

# Chapter 7

## Large–Scale Land Acquisitions, Livelihoods, and Gender Configurations in Zimbabwe

**Patience Mutopo**

*University of Cologne, Germany & University of Wageningen, The Netherlands & Chinhoyi University of Technology, Zimbabwe*

**Manase Kudzai Chiweshe**

*Chinhoyi University of Technology, Zimbabwe & Futures Agricultures Consortium, UK*

**Chipo Plaxedes Mubaya**

*Chinhoyi University of Technology, Zimbabwe*

### ABSTRACT

*The notion of large-scale land acquisitions has been topical in recent years in Zimbabwe; it has even created more nuanced debates, since 70% of rural women in Zimbabwe are the majority of food producers. Foreign and locally orchestrated land deals have presented new challenges and threats to the livelihoods of women in rural Zimbabwe, at a time of land redistributive programs that have been viewed nationally and internationally as chaotic, affecting the food security, economic prowess, and international relations of Zimbabwe. The main aim of this chapter is to examine how women are particularly affected by the investments, based on three case studies. An analysis of the Zimbabwean scenario is presented with regards to participatory methodologies that reflect women's rural livelihoods and land loss.*

### INTRODUCTION

The notion of large scale land acquisitions has been topical in recent years in Zimbabwe. It has created more nuanced political economy debates as 70% of rural women in Zimbabwe are the majority of food producers (Matondi, Chiweshe & Mutopo,

2013). Despite the African Union's commitment to strengthening women's access and control of land by placing land rights in the public domain of human rights, it is silent on the issue of land grabs. This is a gap that the African Union's land policy framework, yet 2014 has been declared the year of agriculture in Africa by the African Union.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-4666-7405-9.ch007

However the foreign and locally orchestrated land deals have presented new challenges and threats to the livelihoods of women in rural Zimbabwe. At a time also of land redistributive programs that have been viewed nationally and internationally as chaotic affecting the food security, economic prowess and international relations of Zimbabwe. Our aim in this chapter is to understand and plainly bring out how women are particularly affected by the large scale land investments within the Zimbabwean context. To include women's stories and experiences is necessary because their stories are often forgotten, trivialized and placed at the periphery (Tollin & Törnqvist 2011). A broad analysis of the Zimbabwean scenario is presented and reference is made to the differential impacts of the investments on livelihoods of women within the Southern African context. In the last decade foreign companies or governments have acquired 227 million hectares of land in Africa, according to a recent report by OXFAM, (Mutopo 2012). Women in rural Zimbabwe tend to be disadvantaged by the large scale land investments, as loss of land a critical livelihood component becomes a relational issue that constantly feature in different contexts of discussions with the women, and the effects the loss has on their lives. The chapter uses three unique case studies carried out in Chisumbanje, Mwenezi and Chiadzwa to highlight how women have experienced land dispossession in Zimbabwe. We dwell on empirical investigations to further unravel how women are affected negatively by the large scale land acquisitions. The impacts are almost always negative and irreversible. Action Aid (2013: 13) reports that:

*Multi-national corporations are key players in land grabbing, often acting in conjunction with governments that create the policies and broker the deals that undermine land rights. Donor governments and international financial institutions play a critical role in land grabs by crafting the policies, financial incentives, and development*

*programs that place business interests ahead of the interests of local communities. Among the top governments engaged in large scale land deals are the UK, the USA, and many northern investors.*

In such processes women are not key actors at all therefore compromising the African Protocol on Women's Rights, the Convention on Economic and Social Rights and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women which emphasize the need for states to ensure that women's access to land, water, livelihoods and other natural resources are upheld by state parties, and that discriminatory laws and cultural practices should not be the basis of violating women's rights to land and livelihoods.

## **GENDERED DIMENSIONS ON LAND ACQUISITIONS IN AFRICA**

Although the chapter specifically focuses on Zimbabwe, it is true, that across the African continent women remain largely responsible for food provision at household level thus any issues relating land affects women (Shah, 2012). Thus it is to this extent that, land remains a valuable livelihood asset for rural women. Large scale land deals across Africa have generally affected rural women negatively, with women losing their identity as well as the right to land ownership and land use, as the conglomerates often ask people to live the land and women emerge as poor victims in most communities as they cannot fight for their land due to patriarchy which insists on land being a male regulated commodity (Mutopo 2012; Mutopo & Chiweshe, 2012). Behrman, Meinzen-Dick, and Quisumbing (2011) provide a gendered analysis of land grabbing in Africa showing how rural women face many disadvantages when it comes to land deals. They argue that:

13 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:  
[www.igi-global.com/chapter/large-scale-land-acquisitions-livelihoods-and-gender-configurations-in-zimbabwe/120374](http://www.igi-global.com/chapter/large-scale-land-acquisitions-livelihoods-and-gender-configurations-in-zimbabwe/120374)

## Related Content

---

### Examine the Role of Data Mining in Achieving the Goals of Knowledge Management in Organization

Saeed Hajizadeh, Mona Toloue Tehrani and Amir Hossein Bagheri (2014). *International Journal of Asian Business and Information Management* (pp. 34-47).

[www.irma-international.org/article/examine-the-role-of-data-mining-in-achieving-the-goals-of-knowledge-management-in-organization/124300](http://www.irma-international.org/article/examine-the-role-of-data-mining-in-achieving-the-goals-of-knowledge-management-in-organization/124300)

### Adaptability of Backcasting for Sustainable Development: A Case Study from Nepal

Eva Wieners, Martina Neuburger and Udo Schickhoff (2015). *International Journal of Asian Business and Information Management* (pp. 16-27).

[www.irma-international.org/article/adaptability-of-backcasting-for-sustainable-development/127626](http://www.irma-international.org/article/adaptability-of-backcasting-for-sustainable-development/127626)

### Systems and Processes Framework in Global Business Transition

Yi-chen Lan and Bhuvan Unhelkar (2005). *Global Enterprise Transitions: Managing the Process* (pp. 61-93).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/systems-processes-framework-global-business/18913](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/systems-processes-framework-global-business/18913)

### Creating a Chinese "Miele"? Asymmetries in the Consumer Perception of Chinese and German Brands

Cora F. Jungbluth (2010). *International Journal of Asian Business and Information Management* (pp. 30-42).

[www.irma-international.org/article/creating-chinese-miele-asymmetries-consumer/49553](http://www.irma-international.org/article/creating-chinese-miele-asymmetries-consumer/49553)

### Trade Liberalization and International Performance of Australian Manufacturing Industries and Its

Andrew Marks (2006). *Global Information Technology and Competitive Financial Alliances* (pp. 183-193).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/trade-liberalization-international-performance-australian/19224](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/trade-liberalization-international-performance-australian/19224)