed with the bulk of the best land surrounding the CA alienated for European use during the colonial era. Africans were squeezed into an area of predominantly poor coarse grained sands with limited subsoil drainage. The soil structure in the area leads to a seasonal perched water table

characterised by high levels of acidity and low base saturation, which impedes soil fertility and drainage (Andersen *et al.* 1993).

This poor ecological soil structure contrasts significantly with the former white farms nearby, where loam and red clay soils better suited for crop production predominate. This wide contrast in the agro-ecological potential of the two areas was a major source of grievances among the former residents of the Mhondoro Ngezi CA. Such people resented the fact that while they were overcrowded in an ecologically degraded communal area, the neighbouring white farms had large tracts of land which were visibly underutilised. Historically, Africans from the Mhondoro Ngezi CA deployed what Scott called 'weapons of the weak' (1986) such as illegally grazing their livestock in white owned farms, poaching of game and other acts of sabotage such as cutting the game perimeter fence and snaring of wild animals as forms of resistance to the alienation of ancestral lands by the colonial government. These 'illegal' activities generally strained the relationship between Africans in the Mhondoro Ngezi CA and their white neighbours in the nearby commercial farms. The ecological crises facing people in the CA and grievances against white landowners were key to the way people in this group joined the land occupations. The biographies provided below highlight why people joined the farm occupations and where they came from.

Mr J. Machikiche came from Mamina in Chief Benhura's territory in the Mhondoro Ngezi CA. He and his wife came to the Damvuri conservancy in 2002 and were allocated a plot in Village 7:

We came from Mhondoro Mamina in 2002; we did not have a piece of land to grow our own crops. During the liberation struggle we relocated to Lusaka in Zambia. We came back to Zimbabwe in 1980 and we had no land. We stayed at someone else's place. In Mhondoro Ngezi the small plot we owned barely produced 5 bags of maize, but now we produce many tonnes of maize. When we heard about availability of land at Damvuri, we went to register our names at the local ZANU PF office in Mamina and then we were told to go to Damvuri where we were allocated a plot (Interviewed at Damvuri on 21/06/10).

Mrs Changi came from Chief Nyika's territory in Mhondoro Ngezi. She and her husband joined the occupation in 2000 in the early stages of the FTLRP and were allocated a plot in Village 8:

We came from Bhururu in Mhondoro Ngezi in 2000. We were part of the very few people who joined the occupation at the beginning. When we came here we did not completely give up our home in the Mhondoro CA. We wanted to be sure that this place was going to be secure enough before we completely gave up our home. In any case we still have relatives back there. The soils in Mhondoro were bad and unproductive. We also had three sons who needed land to start their own families. Our land back home was too small for a growing family. We were attracted by the good soils and rainfall patterns in the area. We also like the plentiful pasture available here where our livestock can graze freely unlike in Mhondoro where there is hardly any grass for livestock (Interviewed at Damvuri on 18/06/10).

Mrs Mangwiro came from Muchemwa in Chief Benhura's territory in the Mhondoro CA. She and her husband joined the occupation in 2002 and were allocated land in Village 7:

We came to from Muchemwa in Chief Benhura' territory in Mhondoro Ngezi; we came here after people told us that there was land. The soils back there were tired. The place is overcrowded. This land belonged to our ancestors; white farmers were sitting on good quality land while we were stuck with poor soils. We came to recover our land. Before we came here we registered with the DA in Kadoma and were offered a plot. This place has plentiful grazing pastures and more opportunities to do other things. Coming here was not very difficult since it's close to our place of origin. We used scotch carts to carry our belongings. We still have part of our family back in the communal areas although we gave up our plot (Interviewed at Damvuri on 17/06/10).

Mrs Musvusvudzi came from Mhondoro Ngezi from chief Mushava's territory and was allocated a plot in Village 1. She and her husband used to run a grocery shop at Manyewe shopping centre in Mhondoro Ngezi:

We came from Manyewe in the Mhondoro Ngezi CA. I was not keen to come here; to start with, this place was a bush. We had a nice house and a business back in the CA. Coming here was hard, this place was not used for growing crops, thus we had to clear fields from scratch which was hard labour. Just setting up a home requires a lot of labour and resources. I also did not want to leave our business back in the CA. We were doing well back there. The only problem was that inflation affected our business. I am happy we came here since we have good soils and bigger plots; above all, this place offers big business opportunities (Interviewed at Damvuri on 12/09/11).

These biographies highlight people's backgrounds and their motivations for seeking land. They also demonstrate that the need for better quality land and recovery of ancestral lands were some of the reasons for joining the land occupations. Due to the close proximity of the Mhondoro Ngezi CA area to the Damvuri conservancy, it was generally easy for people to relocate. However, the relocation was staggered; men

generally moved to Damvuri first and women and children remained behind but followed later when the basic facilities were in place. There were various reasons why people in this category kept their CA homes. Firstly, it was a way of hedging for land in new areas and also maintaining their traditional homes as a security precaution. Secondly, some families sought to address the pressure for land in the CA by securing plots for their sons in the newly resettled area. Thus, some people in this category did not relocate to the new area, instead such plots are being utilised by relatives some of whom were squatting on land.

Others, particularly the elderly people, were reluctant to completely abandon their homes since starting a new home was a laborious process requiring a big investment in manual labour. This process entailed clearing the virgin land and building new infrastructure such as houses, cattle pens and granaries. Moreover, such people had heavily invested in their CA homes; they had built 'modern' looking bungalows and sanitary facilities such as toilets which they were reluctant to leave behind. Elderly people tended to have a strong sense of belonging to their old community where graves of ancestors were located and hence such graves could not be simply left behind. The system of burying people in designated public cemeteries practised in resettlement schemes was a source of 'spiritual' insecurity. Thus, they preferred to be buried at their CA homesteads among their ancestors. This was perceived to provide security in the afterlife while being buried among strangers in a public cemetery was seen as a source of insecurity in the afterlife.

Moreover, maintaining land rights in both places was also a way of 'beating the system' as newly occupied areas such as the Damvuri conservancy were deemed 'contested' areas by international donors and food relief organisations and were thus excluded from their projects. Maintaining a CA home meant that one could access donor assistance directly or indirectly through family members who remained looking after the old homesteads. Thus, such donor services indirectly found their way to newly resettled areas through family networks. Availability of some social services and/or infrastructure in the CAs was another reason for people's reluctance to relocate to newly resettled areas and to maintain the CA homestead. Although the Mhondoro CA is congested with ecologically degraded land, the area has relatively

good social infrastructure such as clinics, schools and boreholes and dip tanks which are not available in the newly resettled area. Thus, by keeping a connection with their former CA homes, people could continue to straddle between the two locations in order to utilise such services.

In general, people in this category did not have to sacrifice large amounts of resources in terms of logistics as it was easy for them to simply walk or use scotch carts to go to the newly occupied area. Moreover, such people were familiar with the ecological landscape in the occupied area and thus required less time to adjust as it was relatively close to the place of origin.

Gokwe and Sanyati 'returnees'

Despite the long distance between Gokwe and Mhondoro Ngezi District, people in this group constitute the majority of the people resettled at the Damvuri conservancy. But why and how did people in this category come to join the land occupations in Mhondoro Ngezi, an area which is located over two hundred kilometres away, rather than occupy farms closer to their places of origin? Various reasons were cited by informants in this category as to why they ended up at the Damvuri conservancy in Mhondoro Ngezi District. Firstly, they claimed to have a historical connection with the area as they were part of a group of people who were forcibly evicted from the former Rhodesdale esate by the colonial government in the 1940s. Secondly, some of them reported that they were attracted by better quality land and the prospect of alternative livelihoods such as gold panning and working as wage labourers across gold and platinum mines located in the area.

But how did these people come to the Damvuri conservancy given the long distance between the two places? In terms of logistics, coming to the Mhondoro Ngezi area was not necessarily easy for them. The long distance meant that they had to invest relatively large sums of money and time to move families after securing plots. This made it much more expensive to straddle between Gokwe and the newly occupied area in order to spread risks. As a result, whole families moved rather than splitting as in the case of those in the Mhondoro Ngezi category. Moreover, the remoteness of Gokwe meant that there was hardly any transport to the area since many public

transport operators had been forced out of business due to severe fuel shortages which were experienced across Zimbabwe after 2000. Unlike their counterparts from the Mhondoro Ngezi CA, they were under much more pressure to gain access to land due to the fact that the overcrowding and land degradation experienced in Gokwe in the 1990s left many of them with limited options for alternative livelihood strategies. The cotton boom of the post-independence era which had attracted many immigrants from other parts of Zimbabwe had all but collapsed by the late 1990s. The situation was further worsened by changing climate occasioned by recurrent droughts which led to frequent crop failure and low yields. Moreover, the skyrocketing inflation and the general slump in cotton prices undermined the peasant economy and forced people to look for alternative livelihoods elsewhere. The biographies below highlight why people left Gokwe and Sanyati in search of land in Mhondoro Ngezi and the logistics involved in such a process.

Mr Madheu came to Damvuri from chief Lozane's area of Sanyati in 2000. He was allocated a plot in Village 7:

I came from Sanyati in 2000. My parents were born in Rhodesdale in this area, but were forcibly relocated to Gokwe by white settlers in the 1950s. We were cotton farmers in the Sanyati area. My father had ten children. In the beginning it was easier to grow crops, but it increasingly became difficult as the soil became infertile; droughts which led to successive poor harvest affected us. Moreover, our family grew in size and the demand for better quality land increased. I used to work in a supermarket at the Gokwe centre as a cashier but lost the job in 1998. I did not have land of my own, so my wife and I stayed with my parents. However, it was not easy to continue living with parents since I got married and had my own kids. The family homestead became congested; there was no land for all of us. I had one cow, which I sold in order for us to move here. I initially registered with Kadoma District Council in 1999 to be resettled and my name was put on a waiting list. I wanted to get land in this area because this is where my parents originally came from. My father used to talk about availability of land here, good soils and rainfall and other natural resources. In early 2000, I got a letter from Kadoma Rural Council informing me that a new farm had been opened up for resettlement. I joined a group of people and we camped at the Kadoma Rural District Council Offices before we organised transport to come here in March 2000 (Interviewed at Damvuri on 23/10/10).

Mr Mafamashiza came from Chief Nembudziya's territory in Gokwe in 2000. He was allocated a plot in Village 6:

We came from Nembudziya. My grandfather was born in Rhodesdale, but was forcibly moved to Sanyati in 1952. He then moved to Nembudziya to get better land for cotton growing. I grew up there although I left to work at Empress Mine in 1994. I am the first born in a family of 15 children since my father was a polygamist. I had a piece of land of my own and used to grow a variety of crops. I was doing well in Gokwe because I used to harvest a lot of cotton and made good money. This changed in the late 1990s when it became difficult to grow cotton since we had no money to buy chemicals and other farm implements. The market for cotton became so bad that it was not worth it. The major problem with Gokwe was that it is a dry area which suffers periodic droughts. Moreover, as a result of changing climate, the droughts increased in intensity which made life difficult for many farmers. In some years we had no water for consumption and for our livestock. I joined others who had registered their names with war veterans in order to be resettled. We used an army truck to come to Kadoma to join others who were waiting to come to Damvuri. We were brought here after some days of camping in Kadoma at the DA's office where our names were registered (Interviewed at Damvuri on 24/10/10).

These biographies provide a picture of people's socio-economic situation before they moved from Gokwe and Sanyati. They also reflect changing livelihood trajectories associated with climate change and the 'boom and bust' cotton economy of Gokwe which forced people to seek better land elsewhere. There are three fundamental characteristics of people in this group which are worth mentioning. Firstly, the people in this group took bigger risks in order to gain access to land in Mhondoro Ngezi given the long distances between the two locations. Secondly, the remote location of Gokwe meant that people had to invest relatively large amounts of resources in order to move their families and property at a time when transport was generally difficult to organise due to shortages of fuel. Thirdly, the long distance between Gokwe and the newly occupied area made it difficult to straddle between the two locations in order to spread risks and to utilise family connections in terms of labour and other social support mechanisms.

Another important logistical dynamic faced by people in this category is that they had to undertake many tasks simultaneously such as clearing the land, building houses and cattle pens as families had to be moved all at once due to transport costs. Some of the tasks such as building houses and planting crops had to be undertaken concurrently given the fact that some people moved just before the rainy season. It was generally difficult for them to leave some of their family members behind as a risk aversion strategy given the long distance between the newly resettled area and

their places of origin. This meant that they did not enjoy the support of their relatives and social networks like their counterparts from the Mhondoro Ngezi CA. An important social characteristic of this group is that a large number of them claim an autochthonous connection with the Mhondoro Ngezi area. During interviews and informal conversations, informants in this category tended to conceptualise fast track land reform as a form of land restitution since it had allowed them to recover ancestral lands lost during the colonial era. The issue of autochthony is explored in great detail in Chapter Four in which I analyse new authority structures and how claims of autochthony have become 'problematic' as various groups claim to 'belong' to the newly resettled area.

Farm workers, urbanites and mine workers

One of the major assumptions about the outcomes of fast track land reform is that farm workers and many other groups who did not have an association with ZANU PF did not gain access to land (Rutherford 2003 and Hammar *et al.* 2010). The impact of land occupations on the livelihoods of farm workers remains contested (Hammar *et al.* 2010 and Chambati 2011). Scoones *et al.* (2010:127) have noted that 'the post 2000 land reform resulted in significant displacement of farm workers from former large scale commercial farms. However, the scale and implications of this is disputed'. Whilst claims of widespread farm worker displacement cannot be dismissed, more empirical data is needed to investigate the pattern and scale of such displacement and how such farm workers have coped in terms of livelihoods after land reform.

There has been a general tendency in literature on land reform (Rutherford 2001, 2003) to take away agency from farm workers by projecting them as passive victims of a changing agrarian structure. Empirical evidence on the ground (Chambati 2011) suggests that farm workers were active participants in the politics of land rather than merely victims, and that in some places, for example, at the Damvuri conservancy, former farm workers benefited from the land reform and have become key members of the newly resettled community. Land reform provided farm workers with an opportunity to gain access to land and other assets such as livestock and equipment, which their former employer could not take away. These assets gave the farm

workers a form of start-up capital to begin their new life as peasant farmers. There is a need to disaggregate farm workers in terms of citizenship and geographical location, since lumping them into one group masks variations in their social circumstances and hence their ability to deal with the changing agrarian structure. For example, disaggregating the farm worker category helps us to understand variations in the way they were affected by land occupations. During the land reform some farm workers were better off than others and had the means to hedge against the risks associated with land reform. Some were highly skilled and were able to acquire land and are now part of an agrarian elite, whereas some were more vulnerable than others, especially the female and migrant farmer workers (Moyo *et al.* 2009). Former farm workers of foreign origin were much more vulnerable since losing jobs meant that they were likely to become homeless as they did not have land rights in communal areas. However, local farm workers had the option to simply go back to their communal areas where they had homes and land (Scoones *et al.* 2010). These variations in farm workers' circumstances require a more nuanced analysis in order to better understand the impact of the changing agrarian situation to their livelihoods.

It is important to highlight that the fate of farm workers was largely determined by local political dynamics that underpinned the occupation of individual farms. There were variations in the way in which a farm was occupied (Scoones *et al.* 2010); in some places farm workers fought pitched battles with war veterans in defence of their employer and hence their livelihoods. In other places, a farm occupation was initiated by farm workers with the help of war veterans, and in other places farm workers were evicted together with their former employer, especially if they refused to support war veterans or were suspected of being anti-ZANU PF.

The experience of farm workers in Mhondoro Ngezi was largely influenced by the relatively peaceful transfer of the occupied land to the government for redistribution and the intervention of their former employer who was able to lobby the DA to give them land after he left. Farm workers were thus not victims of the land reform process but emerged better-off as they had no land of their own before and relied on wage employment for their livelihoods. Although the farm workers lost jobs as a

result of land reform, those interviewed during fieldwork were happy to have been allocated land and the fact that they were no longer bonded at the farm as labourers with no land of their own. The biographies provided below highlight the situation of farm workers at the Damvuri conservancy during the reform process.

Mr Mutanga came from Zambia in the 1970s and worked at the Damvuri conservancy as manager until its occupation by war veterans in 2000. He had this to say about his experience:

I came from Zambia as an immigrant, I used to work for the elder Lewis before he died and then I worked for his son Owain who inherited the Damvuri farm which he converted into a conservancy in the 1980s. Working for a white farmer was always a challenge as the wages were always low. As a manager I enjoyed certain benefits such as access to small loans, a small plot to grow crops. I also had better accommodation compared to my subordinates. When land occupations occurred we were nervous that war veterans were going to evict us. However, the involvement of ZANU PF politicians and the DA in Kadoma protected us. We were allocated land like everyone else despite the fact that some of us are of foreign origin. I am happy with the land reform process, now I have land of my own and have somewhere to call home (Interviewed at Damvuri on 23/09/10).

John Mabheka came from Mhondoro Ngezi in Chief Nyika's territory. He used to work as a game ranger at the Damvuri conservancy until the land occupations in 2000. He had this to say about the land reform process:

I came from the local area in the nearby Mhondoro Ngezi CA. I worked at a game ranger here for five years. Owain was a temperamental guy who was very unpredictable. Working for him was always a challenge. He was not always bad as he would give us meat during the hunting season. I also used to get tips from hunting tourists which provided a bit of extra income. However, working for a white landowner meant that we did not get good wages. The little money I got I sent it back to my wife in the communal areas where she paid school fees for our kids and bought food. I was happy when war veterans came here. I wanted land here as it is more fertile than the land in the Mhondoro Reserve. Without land reform I could still be working for peanuts (Interviewed at Damvuri on 23/09/10).

These biographical summaries show how the land reform in Mhondoro Ngezi allowed former farm workers to access land. They also highlight that farm workers received subsistence wages which did not meet their needs, thus they welcomed the land reform process despite the job losses. According to these former workers, the impact of losing jobs was minimal given the fact that they benefited from gaining land as they now owned plots. Moreover, such former farm workers are now more

mobile and able to pursue other alternative livelihoods when farming is not viable, as they are now free.

There is another group of people who benefited from land reform at Damvuri which comprises landless people mostly of foreign origin who came from mines and gold panning sites scattered around the Kadoma and Kwekwe areas. Some people had been retrenched from big iron and ferrochrome mines in Kwekwe such as ZISCO Steel Company and ZIMASCO. Some informants in this category highlighted how they had resorted to petty commodity trading and gold panning as a way of surviving after losing their jobs. However, the hyperinflationary environment which affected Zimbabwe after 2000 undermined their ability to make a living out of petty commodity trading; many of them could not afford to pay rent and were thus forced to live as squatters in peri-urban areas of Kadoma and Kwekwe. Such people were forced to look for land in order to set up homes and try farming.

But how did people in this sub category come to Damvuri and how were they mobilised? Squatters and landless urbanites utilised a variety of mechanisms and social networks to access land at the Damvuri conservancy. Some people utilised local ZANU PF structures to get information about the availability of land and joined the occupied farms such as the Damvuri conservancy. Others started as squatters staying with friends and relatives who had been given land at occupied farms before they negotiated with the local authority structures to be given land in their own right while others utilised formal bureaucratic procedures such as registering with the DA's office in Kadoma before being offered land. Some who were already in the Mhondoro Ngezi area as gold panners were able to join the land occupations.

The biographies below highlight the experiences of people in this category in terms of where they came from and how they accessed land.

John Tembo, originally from Malawi, came to the Damvuri conservancy from Kadoma in 2003 and was offered a plot in Village 5:

I came from Malawi in 1960; I have not been back since then. I initially worked as a cook for a white farmer near Kwekwe from 1965 until 1979 when my employer left Zimbabwe for Britain. I then worked for another white farmer at Mopane Ranch close to here. Life was good earlier on, but the problem of not

having a home is that if you lose your job you become homeless. That's why I could not complain about my salary or do anything that would lead to my dismissal. When Mopane Ranch was occupied in 2000, I was not able to get land since it was mainly divided for A2 farms and the new landowners brought their own workers. I came here because I knew the people who worked here. They told me to come and stay with them until I was offered land by the local leadership here (Interviewed at Damvuri on 04/02/11).

Peter Banda, originally from Zambia, came to Damvuri from Kwekwe in 2000. He was given a plot in Village 8:

My father was from Zambia. He came here during the Federation years in 1956. He used to work at ZISCO Steel in Kwekwe. After his death in 1982, I took over his job and worked for ZISCO Steel until 2000 when I lost my job. I lived in a company house, which I lost after losing my job. I struggled to make ends meet after losing my job, I tried to work in small mines but that was not paying that much. I am a family man with five kids and I needed a home where my wife and kids could live without having to worry about paying rent. When land occupations started in 2000 I took the opportunity to come here and was given land. Life here is much better. I work for myself and I have a home. I have enough land to grow crops and I have already bought three cows and five goats. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity (Interviewed at Damvuri on 03/02/11).

Lucky Muvhimbi came from Kwekwe where he was a gold panner. He went to the Damvuri conservancy in 2005 where he was allocated land in Village 4:

I originally came from Kwekwe where I used to work at the ZISCO Steel Company. However, I lost my job in 2003 and decided to try gold panning as I had no other means to sustain my family. However, in 2004 I decided that I wanted to gain access to land somewhere near here. I went to Kadoma where I was told people were being allocated land. I registered with the DA's office and later went to the Damvuri conservancy where I was allocated land (Interview on 03/02/11).

A major characteristic of people in this group is that they are mainly people of foreign origin, mostly from neighbouring countries such as Malawi, Zambia and Mozambique, who came during the colonial area. Their legal status has historically left them vulnerable to extreme forms of exploitative wage labour relations in farms and mines where they provided a form of bonded labour since they had nowhere to call home.

Since such people were deemed 'foreigners', they generally faced problems in accessing land in communal areas and hence did not have a *musha* (home) where they could go in difficult times such as after losing their jobs. Data from the

Mhondoro Ngezi case study demonstrate that fast track land reform provided vulnerable groups such as farm workers and wage labourers of foreign origin with an opportunity to own a piece of land. Such land provided them with a *musha* where they could live an independent life as peasant farmers rather than relying on wage labour alone for their livelihoods. The experience of farm workers and other landless groups in Mhondoro Ngezi contrasts significantly with trends observed elsewhere where a more violent standoff and takeover of farms resulted in farm worker displacement. The Mhondoro Ngezi experience highlights that farm workers were not only victims of the land reform process but utilised whatever opportunities at their disposal to gain access to land during a changing agrarian situation.

Dynamics of land tenure after land reform

One of the major outcomes of fast track land reform which has been a source of ongoing academic debates is the nationalisation of land (Moyo *et al* 2009 and Scoones *et al.* 2010 and Matondi 2012). Before the onset of the FTLRP, Zimbabwe's land tenure system was characterised by a private freehold tenure system for the largely white owned LSCF and 'communal' tenure for peasants in communal areas (former reserves) and associated user permits for the old resettlement schemes (Scoones *et al.* 2010). After the implementation of the FTLRP in 2000, the nationalisation of land reversed private free hold title with systems of leasehold tenure for large-scale farms under the A2 Scheme, while user permits were granted to the A1 Schemes (both A1 self-contained and village modelled). Critics of the new land tenure regime have argued that the 99-year leases and other permits offered to beneficiaries of the FTLRP (both A1 and A2) perpetuate tenure insecurity. It has been alleged that such insecure tenure turned land holdings into 'dead capital' (De Soto 2000), since such land holdings can no longer be used as collateral to unlock vital capital in order to further agrarian investment (Richardson 2005).

The link between tenure security and agricultural investment has been challenged (Platteau 2000). Empirical studies undertaken across Zimbabwe (Moyo *et al* 2009, Scoones *et al.* 2010 and Hanlon *et al.* 2012), indicate that secure tenure is not a panacea for agrarian investments. Data gathered as part of this thesis indicate that

farmers in the A1 sector have invested significantly in their new properties despite the alleged tenure insecurity brought about by FTLRP.

In Mhondoro Ngezi people resettled at the former Damvuri conservancy were allocated land under the A1 model scheme (villagised) although the model was designed to separate crop fields and common grazing lands, the boundaries imposed by technocrats during land demarcation processes have become fluid and are being continuously reshaped by ongoing struggles over land. These struggles are reflected in the way in which some people have been able to illegally extend their plots into areas that were technically designated as common lands. Moreover, some people have 'sidetracked' from official land use plans by moving their homesteads from designated areas to crop fields. Their rationale for moving homesteads to their 'fields' was that they wanted to guard their crops from baboons and warthogs which normally invade crop fields in the night and early hours of the morning (Interview with Mrs Chivanga, 12/11/10). However, it seems the reshaping of the land use plans by ordinary people reflects ongoing dynamics of the new tenure regime in terms of how it is interpreted by beneficiaries of land reform and how it can be policed by authority structures. Through formal interviews and informal conversations with key informants such as Ward Councilors, VIDCOs and Village Heads responsible for local land governance, it seems policing the new land tenure regime has been difficult. The main reason cited was that a frontier mentality prevails among resettled people. This mentality, it was claimed has been the source of ongoing attempts by people to ignore or renegotiate official boundaries between individual plots and common grazing lands which were pegged by AREX officials. Since the area was resettled a decade ago, authority structures have had to grapple with many challenges associated with conflicts over access to land. One of the major challenges they face is how to control the illegal encroachment into common grazing land by people whose plots are located near such areas. Such people tend to disregard officially pegged boundaries since they see them as open to negotiation (Interview with War Veteran leader 21/08/10). The absence of fences between individual plots and common lands means that boundaries can be easily ignored or manipulated. Take for example Arthur Manaka who came from the nearby Mhondoro Ngezi Communal Area and works at a small-scale gold mine near Damvuri. He had been able to use his wages to

expand his agricultural operations by extending his plot into common lands without the approval of local authorities. He explained his strategy by stating that:

I was very lucky to get a plot bordering the common grazing lands. This means when the need arises I will simply allocate myself more land since nobody owns these grazing areas. The good part of getting land here is that unlike in communal areas there is so much land that if one is a hard worker one can put as much land under the plough as possible (Interviewed on 12/02/11).

The open frontiers mentality reflected above has been a source of conflict among resettled people; those who were awarded land and remain either in cities or in communal areas have often come back to find their plots having been put under the plough by their more enterprising neighbors often enjoying connection with the local leadership or ZANU PF political elites. Political patronage has also undermined the enforcement of land tenure laws. People continue to utilise 'fast track' ways to gain access to land, rather than the official land allocation process which they see as slow given the bureaucratic procedures. For example, during elections, those without land are often promised by politicians that they would be resettled as there is enough land to resettle everybody. This type of political rhetoric which is common during election times has promoted an idea of land being an infinite resource. On another level, those who hedged for land in the early days of land occupations but did not come to occupy their plots have come back to find their plots reallocated to those who have been squatting with friends and families waiting to gain access to land. Take for example Tichafa Mhungu, whose family is based in the nearby Mhondoro Ngezi Communal Area (CA), in 2000, his family was allocated a plot at Damvuri but remained in the CA with the hope of straddling between the two areas as a way of diversifying livelihoods.

However, in order to demonstrate 'effective' occupation and avoid forfeiting their land rights in the new areas, they offered a distant relative the right to stay at their plot until such a time they needed it. However, their continued absence from Damvuri resulted in the relative negotiating with the local leadership to have the plot reallocated to him resulting in an ongoing conflict which remains unresolved (Interview with Tichafa at Damvuri 12/09/10). Conflicts such as the one highlighted above are common simply because many people from the nearby Mhondoro Ngezi

CA acquired plots at Damvuri during the early days of land occupations but remained in the CA. Such people did not view land reform as 'resettlement', but as a way to diversify livelihoods without the need to necessarily relocate. However, their unoccupied plots have become vulnerable to being reallocated to other landless people through informal land markets.

On another level, it is not only ordinary people who are culprits when it comes to observing land use plans dictated by the new tenure regime. Members of structures of authority such as Village Heads and Ward Councilors and local ZANU PF leaders have provided a platform for the landless to access land through an informal land market. Informal land markets in Mhondoro Ngezi operate through ZANU PF patronage networks and involve the landless paying a small fee to gain access to plots. These informal allocations are a source of conflicts since they involve double allocations of land belonging to absentee plot owners or those originally 'reserved' for sons of land beneficiaries who remained in communal areas or are working in cities. The ongoing informal allocation of land at Damvuri has resulted in a whole new village being opened up beyond the official eight villages officially pegged by AREX officials. Interviews with key informants such as war veteran leaders and Village Heads indicate that a new village was carved out of state land that had been left unassigned by AREX officials. This was created to accommodate sons of land beneficiaries whom did not benefit from the initial land allocations. The village remains 'illegal' since it has not been registered with the lands ministry while those allocated plots in the village did not get 'Offer Letters'. Through conversations with a local Ward Councilor and Village Heads, it seemed that although the village was set-aside for the youth, it has also accommodated those who got land through political connections or by bribing authority structures. The Damvuri case highlights two important aspects of land reform especially with regards to the A1 model schemes; firstly, informal land markets are an important pathway for the landless to access land. Secondly, the new land tenure regime is flexible and open to interpretation.

The dynamics of land tenure highlighted above indicate that land tenure in A1 areas is open to negotiation. Despite its shortcomings, the new tenure regime has allowed a

level of flexibility favorable to smallholder farmers. Through informal interviews and personal observations, it seems tenure insecurity is not an impediment to agrarian investments. Even among those who got their land through informal means and hence did not have 'Offer Letters', did not feel that they could lose such land in the long term as they felt politically protected. It seems informal mechanisms have remained central in the way people access land even after land reform. More importantly, the new tenure system seems to be effective in dealing with distortions in land ownership and rent seeking behavior, as those who are absent run the risk of finding their land reassigned to the land hungry. However, the way tenure laws are enforced has allowed some individuals to abuse common land through illegally extending their plots. It seems the new tenure regime is yet to be entrenched in newly resettled areas in order to deal with the issues highlighted above. Despite the challenges associated with enforcing the new tenure regime, it has generally allowed the weak to access land but at the same time the frontiers mentality which prevails is likely to be a source of conflicts in the near future. It seems the new land tenure regime, although problematic because of its potential vulnerability to political manipulation, has proved useful for small farmers to negotiate access to land although it might be a source of conflicts in the long term.

The Mhondoro Ngezi case study demonstrates that smallholder farmers deploy various strategies to take advantage of the new land tenure regime in their accumulation strategies; such strategies involve, *inter alia*, extending their plots beyond the boundaries imposed by technocrats during land demarcation processes. Lastly, informal land markets have provided an important avenue for the landless to access land in the post fast track land reform era. Debates about how authority over land is exercised and how the new tenure regime has had an impact on the new agrarian structure should take into account these localised experiences.

Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted four important aspects of land reform in Mhondoro Ngezi. Firstly, the land reform was an ordered process involving state structures. This minimised corruption and nepotism in the land allocation process. Secondly, beneficiaries of land came from diverse geographical locations even though a large

number of them claimed a historical association with the newly resettled area. Thirdly, farm workers were not victims of land reform as they benefited from land reform during the resettlement process. Fourthly, political party affiliation was not central to the way people were allocated land as the beneficiaries of land comprise largely of people whose political identities have been constantly changing since they were allocated land. Lastly, the chapter highlights the logistical dynamics which underpinned the way beneficiaries of land reform came to the Damvuri conservancy. Those who came from areas nearby such as residents of the Mhondoro Ngezi CA faced few challenges in relocating to the newly resettled area given the close proximity of their places of origin. Those from far off areas had to invest large amounts of resources to move their families to the newly resettled area given the long distances between the Mhondoro Ngezi and their places of origin.

Chapter Four

Governing the Land: Dynamics of authority after land reform

One of the major criticisms of Zimbabwe's FTLRP was that it led to the 'unravelling' of local state institutions (Hammar 2003 and Alexander 2006). Political events that characterised the watershed moments of 2000 when land occupations took place across the Zimbabwean countryside were captured in apocalyptic terms. It was claimed that the violence witnessed across the Zimbabwean countryside during the land occupations signified the end of 'modernity' and that Zimbabwe had entered a fascist cycle (Worby 2003 and Scarnecchia 2003). A discourse centred on state collapse which was largely influenced by the media representation of the land reform process emerged. This discourse acquired currency in academia, especially during the *jambanja* phase of land reform, and influenced the way in which Zimbabwe's changing agrarian structure was conceptualised (Hammar *et al.* 2003). Competing arguments about the dynamics of land occupations and their impact on local state structures also polarised academia (Hammar *et al.* 2003, Moyo and Yeros 2005, Scarnecchia *et al.* 2008 and Mamdani 2008). However, these arguments were undermined by the absence of empirical data to support them as well as counter claims. The increase in fieldwork driven studies during the so-called planning phase of land reform after 2004 provided the much needed evidence on the outcomes of land reform and the way it had an impact on rural governance (Moyo and Yeros 2005, Moyo *et al.* 2009, Scoones *et al.* 2010 and 2012 and Matondi 2012).

Data from these studies suggest that the FTLRP fundamentally transformed rural authority structures. During the onset of land occupations in 2000, chiefs and war veterans who led them emerged as prominent actors in the rural polity with some authority over land. Local state structures such as Village Development Committees (VIDCOs), Ward Development Committees (WADCOs) and District Administrators (DAs) had to contend with having to share their role over rural administration with war veterans and chiefs who in some places had become powerful political figures. In the aftermath of land reform, the emergency of actors such as war veterans in the new authority structures has had a bearing in the way authority over land is claimed and exercised by diverse actors, both state and non-state. State making in the context

of Zimbabwe's agrarian reform has thus been shaped by competing claims of authority over land as land occupations 'marked a transformation of the state and political sphere' (Alexander 2006: 187). But how does the rural authority structure look like more than a decade after the implementation of fast track land reform? What are the dynamics of the multi-forms of authority that have emerged in the aftermath of the land reform? How do ordinary people engage with these new structures of authority? This chapter aims to highlight how authority over the countryside has changed in the aftermath of land reform. It explores the way in which the state, war veterans, chiefs and ZANU PF structures compete to claim authority over the countryside. The chapter also highlights how newly resettled people engage with the new structures of authority.

Land occupations and the transformation of rural authority

The way land occupations unfolded across the Zimbabwean countryside meant that the outcomes of land reform have retained a localised character. The way in which various actors such as war veterans, chiefs and ZANU PF activists could claim authority over land during land occupations was contested and negotiated, not a straightforward winner takes all scenario as has been suggested by some scholars (Alexander 2003 and Hammar 2003). Although in many areas state authority was certainly challenged by war veterans and ZANU PF activists, especially during *jambanja*, political circumstances that obtained across the countryside did not allow a total collapse of local state institutions as often claimed by critics of land reform. There is evidence (Moyo *et al.* 2009 and Scoones *et al.* 2010) to suggest that the influence of war veterans during the land occupations varied from one place to the other and that class and ethno-regional dynamics influenced the process of land occupations and subsequent redistribution. In some places (Chaumba *et al.* 2003), war veterans had a free reign to take control over the redistribution of occupied farms, especially during the *jambanja* phase. However, in other places such as Mhondoro Ngezi, for example, local state structures remained in charge of the land reform with war veterans being reduced to providing logistical support during the redistribution of occupied farms. Claims that during land reform 'ministries charged with agrarian policy were marginalised in favour of an alliance led by ZANU PF and

war veterans (Alexander 2006: 187), and that local state structures were ‘unravelling’ (Hammar 2003), are problematic and do not sufficiently capture the shifting alliances and the dynamics of authority in the countryside during the land occupations.

Far from being totally overrun and undermined by ZANU PF and war veterans, empirical data gathered in Mhondoro has demonstrated that the state was ‘present’ in the countryside although in some places its presence was ‘spatial’. Moyo and Yeros (2005) have highlighted how when land reform entered the planning phase the state gradually assumed a hegemonic role over the land reform process and the rural polity at large. However, given the wider political context which obtained from 2004 onwards, the state had to contend with sharing the political space with war veterans and chiefs given their strategic importance in the countryside, especially during the elections. Chapters Two and Three highlighted how bureaucrats in Mhondoro Ngezi had an upper hand over land redistribution rather than war veterans. As the leader of the local District Lands Committee (DLC), the DA based in Kadoma was able to challenge attempts by the war veterans to lead the land redistribution and resettlement exercise. Land redistribution in Mhondoro Ngezi thus followed a rather technocratic trajectory from the start, reflecting the influence of state structures. During the land reform, bureaucrats instrumentalised their leadership positions in DLCs and their influence in ZANU PF patronage networks to leverage control over land redistribution.

In their study of rural movements, Moyo and Yeros (2005: 189) have highlighted how during the planning phase of land reform ‘bureaucrats sought to develop hegemony over land occupations’ through their ‘control of the ideological content of media presentations of the third *chimurenga*’. This demonstrates that initially the state suffered setbacks in exercising its authority, especially from 2000 when war veterans and chiefs led land occupations across the countryside until 2004 when the land reform entered the planning phase. However, it soon sought to reassert its authority across the newly resettled areas where war veterans and chiefs had in some places assumed hegemony over the newly resettled areas. This process resulted in contested claims of authority over land.

In order to provide a historical context to the dynamic shifts in rural authority which were occasioned by the fast track land reform process in 2000, it is necessary to briefly rewind to the earlier period immediately after independence. Alexander (2006) has highlighted how state making after independence in 1980 entailed attempts to replace customary authorities with democratic bureaucratic structures such as VIDCOs, WADCOs and Rural District Councils (RDCs). Similarly, Drinkwater (1989: 288) has highlighted how a centralised bureaucracy was ‘the most important legacy of the colonial period’ and that there are ‘continuities between contemporary land use policies and those of technical development phase of the 1920s and 1960s. This legacy is demonstrated by the way state making and rural administration were conceptualised after independence (Herbst 1989 and Munro 1998). A key policy feature of rural administration after independence was the promulgation of laws which sought to curtail customary authority in favour of the so-called democratic local governance structures epitomised by newly created RDCs. According to Moyo *et al.* (2009: 146):

Zimbabwe’s local government system had evolved since independence to an extent that traditional leadership structures in the communal areas had lost their land allocating powers to District Councils. In practice the passing of the Communal Land Act (1982) did not have any significant impact on the role of traditional authorities as people in the communal areas continued to recognise traditional authorities in terms of their land allocation and dispute settlement responsibilities. The Rural District Councils (responsible for LSCF areas) and the District Councils responsible for CAs were in 1988 amalgamated through the Rural District Councils Act, with traditional leaders being subordinated more effectively under RDCs. The RDC is composed of elected ward representatives (councillors) and a chief executive officer who is responsible for the daily operations of the council.

This means that in theory chiefs who were historically an important pillar of colonial rural administration were subordinated to RDCs and politically sidelined by the ‘modernising’ tendencies of the post-colonial state. However, in practice customary authority remained intact as people in the countryside continued to recognize the land allocation powers of chiefs (Moyo *et al.* 2009).

The onset of land occupations in 2000 further emboldened customary authority as chiefs became dominant political actors in the countryside due

to their role in leading the land occupations. Unlike before when bureaucrats reigned supreme in the countryside, state making in the context of fast track land reform had to be based on the co-option of chiefs and war veterans who had become prominent political actors in the countryside. War veterans and chiefs played an influential role in rural areas as members of DLCs which were responsible for local land allocation processes during the implementation of the FTLRP. These local actors became a key part of the local 'state' alongside VIDCOs and WADCOs although their influence varied from one place to the other. However, it is important to highlight here that although chiefs and war veterans emerged as dominant political actors during and after land reform, their authority and influence have fluctuated significantly, from playing a hegemonic role during the *jambanja* phase to working under the state after 2004 when the land reform entered its planning phase. The relationship between the state and these local actors cannot be simplified as it is largely influenced by local political dynamics. The influence and authority of chiefs and war veterans varies from one place to the other and so does their utility. In some places the land reform weakened customary authority while in other places chiefs have become powerful actors in the rural polity due to their ability to deploy ancestral autochthony to make claims over 'ancestral' lands (Mujere 2011).

In the context of Zimbabwe's FTLRP, a better understanding of how authority in the countryside is claimed and exercised by the state and the local actors (such as chiefs and war veterans) requires that we move away from simplifying the way in which authority structures operate and how different actors claim authority. It is also important to conceptualise state-making during the land reform as a contested process involving a diversity of actors both state and non-state. Moreover, it is also important to disaggregate individual authority structures in order to unmask class and ethno-regional dynamics which influence the way they operate. For example, discourses of belonging in Mhondoro Ngezi have shaped the way chiefs and ZANU PF structures operate in terms of the ability of individuals within these organisations to contest for political positions. Such discourses

have also shaped the way ordinary people view such authority structures in terms of their legitimacy. The next section analyses how chiefs and ZANU PF interface with the state in the dynamics of rural authority in the aftermath of the land reform process.

The role of ZANU PF in local governance

ZANU PF political party structures were instrumental in the way the fast track land reform programme was implemented. In conjunction with war veterans, ZANU PF activists mobilised the peasantry and were central in the way the white owned farms were occupied and how such occupations were legitimised. Chapter Three highlighted how peasants utilised ZANU PF structures to access the land. In the aftermath of land reform, ZANU PF structures have remained a key part of the rural authority structure. Interviews with resettled people in Mhondoro Ngezi indicated that local ZANU PF networks are central in the way resettled people gain access to patronage networks. For example, access to government assistance such as farming inputs which are critical for resettled farmers is negotiated through ZANU PF structures. Moreover, employment at the South African owned Zimbabwe Platinum Mines (ZIMPLATS) which is located in the area is negotiated through ZANU PF structures. An informant highlighted how the ZIMPLATS mine operates a ‘ZANU PF’ quota system in its recruitment as a way of buying political protection. The informant claimed that for local people to be employed at ZIMPLATS, their names must be on a list which is usually kept by local chiefs or the local Member of Parliament (MP). The list is periodically handed over to ZIMPLATS management when employment opportunities arise. The mine will then invite the persons on the list for an interview just as a formality, as they would have already secured employment by virtue of their ZANU PF connections. Those whose names are not on the list face challenges in being employed at the mine despite the fact that the mine has an official policy of employing local people based on merit (Interview with Mhuru at Damvuri 28/10/11). ZIMPLATS also operates a wide range of corporate social responsibility programmes such as building new schools, supporting local communities with financial resources to build or repair clinics and schools. However, informants claimed that such programmes are sometimes manipulated by local

ZANU PF politicians for personal gain (Interview with Chiwaro at Damvuri 23/10/11). It is this instrumentality of ZANU PF patronage networks that makes it central in the way resettled people survive in a largely difficult socio-economic environment.

However, the way ZANU PF patronage networks operate is complex and is influenced by diverse factors such as ethnicity, class and ongoing intra-factional politics. The relationship between ordinary people and ZANU PF structures is dynamic and influenced by prevailing factional politics pitting ZANU PF politicians against each other. These factional struggles have to some extent influenced the demographic composition of land beneficiaries at the former Damvuri conservancy. Factional struggles also continue to shape the way in which local structures of authority operate and how individuals bid for leadership positions in local authority structures such as VIDCOs and WADCOs.

Interviews with informants indicate that ethnicity influenced the way one could access ZANU PF patronage structures. It was also influential in the way individuals could bid for political positions within ZANU PF. For example, contested claims of belonging have emerged after resettlement at the Damvuri conservancy with various groups claiming to be the genuine 'autochthons' while disqualifying others who have become perceived as 'strangers'. These groups constitute people who originally came from the nearby Mhondoro Ngezi Communal Area (CA) and those from Gokwe. During the interviews, informants in the Mhondoro Ngezi CA group claimed that people from Gokwe were brought to the area by Paul Mangwana, a ZANU PF politician who was the MP for the Mhondoro Ngezi constituency at the onset of land occupations in 2000. Mangwana is originally from Masvingo Province where the 'Karanga' ethnic group predominates (Karanga is a dialect of the Shona language). Informants in the Mhondoro Ngezi CA group claimed that during his tenure as MP for the Mhondoro Ngezi constituency, Mangwana utilised his political influence and connections with the local DA in Kadoma to secure land for people from Gokwe and Sanyati areas who largely belong to his 'Karanga' ethnic group. According to these claims, the main reason for this was that he sought to dilute the influence of local 'Zezuru' ethnic groups (another dialect of the Shona language) which he suspected of

supporting Bright Matonga, a rival ZANU PF politician. Matonga comes from the local area and belongs to the Zezuru ethnic group which predominates in the Mhondoro Ngezi area (Interview with Musvusvudzi at Damvuri 24/09/10).

Informants in the Mhondoro Ngezi CA group, who are largely from the *Zezuru* ethnic group, expressed some resentment of Mangwana and the people from Gokwe whom they perceive as being ‘outsiders’ from another part of the country. While people in the Gokwe group perceived as being ‘strangers’ have argued against such perceptions and labels, they claimed that the main reason they came to the Mhondoro Ngezi District during land occupations was their historical connection with the area. They claim to be part of a group of people who were forcibly removed from the former Rhodesdale crown lands by the colonial government in the 1950s and resettled in Sanyati and Gokwe. Land reform had created an opportunity for them to recover their ancestral land lost during the colonial era (Interview with Lozane at Damvuri 23/10/11). During interviews, people originally from Gokwe have argued that the *Karanga* identity attached to them was a case of mistaken identity. They claimed that although they spoke the *Karanga* dialect of Shona, they were in fact *Zezurus* who had undergone a linguistic transformation while in Gokwe where they had been forcibly resettled among a large group of karanga speakers from Masvingo who also had been forcibly relocated to Gokwe in the 1950s (Interview with Sibanda at Damvuri 19/11/10).

Interviews with informants from both groups indicate that people were divided between those who supported Mangwana and those who supported Matonga based on ethnicity. However, it is difficult to verify to what extent ethnicity had influenced the demographic make-up of the land beneficiaries at the former Damvuri Conservancy despite the ethnic dynamics reflected above. A major complicating factor is the localised histories of migration and forced removals dating back to the colonial era which have reshaped people’s ethnic identities. A large part of the broader Mhondoro Ngezi area consists of mining and Large Scale Commercial Farms (LSCF). Historically, migration across farms, mines and communal areas was a ‘key feature of life’ (Spierenburg 2004). Moreover, the forced removals of a large number of Africans from the area in the 1950s (Nyambara 2005) to the low lying

areas of Gokwe further complicated the situation. Some of the people who were forcibly relocated to Gokwe came back to reclaim their 'ancestral lands' through fast track land reform. Given these histories of colonial forced removals and voluntary migrations, it has become 'difficult to make a distinction between immigrants and 'autochthons' (Spierenburg 2004).

What is however important is that competing claims of 'belonging' in Mhondoro Ngezi reflect how the newly resettled people seek to legitimise their claims over land and access to ZANU PF patronage structures. For example, the resentment expressed by people in the Mhondoro Ngezi CA group towards those in the Gokwe group, stems from the fact that those in the latter group tend to hold key positions of authority in local decision making structures such as ZANU PF local committees, war veteran structures and VIDCOs. This is despite the fact that people in this group came from areas perceived to be furthest from the Mhondoro Ngezi District. Those in the Mhondoro Ngezi group feel that they have a weak bargaining power over access to resources such as farming inputs and other government assistance due to the fact that they are underrepresented in structures of authority (Interview with Chari at Damvuri 23/11/10).

Contested claims of belonging between the two groups are also entangled with prevailing intra-ZANU PF factional struggles involving two politicians. People in the Mhondoro group claimed they voted Mangwana out during the 2005 parliamentary elections in favour of Matonga because the latter came from the local area (Interview with Mrs Muriro at Damvuri 23/12/10). Matonga's family belongs to the Benhura chieftaincy which is based in the Mhondoro Ngezi CA and thus shares kinship ties with people in the Mhondoro Ngezi CA group. During the 2005 ZANU PF primary elections, Matonga is believed to have utilised his family networks to secure votes before the general election. During his campaign, he went on a road show across the Mhondoro Ngezi constituency accompanied by elders from the Benhura chieftaincy. A crucial part of the tour involved being introduced to all the chieftaincies across the Mhondoro Ngezi constituency such as Chiefs Nyika, Mushava and Murambwa. He is believed to have lobbied such chiefs to mobilise their subjects in support of him instead of Mangwana whom he labelled a 'stranger' from another part of the country.

The conflict between the two politicians was resolved after Mangwana lost his parliamentary seat to Matonga and was thus forced to contest for a constituency based in his native Chivi area in Masvingo Province (Interview with Chikava at Damvuri 13/10/10).

A complicating factor to these autochthonic based ZANU PF factional struggles emerged when the Mhondoro Ngezi Constituency was delineated before the 2008 harmonised elections. The delineation resulted in the creation of the Muzvezve Constituency covering the newly resettled former LSCF areas and the Mhondoro Ngezi Constituency comprising old resettlement areas and the Mhondoro Ngezi CA. In the 2008 harmonised elections, the newly created Muzvezve Constituency was won by Peter Haritatos, a white farmer and ZANU PF politician based in the nearby town of Kadoma. While many white land owners across the area lost their land during the land occupations, Haritatos, who is an ardent ZANU PF supporter, kept his farm and became an MP of a constituency carved out of largely former white owned LSCFs which were resettled through fast track land reform. Interviews with his constituent members indicate that he is a very popular politician despite being a white farmer. This contradicts the general anti-white farmer political rhetoric popularised by senior ZANU PF politicians, including Mugabe. Informants at Damvuri praised Haritatos for supporting the development of the newly resettled area and for periodically donating seeds and farming inputs to local people. Above all, he is believed to be less corrupt than other ZANU PF political elites such as Mangwana whom they voted out because of corruption and negligence (Interview with Musvusvudzi at Damvuri 23/08/10).

It was difficult to know why people thought Haritatos was less corrupt even though it seemed he had also instrumentalised ZANU PF patronage structures as a way of gathering votes during his political campaigns. Like many ZANU PF politicians, Haritatos also deployed belonging and his participation in the liberation struggle as a way of legitimising his right to represent the local area in parliament:

I am a son of the soil. I was born in this area although I am of Greek origin. During the Rhodesia times, Greek people were regarded as blacks, we were not allowed in white private schools. I remember as a young man I was barred from attending a white private school in Kadoma. We suffered a lot of racism during

the Rhodesia time. I joined ZANU PF during the liberation struggle because of my experience during the colonial times. The Rhodesians were racist and it was right that we took land from them. During the land occupations I told the President that I wanted to give up my farm for redistribution. However, the President said I should keep the farm because that was my pension. The President supported me and appointed me to the senate until I became an MP for the Muzvezve Constituency in 2008. I am grooming my son to understand the struggle. He is now in the Mashonaland West provincial executive (Interviewed in Zvimba North 25/08/12).

This highlights the way ‘belonging’ is deployed by various people within ZANU PF regardless of their race. Despite Haritatos’ ‘whiteness’, his family have a long history of farming in the area and participation in the liberation struggle. He speaks fluent Shona and thus ‘belongs’ to the Mhondoro Ngezi area. Most local people address him affectionately as ‘Baba vaGeorge’ (George’s father) a Shona way of addressing people by their first born child’s name (Interview with Nyati at Damvuri 10/06/10). This highlights the ambiguities associated with claims of ‘belonging’ in the way they are instrumentalised by various individuals and groups aligned to the ZANU PF political party. Although Haritatos’s case is unique given the general anti-white rhetoric which underpinned the land occupations, it challenges general assumptions about white farmers being always victims of land reform and the ‘foreign’ label attached to their identity.

The Mhondoro Ngezi case study has highlighted how discourses of belonging play an important role in the way ordinary people compete to make claims over land and to access ZANU PF patronage networks. Moreover, belonging is also crucial to the way ZANU PF politicians bid for political office. Autochthonic struggles have thus shaped the way individuals in ZANU PF bid for political power. These struggles reflect a ‘differentiated politics and strategies of belonging- from ‘below’ as well as from ‘above’ (Christiansen *et al.* 2004). Overall, the above demonstrates that the way ZANU PF functions is dynamic and is prone to prevailing ethnic based factional struggles.

Chiefs and the dynamics of traditional authority after land reform

One of the major outcomes of fast track land reform was the opening up of former LSCF areas to customary authority. As highlighted earlier, the chiefs were important

political actors during the land occupations due to their role in mobilising the peasantry. Within the post fast track land reform era, chiefs have emerged as a key part of the rural polity with some authority over land. The role of chiefs in rural administration has gone through dynamic changes which are worth examining in order to understand their current role in relation to land reform. The post-colonial state making process entailed attempts to subordinate chiefs to RDCs as the government sought to dilute their authority. Under the Ministry of Local Government Urban and Rural Development Act (1982), customary authority was limited to communal areas (formerly reserves), while newly created resettlement areas and Rural Councils (formerly responsible for LSCF areas) were outside their jurisdiction. However, attempts by the post-independence political regime to sideline chiefs in rural administration were largely unsuccessful as they continued to dominate rural administration, controlling access to land despite such powers having been transferred to RDCs (Herbst 1990, Munro 1998 and Alexander 2006). Customary authority was consolidated in the late 1990s when ‘there was an apparent shift in Government thinking in 1999 as traditional leaders were once again upgraded to the status of salaried civil servants through the Traditional Leaders Act’ (Moyo *et al.* 2009: 147). The onset of fast track land reform and changes in laws governing rural administration meant that chiefs became an important part of rural administration. The onset of land occupations allowed them to extend their jurisdiction over former LSCF resettled under fast track land reform. In the aftermath of land reform, chiefs have sought to deploy ancestral autochthony as a way of extending their influence and authority over newly resettled territories. In his study based in the Gutu area, in the south of Zimbabwe, Mujere (2011: 7) highlighted how:

FTLRP has thus provided traditional authorities with an opportunity to pursue an agenda akin to land restitution as they have been making a number of claims both substantiated and unsubstantiated over the new settlements which they regard as their *Matongo* (old homes).

In Mhondoro Ngezi, three chiefs (Nyika, Benhura and Ngezi) based in the nearby Mhondoro Ngezi CA took advantage of the land reform to recast their authority over ‘ancestral lands’ opened up during fast track land reform. However, despite having made territorial claims over newly resettled territories, most of the chiefs have remained in the CA except for chief Nyika who acquired an A2 plot (commercial

farm) at the Rock bar Ranch to the south of Damvuri. Despite having a second home at his newly acquired farm, Chief Nyika maintained his communal area headquarters and now straddles between the two locations holding court sessions at both places. However, Chiefs Benhura and Ngezi did not acquire any land in the new areas and have remained in CAs although they both made territorial claims over the new resettled areas. Both chiefs have devised creative ways of demonstrating 'effective' rule or 'beneficial occupation' (James 2007). Chief Benhura is believed to have informally appointed his uncle who was allocated land at the former Damvuri Conservancy to act as a headman while Chief Ngezi has sought to validate his territorial claims through periodic visits to the newly resettled area to 'familiarise' himself with his new territory and subjects.

In 1999, just before the onset of the land occupations, Chief Ngezi caused some controversy when he was reported to have conducted a spiritual cleansing ceremony at the future site of the ZIMPLATS mine. According to informants, the ritual was a way of seeking the approval of local Mhondoro royal ancestral spirits before the mining company could start its mining operations. He claimed that his ancestors were buried in the Mulota Hills where the mine intended to start its platinum mining operations. According to reports which appeared in the local media, the chief conducted a ritual at the site of his ancestral graves by the '*chemakudo*' shrine in order to avoid 'the wrath of the ancestors in the Mulota Hills' (The Herald Newspaper 27 May 2007). However, the ritual became a source of conflict because of contested claims over the ownership of the territory where the mine is located. Both Chiefs Nyika and Benhura who have also made claims over the area are reported to have boycotted the ritual which they dismissed as a political ploy by Chief Ngezi to prejudice them of their ancestral lands. They are believed to have argued that as a 'stranger', Chief Ngezi's ancestors had no legitimate claim over the area where the mine is located and hence no spiritual power to cause accidents at the mine. They further argued that cleansing rituals can only be undertaken by representatives of the genuine *Mhondoro* spirits (interview with Chief Benhura at Manyewe 25/04/2010). These contested claims over the new territories continue to be a source of conflicts and the mine has become a site of autochthonic struggles.

Historically the boundaries among the three chieftaincies are loosely based on two rivers (Mungezi and Muzvezve) which both flow westwards from the Mhondoro Ngezi CAs towards the contested territories. Chief Nyika's territory is located to the south of the Mungezi River which forms a boundary with Chief Benhura's territory. Chief Benhura's territory is located between Mungezi River to the south and Muzvezve River to the north. Chief Ngezi's territory is located to the north of the Muzvezve River. However, the major problem is that since these chiefs had no jurisdiction over the newly resettled areas before 2000, claims of ownership of such territories are difficult to authenticate. Moreover, histories of colonial land alienation and forced removals meant that boundaries between chieftaincies have constantly changed as more land was alienated for European use (Nyamabara 2005).

Moreover, interviews with the chiefs highlight the relativity or fluidity of boundaries and how these have become a source of conflict. Chief Benhura had on one hand this to say about his claim:

The territory where the mine is located is my ancestral land. Historically the land between the Mungezi and Muzvezve Rivers is Benhura territory. This includes areas which were part of the commercial farms owned by whites which were taken by the colonial government in the 1940s. Our territory borders the Manhize Hills to the north towards Chivhu and ends by the Harare to Bulawayo road in Kadoma to the west. Anybody who claims to own any land in this area is a liar (Interviewed at Benhura homestead 22/07/10).

On the other hand, Chief Nyika had his own story concerning the boundaries between chieftaincies and why he was the legitimate claimant of the new territory:

My ancestors owned all the land in this area. I am a paramount chief who was responsible for this area dating back to the colonial era. All the other chiefs were headmen whom I promoted to chiefs. So how can they claim to own this land when they were subordinate to me? The boundaries they are talking about are open to negotiation and manipulation. They defy history. Everybody including the government knows I am the most prominent chief in this area. All the other chiefs and politicians are trying to come here because of the minerals (Interview with Chief Nyika at Vhera 25/10/11).

Chief Ngezi had a rather grand claim to the area highlighting the fact that the area is named after his ancestors and how all the chiefs in Mhondoro Ngezi area are strangers who came from somewhere and were allocated land by his ancestors:

The area between the town of Chivhu to the north and Kadoma to the south is my ancestral lands. That's why it is called Mhondoro Ngezi. The original Ngezi, my great grandfather who was named after this area, originated from the Zambezi valley and came to settle here before anybody came here probably 500 years ago, before colonial rule. All these minor chiefs came after they were evicted by whites from other parts of the country. Our territory was reduced by colonial authorities who sought to dilute our power. However, this broader area belongs to my family. Most of these chiefs must appreciate that we gave them land as refugees. The place where the ZIMPLATS mine is located is where my ancestors are buried. People must understand that we have a long history here (Interview with Chief Ngezi at Mupawose 23/09/11).

These interviews with the chiefs demonstrate the problematic nature of claims over ancestral lands which have emerged in the aftermath of land reform. Histories of colonial forced removals mean that the ownership of newly resettled territories and the boundaries between them has significantly changed with time. This makes it difficult to identify the legitimate claimant of the newly resettled territory among the three chiefs. Moreover, claims over the newly resettled areas are problematic if one takes into account archival records. According to Native Commissioner Delineation Reports (National Archives of Zimbabwe file S2929/4/1), all the three chiefs have never historically owned land in the former LSCF areas of Mhondoro Ngezi. These records indicate that such territories historically belonged to Chiefs Muyambi and Chirima who were forcibly relocated to the Gokwe area in the 1940s.

Competing claims over the newly resettled areas among the three chieftaincies have been largely fuelled by the presence of mineral resources such as gold and platinum in the newly resettled areas. Zimbabwe's biggest platinum mine, the South African owned ZIMPLATS mine, is located in the newly resettled areas by the Mulota Hills which mark the boundary between the Mhondoro Ngezi CA and the former LSCF areas. In 2012, the mine became the centre of autochthonic struggles after it agreed to an indigenisation package with the Government of Zimbabwe (GoZ). Under Zimbabwe's Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Act, public companies are required to cede a 51 per cent stake to indigenous Zimbabweans.

The indigenisation of the mine has resulted in conflicts among the chiefs, ordinary people and ZANU PF aligned political elites. Struggles to gain access to economic opportunities associated with the mine intensified in 2012 after the company agreed to cede a 51 per cent stake to local people in order to comply with Zimbabwe's

indigenisation laws. Part of the indigenisation package agreed to between the company and the GoZ involved a ten per cent stake worth US\$120 million to be given to a newly created Royal Mhondoro Ngezi Trust. ZANU PF political elites such as Bright Matonga, who is the local Member of Parliament (MP) and other high profile ZANU PF politicians such as Ignatius Chombo (Minister of Local Government and Rural Housing) and Saviour Kasukuvere (Minister of Youth and Indigenisation) have all been involved in attempts to control and access to the trust fund.

On the other hand, local chiefs who claim to be the custodians of the land where the mine is located have protested against elite corruption, arguing that they must be the ones in charge of the trust given the fact that the mine is located in their ancestral lands. What further complicates the situation is that the local chiefs are not in agreement among themselves in terms of who should be in charge. For example, Chief Nyika, who has claimed to be the legitimate custodian of the land where the mine is located, threatened to boycott the 'government' initiated Royal Mhondoro Ngezi Community Trust in favour of the Mhondoro Community Development Trust which he helped to create. The chief argued that he did not want to be part of a trust initiated by politicians who do not 'belong' to the area. His other major contention was that Chief Murambwa, whose territory is located further away to the northern part of the Mhondoro Ngezi CA, was appointed by politicians to be the first chair of the Royal Mhondoro Community Trust. He accused politicians of side lining him by appointing an 'outsider' to lead the trust while he as both a 'paramount' chief and the legitimate 'custodian' of the territory where the mine is located was side lined (Interview with Chief Nyika at Vhera Growth Point 25/11/2011). Struggles over the control of the Royal Mhondoro Ngezi Community Trust eventually forced politicians to concede to his demands by agreeing that the chairmanship of the trust should rotate among all the chiefs from the area on an annual basis. This demonstrates the dynamics of authority over land and natural resources between the state and local actors that have emerged in the aftermath of land reform. Chief Nyika was forced to abandon his own trust in order to join the one created by political elites, which enjoyed legitimacy from various government departments which are responsible for mineral resource extraction and rural administration. An article in the Government

controlled Sunday Mail newspaper (08 October 2011) highlighted how chiefs are on one hand able to make claims over land based on ancestral autochthony, but on the other hand such claims can be problematic if they pose a direct threat to state authority over control of land and natural resources:

Chief Nyika was bitter after government recognised the trust chaired by Chief Murambwa instead of his separate initiative known as Mhondoro Community Development Trust... However, the government resolved that all chiefs in the district must support the Mhondoro-Ngezi scheme, which President Mugabe is expected to launch on Thursday... 'All the chiefs in the area — Murambwa, Mashava, Benhura and Nyika — will be able to lead the development initiative. Chief Murambwa will be the first chair as he is a paramount chief. He is also a member of the Chiefs' Council of Zimbabwe.

This demonstrates that although chiefs have sought to deploy ancestral autochthony to recast their authority over new territories, their claims have largely been undermined by the hegemonic role of the state and local ZANU PF patronage structures. ZANU PF political elites who do not necessarily 'belong' to the local area such Saviour Kasukuvere who heads the indigenisation ministry deployed what Comarof and Commarof (2009) called 'lawfare' as a way of asserting state control of land and what lies below it. During the conflict over the control of the Royal Mhondoro Ngezi Trust, local chiefs were reminded of various regulatory frameworks which governed mineral wealth and rural administration and how their claims could only be legitimised if they complied with the law and worked with government. The chiefs were left with limited options but to comply if they wanted to remain politically relevant and to access state patronage structures in order to access the trust fund, demonstrating the dynamics of state making processes in the aftermath of fast track land reform. On one hand, chiefs can extend their authority to newly resettled areas, and on the other, such claims are subordinated to state authority and thus must be compliant with relevant laws.

Ordinary people have also protested against elite capture of local resources. For example, indigenisation discourses have had an effect of generating 'natural resource activism' across local communities. Discourses of local ownership of natural resources supported by ZANU PF are now emerging from below. Interviews with informants indicate that local communities from the broader Mhondoro Ngezi District are also demanding that the mine should pay back for causing environmental

damage to the local area. As a result of such activism, the mine has invested in corporate social responsibility programmes such as building of schools, clinics and repairing of roads as a way of addressing local problems. Moreover, local ZANU PF youths have also lobbied senior politicians to be offered employment at the ZIMPLATS mine as a way accessing the benefits of indigenisation. Despite claims of corruption in the way the mine has been 'indigenised', discourses of indigenisation have helped ordinary people to challenge political elites and demand access to the benefits of indigenisation of the ZIMPLATS mine.

Struggles over the control of the Royal Mhondoro Trust Fund reflect the dynamics of state making in the aftermath of land reform. They demonstrate that authority over the countryside is contested and that various actors have utilised diverse mechanisms to legitimise their claims over land and what lies beneath it.

On a different note, although the three chiefs have made territorial claims over newly resettled areas, they have struggled to entrench their authority in new areas. Interviews with informants in the newly resettled areas indicate that people are divided in terms of their loyalties to the chiefs. On one hand, former residents of the Mhondoro Ngezi CA tend to support customary authority due to their historical ties with such chiefs with whom they enjoy kinship ties. On the other hand, people who came from places as far as Gokwe and Sanyati with no kinship ties with such chiefs see no reason to submit to their authority. The latter seem to question the authority of chiefs and instead are in favour of local state structures of authority such as VIDCOs and WADCOs which they feel better present their interests.

The legitimacy of chiefs is further weakened by their 'absence' from the newly resettled area despite having made territorial claims over them. Although the chiefs were part of the local DLC which has control over local land redistribution, they were not actively involved in the land occupations and hence cannot deploy land as an instrument to control the newly resettled people. Unlike in communal areas where they have leverage over their subjects due to their ability to control access to land, they lack such leverage in newly resettled areas where other structures of authority such as VIDCOs, WADCOs and ZANU PF structures are heavily involved in controlling access to land. Additionally, contested claims by various chiefs over the

new areas have weakened their authority among new communities. It is difficult for people to know which chief is more 'legitimate' among the three. Moreover, the fact that the government has not yet openly endorsed attempts by the chiefs to recast their authority over the new territories makes people question their legitimacy.

There is a general feeling among resettled people, in particular those from Gokwe, that chiefs are associated with communal areas rather than newly resettled areas. Such people view 'resettlement' areas as 'modern' spaces under the authority of government rather than customary authorities. Their attitudes are influenced by the fact that resettlement programmes or *minda mirefu* (long fields) have been historically associated with yeoman farming and perceived 'superior' forms of tenure arrangements better than those obtaining in communal areas. As a result, notions of better tenurial arrangements and superiority of resettlement areas over communal areas persist among newly resettled people. They generally feel that they enjoy a form of 'freehold' tenure as 'new' farmers and thus cannot be answerable to chiefs. The dynamics of authority in Mhondoro Ngezi demonstrate that authority over land in the post fast track era remains contested among the chiefs and the state. Although political elites instrumentalise customary authority in their state making projects, they are generally averse to the idea of chiefs wielding too much authority over the countryside. An article in the state owned Herald Newspaper (25 January 2012) highlighted the uneasy relationship between chiefs and the state in the aftermath of land reform:

President Mugabe was speaking at Murombedzi Growth Point to members of the Zvimba chieftainship who were discussing a proposal to create additional chieftainship in the district. He advised the Gushungo clan to resolve the issue amicably in conformity with the Traditional Leaders Act... The meeting was aimed at brainstorming on the feasibility of creating more chiefs in Zvimba following geographical transformations spawned by the land reform programme. The area under Chief Zvimba is now too big to effectively administer. The President said it was up to the Gushungo clan to agree on how many chiefs could be added in consultation with the Ministry of Local Government, Rural and Urban Development. He said the chieftainship should not be a source of squabbles.

This exposes the ambiguous relationship between the state and chiefs in the aftermath of land reform. On one hand chiefs have been afforded a level of leverage to make territorial claims over newly resettled areas while on the other hand, such

claims must comply with state patronage processes. Struggles over the proceeds of 'indigenisation' reflected by conflicts centred on the indigenisation of the ZIMPLATS mine highlight the 'binary antagonisms' (Forster and Koechlin 2011) between local actors and the state in the way patronage networks operate. At local level, contested claims over newly resettled territories among the chiefs highlight the pitfalls of ancestral autochthony in terms of how difficult it is to validate such claims. Overall, it seems the dynamics of authority which underpinned the implementation of the FTLRP have had a profound influence in the way structures of authority operate in the countryside after land reform. State making in the aftermath of land reform entails a dynamic process of negotiation among diverse political actors, both state and non-state. The Mhondoro Ngezi case study indicates that although the state has sought to impose a hegemonic presence in the countryside after land reform, local actors such as chiefs remain key in the way the state can be embedded in rural society.

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated how the fast track land reform process transformed the rural authority structure. In the aftermath of land reform, authority over the countryside is contested between chiefs and the state. The relationship between the state and the chiefs is dynamic and influenced by complex patron-client relationships that are difficult to generalise. It has also highlighted the centrality of ethnicity and belonging in the way newly resettled people compete to access land and ZANU PF patronage networks. Moreover, ethnicity is central in the way political elites compete for political positions. Discourses of 'belonging' are also central to the way chiefs have sought to claim authority over areas that were resettled under the fast track land reform process. The discourses of indigenisation which have gained some salience in the aftermath of land reform have had a profound effect on the way authority over land is claimed by both state and chiefs. Chiefs have deployed ancestral autochthony as a way of claiming authority over newly resettled areas while political elites have utilised state patronage networks as a way of challenging the legitimacy of chiefly claims over natural resources. In the aftermath of land reform, the relationship between chiefs and the state is dynamic; although the chiefs and the state contest

each other in claiming authority over the countryside, chiefs play an important role in the way the state can be embedded in rural society. For example chiefs are used by the government to mobilise their subject populations in support of government programmes. Political parties such as ZANU PF also utilise chiefs to mobilise their subject communities during elections. This demonstrates that although there are ongoing conflicts between the chiefs and the state, chiefs' play an important role in the way state is embedded in rural society and the way ZANU PF patronage structures operate.

Chapter Five

New people, new land and new livelihoods: An analysis of livelihood trajectories after fast track land reform

The outcomes of Zimbabwe's land reform had until recently remained contested. Critics of the fast track land reform process had argued that it resulted in dramatic fall in agricultural productivity (Richardson 2005) and that the new farmers lack the requisite farming skills. However, some scholars (e.g. Moyo *et al.* 2009, Scoones *et al.* 2010, Matondi 2012, Hanlon *et al.* 2012 and others) have highlighted that the land reform was not a total failure as claimed, but that the new farmers are utilising the land and that some are already accumulating from below. Empirical data gathered in the Mhondoro Ngezi district indicates that the outcomes of the land reform process are more nuanced and require an in-depth understanding of the dynamics that have shaped agricultural investments in the aftermath of land reform. These dynamics were influenced by a wide variety of factors which were often localised in character. To start with, it has been argued that 'the benefits of programs which involve large-scale human resettlement are unlikely to become apparent in less than a generation' (Kinsey and Binswanger 1993), suggesting that it is too early to make generalisations about the success or failure of the new farmers or the FTLRP at large given the fact that it is little more than a decade since its implementation. Data from the various empirical studies (Moyo *et al.* 2009, Scoones *et al.* 2010, Hanlon *et al.* 2012 and Matondi 2012) indicate that a diversity of factors have influenced agricultural investments and land utilisation in the aftermath of land reform.

Firstly, the fast track land reform was implemented within a hyper inflationary socio-economic context under which the new farmers had to start from scratch often with very little if no government support in terms of inputs and other social services. Secondly, the new farmers came from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, some were better endowed with productive resources to utilise the land such as livestock, ploughs, tractors and financial resources to hire labour. Such people were generally able quickly to clear the land and start their farming operations, build homes and hence generally became more successful in their new farming operations. On the other hand, other farmers had limited means to utilise the newly acquired land and

hence temporarily sought work in mines in the broader Mhondoro Ngezi area as a way of gaining some income with the hope of investing in their land later.

Since fast track land reform was a process rather than a one-off event, success in utilising the land was also dependent on when people were resettled. Those who were resettled in the early stages of land reform around 2000 had better chances of success in making investments on their land. Such people tended to hold positions in local authority structures such as the Committee of Seven, VIDCOs and local ZANU PF (cell or branch) committees. These structures played an important role in the way government assistance in the form of subsidies could be accessed, especially in the early stages of land reform when such inputs were scarce. Those who came later after 2004 during the planning phase generally had limited influence over how vital inputs could be accessed. However, there were those who had their own savings and did not need political connections as they had the resources to invest in their land. This situation might change in the long-term and the new farmers might be better placed to utilise the newly acquired land. But what are the new farmers doing with the newly acquired land? What are the new livelihood trajectories that are emerging in the resettled areas? These questions are central to our understanding of what is happening in newly resettled areas in terms of the type of activities shaping livelihoods in the aftermath of land reform.

Utilising the land

An important factor to take into consideration when analysing agricultural investments after land reform is the broader socio-economic context which obtained during and after the resettlement. This has a bearing on how and what the new farmers could invest in the newly acquired land. Data from Mhondoro Ngezi indicate that in the aftermath of land reform, agriculture is not only the activity undertaken by the new farmers. Instead, a large number of farmers in Mhondoro Ngezi are involved in a wide variety of non-farm activities which provide vital sources of income at a time when investing in agriculture has been difficult. Thus, we should not picture the farmers as bonded at farms only involved in agricultural production as that will be misleading.

Another dynamic reflected by the Mhondoro Ngezi case study is that the new farmers are highly mobile and straddle livelihoods across diverse portfolios. This does not however, constitute a process of de-agrarianisation as the family farm remains a key part of their livelihoods strategies.

In Mhondoro Ngezi, a wide variety of factors influenced the trajectory of agricultural investments after resettlement. 'Success' in utilising the land was thus highly relative and dependent on many factors, which include, *inter alia*, the socio-economic background of the farmers and their ability to utilise ZANU PF patronage networks to access agricultural inputs and other support services, which were generally difficult to access. Another important point to consider when analysing agricultural investments after the land reform is that not everyone who acquired land had the aim of immediately utilising it. Some people especially those from nearby areas such as Mhondoro Ngezi CA acquired land as a form of insurance policy for the future given the fact that communal areas were congested and ecologically degraded. Such people remained in communal areas where they still enjoy land rights while the newly acquired land has remained under-utilised or leased out to other farmers. These factors demonstrate that in any particular context the situation was rather complex and dynamic. Any attempt to make generalisations about the success and failure of the new farmers in utilising the land must take into account a wide variety of factors highlighted which influenced agricultural investments. In their study based in Masvingo, Scoones *et al.* (2010:60) utilised a wealth ranking exercise to construct livelihood typologies. Their study has highlighted 'emerging patterns of social and economic differentiation' among the new farmers. Similar patterns of social and economic differentiation have also been observed in Mhondoro Ngezi and are reflected in the biographies of the new farmers.

An analysis of the dynamics of agricultural investments based on selected biographies of the new farmers highlight how patterns of social differentiation influenced success or failure. Some farmers were more successful in making agricultural investments while others have struggled and are thus more involved in off farm activities such as wage labour and gold panning as they lacked the means to invest in their land. It also highlights that livelihood trajectories after land reform

have been dependent on many factors and that ‘a highly complex pattern of livelihood differentiation ... with hybrid class categories defying any simple ideal type categorisation’ (Scoones *et al.* 2010: 32) has emerged in the aftermath of land reform. The biographies have been loosely grouped into three broad categories based on local notions of wealth reflected during the interviews and focus group meetings with informants. These categories comprise those more successful *hurudza* (rich peasants) who are already accumulating from below, followed by those in the ‘middle’ category comprising of worker peasants who are involved in both farming and wage labour. The last category comprise of ‘poor peasants’ who have not yet been allocated land and thus socially reproduce themselves through the sale of labour power to the more rich peasants. However, it is important to highlight here that these categories are not absolute as the situation is dynamic and likely to change in the long term. Table.1 below shows the social differentiation of the new farmers in terms of geographical background and property ownership.

Table 1: Socio-economic differentiation of the newly resettled farmers

	Rich peasants	Middle peasants	Poor peasants
% of surveyed households	5	84	11
Place of origin	Gokwe Sanyati	Gokwe Sanyati Old resettlements Urban areas	Old resettlements Urban areas Occupied farms
Average livestock owned	25 heads of cattle	5 heads of cattle Other small livestock	1 head of cattle Other small livestock
Crop production and average yields	25 tonnes of maize 15 bales of tobacco 20 bales of cotton	5 tonnes of maize 100kgs of small grains 3 bales of cotton	500 kgs maize 50kgs small grains
Movable property owned	Tractors Ploughs Ox drawn carts	Ploughs Ox drawn carts Hoes	Ploughs Hoes
Investments and business ownership	Grocery shops Bottle stores Grinding mills Butcheries	Petty commodity trade	None
Involvement in off farm activities	None	Wage labour Gold panning	Barter Wage labour Gold panning

Source: Damvuri baseline survey

Hurudza (rich peasants)

Not everyone who came to Damvuri became a successful farmer or had the means to utilise the land. A small number (5% according to the Damvuri survey) of new farmers have, however, successfully established themselves as farmers despite the odds being hugely stacked against the newly resettled farmers. This small percentage of the new farmers constitutes a rich peasantry. According to Bernstein (2009: 431), 'rich peasants ... accumulate sufficiently to invest in production and/or labour power'. In Mhondoro Ngezi, a diversity of factors influenced the emergence of people who have come to constitute the *hurudza*. Interviews with informants in this category indicate that some people became successful because they were the first to join the land occupations hence occupied positions of authority in new authority structures such as the local ZANU PF committees. Such authority structures were instrumental in the way the new farmers could access inputs and other government subsidies such as tractors which were given to farmers under the agricultural mechanisation programme. Moreover, some were rich peasants who already had the means to invest in their newly acquired land. Although they constitute a relatively small percentage of the total population at the former Damvuri Conservancy, they have been able to clear their land, build modern looking houses and own large numbers of livestock and have been able to produce relatively large amounts of grain (an average of 20 tones) and cash crops such as tobacco and cotton .

Apart from being able quickly to make agricultural investments, such farmers took advantage of business opportunities created by the departure of the former white owner to start retailing businesses. For example, before the onset of land occupations at the Damvuri Conservancy in 2000, there was only one farm shop which serviced the approximately 40 farm worker households. In the aftermath of land reform, the shop became too small to cater for the needs of over 185 resettled households. The growth in households has also created new markets for more household goods, agricultural equipment, grinding mills and other services. The biographies below demonstrate how the people who were able to take advantage of these new business

opportunities tended to be those who had access to financial resources or those who could utilise their political connections to access government subsidies. In the aftermath of land reform, new business investments made by this small group have contributed to the emergence of a thriving business centre at the former Damvuri conservancy, which has grown from just one farm shop before land reform to three bottle stores, two butcheries and over five grocery shops, two general dealerships and grinding mills. These biographies highlight also the background of the individual farmers in this category and how they have been able to make investments at a time when a large number of the new farmers struggled to establish their farming operations.

Mr Musvusvudzi came from the nearby Mhondoro Ngezi CA in 2000. Before he was resettled at the former Damvuri conservancy, he was a businessman who owned a grocery shop at Manyewe Business Centre in Mhondoro Ngezi:

We came here in 2000, attracted by the prospect of better land for farming and grazing pastures. The soil in the Mhondoro CA was degraded and required a large amount of fertilizers to grow crops. We were running a successful business back in the communal areas and we quickly re-established the business when we came here. Initially, we were not sure about coming here but now we are confident that the situation is permanent. This place has a lot of opportunities, we own a shop and we are growing cotton, we intend to expand both our business and our farming operations. We recently bought a tractor and other agricultural equipment. The soil here is much better for intensive farming, especially for those farmers with better knowledge of agriculture. In terms of improvements, our business is doing well, and we are already building a bigger shop. Our farming will improve with time as we acquire more machinery. Despite the many economic challenges we faced since we came here, the situation is likely to improve with time (Interview with Mr Musvusvudzi at Damvuri on 23/03/11).

Mr Chitima is one of those who utilised political patronage to invest in his newly acquired land. He came to the former Damvuri Conservancy from Sanyati in 2000, and was part of a group of the so-called pioneers who joined the war veteran led occupation. He is a village chairman and was the secretary of the Committee of Seven, which was responsible for managing the affairs of the land occupiers before the occupation was officialised:

I came here with my wife and five children in 2000 in the early stages of land occupations. Before I came here, I used to own a butchery business in Sanyati. I was also a successful cotton grower with a Master Farmer Certificate. My business collapsed in 1998 due to the difficult economic situation. However, I

still owned a head of 40 cattle. I sold half of them in order to invest in a small general dealership back in Sanyati. By the time we came here in 2000, the business was struggling due to inflation. I came here with 20 cows and other small livestock such as goats and sheep. I grow cotton and employ labour, especially during harvest times. I own a butchery business. When we came here there was no place to buy meat after the white landowner left. I took advantage of the new business opportunity to set up a butcher's shop and want to expand the business in the future. This place offers good farming and business opportunities, especially for those with funds to improve productivity and to start businesses. The only challenge is we cannot access bank loans and the government is under sanctions and thus cannot provide the level of support it used to offer us. Our location close to Kadoma makes it easy for us to transport our produce to the market. Moreover, we also have local markets such as the ZIMPLATS mine where mine workers buy meat and other agricultural produce such as maize, peanuts and livestock (Interview with Mr Chitima at Damvuri on 23/06/10).

Another farmer in this category is Mr Changara who came to Damvuri from Gokwe in 2000 and was a ZANU PF branch chairman who was later elected Ward Councillor and hence has an influential political role in the newly resettled community:

I came from Gokwe from the Nembudziya area with other comrades (Cdes) in 2000. I had left my wife and six children behind until we were certain that we had secured land. They later joined us towards the end of 2000 when we were allocated land by the DA. We have a historical connection with this place as our forefathers were evicted from Rhodesdale, which was in this area. I was active in politics and was also a successful cotton farmer with a tractor and a large number of cattle. In Gokwe, I used to market on average 50 bales of cotton and 20 tonnes of maize per year. However, the situation changed, the land became weak, rainfall became patchy, and we were offered bad prices for our produce and inflation made farming useless. We came here in search of better opportunities: land, better roads, water and access to minerals abundant in this area. White colonists confiscated these minerals from our forefathers. I run a successful bottle store and own a large plot both in A1 and A2 areas. I grow cotton and am trying winter wheat and tobacco. I have no problems in accessing inputs although such inputs are always late, as the government does not have cash to support farmers. However, we will be okay soon. We took our land and we shall reap the benefits (Interview with Mr Changara at Damvuri on 23/07/10).

These biographies demonstrate that success in establishing oneself was dependent on many factors. Firstly, those who were 'rural entrepreneurs' (Ranger 1985) in the communal areas where they came from had a better chance of quickly re-establishing new farming operations after being resettled because they were able to hire labour. Secondly, being a member of local authority structures such as ZANU PF, war veterans association or Ward Development Committee also enhanced one's chances to access inputs and other government subsidies, which were largely accessed through ZANU PF patronage networks. For example, some people in this category

became successful due to their ability to utilise political positions to gain preferential access to agricultural inputs which were generally difficult to access, especially in the early stages of resettlement. Patronage structures thus played an important role in the way those with political positions accumulated assets. However, these biographies indicate that agricultural investments and accumulation of assets was not only based on political patronage but one's financial endowment. Those who had the financial endowment before they were resettled were also able to quickly take advantage of opportunities provided by the land reform as they were able to hire labour to clear the land and to invest in businesses. Moreover, given the largely difficult economic environment which confronted the new farmers, people in this category were better placed to hedge against economic and recurrent climatic risks. Access to cheap labour also contributed to the ability of the rich peasants to accumulate assets as poor peasants lacking land and draught power were forced to exchange their labour power in order to access such draught power from the former.

The biographies also highlight that farmers in this category are expanding their agricultural operations by procuring motorised machinery such as tractors, increasing their livestock and hire labour for both their farming and businesses. Moreover, these farmers tend to link their agricultural investments to their businesses. The ability of people in this category to hire labour and to mechanise their farming operations means that they have made relatively large scale investments on their land compared to their counterparts in the middle peasantry category. However, it is important to highlight here that 'rural entrepreneurs' in Mhondoro Ngezi do not constitute a fully-fledged agrarian bourgeoisie in classic sense, as such rich peasants remain vulnerable to ongoing socio-economic environment. Time will tell if the current trajectory of accumulation among this group can be sustained given the prevailing economic challenges and climatic vagaries.

Middle peasants

A large number (89% according to the Damvuri survey) of the newly resettled farmers in Mhondoro Ngezi belong to the middle peasantry. According to Bernstein (2009: 431), 'middle peasants are able to reproduce themselves mainly through

family labour and land but in specific relations with other forms of production’. Although farmers in this category did not have the financial endowment to make large scale investments, they have been able to clear part of their newly acquired land, construct houses and acquire some cattle, ploughs and ox drawn carts. They have generally relied on family labour in order to clear the land and start their farming operations. Those who came from areas near the newly resettled area such as the Mhondoro Ngezi communal area generally had better access to extended family networks which were a vital source of labour and agricultural equipment in the period immediately after resettlement. However, for those who came from areas further away such as Gokwe, it was generally difficult to access labour from extended family networks given the logistics involved and they had to make do with whatever labour they had in order to clear the land and set up homes.

An important characteristic of people in this category is that they are largely worker-peasants involved in a wide variety of off-farm income generating activities although agriculture remains a key part of their livelihoods. For example, some are regularly employed at the ZIMPLATS mine as wage labourers, others are engaged in gold panning while others are engaged in petty entrepreneurial activities such as trade in household goods sourced through cross-border trade. Within this group are those who have accumulated enough capital through gold panning and wage labour to acquire farming equipment and to hire labour on a seasonal basis. Such people are already accumulating from below. However, others in this group have only been able to acquire farming equipment and to clear fields, as they have faced challenges in establishing themselves due to the difficult socio-economic environment which have obtained after resettlement. The biographies below highlight the dynamics that have shaped the way farmers in this category have invested in their land and how off-farm activities are a key part of their livelihoods.

Mr Chiriseri came from the old resettlement area of Tyron near Damvuri and was allocated land at Damvuri in 2003; he had this to say:

I am originally from Gokwe where we were resettled in the 1960s; I was a cotton farmer in Gokwe until the late 1990s when cotton growing became unprofitable due to poor prices and expensive inputs. I moved to Tyron where I was both a farmer and owned a small scale chrome mine. In 2003, I decided to move here in order to leave my old plot to my two sons. I am a gold panner and I am also

partly employed as a builder at the ZIMPLATS mine. Since I came here I acquired four cattle, a scotch cart and a cultivator. I am also thinking of thinking of going fulltime in mining since it is profitable. This will give me more income to utilise on my land (Interviewed at Damvuri on 28/09/10).

Mrs Nhidza is a widow; she came from Chitani in the Mhondoro Ngezi communal area and was allocated land at Damvuri in 2004. She had this to say:

I am a widow, my husband died in 1999; he used to work in Harare. I was left alone to look after my two sons. We decided to come here 2004 in search of better land and other opportunities. When we arrived here we had cattle and farm equipment to farm but we lacked financial resources to buy seed and fertilizers. However, we were lucky when my two sons were offered employment at the ZIMPLATS mine. My sons have provided me with capital to buy a scotch cart and to build a better looking house; they also supply me with seed and fertilizer every year. My agricultural production has improved as a result; I hire labour during the planting and harvesting season. I am also involved in selling second clothing which I import from Mozambique; these provide another source of income which I use to improve production at the farm. My sons are now saving money in order to buy a tractor that will help us to expand our farming operations (Interviewed on 29/09/10).

Mrs Chirango is a widow, who came from the Nemangwe in Gokwe and was allocated land in 2003, three years after the Damvuri Conservancy had been resettled, had this to say:

I came from Gokwe, my husband died in 1995. In Gokwe we used to be successful cotton growers. We made lots of money when cotton used to fetch better prices on the market. I was forced to move here in 2003 because of conflicts with my husband's family. It was difficult to move here, I had to dispose of some of my livestock in order to hire a truck to transport my belongings. It was hard to settle here, we had to clear fields and to buy equipment at a time of economic difficulties and inflation. We are now settled, I have access to better quality land and more space for myself with little interference from my family members. While it has been difficult to establish myself here, we have made achievements. As a single mother I have managed to buy three oxen and build a decent house. We are going to make more progress if the economic situation improves. The advantage of this place is that we are closer to cities and in an area with lots of minerals, water and other natural resources. There are opportunities to work in mines in the area. My son works part-time at the ZIMPLATS mine. I am a cross border trader - I go to South Africa and Botswana to buy household goods for resale. This place is very good, despite the challenges we face, we are no longer congested like in communal areas (Interview at Damvuri on 21/10/10).

Mr Mutanga is a former farm manager of the Damvuri conservancy. Although he was born in Zimbabwe, his parents came from Zambia, had this to say:

I am of Zambian origin, however I was born in Zimbabwe as my father came here during the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland in the 1950s. I have a family with four children. I was a Farm Manager here. Life has changed significantly since I came here. Life at this farm was similar to everywhere across Zimbabwe before independence. As farm workers we had few rights as

we relied on our white employer for everything. When the farm was occupied, I played a role in negotiating with war veterans in order to avoid confrontation. I have cleared only part of the land as it has been very difficult to concentrate on farming without support from the government. I am still in the process of clearing more land, as I want to expand my farming operations. I am also involved in gold panning, especially during the dry season. I use the income from gold panning to buy agricultural inputs, pay school fees and buy food for my family in times of droughts. This place has a lot of potential, the only challenge we face here is access to inputs and government support. We hope the government can provide support in the long term (Interview with Mutangaat Damvuri on 04/06/10).

These biographies indicate that people in this category have invested in their land despite the challenges they faced after resettlement. A fundamental characteristic of people in this category is that they owned limited means to utilise the land when they were resettled. However, such people have taken advantage of new opportunities associated with the new land to acquire livestock, farming inputs, agricultural equipment and to hire seasonal labour. Off farm livelihoods such as wage labour and gold panning have played an important role in the way people in this category have accumulated assets. This demonstrates the importance of off farm livelihoods to the way a large number of the new farmers have been able to invest in their land. The importance of agriculture to the livelihoods of farmers in this category is demonstrated by the fact that some income gained from off farm activities was invested in agricultural activities such as clearing the land, buying agricultural inputs, acquiring livestock and hiring labour. Some of the money earned was also used to address immediate needs such a payment of school fees and procurement of food. Since farmers in this category were generally vulnerable to climatic risks such as droughts, they also tended to use income from non-farm activities to procure food especially during years of drought. Petty entrepreneurial activities such as cross border trade provided an additional source of income for some of them.

Some farmers in this category have only been able to clear part of their land because they had to spend part of their time engaging in other income generating activities as a way of spreading risks. However, not fully utilising the land did not necessarily mean that these farmers had failed. Across interviews the farmers indicated that they intended to expand their agricultural production in future when the economic situation improves. Thus patterns of agricultural investments might change in future as the new farmers access more help or have the financial resources to invest in their

land. An important dynamic reflected in biographies of people in this group is that they are involved in a wide variety of off farm activities which are linked to their agricultural operations. Accumulation patterns in this group have thus been highly influenced by the presence of opportunities to gain some income through wage labour and other income generating activities such as gold panning and cross border trade.

One of the most important aspects of the fast track land reform programme which has received limited attention in literature is how the new farmers conceptualise land reform. Across biographies, the new land was viewed as an asset that provided economic opportunities not only in the present but in the future. Thus, challenges in utilising the land which confronted the new farmers at the time of resettlement were viewed as temporary impediments to be overcome in the future. The main reason behind this optimism is that many of the new farmers came from congested and ecologically degraded communal areas where there were limited opportunities beyond farming. For such people access to new land brought with it new opportunities beyond the farm which were not available where they came from. Another important factor reflected across biographies is that the new farmers did not necessarily view the benefits of land reform as only about acquiring land to grow crops but access to water, pasture, minerals and employment opportunities associated with new land were all viewed as benefits of land reform. Therefore, land reform was conceptualised as a process which could enhance economic opportunities beyond farming. These biographies of farmers in this category demonstrate that, although patterns of accumulation and social differentiation have emerged among the new farmers, success and failure are relative concepts requiring an in-depth understanding of the dynamics of livelihoods that have emerged in the aftermath of land reform.

An agrarian underclass

Not everybody who came to Mhondoro Ngezi gained access to land under the fast track land reform programme. Since fast track land reform has been an ongoing process, there remains a group of landless people who are resident at the former Damvuri Conservancy. These people constitute an agrarian underclass or poor

peasants. As noted by Bernstein (2009: 431), 'poor peasants are unable to reproduce themselves through household production and have to rely on exchange of labour power'. In Mhondoro Ngezi, poor peasants comprise of widows, former farm workers and urbanites mainly from the towns of Kadoma and Chegutu. Some of these people had lost their place of employment in farms during the land occupations or lost employment in towns and came to the former conservancy in search of the 'peasant option' (Rutherford 2002). However, by the time of fieldwork in 2010, such people had not yet gained access to land, although some of them had come to Damvuri as far back as 2006. Such people were living with relatives or friends while waiting to negotiate access to land. The biographies below highlight how they have survived in terms of livelihoods.

Mrs Zirati came from Kadoma in 2004 and is a single woman of Malawian origin. Her late husband used to work as a cook for a white farmer near Kwekwe. The husband died in 1998 and she lost her place to stay. She moved to Kadoma to work for an Indian trader as a maid. She lost the job in 2002 and decided to come to the former Damvuri Conservancy looking for land:

I originally come from Malawi, but I have never been to Malawi in my old age. I think we came from Lilongwe with my father who moved to Rhodesia in search of work in the 1960s. I married a Malawian cook and we had three kids. When my husband died, I lost a place to stay and I had to seek accommodation with friends until I got a job as a maid for an Indian family in Kadoma. All my children left for South Africa; they do send me money on a regular basis. I came here because I wanted a place of my own. I stay with a friend who offered me a piece of land to grow my own crops. I am still waiting to get my own land. Since I am a widow with no livestock and equipment, I survive by working for those who are better-off, and they in turn assist me in ploughing my one acre piece of land. I am hoping that my children can send me money to buy livestock and a plough. Life is still hard for me because I don't have equipment and it is difficult to access farming inputs. I thought of leaving this place but my friends persuaded me to stay. This place is good, especially if one has their own piece of land to build a home and grow crops (Interview with Mrs Zirati at Damvuri on 11/02/11).

Mr Ndlovu came to Damvuri from Kwekwe where he used to work at the ZISCO Steel Works Company. He lost his job in 2005 and came to live with a relative from the Mhondoro Ngezi CA:

I used to work as a general hand at ZISCO Steel in Kwekwe. However, I lost my job in 2005 and wanted to get some land. I am married with four children. I decided to come to here but have not yet been given land of my own. I stay with a relative but survive on working for

different farmers and also doing menial jobs for other villagers such as clearing the fields, repairing houses and selling firewood. My son recently got a job at Amble gold mine not very far from here. This place is good if I get land of my own things will improve. We were promised by the local ZANU MP that we are going to be given land, we hope they will keep their promise (Interview with Mr Ndhovu at Damvuri on 12/11/10).

These biographies above highlight that there is a group of people who do not have land of their own but survive by providing wage labour to better-off peasants. The fact that there are people who are without land but who continue to expect to gain access to land highlights that land reform has been viewed by ordinary people as an infinite process. It is important to highlight that landlessness in Mhondoro Ngezi is juxtaposed to the fact that there is a relatively large amounts of land belonging to absentee owners. This is because residents of the Mhondoro Ngezi CA acquired land at the former Damvuri conservancy but remained in the communal area. Thus, distortions in land ownership persist in the aftermath of land reform and are likely to be the source of ongoing struggles over access to land.

Straddling livelihoods after land reform

A large number (89%) of the new farmers in Mhondoro Ngezi have struggled to utilise the land and are involved in a wide range of income generating activities since they did not get government support after resettlement. Such farmers are involved in diverse activities beyond farming. Although such people have made limited investments on their land, it does not mean that they have completely failed. Interviews with informants indicate that access to land brought with it many benefits beyond the farming. These opportunities have played an important role in sustaining those farmers who lacked the means to farm. But what kind of off farm opportunities were brought about by the reform in Mhondoro Ngezi and how have they influenced new livelihoods trajectories? An important aspect to take into consideration when analysing the benefits of land is that they go far beyond getting land to grow crops. Land reform in Mhondoro Ngezi entailed access to diverse livelihood opportunities such as natural resource extraction, hunting, fishing, wage labour and gold panning. These off-farm opportunities have provided a vital source of food and income, which sustain a large number of farmers who have struggled to invest in their land.

In their analyses of livelihoods after land reform in the Masvingo Province, Scoones

et al. (2010: 166) have observed that ‘livelihoods in Africa are highly diversified and Zimbabwe is no exception’. This is also highlighted by the Mhondoro Ngezi case study. The new land has brought with it greater benefits which were non-existent in communal areas where the majority of land beneficiaries came from. The newly resettled areas are located in an area rich in minerals such as gold, chrome and platinum. Thus, a wide range of mining activities take place across the broader Mhondoro Ngezi area; these range from alluvial gold panning across riverbeds near the towns of Kwekwe and Kadoma, small-scale ‘indigenous’ gold mines to large-scale mines such as the South African owned ZIMPLATS mine. Moreover, the newly resettled area is located in an area of relatively high ecological potential (ecological Region II and III according to rainfall isohyets). The area is watered by four major rivers, which flow westwards (Muzvezve, Munyati, Sebakwe and Mungezi) and provide fresh water for domestic animals and for gardening. Riverine ecosystems are also a source of fresh water fish and other wildlife, which are harvested for own consumption and for sale. The new land has thus brought with it a wide variety of off-farm income opportunities and provided the new farmers with more food options at a time when many of them struggled to invest in their land. Below, I analyse how these off-farm opportunities have influenced livelihood trends.

Natural resource extraction and trade

At the time of its occupation by war veterans in 2000, the Damvuri conservancy had a wide variety of fauna and flora which became accessible to the new farmers after the white farmer left. In the aftermath of land reform, newly resettled farmers were able to harvest wildlife and other natural resources which were in relative abundance in the early stages of land occupations in 2000. Historically, such natural resources were formerly a preserve of the white landowners and foreign tourists who frequented the area during the safari hunting seasons. In the aftermath of the land reform, the trade in game meat became a lucrative business. It was largely a male activity undertaken through informal networks. In the early stages of resettlement, a large number of warthogs and other small game such as impala were snared and

hunted with dogs. The meat was sold at the nearby ZIMPLATS mine and at gold panning sites near the towns of Kwekwe and kadoma. The informal meat markets have become a vital source of income for some farmers although this cannot be sustained in the long term.

The woodlands across the former white owned farms of Mhondoro Ngezi also provided a rich array of wild plants and timber which were harvested for both domestic consumption and for sale locally and in the nearby towns of Kadoma and Kwekwe. The gathering of wild fruits and plants for sale at informal markets by the road side was mainly undertaken by women. Wild plants such, *nyii* (brown Ivory), *nhengeni*, (*ximenia Americana*) and wild mushrooms were gathered and sold by the road side or transported to Kwekwe and Kadoma where they were sold. The trade in wild plants and fruits provided women with some income which supplemented their agricultural activities. The wide variety of flora in Mhondoro Ngezi was not only exploited for economic gain, but some informants highlighted during the fieldwork how some plant species with medicinal qualities are highly valued and conserved by the new farmers. For example, certain species of *gavakava* (Aloe-Vera) commonly found in the area are harvested to cure livestock diseases such as Red Water common during the summer season. Other plants are propagated and harvested to cure ailments such as headaches, stomach pains and fevers. An informant who is an herbalist highlighted during the interviews how 'land reform had created access to a wide range of plants with medicinal qualities which were no longer available in ecologically degraded communal areas' (Interview with Chinyama at Damvuri 23/10/10).

This highlights that there are certain types of plants that people are compelled to conserve as they provide a vital source of alternative medicine in the absence of health care workers and clinics in the new area. The wide scale utilisation of natural resources after land reform in Mhondoro Ngezi has triggered fears of an environmental catastrophe among local authority structures such as chiefs and ward councillors. Although these local authorities are tasked with policing natural resource utilisation, they tend not to strictly enforce the statutory laws governing their utilisation. There are various reasons for their failure to enforce the laws. Firstly,

since chiefs and councillors live among the people, they have a better understanding of the challenges faced by people and why such people end up over exploiting certain natural resources. This is highlighted in an interview with Chief Benhura who observed that:

I am against people who randomly cut down trees or engage in careless hunting of wild animals. We want to reserve these natural resources for future generations, however we should also understand that rural people have needs that they to address on a daily bases. If those problems are addressed, such as having access to alternative sources of energy or meat, then there will be less pressure on the environment' (Interview at Manyewe on 23/09/11).

The above illustrate that local authorities are aware of the over exploitation of natural resources after land reform but are also faced with the dilemma of enforcing laws if there are no alternatives available for ordinary people. Interviews with ordinary people indicate that histories of colonial enclosure of land and natural resources influenced the trajectory of natural resource extraction. For example, some informants highlighted during fieldwork that 'there was nothing wrong with them hunting wild animals as they have been historically barred from hunting while whites could hunt at will' (Interview with Mahachi at Damvuri on 26/09/11). Other informants argued that wild animals such as warthogs destroyed crops and hence they needed to be culled. They further argued that it was inevitable that after resettlement trees were going to be cut as people needed to clear land to grow crops (Interview with Sibanda at Damvuri 26/09/11). Thus, the dynamics of natural resource utilisation after land reform are complex and require an in-depth understanding of why and how people exploit such resources.

Cross border trade

Another important off-farm activity observed during fieldwork was cross border trade. Women from the newly resettled areas of Mhondoro Ngezi were engaged in cross border trade as a way of supplementing family income. A wide variety of goods were imported and sold locally by mostly women traders. These products comprised, *inter alia*, mobile phones, solar panels, mobile phone solar chargers, TV sets and radios. The availability of mobile phone connectivity at the Damvuri Conservancy and the wider area has led to an upsurge in the use of mobile phones

among the rural farmers. This has created a large market for mobile phones and associated gadgets such as solar chargers and solar panels in the newly resettled area since the new farmers are not connected to the electricity grid.

The location of Mhondoro Ngezi in the middle of Zimbabwe close to both road and rail infrastructure meant that it was relatively easy for women from the area to travel across Zimbabwe's borders in order to import a wide variety of household goods for resale. These goods were sold at mine sites such as ZIMPLATS or gold panning sites. Female informants interviewed during the fieldwork highlighted how they regularly travelled to Zambia, South Africa and Botswana where they exported locally made handcrafts and embroidered clothes which were popular in those neighbouring countries and in turn imported goods for sale locally:

We regularly go to Zambia or Botswana to sell locally made handcrafts or hand broidered clothes that are in demand in these countries. We started going to Zambia in 2004 because life here was difficult because of inflation. We sold goods there and in turn we brought back some foreign currency which was in demand in Zimbabwe. We also brought back foodstuffs such as cooking oil which were in short supply in Zimbabwe. When the economy stabilised in 2008, there was a new demand for electrical gadgets such as mobile phones, solar chargers and solar panels. We import these goods and sell them at ZIMPLATS and at many gold panning sites near Kadoma and Kwkwe (Interview with Mai Mahachi at Damvuri on 20/11/11).

This highlights how women have become actively mobile and engaged in income generating activities. An important dynamic observed in Mhondoro Ngezi with regards to women is that they are no longer bonded at family farms reproducing male labour as was historically the case in communal areas. Women are now actively mobile travelling across borders exporting and importing products for domestic consumption and for resale. This new mobility of women has a bearing in terms of ownerships of assets at household level. Several women interviewed during the fieldwork indicated that they now owned various assets bought from income gained from cross border trade:

I now own two cows and three goats which I bought after selling the goods I imported from South Africa. I also contributed money which we used to buy a scotch cart. This year I bought fertilizer as I want to plant tobacco. Cross border trade has helped me to support my family since just sitting at home as a house wife does not pay (interview with Mai Maruta at Damvuri 14/09/10).

The role of women after land reform has changed as some women have been able to

acquire assets. Unlike before when ownership of livestock such as cattle was a preserve for men, in Mhondoro Ngezi land reform necessitated the ability of women to own livestock and agricultural equipment such as ploughs and scotch carts. Ownership of such assets has empowered women to have leverage over the control of family income and assets. It has also enhanced their ability to have a say in the way land is utilised and leverage over how the proceeds from farming are shared among households.

Mining

There is a wide variety of mining companies that operate in the Mhondoro Ngezi area, and include, *inter alia*, the South African owned ZIMPLATS mine and other small scale ‘indigenously’ owned gold mines such as the Amble Mine. Alluvial gold can also be easily found in the wider area near Kadoma and Kwekwe. As a result, there is widespread gold panning activities in the area which provide a vital source of income for those farmers that have struggled to invest in their newly acquired land. Illegal gold panning locally known as *chikorokoza* provides an important source of income for many newly resettled farmers and was a largely male activity undertaken during the dry season as noted below:

Chikorokoza is an important part of how we survive here. Farming is still difficult since we don't have inputs and other equipment needed for farming. We normally engage in gold panning during the dry season when we are not working on our farms. We sell the gold to dealers in Kadoma. We normally use the money we earn for paying school fees and buying food. We also buy livestock and agricultural equipment if we make enough money. Land reform allowed us access to gold as these areas were previously difficult to access. (Interview with Chinyama at Damvuri on 05/08/10).

According to interviews with the gold panners, income gained from gold panning has been vital for acquisition of livestock, procurement of food and payment of school fees for children. Some informants highlighted that, although gold panning increased after the land reform as many private farms were opened up, gold panning in the Mhondoro Ngezi area predates fast track land reform. Some of the new farmers were involved in gold panning way before they were resettled at the former Damvuri Conservancy. Such farmers used to periodically visit gold panning sites near the towns of Kadoma and Kwekwe where they would stay for some months and then go

back to their communal areas after accumulating some capital:

I have been a gold panner since 1989 when I first travelled from my village in Gokwe South to Kwekwe where a lot of gold is found. Although gold panning is risky as one can easily die in accidents or get murdered by criminal gangs. I own over five head of cattle which I bought after selling gold. Since I moved here, it is now much easier to engage in gold panning since I do not have to travel very far to engage in gold panning like before. Besides, the government is now friendly towards *Makorokoza* (gold panners) as land reform and indigenisation empowered us to utilise our natural resources (Interview with Chikari at Damvuri on 05/08/10).

These interviews highlight how *chikorokoza* is an old income generating activity undertaken by peasant farmers, and that the land reform in Mhondoro Ngezi enhanced access to minerals such as alluvial gold that have become a key part of livelihoods of newly resettled farmers. Historically, it was difficult for such farmers to travel across former large scale commercial farming areas in order to engage in gold panning as such areas were enclosed and difficult to access. Land reform improved access to these areas as shown by the widespread gold panning activities that have emerged in the aftermath of land reform.

However, according to gold panners, although the rewards of gold panning can be very high, *chikorokoza* is a dangerous activity. One can either die through accidents after landslides or can be murdered by criminal syndicates which periodically carry raids on unsuspecting gold panners demanding gold and cash. These criminal gangs are reported to operate in collusion with the police and other state agents and thus are difficult to deal with (Interview with Jara at Damvuri on 20/09/11).

Gold panners also periodically suffer from state violence, as was the case in 2007 when gold panning had escalated across the newly resettled areas. The government launched Operation *Chikorokoza Chapera*, (Operation Gold Panning is Over), a violent campaign which led to the forceful eviction of gold panners. The government claimed the reason for the violent evictions was that the gold panners were destroying the environment and illegally trading in minerals, although some of the reasons could have been political. However, in 2012 the government indicated that it was changing its attitude towards the gold panners. In the context of Zimbabwe's indigenisation policies popularised by the ZANU PF political party, gold panners have been rebranded 'artisanal miners' (Herald 28 May 2012) whose activities are

contributing to the growth in national gold output. Moreover, there are indications that the government intends to amend the Mining Act in order to give people legal ownership of minerals found on their land. These new policy shifts if implemented are likely to improve the situation of gold panners in terms of security and safety.

Large scale mines such as ZIMPLATS have also provided a vital source of income as they employ the new farmers as wage labourers on a part time bases. Key informant interviews indicate that the large mine employs a relatively large part of its work force from local communities:

ZIMPLATS has brought a lot of development to this area. It provides us with employment. It has repaired roads, schools and clinics in the area. Through land reform we were resettled close to the mine. Before land reform we were not able to benefit from our minerals (Interview with Councillor Chitani at Damvuri on 06/08/10).

This illustrates the importance of mining to the livelihoods of the newly resettled farmers. Interviews with the new farmers indicate that many newly resettled farmers are in one way or another involved in mining either as gold panners, wage labourers or as petty commodity brokers at mine sites in the case of women. Income gained from mining activities is vital for agricultural investments and to cover domestic expenses. Some farmers indicated during the interviews that they use income gained from mining activities to procure agricultural inputs, hire labour to clear fields or to buy livestock, while others use it to procure food and to pay school fees for their children.

The new farmers have also benefited from corporate social responsibility programmes initiated by the ZIMPLATS mining company. For example, the company helped to fund the creation of a women led brick moulding co-operative. The co-operative was exclusively awarded a tender to supply bricks for the construction of the mine's staff quarters. The brick moulding co-operative has created employment for women and strengthened their economic position as they can now contribute to family income. ZIMPLATS has also invested in local infrastructure such as schools, clinics and boreholes. Corporate social responsibility programmes such as the repair of schools and clinics create economic opportunities for local people who are given preference in the supply of raw materials and labour.

Access to the benefits of mineral resource extraction is a key feature of land reform in Mhondoro Ngezi which has improved livelihoods. A large number of new farmers who have struggled to kick-start their farming operations have relied on working as wage labourers at mines or as gold panners to gain some income which has sustained them at a time when farming was not viable. An important point to highlight is that the benefits of mineral resource extraction are inextricably linked to further agricultural investments as many farmers interviewed indicated that they used income gained from working as miners or gold panners to either acquire agricultural equipment or hire labour to clear crop fields.

Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted that there are many factors that have influenced the trajectory of agricultural investments in the aftermath of land reform. It has also highlighted how some of the new farmers have been able to utilise fully the land and business opportunities created by the land reform process. On the other hand, a relatively large number of the new farmers are worker peasants who have invested in part of their land while they straddle livelihoods across a broad range of portfolios such as wage labour, gold panning and cross border trade. These off farm activities have influenced accumulation patterns in this group. There remains a group of poor peasants who have not yet accessed land and thus survive by selling their labour power to richer peasants. Such people remain hopeful that they would be able to access land in the long term. Off-farm livelihoods activities have played important roles in providing alternative sources of income for a large proportion of the new farmers. Moreover, such activities have enhanced the economic position of women, as income gained from cross border trade has been used to acquire assets which have given them leverage over the control of household income. Overall, the chapter has highlighted that land reform has allowed the new farmers access to a wide range of natural resources which were previously inaccessible. These have provided alternative sources of income which have in turn influenced accumulation patterns among a large group of the new farmers.

Chapter Six

Social organisation and agency after land reform in Mhondoro Ngezi District

The newly resettled farmers in Mhondoro Ngezi faced various challenges, which among other things, required them to organise socially and collectively address them, unlike the old resettlement schemes of the 1980s. These Newly Resettled Areas (NRAs) were implemented without prior provision of social infrastructure and services. Moreover, these NRAs were established on former Large Scale Commercial Farms (LSCFs), which historically lacked basic infrastructure such as clinics, schools and shops. In addition, access to the NRAs is generally difficult as most of the former LSCFs were located far from major road networks serviced by public transport. Another compounding factor was that newly resettled farmers came from diverse geographical and ethnic backgrounds, thus were ‘strangers’ resettled together with no shared kinship ties. However, the new social environment required them to work collectively to resolve common challenges. According to Dekker and Kinsey (2011: 6), besides living as newly acquainted neighbours, ‘the new inhabitants had to solve various problems of collective action together relating to natural resource management, inputs for agricultural production ... and the management of risk and uncertainty’.

The situation which prevailed at the NRAs significantly shaped the trajectory of social organisation in the aftermath of resettlement. Thus, the relationships among newly resettled households have been dynamic, influenced also by their heterogeneity based on class, ethnicity and geographical location. Although, the new farmers shared a common objective of gaining access to land, they often competed against each other to access livelihood opportunities associated with new land. Therefore, an understanding of the trajectory of social organisation after land reform cannot be based on romantic notions of solidarity among what has been termed the ‘land occupation movement’ by Moyo and Yeros (2005). Interviews with informants in Mhondoro Ngezi indicated that at early stages of the land redistribution exercise, relationships among the newly resettled households were underpinned by geographical and ethnic background of individual farmers. Moreover, since most of

the resettled farmers claimed an autochthonic connection with the wider Mhondoro Ngezi area, such claims were often contested and strained social relationships particularly between those from different geographical backgrounds. However, the formation of associational networks within the NRA by strangers despite difficulties which existed had to transcend these ethnic and geographical boundaries.

New people, new challenges

Farmers resettled under the fast track land reform programme were immediately confronted by a crisis of social services. The programme involved people occupying land under the leadership of war veterans and chiefs with limited government involvement and no pre-settlement support. Such occupations were only formalised at a later stage under the so-called *planning* phase of land reform. However, even the post-2000 planning phase was not accompanied by the provision of social infrastructure, as was the case with earlier land resettlement programmes in the 1980s and early 1990s. Planning and other related cadastral processes were instead state making processes meant to entrench state authority over NRAs occupied with limited state involvement.

Although the state sought to impose a hegemonic presence in these newly occupied areas, it lacked the necessary resources to provide social infrastructure such as schools, clinics, extension services and farming inputs. The situation was further exacerbated by the fact that the new areas were boycotted by most foreign funded NGOs as they were deemed 'contested' by the major donors.

In Mhondoro Ngezi, the occupation of the Damvuri conservancy led to the resettlement of 185 households under the A1 Model (villagised). Damvuri conservancy, like other wildlife conservancies, did not employ large numbers of workers unlike commercial farms (LSCFs). As a result, the conservancy had little or no social infrastructure such as schools, clinics and water sources available to cater for the 185 newly resettled households. In the aftermath of land reform such services had to be accessed either from the nearby Mhondoro Ngezi Communal Areas (CA) or old resettlement schemes bordering the former Damvuri conservancy such as

Bandahwe or Tyron. In their baseline survey of the outcomes of fast track land reform across six districts of Zimbabwe, Moyo *et al.* (2009: 146) observed that:

There are a variety of social constraints affecting newly resettled land beneficiaries, the most apparent of which include unavailability of suitable water for domestic use and lack of sanitation facilities, inadequate health and education facilities and generally poor planning for any investment in social infrastructure.

At Damvuri, the absence of social infrastructure affected people differently depending on where they originally came from. Those who came from distant areas such as Gokwe and Sanyati were generally more affected. Such people had little or no knowledge of the broader area, particularly its social infrastructure and extension services (health, agriculture, etc). Moreover, they left behind the established social networks which could assist them in times of need. The reason for this is geographical. For example, the distance between the Damvuri Conservancy and Gokwe (approximately 300 km) made it expensive for people to straddle between the two sites in order to utilise their CA social infrastructure and networks. The situation was however different for new farmers who came from areas adjacent to the conservancy such as the Mhondoro Ngezi CA and the old resettlement schemes. These people, because they had the knowledge of the broader area, could easily access social services and at times utilised their old social networks to access help and support given the close proximity of their places of origin.

The HIV/AIDS pandemic also posed a formidable challenge for the resettled households, many of which were affected either through the death of immediate family members or relatives. Moreover, HIV/AIDS associated mortality meant that some families lost some productive members, thus undermining household resilience to prevailing socio-economic challenges. The absence of health facilities in the newly resettled areas imposed a burden on the newly resettled households, as they had to cope with the HIV/AIDS pandemic often without government support. The next section discusses conceptual issues related to social organisation and agency among rural households.

Agency and social organisation

New farmers at Damvuri were resettled in areas that generally lacked social services. Empirical data from the Damvuri case study and studies undertaken elsewhere (Murisa 2007, Scoones *et al.* 2010 and Dekker and Kinsey 2011) indicate that despite the challenges associated with being resettled during an economic crisis, the new farmers have overcome their geographical and ethnic differences and have organised themselves in order to address the wide socio-economic challenges associated with new land. The large number of social networks and new institutions that gradually emerged at Damvuri demonstrates the agency and resilience of the newly resettled households.

Agency can be conceptualised as ‘the individual’s capacity to process social experience and to devise the means of coping with life even under the most extreme forms of coercion and exploitation’ (Murisa 2007: 4). According to Long (2001), ‘social actors possess ‘knowledge ability’ and ‘capacity’ to solve problems and learn how to intervene in the flow of social events around them’. Giddens (1984) has also argued that ‘agency depends heavily upon the emergence of a network of actors who become enrolled in the project of some other person’. Within the context of the fast track land reform the study of agency is ‘concerned with how rural households respond both collectively and individually to the opportunities and constraints that have the potential to alter their way of living’ (Murisa 2007: 5). The study of social organisation entails ‘understanding the social infrastructure, institutions customs and material and non-material relations that either constrain or enable the individual in whatever pursuit they are engaged’ (Murisa 2007: 2).

In Mhondoro Ngezi, agency and social organisation was initially influenced by competing claims of belonging to the new land, which created discord and animosity among the farmers. For example, ethnicity and geographical background generally influenced the way people contested for leadership positions in local structures of authority such as Village Development Committees (VIDCOs), Ward Development Committees (WADCOS), local council and local ZANU PF structures. During such

contests, people tended to generally support candidates with whom they had a shared history, *vematongo* (*matongo* means ruins). For example, those who came from Gokwe tended to support candidates with whom they came to join land occupations at the Damvuri conservancy. This was also the case with those from nearby Mhondoro Ngezi CA. Interviews with informants from both groups indicated that the reason for this was to gain access to scarce government subsidies, while voting for someone you had kinship ties with enhanced one's chances of accessing such inputs. As one informant put it:

We support people we know because they are likely to help us when we face problems; strangers have a short memory, you vote them into power and they will not remember your problems once they are in power (Interview with Mpofo at Damvuri on 19/11/10).

Moreover, these interviews also indicated that in the early stages of land redistribution, there was a tendency of people to label those whom they did not know as 'strangers' or witches. For example, former residents of the Mhondoro Ngezi CA blamed those who came from Gokwe for 'witchcraft' which they claimed was 'common in Gokwe (Interview with Musvusvudzi at Damvuri on 12/11/10). Similarly, those from Gokwe accused the former residents of Mhondoro Ngezi CA for being lazy and for 'deploying *zvidoma* (goblins) to steal wealth from others' (Interview with Chikomo at Damvuri on 12/11/10). Through informal conversations with people from various groups, accusations and counter accusations of witchcraft stemmed from the difficult socio-economic situation which confronted them after resettlement and frequent crop failures. Moreover, since access to farming inputs and other government subsidies was generally difficult, this created competition and animosity among people of diverse ethnic and geographical backgrounds. In general, geographical background and ethnicity played a central role in the way people were socially organised, especially in the early stages of resettlement.

Between 2000 and 2004, the so-called *jambanja* era, communal area networks remained critical for livelihoods security. These networks acted as reservoirs of labour necessary for clearing fields and setting up of new homes. Again, such networks were also critical in the early stages of land occupations when security of tenure at occupied farms could not be guaranteed. Land occupiers often had to utilise

their social networks in CAs as a safety net in the event of evictions or when facing food shortages. Historically, communal area social networks are critical in the way rural households can mobilise labour through *nhimbes* (work parties). *Nhimbes* are reciprocal labour arrangements which are based on established social networks, among people who have lived in the same place for a long time and hence have established relationships based on mutual trust (Scoones *et al.* 2010).

Being resettled among strangers meant that newly resettled households generally lacked 'social capital' which is necessary in times of socio-economic challenges. According to Deng (2010:2), social capital is 'the bonding and... the stock of reciprocal networks of trust'. Interviews with informants from Gokwe and Sanyati indicated that they generally struggled as they had limited recourse to social networks based in their former CAs. These people had to rely on a small network of people who they either knew from the group they came with during the land occupations or new friends in the new place.

However, as new communities emerged, people who were once strangers became neighbours who could be relied on in times of need. New associational networks and institutions, which transcended ethnicity and geographical background, gradually emerged as people cooperated in order to overcome socio-economic challenges that required collective action. Below, an exploration of the dynamics that governed the social organisation of the new farmers is provided. This is followed by an analysis of various institutions and associations that have emerged a decade after resettlement.

New people, new social networks and institutions

The newly resettled farmers at the former Damvuri Conservancy faced a wide range of social challenges. The little infrastructure available could not cope with the large number of people resettled in the area. For example, the 185 resettled households had to rely on one borehole for water, which regularly broke down. This forced the new farmers to trek approximately five kilometres to the Muzvezve River in search of water (Interview with Mai Chitima 23/11/10). During the rainy season people often drank water from unprotected shallow wells, which exposed them to water borne diseases such as cholera and bilharzia. Apart from the water challenges, Damvuri had

no health facilities. The nearest clinic was five kilometres away at Bandawe towards the Mhondoro Ngezi CA. There was neither a primary nor secondary school and their children had to attend school in dilapidated tobacco barns which had been converted into a primary school' while the secondary school children were sent back to 'communal areas to live with relatives in order to attend school' (Interview with Bozho at Damvuri on 23/11/10).

Some informants indicated that the absence of secondary schools at Damvuri helped to perpetuate the marginalization of girls in secondary education. They further expressed how they were uncomfortable with sending their daughters away to study for fear that they might end up being abused or impregnated; instead, they preferred to send boys away to secondary schools. This meant that a disproportionate number of girls were unable to continue beyond primary education. Interviews and informal conversations during fieldwork indicated that although people appreciated the benefits of land reform, the absence of social infrastructure negatively affected them as reflected in selected biographies cited below.

Mrs. Makhaya came from Sanyati and arrived at Damvuri in 2000 and she had this to say about the situation after resettlement:

The agricultural situation is better than where we came from because here there soils are good as land was virgin land. Our yields are better than those in Sanyati if we were to compare the two places. The main challenge here is that we travel about 8 km to the nearest health facilities. We also send our children, especially those at secondary level, to schools in the rural areas at Mhondoro Ngezi CA since there are no secondary schools here (Interviewed at Damvuri on 13/09/10).

Mr. F Mafamashiza came from Sanyati and was allocated land at Damvuri in 2001. His family had been evicted from the Rhodesdale area and forcibly relocated to Sanyati in 1952:

We have no health facilities since the nearest clinic is 5km away. We also face serious water shortages as there is only one borehole servicing over 8 villages. I live hundred meters from an electricity power line but my home is not connected to electricity. Our local political leadership is corrupt, we are told that the government donates money and inputs but the local councillor diverts them for personal use (Interviewed at Damvuri on 13/09/10).

Mrs. J Changa came from Manyewe in the Mhondoro Ngezi CA and was allocated land at Damvuri in 2003:

We face serious water shortages here. If the borehole is broken down we fetch water from those with wells but you have to wake up as early as 4am in order to get the water. This makes life very difficult for people like me who are aged 66 years. Our local school is run down; it is not even a school but is more of a fowl run. We wish the councillor could take our grievances to government (Interviewed at Damvuri on 22/11/10).

These challenges associated with new land gradually forced ‘strangers’ into ‘neighbours’ and a new sense of community emerged. In 2012, over a decade after the FTLRP commenced, a spirit of co-operation and self-reliance had emerged among the new farmers. Although informants decried the absence of government support during interviews, there was a general perception among the new farmers that through cooperation many of the problems they faced could be addressed. As one informant observed “we were given land by the government let’s work together to utilize it” (Interview with Jonasi at Damvuri on 27/07/10).

The new spirit of cooperation and mutual understanding among the farmers has resulted in a wide variety of social organisations and institutions. These range from a local development association focused on mobilising resources for building infrastructure such as schools, dams and sinking boreholes. Other associational networks such as local farmer groups, burial societies, new churches and micro-finance schemes are concerned with addressing social challenges. A detailed analysis of these initiatives is provided below.

Damvuri Development Association

‘Welcome to Damvuri fast tracking education for development’

New farmers settled at Damvuri were faced with a wide variety of challenges after resettlement. These involved, *inter alia*, the absence of infrastructure, access to markets, and establishing new communities from scratch at a time of severe economic challenges. Although new associations and networks have taken time to emerge at Damvuri, they now play a key role in the way the new farmers are socially organised. In his study of social organization in the Zvimba District of Zimbabwe, Murisa (2007: 5) noted that ‘rural communities have developed innovative support systems that cushion against vulnerability and that enhance the quality of life. These support systems include social arrangements of reciprocity, compulsory norms of

generosity, communal land and work sharing'. In Mhondoro Ngezi, the absence of schools, clinics and clean water at Damvuri eventually led to the formation of the Damvuri Development Association (DDA).

The DDA was formed with the aim of co-coordinating local development activities given the absence of local state and NGO development initiatives. Its leadership comprises village heads, VIDCOs, war veterans, local ZANU PF leadership and the Ward Councillor. The main aim of the association was to spearhead the mobilization of resources in order to build infrastructure such as schools, dams and drilling of boreholes. The DDA also acts as a platform for local people to lobby politicians and to voice their grievances to the state. Its activities involve regular meetings where people from all the eight villages are invited to participate. The meetings provide an opportunity for people to discuss problems they face in their respective communities and propose and/or seek solutions. Common problems discussed range from the absence of clean water, dams for irrigation and watering livestock, unemployment, HIV/AIDS, clinics, libraries and connection to the electricity grid. For example, at one meeting I attended, various interest groups highlighted the challenges they faced and their needs: Mrs Mukora, who represents a women's association, had this to say:

We need boreholes in every village; as women we have to travel for five kilometres in search of water as the only borehole in Village One cannot meet our water needs. We want the government or the local leadership to secure funds for borehole drilling (Recorded at Damvuri on 23/10/10).

Mr Ruhanya, who represented the Damvuri Primary School Development Association, also highlighted the problems they were facing in constructing classrooms since the children were currently attending classes in former tobacco barns:

We need financial resources to finish building classrooms. The place where our children are attending classes cannot be called a school, but this is just a shade! We want the government and other stakeholders such as Non-Governmental Organisations to provide us with help (Recorded at Damvuri on 23/10/10).

Mr Ncube, who represents a HIV/AIDS support group, also highlighted the challenges facing people living with HIV/AIDS in terms of accessing health facilities and support:

People living with HIV/AIDS here at Damvuri are struggling to survive, there is no clinic, and we face difficulties in accessing information and financial resources to coordinate HIV/AIDS awareness activities. The coordinator needs a bicycle in order to travel to all 8 villages to support HIV/AIDS support groups (Recorded at Damvuri on 23/10/10).

Lastly, the head of the DDA highlighted how he was busy talking to the local Member of Parliament (MP) and other government ministries to secure funding for local development:

We understand the challenges we face which have been highlighted by various groups, we are in the process of organising meetings with our local MP to highlight our challenges so that they can take them further along the authority structures. We are also lobbying local mining companies to provide us financial resources to repair roads, build dams and sink boreholes. We believe that in the long term our challenges are going to be resolved (Recorded at Damvuri on 23/10/10).

These recordings highlight some of the challenges faced by the newly resettled farmers and how they are organising themselves to address them. What was interesting to observe during the meeting was the fact that, although ZANU PF which plays an important role in the newly resettled area is generally anti-NGOs many people highlighted the need for NGOs to provide support. Representatives of local authorities highlighted also how they were going to take these problems to higher authorities or how, for example, they were going to engage local mining companies to provide help. What was reflected was that people did not only expect the government to provide help but also NGOs and private companies. However, this is despite the fact that there are hardly any NGOs operating in the area. Moreover, other people emphasised the need for people to pool resources together in order to address some of the problems, such as donating labour and money to build the primary school.

The DDA also acts as a bridge between ordinary people and local state structures such as VIDCOs and Ward councillors. It also coordinates local initiatives such as mobilising labour and financial donations from Damvuri residents for the construction of infrastructure such as schools and repairing of boreholes. The association also plays a central role in the way Damvuri farmers leverage development aid from mining companies operating in the area. For example, the

DDA regularly set meetings with the ZIMPLATS mine in order to secure funds for borehole drilling, dam construction and construction of schools. The way the DDA operates highlights an important aspect of social organisation of newly resettled farmers. Informal structures such as the DDA and formal structures of authority operate hand in hand in their quest to address local developmental needs. For example, VIDCOs and Ward councillors who represent local state authorities play an important part in the DDA's activities as they lend both legitimacy and access to other state structures, which is required especially given the centrality of state patronage in the way vital inputs and other services, can be accessed. Thus, the boundaries between formal structures of authority and informal networks, which have emerged in the aftermath of land reform, are often blurred. People have ceased to rely only on one form of authority or organisation but assume a dynamic role all with the aim of addressing local issues.

Churches

Since its occupation in 2000, a wide variety of churches have emerged at Damvuri. These range from the popular African Apostolic Faith churches, Zionist sects and mainstream churches such as Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches. These churches have played an important role in promoting cohesion among the newly resettled households. For example, through such churches, some people lacking draught power such as widows and the poor can secure such help from church members. Churches such as Apostolic Faith sects have also contributed to the formation of micro finance schemes locally known as *kukandirana mari or raundi* (a rotating fund). These micro finance schemes were especially central in the way some of the new farmers gained income to acquire small livestock, hire labour and to pay for household expenses and even school fees. Some of the schemes have been particularly useful in helping women to mobilize financial resources for them to buy seed and other property, which improves their participation in the rural economy. The biographies below highlight the role of churches in promoting cohesion, the creation of new support networks and safety nets in the aftermath of the land reform programme.

Mrs Chipiro is a single woman who came from the Mhondoro Ngezi Communal Area. She is a member of Chiedza Chavatendi Apostolic Sect, and had this to say about how the church has helped her:

I am a single woman, my husband died in 2003 and I was left to fend for myself. Life was difficult since I did not have any relatives here. My husband left me with three children, without any livestock of our own. It was very difficult for me to fend for my children on my own. I joined the church because I wanted to feel part of a community. I wanted to have people with whom I could share my problems and also worship. People in the church have helped me during the planting season. As a widow, church members set a day aside when they pool all their draught power together and plough my fields. I feel happy that I found a church with very helpful people. Life is not as hard as it used to be before I joined the church (Interviewed at Damvuri on 22/03/11).

Mr Chapika came from Sanyati and is a senior church deacon involved in the formation of the Mughodhi Apostolic Faith Church at Damvuri:

We came here and these were *mapurazi* (farms) with no churches. Land reform led to the spread of the word of God. In 2002 when I came here we decided to start a church, we needed to bring people who had come from different places to worship the Lord. The church has been a source of support for many people, the poor, those suffering from *mukondombera* (HIV/AIDS). The churches have also contributed to peace and stability here, in the early days people were suspicious of each other, there was politically motivated violence however through churches people are more peaceful and eager to help one another (Interviewed at Damvuri on 22/03/11).

These biographies highlight the many roles that the churches have played in the NRAs. Since people were suspicious of ‘strangers’ or ‘outsiders’ in the early stages of land reform, churches have to a large extent been a source of cohesion as they have promoted the establishment of new social networks, which transcend ethnicity and kinship ties. Churches have thus redefined belonging as some people are now less attached to ‘kinship’ ties, as church members have become their ‘kin’. They have also helped to address spiritual issues, which have confronted the newly resettled households. Those in need of material and emotional support have been able to utilise churches in order to gain access to help in times of need. As a result, a new sense of belonging has crystallised around the church.

In the aftermath of land reform, churches have also come to constitute an important political constituency due to their ability to influence their

members during elections. Interviews with informants who belong to various churches indicate that although churches have promoted cohesion among the new farmers, some churches, in particular Apostolic sects, can be politicised during the elections in support of particular political parties. However, during fieldwork most of the churches tended to support community cohesion as they were utilised by the new farmers to address their social challenges.

Political parties and local state structures

Political party membership and local state structures played an important role in the way in which the new farmers were socially organised, especially in the early stages of fast track land reform. During the land occupations, ZANU PF played an important role in the way in which land occupiers were socially organised and how they sought to legitimize their claims over land. ZANU PF membership was also used to fight against potential threats of eviction from occupied farms. It has continued to play an important role in the way access to land is governed. Interviews with informants indicated that during the land occupations it was important to be seen to be a member of ZANU PF. This enhanced one's chances of gaining access to land, inputs and other government subsidies, which were in short supply (Interview with Bushu at Damvuri 23/11/10).

Resettled farmers therefore utilise ZANU PF networks as a way of negotiating access to patronage networks, which are critical for accessing government services. Moreover, at Damvuri such membership was not only important for accessing land and government help, but also enhanced one's opportunity of securing jobs at the nearby ZIMPLATS mine where an unofficial ZANU PF 'quota' forms part of the mine's human resources policy (Interview with Chishangwe at Damvuri 20/09/10). ZANU PF has also been central to the way people who came from diverse ethnic and geographical backgrounds could work together as a new form of belonging crystallised around the land occupations, which were by default associated with ZANU PF membership. Such belonging provided those perceived as 'strangers' to make legitimate claims over land. For example, those who came from far places such as Gokwe and were regarded by those from the nearby communal area of Mhondoro

Ngezi as ‘strangers’, utilised ZANU PF networks as a way of legitimising their claims over land and building new social networks.

Through ZANU PF, such people, although dismissed as ‘strangers’, have become influential in local authority structures where they hold positions of authority as village heads or members of VIDCOs and WADCOs. As one informant argued, “we all fought in the liberation struggle, we belong to ZANU PF, we should get land anywhere in Zimbabwe regardless of our ethnic background” (Interview with Bere at Damvuri 07/06/12).

HIV/AIDS support groups

One of the major aspects of fast track land reform, which has received limited attention in literature, is how the large scale mobility of people associated with land reform increased their vulnerability to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. During the land occupations, most men left their communal homes to join war veteran-led land occupations. Since these occupations generally started as protests with no guarantee that they would be sustained, most men left their wives behind as a security precaution. The process sometimes took many months before a land owner was forced off the land; men were therefore separated from their wives for long periods.

The long separation of men from their wives during the land occupations resulted in men engaging in extra-marital affairs, hence the high incidences of *kubika mapoto* (co-habiting) or the increase in polygamous relationships. These new relationships often increased the vulnerability of households to HIV/AIDS. At Damvuri and the wider area, HIV/AIDS has become a critical issue as it has affected many households due to various factors. The broader Mhondoro Ngezi area is a predominantly mining area. Historically, mining areas have high HIV/AIDS prevalence than the national average (Moyo *et al.* 2009). Moreover, Damvuri is located in a transit area linking the Mhondoro Ngezi CA with the mining towns of Kwekwe and Kadoma to the west and Mvuma to east. The large scale mobility of people in the area makes it difficult to contain the spread of HIV/AIDS as people are constantly moving from one mine to the other. Chapter Five highlighted how many of the new farmers double up as gold panners and wage labourers at the ZIMPLATS mine as a way of straddling

livelihoods. Mine compounds and gold panning sites increase the vulnerability of people to HIV/AIDS. For example, on the fringes of the ZIMPLATS mine is an informal squatter camp called '*kumahuswa*' (the grasses) which houses prostitutes who have been attracted by the presence of 'business' opportunities.

Casual labourers (who are often local farmers) at the mine regularly engage the services of prostitutes who not only provide them with sex but accommodation. The mine does not provide housing for casual workers; hence the squatter camp provides cheap accommodation. Interviews with informants who once worked as wage labourers at the ZIMPLATS mine and had once stayed at *kumahuswa*, indicated that the lack of information about the risks of extra marital relationships and prostitution increased their vulnerability to HIV/AIDS and other Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs). The situation is further worsened by the fact that there are few health facilities around the area. Moreover, there is no HIV/AIDS focused NGOs operating in the area.

In response to the HIV/AIDS crisis, Damvuri residents initiated an HIV/AIDS support group, which provides information, counselling and psychosocial support to those living with HIV/AIDS. The support group coordinators regularly attend training in what is locally known as 'positive living' in Kadoma. After training, such information about living with HIV/AIDS is shared with their respective local support groups. HIV/AIDS support groups not only play an important role as a source of information about how to access anti-retroviral drugs in the absence of healthcare workers but provide access to Anti-Retroviral Treatment (ART). The support group members access their treatment by sending one person to the nearest clinic in Kadoma to collect drugs.

However, support group activities are hampered by lack of transport. The volunteer support group coordinators have to walk across eight villages in order to reach out to their members. During an interview with one coordinator, he highlighted how lack of transport was hampering his ability to coordinate support group activities: 'I need a bicycle in order for me to travel across all villages here at Damvuri; it is difficult to reach out to all those living with HIV/AIDS without transport' (Interview with Ncube 23/07/10).

Burial societies

A wide range of new associational relationships have developed at Damvuri. Burial societies are one of the associational relationships that have emerged and play a key role in the way in which people assist each other during bereavement. Traditionally, when there is bereavement in a rural area, people pool resources together to assist the bereaved family with food and cash donations. These reciprocal burial associations are based on established social networks and kinship ties. However, in the context of fast track land reform, these traditional arrangements have undergone some changes. For example, those from areas as far as Gokwe who lack any association with former communal areas, have been forced to initiate burial societies as a way of dealing with bereavement in the absence kin and established social networks. Although these burial societies were initially formed by people from Gokwe, they now have a broad membership comprising people from diverse geographical backgrounds.

The emergence of formal burial societies highlights three important dynamics associated with the fast track land reform. Firstly, that those who left established networks in communal areas had to initiate new ones in order to deal with the potential costs of bereavement in the absence of kin and established social relationships. Secondly, the difficult socio-economic environment has undermined the ability of most families to make contributions during bereavement since they cannot afford such donations. Thirdly, being far away from one's kin as a result of resettlement means that one has limited access to their support in times of need. Formal burial societies, which have emerged after resettlement were initially started by people who came from far areas and hence were unable to utilise kinship networks based in communal areas where they came from. However, interviews with the members of such burial societies indicated that they now have people from diverse geographical backgrounds and ethnicity.

People who came from the nearby Mhondoro Ngezi CA tended to be less involved in new burial societies as they continue to utilise their old links with communal areas which are adjacent to Damvuri. For such people, burials and other traditional rituals

and ceremonies still involve their extended families. Moreover, as highlighted in previous chapters, they continue to bury their dead in communal areas where they still feel a strong sense of ‘belonging’. An important case in point to demonstrate the dynamics of burials is highlighted below:

Themba Bozho came to Damvuri from Manyewe in Mhondoro Ngezi in 2002. In 2012 his son was murdered in Bulawayo. During an informal conversation, he explained how his family decided to bury him in the Mhondoro Ngezi CA rather than at the newly resettled area:

When my son died after being murdered in Bulawayo by thugs, we decided to bury him at our former homestead in Mhondoro close to where my mother is buried. Although nobody lives at the ruins of our former homestead, we thought it did not make sense to bury him here since all people are buried back home in Mhondoro Ngezi. Moreover, we could not have the funeral here because most of our family and relatives are in Mhondoro Communal Area (Interviewed at Damvuri on 30/06/12).

This indicates that even though new associations have emerged in Damvuri, lineage and kinship ties with communal areas where some beneficiaries of land came from continue to play an important role in the way the newly resettled households are socially organised. Such networks play a central role during funerals and other family gatherings such as *kurova guva* (a ritual that takes place a year after one’s death). However, not everyone can utilise their lineage and kinship-based networks, particularly those from areas far from Mhondoro Ngezi, but they tend to utilise new associational networks. However, this does not mean those who are not burial society members do not participate in local funerals as all community members are expected to participate. The social organisation in the aftermath of land reform has thus been influenced by a variety of factors; these include, *inter alia*, geographical background of the farmers in terms of location of their places of origin in relation to Damvuri. Time is also an important factor as interviews with informants in 2012, a decade after resettlement, indicated. It highlighted that new social networks based on mutual trust, marriage and friendship rather than ethnicity or geographical background had reshaped the way the new farmers are socially organised.

Farmer co-operatives

One of the major challenges facing the new farmers was the absence of extension services immediately after resettlement. Such services were difficult to access given the fact that the key ministries responsible for providing them such as Agricultural Research and Extension Services (AREX) were underfunded. Moreover, key personnel such as extension officers had been lost in the large brain drain which occurred after 2000. The absence of extension services, especially in the early stages of land reform, had a negative impact on the farming operations of the new farmers. Since such farmers came from diverse agro-ecological locations, they had to adapt to a new agro-ecological environment requiring an understanding of local rainfall patterns, soil types and livestock diseases. This affected their cropping patterns and animal husbandry. Problems of establishing new agrarian operations in new environments compelled the farmers to start new farmer associations as a way of sharing risks, equipment, information and support in the absence of official help.

Local farmer associations that emerged at Damvuri played a role in the way people exchanged expertise. For example, some farmers learnt how to use new technologies such as using knapsacks to spray their livestock against tick borne diseases in the absence of dip tanks. Interviews with the members of farmers' association indicated that they provided a platform for the farmers to share information and expertise. For example, those with better knowledge of the local ecology such as former employees of the Damvuri conservancy helped to orientate their colleagues to the ecological dynamics of the local landscape. As a result, those who were new to the local ecological landscape were able to adjust their cropping patterns to the new environment. Farmers' associations became key sources of information about the availability of inputs and also provided a platform to lobby local politicians in order to access government subsidies (Interview with Mutanga at Damvuri 23/10/10).

Most of the farmers' associations such as *Kuguta Kushinga* Co-operative were started after 2006 as a result of high inflation and shortages of inputs. They were central in the way the farmers accessed inputs and marketed their agricultural produce. Unlike in communal areas where people could easily utilise ox-drawn carts to transport agricultural produce to the market or depot, Damvuri had neither a grain

or cotton marketing depot. Agricultural produce had to be marketed in Kadoma where the nearest depots are located. Although Damvuri is situated relatively close to Kadoma (less than 100 km), transporting farm produce required people to pool resources together in order to hire transport as one cannot use ox-drawn carts. Moreover, those growing tobacco had to hire transport to Harare since the marketing of tobacco is centralized. Transport logistics thus required closer co-operation among the farmers. However, the situation might change in the long term once the marketing facilities of both cotton and tobacco are decentralised.

Moreover, those involved in the production of cash crops such as cotton needed to be part of a farmers' group in order to access credit. As a risk control measure, cotton companies require that farmers belong to a group before they become a part of the out-grower schemes which enabled access to credit. Thus, the new farmers had to enter into local farmers' associations as a way of accessing credit or as a way of sharing the cost of transporting produce to the market. Interviews with key informants such as AREX Officer indicated the new farmers' associations are localised and have limited links to national organizations representing small scale farmers such as the Zimbabwe Farmers Union [ZFU] (Interview with Chikozho at Damvuri on 24/10/10). However, this did not make them less effective in helping the local farmers to deal with their challenges, especially in accessing inputs. Through interviews and informal conversations with the members of farmers' associations, it emerged that such associations provide a platform for the new farmers to engage with the state in order to access help since local farmers' associations play an influential role during the elections as politicians target them to canvas for support. Thus, the associations use such periods to address their problems and also to lobby politicians for more and secure access to agricultural inputs. For example, local farmers' groups at Damvuri have used their lobbying power to source periodically donations of seed and fertiliser from Peter Haritatos, the local ZANU PF MP (Interview with Hungwe at Damvuri on 26/10/10). Since farmers' co-operatives have among their membership representatives of local authority structures such as war veterans, local ZANU PF leaders and Ward councillors, they have the capacity to access state patronage structures which are key to accessing agricultural inputs.

Royal Mhondoro Ngezi Community Trust

An important local organisation, which emerged in 2011 in the context of Zimbabwe's controversial indigenisation policy, is the Royal Mhondoro Ngezi Trust. It was created with the aim of helping local communities access the benefits of indigenisation of the South African owned ZIMPLATS mine. Despite the controversy associated with its creation, the trust had the effect of amplifying discourses of local ownership of natural resources among the newly resettled farmers. Through conversations with informants at Damvuri, there is a general expectation among the new farmers that the ZIMPLATS mine should fund local development initiatives as a way of paying back for the extraction of local mineral resources. Although discourses of indigenisation and local ownership of resources have been dismissed as a ZANU PF political gimmick, they have become key to the way local people conceptualise solutions to problems they face. In Mhondoro Ngezi, the absence of 'development' after land reform is no longer a problem of the state alone; foreign owned companies such as ZIMPLATS are also implicated in the way local people continue to be marginalised while the companies are extracting local resources. Thus, local farmers have deployed the indigenisation mantra as a way of forcing the company to fund local development initiatives, as the local councillor put it:

These companies are taking away our resources left to us by our ancestors. They should pay by giving us money so we can address the challenges we face, if they don't we can force them out, the President made it clear that if they do not want to indigenise they should leave our resources (Interview with Councillor Tigere at Damvuri on 21/09/10).

On a broader level, discourses of indigenisation and local ownership of natural resources, which have recently gained some salience in Zimbabwean political discourse, have come to play a key role in the way in which the local communities organise themselves to address their local problems. At the core of such discourses is the fact that the state ceases to be responsible for local development; instead foreign owned mining companies are expected to pay for such development resources by investing in local communities. However, such discourses are juxtaposed to the fact that local community share ownership trusts have been reportedly looted by ZANU

PF political elites (Mail and Guardian Online 24 October 2011). For example, the indigenisation of ZIMPLATS was highly contested by local chiefs and elites in government as highlighted in the Government of Zimbabwe owned Sunday Mail newspaper (3 March 2013). Despite this, local people have been able to deploy indigenisation discourses as a way of mobilising resources in order to address local problems. The situation at Damvuri illustrates the agency of the newly resettled farmers in terms of their ability to socially organise themselves to deal with a wide variety of challenges that confronted them after resettlement.

Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted that gaining access to land was not the end of the story. Many of the newly resettled areas lacked basic infrastructure such as roads, schools and clinics. The situation was worsened by the fact that farmers that were resettled under the FTLRP received limited government support and they had to address many socio-economic challenges on their own. Thus, the success of the new farmers in the way they organised themselves to deal with the many problems they faced after resettlement largely owes itself to their creativity. An important aspect of social organisation after resettlement worth noting is that it was initially influenced by the ethnic and geographical background of land beneficiaries. However, time became an important factor in the way the new social institutions and associational networks emerged as people overcame their differences and co-operated with former ‘strangers’ in order to deal with local problems. However, it is important to highlight that newly formed associational networks have been underpinned by gender, ethnicity and political dynamics. Some organisations have been more inclusive of gender and ethnicity than others. For example, church based micro-finance schemes have a predominantly female membership, while local farmer organisations tend to be dominated by men with very few female members. Local farmers’ organisations were largely inclusive of people from diverse ethnic and geographical backgrounds as anybody could join them based on their needs. Other organisations such as burial societies were started by people who came from distant areas such as Gokwe and Sanyati. However, their membership has grown to include people from diverse geographical backgrounds. Other local organisations such as the Royal Mhondoro

Ngezi Trust, and the Damvuri Development Association tended to be controlled by the ZANU PF political party. Access to their services is largely through patronage networks. It is important to note that as much as the benefits of land reform are celebrated, the new farmers have had to deal with many challenges on their own with limited government support. The fact that many farmers have stayed put despite many challenges highlighted reflects their resilience and the importance of land to their livelihood strategies. It also highlights that if such farmers are supported, the benefits of land reform are potentially immense.

Chapter Seven

Conclusions

This thesis has provided a timely contribution to the growing body of literature on Zimbabwe's fast track land reform process, including on the manner in which land was allocated, the distribution of beneficiaries and the emerging trajectory of rural livelihoods. The thesis utilises empirical data and ethnographic approaches to elaborate much more than is found in most studies on specific processes of how the land reform has unfolded, and its impact on the livelihoods of peasant farmers who benefited from land redistribution.

The outcomes of Zimbabwe's land reform have retained a localised character. For example, in Mhondoro Ngezi, land reform was an ordered process which was state led. The state was 'present' and assumed a hegemonic role during the implementation of the Fast Track land Reform Program (FTLRP) and in its aftermath. This ordered process allowed people from diverse geographical, class and ethnic backgrounds to access land and other opportunities associated with the new land. This local experience challenges claims of state absence, disorder and chaos during the implementation of the FTLRP which have been popularised by some scholars (Hammar *et al.* 2003). For example, in Mhondoro Ngezi, local state structures did not collapse and remained in charge of the land reform, the DA became a modernising figure who guarded against the collapse of the local state. War veterans were thus forced to work under him rather than undermine the authority of local state structures. This local experience owes to the fact that local bureaucratic structures such as the DA had a long history of implementing resettlement programmes during Zimbabwe's land reforms of the 1980s. Such a bureaucracy continued to play a role in resettlement within the new context of fast track land reform despite the fact that many bureaucratic structures across Zimbabwe had collapsed. Another important reason why there was no disorder during land occupations might be the fact that Mashonaland West Province is home to many ZANU PF high profile politicians who acquired farms in the area (President Mugabe, Webster Shamu, Nathan Shamuyarira, Ignatius Chombo and Bright Matonga). Such

politicians were reluctant to allow the situation to deteriorate into disorder during land occupations as this would have affected their newly acquired properties.

Claims that the land reform only benefited ZANU PF supporters (Zamchiya 2011) do not sufficiently capture the diverse experiences across Zimbabwe's countryside. In Mhondoro Ngezi, ZANU PF membership was 'performed' and instrumentalised by landless peasants as a way of gaining access to land and government subsidies. During land occupations, landless peasants utilised ZANU PF membership in order to access land, however such people did not necessarily vote ZANU PF during elections as voting returns indicate. This demonstrates the negotiability of political party identities and the way they were utilised by landless people to access land.

Various scholars have utilised empirical data to highlight the outcomes of Zimbabwe's land reform process. For instance, Moyo *et al.* (2009) have highlighted how the land reform transformed a bi-modal agrarian structure inherited at independence in favour of a broad base of beneficiaries. Similarly, Scoones *et al.* (2010) and Hanlon *et al.* (2012) have highlighted how the newly resettled farmers have invested in their land in terms of agricultural productivity and accumulation processes. This thesis compliments these earlier studies by demonstrating that land reform allowed landless peasants to access better quality land and other natural resources which were previously a preserve for white farmers. Additionally, the geographical and geological location of Mhondoro Ngezi provided newly resettled peasant farmers with a wide range of alternative livelihoods which were not available in communal areas where most of them came from. Through land reform, the new farmers gained particularly unique opportunities for employment at mines which are operating in the area. Gold panning has also become a key livelihood activity, especially during the dry season when people are not farming. The biographies of the farmers highlight the fact that gold panning and wage labour on the mines, for example, are important sources of capital which is used to pay for school fees, food, seeds, agricultural equipment and livestock. The importance of this source of capital, which lies outside the realm of state control, shows how livelihoods and accumulation occur through formal and informal resources extraction activities and markets. Apart from wage labour, platinum mining and gold panning, the new area

also offered the new farmers opportunities to start businesses. As the economy has been restructured and markets reconfigured, new market opportunities have emerged. This local experience challenges claims of cronyism and elite capture of land by political connected elites which have been popularised in literature on land reform (Zamchiya 2011). This finding also demonstrates that the outcomes of land reform across the variegated Zimbabwean countryside assumed peculiar and localised characteristics, which defy over-generalisation and calls for the analyses of the FTLRP to take into account these diverse experiences.

Theoretically, this thesis has demonstrated that land reform can transform the lives of poor peasants by removing distortions in the land ownership structure which allows them access to land and other natural resources which are critical for their social reproduction strategies and livelihoods security. Furthermore, it has demonstrated that the benefits of land reform go beyond gaining access to land in order to farm; off farm activities are a key part of rural livelihoods as they provide capital for further agricultural investments. The fact that a large number of middle peasants who are engaged in off farm activities utilise income gained from such activities to further agricultural investments demonstrates that off farm activities are inextricably linked to future agrarian investments. These findings thus challenge theories of 'deagrarianisation' which have been popularised by so-called agrarian pessimists (Byres 2004 and Bryceson *et al.* 2000).

This thesis has demonstrated that land reform was a process underpinned by many dynamics which were often localised in character. This means that any analyses of its outcomes must take into account this diversity of experiences. The increase in empirical based studies (Matondi 2012 and Halon *et al.* 2012) and ongoing studies by doctoral students (Interviews with Chigumira, Chambati and James) undertaken across various provinces and agro-ecological regions, is a welcome development that is likely to address challenges associated with single case studies.

Overall, important lessons can be drawn from the Mhondoro Ngezi case study. Firstly, land reform can address historical injustices in the land ownership structure by allowing landless peasants to access land and other livelihoods enhancing opportunities. However, the process is not without challenges; a large scale

resettlement of people requires the provision of social infrastructure and other support such as farming inputs. Without such support, it is difficult for land beneficiaries to quickly make investments on their land. Secondly, and this is linked to the first point, the benefits of land reform are long term, their impact is likely to take longer to realise (Kinsey and Binswanger 1993). Thirdly, land reform has the potential to radicalise poor peasants, to demand their rights and entitlements to land and natural resources previously enclosed under an unjust land ownership structure and socio-economic relations.

Lastly, this thesis has demonstrated that a lot of factors must be taken into consideration in any programme that involves a large scale resettlement of people. While land reform has allowed landless peasants to access land, droughts makes rain-reliant agriculture a risky livelihood portfolio. This means that newly resettled farmers must adapt their farming operations to changing climatic conditions as a way of spreading risks associated with recurrent droughts. Off farm activities are critical for rural livelihoods security as they can cushion peasant households against environmental shocks. Furthermore, the exploitation and utilisation of natural resources which have increased in the aftermath of land reform is not sustainable and is likely to affect the livelihoods of the new farmers in the long-term. This is an area that requires further research which is beyond the scope of this thesis.

Zimbabwe's fast track land reform process provides important lessons for countries in the southern African region with similar histories of settler colonialism such as South Africa and Namibia. These countries continue to pursue a market-driven approach to land reform which has largely failed to restore the land rights of indigenous groups who were dispossessed of their ancestral lands during apartheid era forced removals. The Zimbabwean experience demonstrates that an unjust land ownership structure can be a source of social and political instability, but that land reform can transform rural livelihoods in favour of marginalised rural farmers.

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