



**LARGE SCALE LAND ACQUISITION AND ITS IMPLICATION ON
RURAL LIVELIHOODS: THE CHISUMBANJE ETHANOL PLANT
CASE, ZIMBABWE.**

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CHIPO MILDRED MANDIHLARE

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Members of the Examining Committee:

Dr [Oane Visser]

Dr [Jun Borras]

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Inquiries:

International Institute of Social Studies
P.O. Box 29776
2502 LT The Hague
The Netherlands

t: +31 70 426 0460
e: info@iss.nl
w: www.iss.nl
fb: <http://www.facebook.com/iss.nl>
twitter: [@issnl](https://twitter.com/issnl)

Location:

Kortenaerkade 12
2518 AX The Hague
The Netherlands

Dedication

To my loving mother Mrs Jane Mandihlare, for your love, support, encouragement and prayers.

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List of Acronyms

ARDA	Agricultural and Rural Development Authority
DTZ	Development Trust of Zimbabwe
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
FTLRP	Fast Track Land Reform Programme
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GoZ	Government of Zimbabwe
LRRP	Land Reform and Resettlement Programme
ZANU PF	Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front
ZBE	Zimbabwe Bio-Energy

Abstract

Whether viewed as “land grabbing”, “large scale land acquisition” or “agriculture investment for development”, this trajectory has seen vast tracks of land being outsourced for non-food projects such as bio-fuel production. Majority of farmers who reside in the rural areas have their land earmarked for such projects (bio-fuel production) and resultantly they are left to swallow the bitter pill of the effects of large scale land deals. In most studies done in Africa commonly cited benefits of large scale farming such as employment or income generating opportunities to the local communities has fallen far short of expectations. Downsides have often stood in stark contrast to the reported and anticipated benefits of such land deals. The fieldwork for this study was carried out in Chisumbanje communal area, Zimbabwe in July 2013. The study seeks to explore how the introduction of large scale commercial farming by Green Fuel Company affected the community in every aspect of their lives ranging from loss of livelihood strategies, dispossession, displacement and loss of social and economic status. The research assessed the impact of the Chisumbanje large scale land acquisition on the community’s livelihood, examined the community’s perception and response towards the project. The methods used for collecting data were, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions with the locals who included men, women and the youths as well as the Observation method. The research answers the question: In what ways and to what extent has large scale land acquisition altered the livelihoods of the Chisumbanje community? In answering this, it adopted two of Bernstein’s key questions in agrarian political economy “who owns what” and “who gets what”. Analytical tools provided through Sustainable Rural Livelihoods framework and Scott’s weapons of the weak theory were also applied. Empirical study of the Chisumbanje case shows that there are no convincing positive impacts for the locals, but only a long list of downsides.

Relevance to Development Studies

Large scale land acquisition is currently a subject of heated debate among development practitioners and researchers, national governments, international community and civil society organizations. This research assessed the politics surrounding large scale land acquisition and its impact on community livelihoods and rural development in Zimbabwe. The research is relevant to development studies mainly because land is essential to the lives of the rural poor people as it is a source of their livelihoods.

Keywords

Livelihoods, large scale land acquisition, displacement, Political Economy

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Large scale land acquisition is a worldwide contested issue that causes a diversity of adverse impacts on the social, political, economic and environmental areas. The emergence of a new trajectory dubbed “large scale land acquisition”, where vast tracts of land have been outsourced for non- food projects such as bio-fuel production is resulting in crippling effects on rural communities. This research examined how the large scale land acquisition in Chisumbanje by Green Fuel Company altered the local community in every aspect of their lives ranging from loss of livelihood strategies, displacement and loss of social and economic status. This paper seeks to assess how and to what extent large scale land acquisition has changed the livelihoods pattern of the people of Chisumbanje community in Zimbabwe.

1.2 Contextual Background

Large scale land acquisition and land grabbing are strategic terms with the same meaning and used through different agrarian perspectives in agrarian studies. Cotula et al (2009:18) defined it as acquisitions whether through purchasing, leases or other of land areas over 1000 hectares by investors. According to De Schutter (2011:249) land grabbing is a phenomenon defined as acquisition or long term lease of large tracts of land by investors. Borras et al (2009:34) describe land grabbing as a catch all to describe and analyse the explosion of large scale (trans) national commercial land transactions. Large scale land acquisition emerged out of the 2008 global food crisis and has been hailed by investors and some developing countries as one instrument for lifting economic growth as well as improving livelihood of rural people (De Schutter 2011).

The proliferation of land acquisitions across Africa and elsewhere originates from three main drivers, which are reflected in the term ‘the triple-F crisis’: food, fuel and finance (Hall and Paradza 2012). Land deals are being negotiated with foreigners, state, politicians, nongovernmental actors and large investments entrepreneurs to establish large scale projects. Large scale land investments have generated much critique within theoretical debates. Scholars like Li (2011) and De Schutter (2011) argue that the investments pose a high threat to rural livelihoods as in most cases investors focus more on seeking and maximizing profits and ignore local’s livelihood. De Schutter (2011) highlighted that the investments can result in local communities losing access to land and related resources hence losing their source of livelihood.

According to Moyo (2000), the land issue in Zimbabwe has resurfaced as a major social, political and economic problem at both national and international levels. Before independence (1980), Zimbabwean government regulations were in favor of white commercial farmers and marginalized black peasant farmers. Whereas between 1980 and the 1990s land reform in Zimbabwe was on the willing buyer willing seller policy established at the 1979 Lancaster House Conference, the year 2000 saw the launch of the peasants led accelerated land reform programme which was also known as the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) (Moyo 2000). The logic of the FTLRP has been to

repossess land from minority white commercial farmers and redistribute it among the majority landless peasants. It was meant to complete the liberation struggle, with economic rights in 2000 finally following upon the political rights gained with independence in 1980.

Meanwhile, large scale land acquisitions in Zimbabwe have been a recurrent phenomenon within the last five years (Mutopo and Chiweshe 2012), as land deals are being negotiated with state, politicians, nongovernmental actors and large investments entrepreneurs to establish large scale projects such as biofuel production (Mujere and Dombo 2011). The Government of Zimbabwe (GoZ) through FTLRP was claiming to articulate the injuries of colonialism, oppression and injustice generated by structural inequality of land access in Zimbabwe. The same government is now turning its support and putting its efforts into large scale commercial farming claiming that it is a panacea for rural development.

In the case of Zimbabwe, investors in land projects have largely been rogue businessmen with close ties to politicians, elites and some multi-national companies who get into partnership with government companies or companies owned by some few elites (Mujere and Dombo 2011). Matondi (2010) pointed out that some of the domestic investors involved in such deals are former white commercial farmers finding new forms of investment in agriculture, now with the blessing of the state. The new trajectory of large scale land acquisition in Zimbabwe invokes debates on whether the government is contradicting itself as it is going against the aim of FTLRP (Makombe 2013).

In 2009, Billy Rautenbach's Rating and Macdom Investments under the Green Fuel company banner entered into a 20 year Build, Operate and Transfer arrangement with the state-run Agricultural Rural Development Authority (ARDA) in Chisumbanje to grow sugar cane for bio-fuel production (Makombe 2013).¹ The exact ownership structure of Chisumbanje ethanol plant is shrouded in secrecy (ibid). Green Fuel Company additionally acquired land through dispossession and displacement of local farmers neighboring to ARDA land as the 5000 hectares from ARDA was not enough to match the capacity of the plant that required 40 000 hectares. According to Green Fuel (2012) Chisumbanje ethanol plant is the first large-scale ethanol producing factory in sub-Saharan Africa, manufacturing anhydrous ethanol from sugarcane to supply Zimbabwe and the region. The Chisumbanje ethanol plant believed to be worth US\$600 million has altered the livelihoods and welfare of a number of villagers who live along the Save River (Mujere and Dombo 2011).

The ethanol project which is seen as a solution to the country's energy and rural development challenges, has failed to live up to its billing, with a number of local communities losing their source of livelihoods and millions of litres of ethanol so far produced failing to find buyers. According to Makoche-kanwa (2012), many motorists think it is rather absurd to switch to ethanol fuels for no reason as the price difference is at most two cents. The Chisumbanje ethanol project has led to the altering of the livelihoods system of

¹ Billy Rautenbach is a controversial and rich Zimbabwean businessman who held diversified interest in various African countries as well as Europe and Asia (Borras Jr et al. 2011). Rautenbach is believed to be aligned to top ZANU PF politicians and supply the party with funds to keep President Robert Mugabe in power (ibid).

the local communities. This and other deals are done at the expense of livelihoods that can be generated from the land for the local communities.

1.3 Problem Statement

Zimbabwe has recently gone through large-scale land acquisitions meant to benefit the majority populace and indigenous companies. However the speed, scale of land and drivers behind the land acquisition give cause for concern. The Chisumbanje case which led to displacement of local communities for sugarcane plantation to produce ethanol is the most debated and controversial land deal in Zimbabwe partly because diverse elite investors are interested against local actors interested in making a living from the land. The Chisumbanje land deal displaced 1754 households (Makombe 2012). The ProCana case in Mozambique is an example of a well-studied example that proved large scale land deals are a high risk of worsening livelihoods against the anticipated rural development. Contrary to the logic of FTLRP, Chisumbanje ethanol project led to the displacement of local communities to pave the way for a bio-ethanol project and this portrayed a contradictory shift from the FTLRP aims as the new investors came with the backing of the government. Locals are being moved from their territories as the elites and the politicians are now viewing land as a novel way for business deals and new profit opportunities (Mutopo and Chiweshe 2012). Local communities used to make a living from the land through farming cotton, maize, sorghum and livestock before being displaced. Therefore it is against this backdrop that the study intends to explore the impacts of large scale land acquisition on the livelihoods of the local communities. The research aims to find out why, despite the theoretical potentials, large-scale commercial land deals mainly result in negative consequences for the local communities. I decided to use this case because of its potential to markedly impact rural communities, partly due to its extensive need for land.

1.4 General Objectives

1. The research aims to assess how large scale land acquisition and control of related natural resources has changed the livelihood pattern of the people of Chisumbanje community.
2. What are the local's interpretation and response to the land acquisition deal?

1.5 Research Question

In what ways and to what extent has large scale land acquisition altered the livelihoods of the Chisumbanje community?

1.5.1 Sub Research Questions

1. What is the meaning and importance of having land in Chisumbanje community?
2. What are the effects of land deals on the livelihood strategies of the Chisumbanje community?
3. What are the perceptions of the locals towards the deal/project?

1.6 Relevance and Justification

In Zimbabwe land is central to the prospects for development and a backbone of rural livelihoods. The research is relevant to development studies mainly because land is essential to the lives of the rural poor people as it is a source of their livelihoods. In Zimbabwe, approximately 80% of the rural population depends on land for their livelihood. Secure access to land decreases vulnerability to hunger and poverty. Large scale land acquisition is currently a subject of heated debate among development practitioners and researchers, national governments, international community and civil society organizations. This research is going to assess the politics surrounding large scale land acquisition and its impact on community livelihoods and rural development in Zimbabwe.

Despite the spate of literature, different studies indicate that impacts of large scale land acquisition remain vaguely understood and controversial. This research is a step towards filling the gap in understanding the impacts and helps to analyze reported intentions and high expectations of positive development that are preached about on investing in such deals.

A 2009 report (FAO, IIED and IFAD) revealed that the main benefit to the countries involved in such deals is perceived to be investor commitments such as employment creation and infrastructure development. Scholars like Deininger (2011) argues that such land agreements can provide macro-level benefits like Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth and increase government revenue, upgrade local living standards, and introduce technology, capital and market access. However, potential benefits and risks associated with large scale land acquisition is debated, there is limited systematic evidence of the actual impacts of such investments on the local communities. As a result of the high level of debates in the topic there is diversity in the reported opportunities, challenges, risks and effect of the deals. According to Behrman et al. (2012) tangible evidence regarding the impact of large scale land acquisitions is scarce, which makes it have diverging opinions and challenging to measure the effects. This may be a result of limited availability of detailed information and data on such deals as some transactions are shrouded in secrecy.

Given this debatable position of large scale land acquisition, this research seeks to inform the development discourse by providing an empirical analysis of Zimbabwean large scale land acquisition. This research aims to assess the impact of large scale land acquisition in Zimbabwe and the most common claims made in favour of the land deals in order to delineate the difference between the rhetoric and reality. Research on livelihood areas provides valuable sustainability information on the limitations and opportunities for current and future project planning and implementation. The research focuses on the Chisumbanje case as it is currently the most debated one compared with other cases in Zimbabwe. The Chisumbanje Ethanol plant case drew a lot of media attention and varying reports.

1.7 Outline Of The Study.

This paper is organized in six chapters. Chapter one provided a systematic background to the study, problem statement, research objectives and relevance and justification of the study will be outlined.

Chapter two sets out the theoretical framework and literature review.

Chapter three presents the methodology and research approach.

Chapter four presents a historical and contextual background of the Chisumbanje Ethanol project, description of project activities and demographic characteristics of the study district.

Chapter five analyses and discusses research findings with respect to the impact of the project on livelihoods of local communities and livelihood strategies adopted to decrease unfavourable impact.

Chapter six presents a conclusion with a presentation of summary of key findings.

Chapter 2: Literature review and Theoretical Framework

2.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the theoretical framework and concepts that are used in discussing and analysing the study findings. The researcher adopted two of Bernstein's four key questions in agrarian political economy "who owns what" and "who gets what". Analytical tools provided through Sustainable Rural Livelihoods framework and Scott's weapons of the weak theory were also applied. The chapter presents literature review of studies done in Zimbabwe about large scale land acquisition.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

2.2.1 Political economy

This study was premised upon two of Bernstein's four key questions in agrarian political economy "who owns what" regarding social relations of property and "who gets what" relating to distribution of income (Bernstein 2010). Situating this theory with the occurrences in Chisumbanje, the research sought to highlight how the means of production and reproduction are distributed, income distribution and how has it altered the livelihood of the local community. The political economy lens helps interpret the struggles related to control over land and how it shapes direction of agrarian change. "Who owns what" and "Who gets what" are intertwined as social relations of property shape social distribution of income.

Bailey and Bryant (1997:39) argued that the possession of power in greater or lesser amounts, when exerted could make it possible for certain outcomes to be achieved. In Zimbabwe, investors in land projects have largely been individual elites and companies owned by some few elites who partner with government companies (Mujere and Dombo 2011). Land is being used as a symbol of both economic and social power and it denotes prestige and social status. The Chisumbanje land deal was approved by a few influential political elites and the intricate details about it are privy (ibid). Scoones et al (2012:84) points out that until land is viewed as a source of livelihood and redistributed economic wealth, and not as a source of patronage or political weapon, will the real possibilities of Zimbabwe's land reform be realized. The Chisumbanje case suggests that the interplay of power denotes who gets what in relation social relations of property.

It is important to note that from a political economy lens, access to natural resources is not just based on rights, but power relations also come into play. Referring to the Chisumbanje case the investors and some influential political elites are the ones controlling the access to land and related natural resources. Land deals will likely exacerbate the existing power disparities in land access and distribution of income. The findings suggest that a few influential members of local elites and chiefs are being given gifts in form of money, fuel among others by the investors in return for support. A growing body of evi-

dence is suggesting that the Chisumbanje community local dynamics and power relation determines who benefits from the land deal and to what extent. It is also important to acknowledge how locals respond to power imbalances and the way access to land is restricted based on power relations and political affiliations. The community response to dominance and the various strategies they employed, forms of resistance are some of the aspects which are highlighted in this research.

Mutopo and Chiweshe (2012) assert that local communities are being displaced from their territories as the elites are now viewing land as a new way for business deals and new profit opportunities. The corporate biofuels initiatives view land as the new oil well where fuel can be pumped out (Borras et al. 2011) resulting in land becoming more of an economic factor of production against a place where people live. The locals are normally disempowered and lose the ability to make their own decisions.

Hall (2011) pointed out that rich countries and rich individuals are now buying poor countries land and water resources at meager amounts at the expense of the livelihoods that can be generated from the land for the local communities. This paper is going to take into account the different social relations of production, reproduction, property and power that exist in the Chisumbanje community and how it influences who gets what and who owns what. Who owns what and who gets what are intertwined, whatever happens in the realm of one force has a bearing on the other. The political economy framework provides the basis of how power relations have implications on land and related natural resources in Chisumbanje. The study aimed to explore how the politics of resource use and distribution have become a central force in determining livelihoods in Zimbabwe's communal areas and what forms of resistance exist.

The political economy approach is useful in this research in that it helps in understanding forces behind the project, why and how despite the anticipated development there is poverty in the community. Political economy informs us the nature of politics in production and consumption, but it does not inform us the causes and consequences of these processes on social changes in community culture practices and behavior (Blackie 1985). The livelihoods framework provides a better understanding of how livelihoods are constructed and this helps the researcher to analyse strategies adopted by the Chisumbanje community in their bid to create and curve a living.

2.2.2 Sustainable rural livelihoods

The concept of livelihoods has gained wide acceptance as a valuable means of understanding the factors that influence people's lives and well-being, particularly those of the poor in the developing world (Carney 1998:33). Livelihoods in the rural areas are built around the availability of such essential resources as land, water and vegetation. The Chisumbanje community lost their source of livelihoods as they were dispossessed and displaced from the land. Ellis and Ade Freeman (2005: 4), explain the term livelihood as an attempt to capture both what people do in order to earn a living and the resources that provides them with capability to build a satisfactory living taking into account risk factors, institutional and policy context that either helps or hinders them in their pursuit of viable living. Land and related natural resources influence people's lives and well-being in rural Zimbabwe. Scoones (2009:5) asserts Chambers'

definition of livelihoods to ‘comprise the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living’. According to Neumann (2005) and Scoones (2009), this may also involve traditional practices, processes and means of subsistence attained as human and environment interact to enhance their livelihoods security while protecting their ‘natural resource base’. The proliferation of large scale land deals is leading rural people’s livelihoods under threat as land is lost in the guise of national development priority. The land deals are commenced in line with institutional processes and policy arrangements and this may create opportunities and constraints for local communities in relation to their livelihoods and livelihood outcomes as explained in the livelihoods framework (Scoones 2009:180).

Scoones (2009) pointed out five livelihood resources available which are natural capital (land and water), physical capital (roads and irrigation), human labour (knowledge and skills), financial (loans and credits) and social capital (social privileges). The researcher is going to focus more on natural capital considering the issue of land is central on the research topic. Natural capital comprises land and water and they are resources that are utilized by rural people to generate a means of survival. Natural capital is the most open, freely accessible resource base that the Chisumbanje community counts on for their livelihoods.

Sustainable livelihoods approach does not formally take into account the actions and influence of the elites as it only focuses on the poor. The theory incorporates the elites under the role played by the institutions and organization in the building of sustainable livelihoods. Political economy approach will be used to analyse the issue of power dynamics in the land deal. Looking at the Chisumbanje case the elites played an important role in the altering of sustainable livelihoods for the locals. The Chisumbanje case suggests that questions of power and politics should be central to analysis on how livelihoods are structured. Empirical evidence revealed that for the Chisumbanje case political capital also played an enormous role just like other capital assets such as land. A number of studies on large scale land deals show that the elites played a part in altering the livelihoods of the locals. For the Chisumbanje land deal, the investors in the project are shrouded in secrecy, but it is said to be an individual and companies owned by a few members of the elites who partnered with government companies (Mujere and Dombo 2011).

Scoones (2009:12) argued that livelihoods are structured by social relations that unavoidably govern the distribution of property (including land), patterns of work and divisions of labour, distribution of income and dynamics of consumption and accumulation. Scoones (2009:10) advocates for politics and power to be central to livelihood perspectives for rural development. The sustainable livelihoods approach has been criticised for its failure to capture the process of change over time. Relating to the Chisumbanje community, Livelihoods approach’s failure to capture change leaves a lot to be desired. Through dispossession and displacement living ways are bound to change. Livelihoods are not static they are dynamic over time. The process of the Chisumbanje land deal led to resistance from the locals and what (Scott 1985) calls weapons of the weak. Resistance is often an aspect that is ignored in livelihood analysis.

2.2.3 Weapons of the weak

Scott (1985) looks at peasant societies and their ways of responding to dominance. In his conceptualization of daily forms of peasant resistance, Scott ascertained that, instead of revolting, peasants engage in what he calls weapons of the weak, whereby peasants engage in foot-dragging, evasion, false compliance, implicit collective bargaining for better working hours and pay, by taking long lunches if the pay is too low and sabotage. Situating this theory with the occurrences in Chisumbanje, the study sought to highlight how the displaced smallholder farmers employed various forms of resistance like non-compliance as a way of resisting dominance. This theory helps in the understanding of how land grabs affected the farmers individually, thus putting the displaced farmer at the center of analysis was important in terms of gathering data on how they were individually affected by the introduction of the land deal. Situating this theory in the context of the plight of smallholder farmers in Chisumbanje, the study highlighted how top down approaches used by the government and Green Fuel Company failed to take into cognisance the fact that peasant farmers are not blank slates, hence, they could devise a number of non-coordinated and invisible ways to resist. By so doing, peasant farmers may not directly create a new order, but they could be effective in mitigating the process of marginalization, and therefore have made impact over time, in social changes.

Scott (1985) further noted that the rich expend effort and material in molding the peasants to suit their own end at the expense of the poor, who oppose them whatever means, are available. Prior to the introduction of the land deals in Chisumbanje, the farmers had created social bonds and relations and they could identify with each other. However, the setting up of the ethanol plant in Chisumbanje destroyed and disintegrated social ties and stripped off whatever social status these farmers used to have. Therefore, such loss of social status as clearly posited by Scott (ibid) led to the daily forms of peasant resistance because the peasant no longer had a social base and this motivated them to resist in various ways. The rural poor are left out of the picture because of the power disparities in the system of land governance.

2.3 Conceptual Discussion

Large scale land acquisition - Large scale land acquisition and land grabbing are strategic terms with the same meaning and used based on different agrarian perspectives in agrarian studies. The term is tricky to define and has generated a lot of debate in the academic field as evidenced by a lot of varying terms and definitions one encounters in literature. According to Hall and Paradza (2012), Africa is at the centre of the new “global land rush” – pejoratively termed “land grabbing” or approvingly named “land-based foreign direct investment” or, more neutrally, “large-scale land acquisitions”. Borras and Franco (2012) relate the term land grabbing to ‘emerging dynamics of changes in land use and property relations’ for production of ‘flex’ crops (i.e. rice, sugarcane and corn) that can be converted into biofuel. Cotula and Vermeulen (2008) defined land deals as typically involving the leasing, or other concessions rather than sale, of large tracts of land usually for production of foreign markets through foreign companies and governments concerned with hedging against the risks of food

price increases on global markets. Nunow (2011) defined land grabs as the purchase, lease or other form of taking possession of huge tracts of land, mostly in poor developing countries, by national government agencies and private sectors aiming at producing bio-fuel, crops and minerals for export. Visser et al (2012) highlighted that land grabbing has been defined as large scale land acquisition by foreigners, but currently a substantial share of land grabbing is conducted by domestic investors or by coalitions of foreign and domestic actors. There is generally no consensus regarding the meaning and usage of the term. The impacts of large scale land deals vary with time, geographical area and the size of the land hence one can conclude that relevance of any definition is dependent on the specific context. While 'land grab' is not an entirely new phenomena, the scale, magnitude and discourse around the global rush on farmland, makes this moment unique in history (Grain 2008). It is important to note that whilst a number of studies has been done to pin down the impact of land deals on local communities, most deals are in early stages hence it may be too early to assess impacts.

The ongoing global land grabs risks creating a re-invigorated neo-colonial system that enhances the power of cash-rich Multinational Corporations (Hall and Paradza 2012) at the expense of smallholder peasants and indigenous communities who are displaced and dispossessed. In the case of Zimbabwe large scale land deals are being negotiated with state, politicians, individuals and private companies to establish large scale farming projects such as biofuel production. Large scale land deals have the potential to bring about development in rural areas in poor developing countries, but they also raise concern about the impacts on local who risk losing land on which they depend for their livelihood.

Displacement-dictionary definition it means forced migration. Cotula et al (2009) points out that large scale land acquisition poses a threat to rural livelihoods as people are being displaced losing their source of livelihoods. Borras and Franco (2012) noted that some of the problems associated with large scale land deals include, neglect of land users, absence of consultation with farmers, corruption and violent conflicts over land rights among others. Large scale land acquisition in Chisumbanje led to the displacement of local people to pave way for the bio-ethanol related project. Capitalist expansion is driving governments to dispossess and displace peasants from agricultural land, even using force to break up resistance. These large scale projects are often supported by governments because they are anticipated to produce long-term benefits to a large number of people in local, or even national, economies as well as other positive outputs such as political prestige (Hall 2011). The Chisumbanje land deal is backed by the government and the displaced households have no bargaining power as the land is owned by the government. According to Borras et al (2012) it is generally assumed that large scale land deals are shady in character, facilitated by corrupt government officials and result in the displacement of local communities from their land. Displacement often results in resettlement in marginal lands, erosion of social networks and loss of livelihoods. Literature review suggests that the displacement and dispossession of rural poor in many countries is one of the immediate major outcomes of the global land grabs. The Chisumbanje land deal dispossessed the locals not only of land, but also of social, political and economic entitlements that come with it.

2.4 Studies on large scale land acquisition in Zimbabwe

2.4.1 Nuanetsi Ranch Bio-Diesel Project

The Nuanetsi Ranch is owned by Development Trust of Zimbabwe (DTZ) and during the FTLRP it offered part of the ranch for resettlement (Mujere and Dombo 2011). In 2008 DTZ signed a partnership agreement with Zimbabwe Bio-Energy (ZBE) to establish a bio-diesel and agribusiness projects on the ranch (ibid). As a result the small scale farmers who were resettled are now being dispossessed and displaced.

Mujere and Dombo (2011), documented on the controversies the Nuanetsi Ranch Bio-Diesel Project, had generated. The research also focused on the responses of local peasants to such a large scale but non-food investment project. Mujere and Dombo (2011), also highlighted a few issues on the plight of small- holder farmers in Chisumbanje, but lacked a detailed analysis on how the land grabs impacted smallholder farmers' social and economic lives.

Mutopo (2012) carried out a study in Mwenezi on the Nuanetsi Ranch Bio-Diesel Project. She documented the gendered dimension of land and rural livelihoods, with particular attention to the effects of land deals on men and women, with women being more disadvantaged as they have difficulties in land accessing and utilization in rural Zimbabwe. In her research, Mutopo (ibid) highlighted the relationship that exists between women and men in terms of relations of production as far as land outsourcing are concerned. Mutopo (2011) ascertained that the gendered bio-fuel, livelihoods and displacement discourse operate within the definitions of politics, which entail who gets what, when and how. Therefore, the gendered nature of livelihoods reflects the structural relationship of inequality between men and women as manifested in households, labor markets and political structures. Thus in conceptualizing land grabs and its gendered nature, the research failed to give out an assessment of the interaction between the displaced farmers, both men and women and the civil society. The research also fell short of highlighting the kind of relationship that existed whether it was through subordination or not.

2.4.2 Chisumbanje Ethanol Project

Mutopo and Chiweshe (2012) studied the Chisumbanje case focusing on impacts on women in regard to land ownership and how the women created and curved new livelihood strategies. The research did not look at the impact of the community as a whole. Thus on focusing on the politicization of the Chisumbanje Ethanol project, Mutopo and Chiweshe (2012) omitted crucial factors like how displaced farmers responded to dominance and the various strategies they employed as forms of resistance. There is a need to do research on the impact on the whole community as the extent of impact differs for example among men, women and youth.

Makombe (2013) studied on the Chisumbanje case focusing on economic histories and its importance for understanding and resolving new disputes. He pointed out that land disputes are not new, but rooted in and played out through much longer histories of land rights, claims and contests. His study

mainly focused on the historical origins of these competing claims of rights of use and ownership of land at the centre of land disputes.

The implication of the land deal to the livelihoods of the Chisumbanje community as a whole was not fully explored. A community is not a homogeneous unit; there are diverse attitudes, effects and perceptions among others. This research seeks to find out from diverse angles how and to what extent the deal has altered the livelihoods of the locals. There is a need for empirical evidence on the question to what extent and how the livelihoods of the Chisumbanje community as a whole have been altered. There is also a need to explore what are the survival strategies emerging as all the findings portrayed an overall negative impact. Studies by (Mutopo and Chiweshe 2011, Dombo and Mujere 2011, Makombe 2013) provided evidence of how control of land and related natural resources is a contentious and political issue in Zimbabwe. They all agreed that the land deal have an overall negative impact on the local communities.

Chapter Three: Methodology and Research Approach

3.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology and the analytical tools used in the study. It discusses the data sources, procedure, data collection methods, limitations and analysis. It also gives the reasons for choosing qualitative methods over other methodologies.

3.1 Methodology

The methods used for collecting data were, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions with the local people who included men, women and the youths. Participant observation was also used. Qualitative methods were preferable, because they captured social issues and the research was social in nature. Qualitative methods were also used to solicit full in-depth of the effects of large scale land acquisition on the livelihood strategies of the local people. The research adopted a case study approach where Chisumbanje Ethanol project was used as the case. This research was grounded on two of Bernstein's four key questions in agrarian political economy who owns what regarding social relations of property and who gets what relating to distribution of income (Bernstein 2010).

3.2 Why A Case Study Approach?

The researcher chose a case study approach mainly because she wanted to see what is on the ground and if what is in literature was true, considering the case has received contrasting reports in the press and is the most debated in Zimbabwe. According to O'Leary (2010:174), a case study is, "a method of studying elements of the social through comprehensive description and analysis of a single situation or case. The researcher had to go in the field and observe what is on the ground, and listening to how the land deal has altered the livelihoods of the local community. By using a case study this paper aimed to inform, on a site specific basis, the impact of large scale land deals for biofuel production on the local communities in Zimbabwe.

3.3 Data Sources

To better understand the impact of large scale land acquisition in rural Zimbabwe, the researcher carried out an empirical study that is qualitative in nature. Data was collected from a sample of the Chisumbanje community and literature review. The researcher ensured confidentiality of the data collected and that anonymity of the respondents will be respected. Chisumbanje is an interesting case study because it is poised to be the largest bio-ethanol plant in Sub-Saharan Africa (Green Fuel 2012). Chisumbanje is an area in the province of Manicaland in Zimbabwe.

3.3.1 Secondary Data

The researcher reviewed literature from researches done on the case. Makombe (2013) studied the case from an angle of economic histories and its importance to understanding and resolving new disputes, Mujere and Dombo (2011) focused on the conflicts that emerged and Mutopo and Chiweshe (2012) studied on gender perspective focusing on the impact on women from the land deal. Mutopo and Chiweshe(2012), focused much on the impacts of land deals on women, they left the impact such large scale land transactions had on the men, especially considering that Zimbabwe have a patriarchal society which regard men as breadwinners of the family. This research therefore seeks to fill the gap that was left, by looking at how the community responded to the introduction of land deals and how the setup of the bio-fuel plant affected livelihood strategies for the community.

There is a literature gap on empirical evidence relating to the extent and how the livelihood of the Chisumbanje community as a whole has been altered. Mujere and Dombo (2011) also highlighted a few issues on the plight of small- holder farmers in Chisumbanje, but lacked a detailed analysis on how the land grabs impacted smallholder farmers' social and economic lives. The available literature has a gap on what are the survival strategies emerged because of the displacement. Mutopo and Chiweshe (2012) only focused on the strategies created and done by women. Mujere and Dombo (2011) omitted crucial factors like how displaced locals responded to dominance and the various strategies they employed as forms of resistance, aspects which are highlighted in this research.

Newspaper articles, website of the project were also used. In choosing media sources the researcher prioritized those with a reputation of credibility. Primary data is going to be used to cover the missing links on available literature of the case study.

3.3.2 Primary Data

To cover the gaps left by secondary data the researcher used qualitative methodological strategies which are semi- structured interviews, focus group discussions and observation. Miles (1994) pointed that qualitative research involves analysis of data such as words and gestures from data gathering techniques such as interviews. The researcher designed and used interview guide as data collecting instruments in carrying out the study. Questions were arranged from broad to more specific so as to allow the participants to adjust to the interview schedule. The questions order starts with simple short questions then long probing ones that elicited more complex responses. Data was collected from local government agencies involved in land administration, people who were displaced, people who are now surrounding the Chisumbanje plant landholding, ethanol plant staff, local authorities, and other key informants'. Qualitative methods allowed the researcher to have a holistic and in-depth understanding of local people's experiences in Chisumbanje. According to O'Leary (2010:194), interviewing is a method of data collection that involves researchers seeking open-ended answers related to a number of themes, topic areas, or questions. Observation helped the researcher in cross checking findings from the interviews hence the methods complement each other. The use of semi-

structured interviews was very relevant to this study as it allows the researcher to control the process by guiding the interviews through the questions and at the same time, it gives room to pursue or follow new leads in the course of interviews. According to Babbie (2012), qualitative research design involves studying human action in a natural setting and through the eyes of the actors themselves, together with an emphasis on detailed description and understanding of the phenomena within the appropriate context. Qualitative approach is appropriate for answering the research question which requires in-depth interview, different views and case realities. The researcher chose to use a case study so as to assess and evaluate what is in literature and what is on the ground.

3.4 Data Collection Techniques

For data collection the researcher employed semi-structured interviews, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and observation.

3.4.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

The researcher used semi-structured interviews to achieve the objectives of the study. For this research, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the locals to gather their experience and perspective towards the project. 18 participants were selected using snowball sampling method. The researcher chose to use semi-structured interviews because they helped the interviewer to have a clear plan in mind concerning the focus and goal of the interview. This was of great importance as it assisted to guide the direction of the discussion. The researcher also chose the semi-structured interviews because they expressed little control over the informants' responses since the questions were open-ended. The relevance of the semi-structured interviews was that, since the objectives of the research entailed assessing the responses of the locals to land deals, the questions that were asked highlighted different responses on how the locals reacted to the introduction of land deals. The reaction was noted especially on their views pertaining a large scale but, non- food investment project in their land. This methodology also brought out the various livelihood strategies that were adopted by the displaced people. The strategies differed from household to household, hence the relevance of using semi-structured interviews in this research. Since the interview questions were semi-structured, the researcher asked from various dimensions to capture differing views. Semi-structured interviews are flexible, they help respondents to explain issues in their own understanding.

These interviews were carried face to face and this gave room for in depth questioning thereby creating trust and co-operation. Voice recording was avoided due to unpredictable politics in Zimbabwe and this was also a way of maintaining ethical standards and participant wellbeing. Face to face, interviews permitted the collection of data through direct verbal exchange with interviewer and respondents. Burgess (1982) ascertained that, semi-structured interviews provides room for the researcher to probe deeply into the issues under study, to uncover new clues, to open up new dimensions to the phenomenon, and to secure vivid, accurate and inclusive accounts of respondents that are based on personal experience.

The researcher was taking notes during interviews. Of the 18 interviewees 11 (61%) were women and 7(39%) were men. 15 out of the 18 interviewees were more concerned about the loss of land and uncertain future of their livelihoods. Two (2) interviews were conducted with representatives from Green Fuel Company which are the Public Relations Officer and Production manager. Past and current issues such as equality issues relating to benefits for locals, displacement, compensation and community development were discussed with the Green Fuel representatives. Each interview lasted for about 20-40 minutes.

3.4.2 Focus Group Discussions

The researcher conducted focus group discussions to be able to capture the local's ideas as they discussed. This helped the researcher to be able to analyse some of the issues that individuals through interviews failed to express. A total of 2 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) that constituted 12 locals each of different sex and age groups were conducted. The first FGD was conducted with displaced locals who were allocated 0.5 hectares under irrigation by Green Fuel Company. The second FGD was conducted with locals who were indirectly affected by the project. Before conducting the FGDs the researcher came up with a set of questions which were used to guide the discussion. Focus group discussions did not however promote the participation of other individuals among the group, therefore the researcher probed further so as to try and amplify those voices muted by the dominant ones.

3.4.3 Observation

Participant observation was applied to clarify and ascertain the issues that had been raised by interviewees for example seeing the sizes of the allocated lands under irrigation and soil condition. Field observation of villages and land holdings belonging to interviewees were done. This method was useful because, through observation the researcher confirmed issues such as the project was operating on a large scale and the 0.5 hectares under irrigation allocated to some of the displaced locals. Observation as a technique provided the researcher with first-hand information on issues related to the study and in-depth qualitative data was generated by the use of this technique.

3.5 Data Analysis

The field notes, interviews and transcriptions of the FGDs were analysed qualitatively. The final output has been presented in this paper basically in the form of texts, direct quotes from key informants, stakeholders and local community members. The texts and transcribed messages are supported with relevant pictures, tables and maps.

3.6 Limitations

The study is limited in scope as it only focused on Chisumbanje Ethanol case hence high chances of wider scale generalization.

Availability of some key informants and their willingness to grant in-depth interviews was also a problem given their busy schedules. However with perseverance, interviews were conducted. It was difficult to manage the fieldwork within a limited timeframe, which has implications for empirical depth of the research.

The study was conducted a few weeks before the presidential elections in Zimbabwe. Some community members saw the researcher as a threat to their lives because information peddled around indicated that, the researcher had been hired by the opposition party to solicit their views on the activities of the company which will be used to tarnish the image of ZANU PF since the company is believed to be highly a ZANU PF project. As a result at first it was difficult to get audience for interviews/FGDs. The introductory letter from Institute of Social Studies (ISS) and the local authorities, helped ease all the fear and anxiety hence conducting successful interviews and FGDS.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

The researcher first sought permission from village headman Mutape, since chief Chisumbanje was attending other official duties. The researcher managed to build good relations with the respondents and instilled in them some form of trust, to illicit in depth information. The purpose of ethical considerations in a research is that they ensure the protection of the participants in regards to information that they will provide. The researcher assured respondents of the privacy and confidentiality of their information through authentic insistence that the information being sourced was for academic purposes only. The researcher also made prior consultation with the responsible authorities so as to avoid raising alarm unnecessarily.

Chapter Four: Case Presentation

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a historical and contextual background of the Chisumbanje Ethanol project, description of project activities, and demographic characteristics of the study district. The chapter also describes Chisumbanje area, land relations/tenure in Chisumbanje community and a brief history of land issue in Zimbabwe. Chisumbanje Ethanol plant is located in Chipinge District under Manicaland province. A map of the districts in Manicaland province is also shown.

4.2 A Snapshot of Land History in Zimbabwe

The issue of land in Zimbabwe has been the epicenter where all development evolves and has been labeled as the root of political tension nationally and internationally (Embassy of Zimbabwe 2012). In Zimbabwe land is owned by the state and people are given usufruct rights. Generally, land occupations in Zimbabwe can be traced back to the colonial period, where the British South Africa company, seized huge tracks of land from the rural people, for either agriculture or mining purposes (Roth and Gonese 2003). Prior to colonization, traditional leaders were the custodians of the land and they regulated the allocation of land to residents in their respective communities. Land was regarded as national heritage and symbol of wealth.

In colonial Zimbabwe land was divided into European and Communal areas (Moyo 2000). The size of land allocated to European areas was more or less equal to that allocated to the indigenous people disregarding the population differences of 96% indigenous and 4% Europeans (ibid). In Zimbabwe land politics, dispossession and displacement of marginalized groups were experienced in both colonial and independent Zimbabwe.

Prior to independence (1980), Zimbabwean government regulations were in favor of white commercial farmers and marginalized black peasant farmers. Lack of equal access to land was one of the driving factors, which led to the Liberation struggle. The Lancaster house Agreement of 1979's position was that the liberation struggle goal was to restore land back to the black people and that land is to be restored with or without compensation (Embassy of Zimbabwe 2012).

After independence, the government tried to correct the colonial injustices, by resettling farmers who, previously had been displaced by the colonialists; this ushered in the much-debated Fast Track Land Reform Program, which gave a controversial number of people livelihood portfolios. However, as dust began to settle on the land issue, a new trajectory has emerged, which has seen some private companies and individuals getting into land deals with the government, to launch large scale agri-business projects, such as the bio-fuel projects. Again, this has seen some previously resettled farmers being, re-located to pave way for these projects.

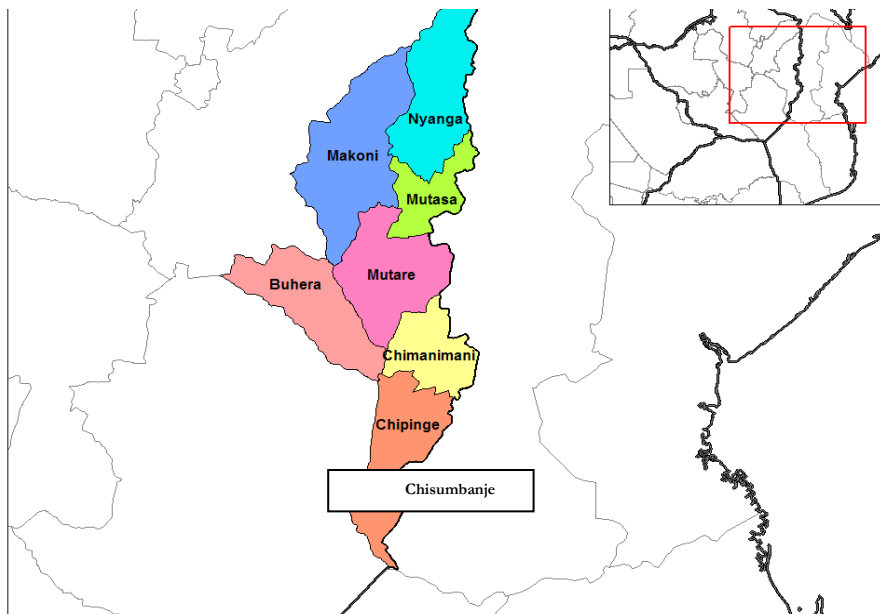
4.2.1 Land Tenure in Zimbabwe

In Zimbabwe the state owns the land and the people are given usufruct rights. The land tenure system is currently classified into three categories, which are freehold and leased (37 percent), occupancy rights to land in communal areas (41 percent) and state land or leases of land granted by the government through various distribution schemes (22 percent) (Makochekanwa 2012). Leases are generally for periods of 99 years. The people displaced in Chisumbanje had land under the freehold and leased category.

4.3 The Study Area

The case study area is located in Chipinge District under Manicaland province in Zimbabwe. Chisumbanje community is about 500 kilometers from Harare the capital city of Zimbabwe. The Ethanol plant is located on the eastern bank of Save River. Zimbabwe has got 5 agro ecological zones based on climate and the cropping suitability and the community under study falls in climatic region 5 of where rainfall is less than 650mm per year. The area lies in a valley and it is arid resulting in generally poor crop yields. The economy is largely agricultural with most common crops being cotton for cash and maize for subsistence. In terms of population distribution it has about 300 000 people (Central Statistics Office 2009). The district capital is Chipinge and provincial capital is Mutare. The map below indicates the districts in Manicaland province.

Map 1 Districts in Manicaland province, Zimbabwe



Source: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Manicaland_districts.png

4.4 Chisumbanje Community: Prior to the Land Deal.

The Chisumbanje ethanol project is set within a rural community on the Southern part of Zimbabwe's lowveld region in Manicaland Province, Chipinge District. The community has been using the land from around 1960s (Makombe 2013). The demographic pattern of the area was heavily rural, while majority of the households relied on cotton farming for commercial purpose and maize for subsistence. The Chisumbanje community consisted of mostly small scale farmers (men & women), a few traders and traditional leaders. The community is divided into various villages and the population of each village tends to vary from 50-150 households. Each village has a village head and the chief is the overall head of traditional leadership. The chief was responsible for land allocation. Before the land deal the community's major source of livelihood was agriculture and they had between 4-8 hectares of dry land per household. Access to land was biased against women and youth mainly because of the patriachial system. Women had access to land through their husbands and fathers.

Part of the land which was being used for farming by the community centered on ARDA estate. ARDA had allowed the people to use the land mainly because it has not been using the land for years (Makombe 2013). Data on the exact size of the land owned by ARDA are scarce and incomplete. The acquisitions of land and the subsequent investments in Chisumbanje have led to the displacement of the community. It is important to note that Chisumbanje Community is not a homogenous group as the people have got different social relations of production, reproduction, property and power. The Chisumbanje community was differently impacted for example among women, men, youth and the elderly. The Chisumbanje community after the land deal will be discussed in the findings and analysis chapter.

4.5 History of Chisumbanje Project

Initially the project was started in the 1960s as an Irrigation Development project to capacitate the government owned ARDA Estate with water to grow various crops which included maize, tomatoes, soya beans, cotton and sugarcane (Makombe 2013). The Ethanol and Sugar project was initiated in 1979 and feasibilities were carried out by ARDA and various stakeholders (ibid). The project did not sail due to budgetary constraints and high inflation experienced then.

ARDA proceeded, in 2008 to discuss and negotiate with a private investor and resolved to enter into a 20 year Build Operate and Transfer (BOT) arrangement, with Green Fuel Company to embark on the irrigation expansion, ethanol and sugar project (Mutopo and Chiweshe 2012). The B.O.T agreements stipulate that the investors will develop the estates and furnish with viable irrigation facilities to hand over these back to ARDA at the expiry of the agreements (Green Fuel 2012). The Chisumbanje Ethanol plant is a US600 million project which was commissioned in 2008 (Green Fuel 2012). The plant is the biggest of its kind in Africa (ibid). Chisumbanje Ethanol plant is set on a 40 0000 hectares of land. The land under bio fuel is state land. At its peak it

has been projected to create employment for more than 8000 people (Green Fuel 2012).

Chapter Five: Analysis and Discussion of Findings

5.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the presentation and discussion of the study's major findings from the survey and secondary data. The discussion will be premised on the study objective and research questions. Analysis and discussion is centered on two of Bernstein's four key questions in agrarian political economy who owns what regarding social relations of property and who gets what relating to distribution of income (Bernstein 2010). Sustainable livelihoods framework and Scott's weapons of the weak theory will also be used to analyse the findings. The chapter will point out community interpretation and perspective towards the project, impact on the community, livelihood diversification, the importance of land to the community and emerging livelihood strategies as a result of the project.

5.2 Local's Interpretation of the Chisumbanje Land Deal.

The residents of Chisumbanje received the acquisition of thousands of hectares of land by Green Fuel Investments with mixed feelings. Basing on the interviews and FGDs conducted by the researcher the majority were not happy as they question the rationale behind displacing them to accommodate the bio-diesel project. Furthermore the study revealed that the locals saw the dispossession and displacement as defeating the whole logic of the FTLRP. They had not yet come across any land acquisition of such magnitude, which also greatly affected their livelihoods.

In an interview conducted by the researcher with the locals, one of the well-established businessmen in the area highlighted that, Agro fuel development companies are competing with small scale farmers for access to the land being cultivated by the farmers. Prior to the land deal displaced small scale farmers used to have between 4-8 hectares of dry land but now Green Fuel is allocating 0.5 hectares under irrigation per household, and some directly affected households have not yet been allocated the land. An informant who benefited from the 0.5 hectare under irrigation highlighted that the allocated land is too small to sustain the needs of a family. As a result, the investors are benefiting whilst displaced households are the ones who lose and are left to swallow the bitter pill of landlessness and the consequences it entails.

In an interview with the directly affected locals, most of them pointed out that there had not been consulted regarding the land take over. They also pointed that they do not understand the land deal and that they are confused and uncertain about their future as they used to rely more on their fields as their source of livelihood. The small scale farmers were not happy with the way the transaction was done and dealing with landlessness and homelessness at the same time was a shock to them. The reasons for the government's failure to consult the local people, according to the businessmen, are that, land in

Zimbabwe is owned by the state. In principle, this means people can only be given usufruct rights through various ways such as leases. The land under bio fuel production in Chisumbanje is state land that belongs to the government through Agricultural Rural Development Authority (ARDA). Hence, the displaced families saw this as a government's way of simply giving its land to investors without putting into consideration the locals who used to cultivate that land. As a result, this angered the locals especially those in Chinyamukwakwa who had their maize ploughed down at tasselling stage and were not compensated. A 42 year old male informant said:

"Chisumbanje community have little hope of being helped by the government as it seems the law enforcing agents who were supposed to assist us are actually being used as state repressive apparatus used to further silence the troubled farmers".

From the interviews and FGDs the locals knew the land belongs to the state, but they were not happy as they were not consulted, displaced without alternative settlement and having their crops destroyed. A project of this kind and magnitude is new for Chisumbanje community. Therefore, the locals were surprised as to why the government could approve such a large-scale non-food project and ignore the fate of the local communities. The locals saw this commercial land transaction as a government's way of backtracking on the fundamental principles of the Fast Track Land Reform Program, whose logic went against the ownership of large tracks of land by a few individuals. In an interview with one headman Mutape, another victim of the land grabs, he highlighted that, they lost access to their traditional land and the community's human right to food was threatened.

Most community members argued against the land acquisition deal, sighting how the term "son of the soil" which was preached during the implementation of the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) could remain relevant.² Throughout the study, the main concern of the locals was that any lease or commercial transaction of land in any sort, was supposed to take place on the condition that there is consent of the local communities. One informant pointed out that inclusion of local communities to rural development programs was very important for a project to be successful. His words were:

"How do you expect us to accept a deal that is imposed on us and further displaces us while at the same time ignoring our livelihoods and cultural concerns? I am not entirely opposed to the project, but I am just not happy with the process as the government failed to engage us during the project inception. It is not fair to us, since we have built a history in this community and we cannot just pack and leave it behind just like that."

In the interviews, the researcher noted that only a few respondents understood the buzzword "land grabs" and what it entailed. From the discussions it was revealed that the community feels that the push for agro fuel project was not in the interest of them but the real beneficiaries were the governments, a few elites and the investors. An informant pointed that, *"we do not even understand the deal and how it is going to benefit us as the people who had been using the land prior to the land for our livelihoods. We were expecting to be employed, given alternative land but up to now we are still confused the process of the deal"*. Use and access to resources

²"Son of the soil" is a term which was used to refer that the indigenous people belong to the land and the land belongs to the indigenous people.

are questions riddled in power and authority such that the marginalized remain disadvantaged hence biofuel development will lead to further weakening of their bargaining power (Mutopo and Chiweshe 2012). Thus, the Chisumbanje case suggests that these investors who come in the name of “developing the rural areas”, have actually failed to address the socio-economic conditions facing the target communities. One of the elderly locals argued that,

“Our livelihoods depend on land, and when we see a company coming to claim our land for biofuel production, it becomes a problem. Our livelihoods have been negatively affected ever since Green Fuel Company took over our land. We do not even have a small space to plant even a garden of vegetables. Wega urikuzvionerawo (you can see it yourself). (65 year old, field interview July 2013)”

Prior to dispossession and displacement, the locals relied on their land to generate income and food. One directly affected informant pointed out that they assumed the government would offer them alternative resettlement since it was the government which authorized the lease of their land to a private investor. The farmers thus questioned the intentions of the land acquisition deal, because they wondered how an initiative that was supposedly meant to enhance rural development, undermined the very people it was supposed to help, in terms of job provision and enhance livelihood.

One informant highlighted the fact that the local chiefs were not consulted prior to the land take over, their power and authority to govern their particular villages was undermined. From the FGDs it was revealed that the locals were not happy by the disrespect shown to their traditional leader’s powers. The informants highlighted that the traditional leaders are part of the society and live with the people on the ground hence their powers protect the lands and their people. The chiefs have the final judicial authority on matters affecting their communities from the civil and criminal cases they work together with relevant government departments to discharge rule of law and prosecute offenders. They are also the custodians of all land in their jurisdiction, and anyone willing to get access to land has to seek their approval beforehand. The informants pointed out that the traditional way of land allocation by the traditional leaders was fair and transparent. In a focus group discussion conducted by the researcher, the small scale farmers noted that prior to land deal the chiefs possessed a lot of power and respect, having a final say in everything that concerned their communities. The undermining of the traditional chiefs powers had great social impacts on the relations between the chiefs and the society, as the chief’s subjects felt their leaders did not protect them enough from this unwelcome development. There were also suspicions that some chiefs were involved in underhand dealings to push this project through behind the people they represent.

Concerned residents also revealed that the Chisumbanje ethanol plant actually posed a threat to the environment and the people’s livestock. It was found out that the water that comes from the mill where the sugar cane is processed, is very harmful to fish and livestock. This water is deposited into the Save river and due to the scarcity of water sources, water along the Save river is also used for washing clothes, bathing, cooking and even drinking. A 36 year old woman said:

“I am now forced to boil the water before drinking as a way of purifying as we are not sure if the water from Save river is still safe. And this also means more household duties for me”. Therefore, this posed a threat on the health of the local people who consume and use this water on a daily basis. Furthermore boiling of water was pointed out as additional household duties for women considering that they take firewood from a distant mountain.

5.3 The Impact of Large Scale Land Deals on Locals

This section looks at both the positive and the negative impact of the land deal. As a result of different positions in the socio –economic and political power relations the locals may not equally benefit or lose out. Borrás et al. (2011) asserts that one of the selling points of biofuels in the global south is that it promotes and enhances livelihood and generation of employment among the rural poor in host communities. However, the Chisumbanje case shows that there are no convincing benefits for poor communities but a long list of downsides.

The Chisumbanje community is socially differentiated in terms of gender and social class hence impacts may not equally affect the population. From the interviews conducted, 13 out of the 18 respondents mentioned that the project brought more harm than good and the reasons given were; dispossession and displacement of locals, no consensus and consultation with the locals and it brought tension among the locals themselves as a result of the confusion during the allocation process. This supports Borrás and Franco (2012) argument that some of the problems associated with land deals include, neglect of land users, no consultation with farmers, corruption and violent conflicts over land rights among other effects. The interest of growing food for engines and not for stomachs has led to forceful displacement of indigenous people from their lands to seclusion, misery and loss of livelihoods (Hall 2011). Before the land deal the locals used to mainly grow cotton as a cash crop and maize for subsistence. A 60 year old man who was interviewed said:

“all these brick houses under corrugated iron roofs and graduates from this community are a result of cotton proceeds, but the coming of this company proved to be a pain as most villagers are no longer able to sustain themselves because they are landless and unemployed” (interview ,Chisumbanje July 2013)

From the selling of cotton some villagers from Mutape and Madwai managed to afford sending their children to boarding schools, but now they cannot afford it. The Chinyamukwaka, Mutape and Madwai villagers confirmed that they no longer afford decent education for their children. Evidence that was gathered by the researcher from the interviews conducted suggests that the introduction of the project in Chisumbanje greatly influenced the economic status of the smallholder farmers, thus their being displaced from the land was a big blow. The researcher interviewed a directly affected 60 year old lady from Chinyamukwakwa village. The old lady pointed out that she has been happy with growing cotton for commercial use and maize for

subsistence hence the displacement negatively affected her economic independence and livelihood. This suggests that the acquisition deal was not sensitive to age and gender, otherwise it would not force a 60 year old woman to craft new strategies to start and sustain a new living.

Another 28 year old woman pointed out that as a result of the displacement some women in the area who used to get income from farming cotton can no longer afford seeking maternity health. The local clinic charges \$5,00 for a single consultation and this is beyond reach of most locals. The informant also highlighted that some women are now resorting to giving birth at home with the assistance of the elderly women. However, this poses serious health challenges to the baby, the mother and elderly women who help in delivering especially in this era of the HIV and AIDS pandemic.

Empirical evidence suggests that the people who are socially and politically connected benefitted from the Chisumbanje land deal unlike their unconnected counterparts. A few unconnected locals were employed as wage laborers but some of them had been divorced from their prime land and were not yet allocated the 0.5 hectare under irrigation like some of their connected counterparts who not only got employed at the plant but had also not been directly affected by the land acquisition deal because of their political contacts. This politically connected group remained with their original vast lands where they still carryout cotton and maize farming while a few of the less connected group had to rely on the plant wages and the 0,5 ha under irrigation only. This power dynamic naturally created an unfavorable economic gap not seen before the land takeover.

A 40 year old man who is employed as a wage laborer complained that they are not offered permanent contracts, no benefits besides the wage and no payment in case of absence due to serious issues such as health problems. The man highlighted that they are concerned in case of an accident that they will not be able to sustain their livelihoods as well as after retirement. He also highlighted that what they earn as wage laborers is too little as it does not equal to earlier proceeds from farming cotton and maize. This suggests that land based livelihood strategies make significant contributions to overall livelihood wellbeing for the Chisumbanje community.

However, a 26 year old boy pointed out that he benefitted from being employed at the plant because the wages helped him get income directly in his name unlike the income from cotton farming which was controlled by his father. The 26 year old said he was happy as it brought him economic independence. It is important to note that this 26 year old informant prior to the land deal was totally dependent on his parents. The informants also highlighted that some people who were not displaced or dispossessed during the takeover, but had got employed as wage laborers actually improved their lifestyles as they did not lose anything to pave way for the project.

Some displaced farmers showed fears of being left out in the land allocation because other community members who are politically influential but not affected were also competing for the land. In an interview with Green Fuel representative, she highlighted that the process of land allocation is still ongoing as to date 600 households have been allocated the 0.5 hectares under irrigation and more than 1000 directly affected households are yet to benefit. Four informants highlighted that there is nepotism as even politically connected

people who were not displaced and some who are not from Chisumbanje were being allocated the 0.5 hectare under irrigation yet there are still a large number of directly affected who have not benefited. The land allocation reveals how access to natural resources is affected by institutional norms and arrangements as highlighted in the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach. This suggests that the power dynamics determine who gets what. The power each actor possesses more or less influences the outcome of the land deal activities hence creating an unequal property relation among actors.

One informant, an elderly man (68), highlighted that they used to get traditional medicine from some of the tree species which are now fenced in the “private property” belonging to Green Fuel Company. This shows that the power Green Fuel Company has, distanced the locals from the natural resources that they used to rely on. The interplay of power dynamics of who owns what and who gets what shows how power is negotiated between the investors and the locals with regard to the land deal. As a result of the land deal access to the herbs is now difficult for the local people who used to rely on the herbs to prevent diseases. This also shows that for the Chisumbanje community land provided more than food only.

Chisumbanje Ethanol plant land deal lacked small scale farmers’ inclusion in the decision making process. Lack of local’s inclusion in decision making in the Chisumbanje deal supports Vermeulen and Cotula (2010: 900)’s “over the heads” characterization of bio-fuel projects in Africa. Vermeulen and Cotula (2010: 900) argued that while more investment may bring new opportunities for local livelihoods and national economies, local people are vulnerable to dispossession as a result of changes in land use. 14 out of the 18 interviewed informants highlighted that they had no opportunity or chance to articulate their demands. Cotula & Vermeulen (2009) and Braun & Meinzen-Dick (2009) also reported that consultations are normally done with the community leaders and elites resulting in other people in the community having no or less opportunities to express their demands and shape the process.

Informants from FGDs highlighted that traditional leaders were not consulted prior to the land take over, which shows that their power and authority to govern their particular villages was stripped. In a focus group discussion conducted, the displaced farmers noted that the chiefs possessed a lot of power and were responsible for land allocation and thus they had a final say in everything that concerned their communities. The introduction of land deals in Chisumbanje resulted in a stir among community members in terms of whose authority they had to adhere to. Concerned villagers noted that there was no longer any difference between themselves and the chiefs especially concerning land allocation, because Green Fuel was only willing to allocate 0.5 hectare of land under irrigation to displaced households, the traditional leaders included. Such a development was contrary to the historical balance where the traditional leaders had more control and were responsible for all the land in their territories. The chiefs were responsible for approving and allocating land to their villagers.

Traditional leaders are assigned as custodians of land in rural Zimbabwe. The Chisumbanje deal undermined traditional leaders’ authority and has sown some seeds of conflict, for example conflict over areas of jurisdiction and boundaries. Looking at the Chisumbanje case there were strong forces from

“above” as the project was backed by the owner of the land which is the government. The traditional leaders were relegated to figureheads resulting in their inability to command influence in other areas of society which made them insufficient representatives of the people when confronted with pressure or demands for land from investors who are backed by the government (Makombe 2013).

FGDs also revealed that Green Fuel company gave Chief Garahwa a vehicle & monthly fuel allocation, electrified his homestead so as to gain support from him as he is the most influential and powerful traditional leader in the community. Chief Garahwa is solidly in favour of the project (Makombe 2013) and the community assumes it is because of the benefits he is getting. A 35 year old male informant pointed out that,

“We were shocked with the change of mind of one of our Chiefs .At the beginning of the project, the traditional leaders and small scale farmers were preaching one language, that of against giving up our land”

Large scale land acquisition in Chisumbanje disintegrated close knit family and social ties that were in existence prior to the land take over and the traditional way of controlling and regulating land use patterns. From the 18 interviews contacted 11 informants pointed out that some families relocated to Mozambique to look for greener pastures as they could not sustain themselves after the dispossession of land. The informants also pointed that a considerable number of men migrated to South Africa and Mozambique to look for employment. The informants highlighted that the migration was exacerbated by the fact that very few locals got employed by the Green Fuel company as most of the workers employed at the plant are non-residents of Chisumbanje. A 38 year old man pointed that *“Green fuel Company has been preaching lies that it had upgraded locals livelihoods and employed more than 1000 locals yet our livelihoods have been destroyed and as of now only less than 50 locals had been employed .Most locals were employed during the initial stages of clearing the land, but they were all stopped”*. This supports (Li 2009)’s argument that the surplus population created by dispossession and displacement is not always necessary as a labour force for capitalist expansion. The eviction of peasants from their land occurs precisely when their labour is not needed but their land (Li 2011:186). An informant pointed out that most of the workers are from Masvingo, Chiredzi, Harare and even as far as Brazil. The project affected social relations in the community because of the out migration. Livelihood also entails managing and coping with relationships in the family and community. The displacement resulted in disintegration of families and social ties that were in existence before the land deal .This was supported by a young woman who said, *“The dispossession and displacement resulted in my husband going to work in South Africa and now I can only see him once in three months”*

Employment creation is one of the cited opportunities of large scale farming. For the Chisumbanje land deal local men and women did not benefit equally on employment. This shows that even if there are people who are benefitting there is inequality in these opportunities. Empirical evidence suggests that initially the community and to some extent the investors assumed that wage labour is largely and exclusively for men. This was supported by a 36 year old woman who said:

“I did not get the opportunity to work for Green Fuel Company because when the company started and people were being recruited for clearing the land my family discouraged me citing that it is men’s work and also the company was giving first preference to able-bodied men. Most people who were employed to clear the land were men”.

The diverging perspectives and impacts are related to the fact that the Chisumbanje community is not homogeneous as it has a mixture of different ideologies and beliefs. Within the community there are class relations and power dynamics resulting in different levels of impact.

5.4 Community Livelihood Diversification

Empirical evidence from Chisumbanje community shows that as a result of the land deal multiple livelihood strategies emerged. According to Ellis (2000) livelihood diversification is defined as the process by which rural households or individuals construct or engage in diverse portfolios and social support capabilities in order to survive and to improve their standards of living. Diversification to different livelihood opportunities is either by choice or it is due to external factors that force the individual to diversify in order to survive (ibid). The diversification in Chisumbanje community was forced as the locals were stripped of land which was their major source of livelihood and now they were forced to try other alternatives.

The strategies that emerged in Chisumbanje include outmigration, land based, trade based and wage based. During the interviews, one directly affected farmer highlighted that when he was evicted from the land, he learnt how to weave baskets and mats for selling. However, he noted with great sadness that no matter how many piece jobs he got, the money accrued did not even come close to the amount he got from selling cotton and maize that he used to grow. Non-farm activities emerged for both men and women at a high rate as compared to the period before the displacement and dispossession.

Table 1: Selected livelihood strategies in Chisumbanje-after the land deal

Activity type	Description
Land based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Horticultural gardening -0.5 ha beneficiaries(men & women) • Land leasing-Meniere village leasing land to displaced and dispossessed people
Trade based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manufacturing-hoes, axes(men) • Weaving-baskets and mats(men & women) • Cross border-buying and selling clothes from South Africa and Mozambique(men & women)

	women)
Wage based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seasonal jobs at Green Fuel Company(men & women)
Out migration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To Mozambique and South Africa for greener pastures (men & very few women)

Source: author's field interviews July 2013

The above table shows various strategies that emerged in Chisumbanje community as a result of the land deal. The Chisumbanje case suggests that sustainable livelihoods are gradually being divorced from the land based as evidenced by households who are shifting from agricultural income sources. Voices from the field revealed that men dominated in wage based and out-migration strategies whereas women dominated in the land based and trade based strategies. This could be attributed to the fact that the society is patriarchal and some types of activities are more aligned to men than women and vice versa. Activities which are heavy are more aligned to men as they are believed to be stronger than women. An elderly women interviewed pointed that the less domination of women in trade wage based and outmigration is largely because of their triple role of reproduction, production and community service. The informants pointed out that women, children and elderly (men and women) do not usually migrate to search for jobs as they are normally left to carry out most of the work and taking care of the home. From the FGDs it was also revealed that those who leased land for a fee were normally the elderly as they are no longer able-bodied to cultivate the 4-8 hectares of land they have. It is important to note that these elderly were from villages which were not dispossessed or displaced. The strategies differed from household to household due to factors that vary between household such as income and asset profiles. The strategies emerged as a way of coping for the locals.

It is interesting to note that the land deal in Chisumbanje affected women, men and youth differently. The FGDs that the researcher conducted brought out the information that among the few locals who were contracted as wage laborers in the sugar cane plantations, the employer did not want to see any elderly women or nursing mothers in the fields. Thus the women were stripped of the little autonomy and economic independence they had prior to the displacement. An informant pointed out that some women started their own small businesses like buying clothes and reselling as they managed to raise capital from wages and gardening. Young and able-bodied women started businesses of cross boarder trading since they are close to the Mozambican and South African borders they are going to buy clothes and blankets for resell. A 30 year women highlighted that the main challenge regarding this form of livelihood strategy is that it is too congested as almost most women are doing it resulting in more competition to get clients. In an interview a cross-border women highlighted that the business was not very sustainable because of competition on clients and the fact that their husbands had no source of income, the small profits raised would be channeled to the purchase of groceries and school fees and in some cases they fail to restock.

Figure 1: Crops under (0.5Hectare) irrigation Scheme



Source (fieldwork July 2013.)

Some locals for example from Madwai village who were allocated 0.5 hectares land under irrigation started small gardening projects, and they practiced crop rotation. The farmers rotated crops like maize, beans, vegetables, tomatoes, onions among other crops. Some beneficiaries from this initiative saw it as a positive move towards the enhancement of their livelihood portfolios. Some farmers especially women who engaged in market gardening managed to sell their produce at the nearby Checheche growth point, hence they managed to provide something to their families.

Figure 2: -0.5 hectare Irrigation farmers (beneficiaries)



(Source fieldwork July 2013)

In some less affected areas like Manzvire, locals ended up leasing out land to the displaced farmers. From the FGDs it was revealed that those who leased out land for a fee were mainly the elderly as they are no longer able to farm all their 4-8 hectares of land they have. In addition an informant pointed that some of the people who were renting out land lacked production inputs so it was a way of raising income for inputs. The land leased was usually an acre, which they rented for seventy to eighty US dollars per year. This resulted in the commercialization of land, a natural resource that was supposed to be rightfully enjoyed by every bona fide citizen. This evidence proves the extent to which the Chisumbanje community valued land.

In an interview with a Green Fuel official, she revealed that the company launched social responsibility programmes anchored on the need to improve on livelihood patterns of the locals. The official highlighted that the company's flagship of the social responsibility is an irrigation scheme and a food relief handout facility targeting households who were dispossessed and displaced. The assistance that Green Fuel Company is giving to the farmers has been highly criticized. In the focus group discussions and interviews conducted by the researcher, some farmers emphasized with wrath, sarcasm and anger that they would rather have their land back as the assistance is very little. Most of the households comprise large numbers of extended family members, thus the small land under irrigation and food handout of maize meal was not enough to sustain the family. Consequently, this exacerbated food insecurity. One elderly woman highlighted that the food handout program gave out 50kg maize meal per every four individuals and it came in a space of three or four months which is not sustainable. Although these food handouts were a move towards enhancing the villager's livelihoods, their seasonality left a lot to address the imminent food challenges.

5.5 The Importance of Land to the Chisumbanje Community

The interviews conducted showed that land is very important as it holds economic, social and cultural value for the Chisumbanje community. The perceptions were similar for both men and women. Eighty (80) percent of the people interviewed related that land is very important to them as farming is their major livelihood strategy. The informants pointed out that from land they used to do farming which provided them with food and cash for their survival. This is supported by Scoones (2000) who highlighted agriculture as the core strategy for rural livelihoods. Cousins and Scoones (2010) pointed that in rural economies land is seen as a basic livelihood asset and it is the principal form of natural capital which provides food, income and range of natural resources harvested in it. Land has always been a crucial issue, especially in African countries where sixty-eight percent of the population relies on agriculture (World Bank 2007). Displacement meant that they have lost their major means of survival. The majority of the respondents highlighted that they want their land back as it is their source of livelihood.

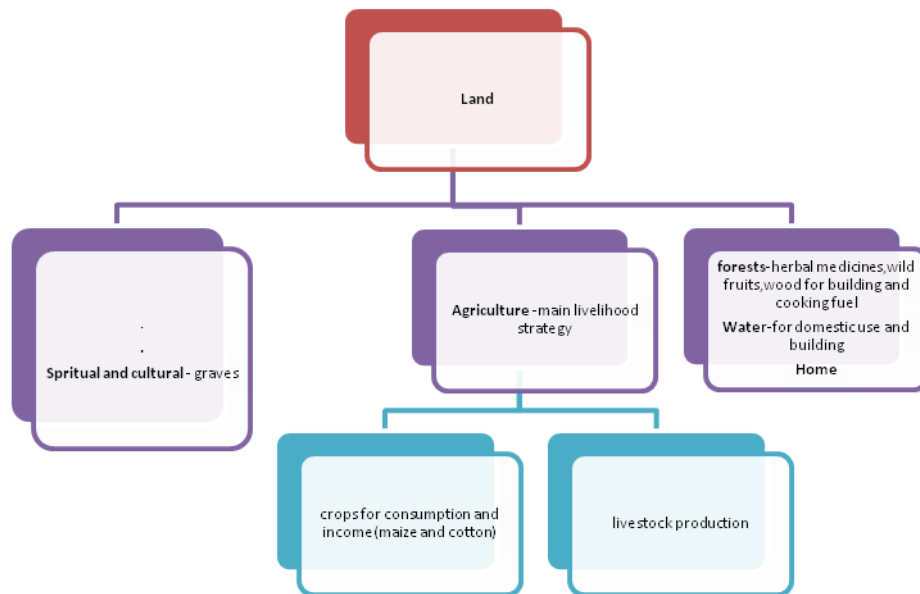
For Chisumbanje community land is the center stage as agriculture forms the backbone of their livelihoods. The study revealed that land as a natural capital is very crucial to the building of the livelihoods for the Chisumbanje community. Land is viewed as a source of shelter and survival. Mujere and Dombo (2012) highlighted that in Africa land is part of local's notion of belonging as they are attached to their homesteads and burial sites. Notions of belonging for the small holder farmers revolve around religion and ownership of land among other local attachments (ibid). Land holds the social and cultural fabric of the community. A 62 year old man interviewed pointed out that they have lost their ancestral land because of the displacement. The man alleged:

"This is my home, my family graves are here. I am not going anywhere these people have destroyed us and our sacred objects. I will fight for my land and heritage"

A number of the developing world rural people rely on farming for their livelihood and food security hence depend on productive use of land. Land is their most fundamental livelihood asset. Empirical evidence from the Chisumbanje small scale farmers shows that the people believed that no other asset contributes to their survival as does land. A displaced informant related that:

"Land was the greatest and most valuable asset I had, even if I do not have income I am guaranteed of my survival as I can plough my crops for consumption"

Figure 3 Land use-Chisumbanje Community



source: author's own -July 2013 fieldwork

From the FGDs it was noted that there are some more politically influential individuals who were not affected by the expansion of the ethanol project, but who were allocated the land under irrigation. The scramble for land in Chisumbanje suggests that land is very important in the community. In Zimbabwe it seems as if once you belong to the same political group in power and actors with more control you stand a chance of gaining favors. The interplay of power at the local level resulted in some unintended beneficiaries being allocated the land under irrigation.

Empirical evidence from Chisumbanje case revealed that land issue defines the locals' past, present and future. Some youth also highlighted that they are now uncertain of their future source of livelihood as land is normally handed over from generation to generation. This supports Cousins and Scoones (2010) who asserts that land is a heritable asset and is the basis for income and livelihood security of future rural generations. This shows again that land is important as a source of livelihood for the local community.

Land is a crucial part in the dynamics of power as access to it determines both social and economic status. The Chisumbanje community also ascribed land with spiritual values and viewed it as sacred. An elderly man informant highlighted that an area where they used to conduct rain making ceremonies and other rituals was fenced in the land which was taken by Green Fuel Company. The elderly man pointed that they lost religious sites where their spirits

resided because of the displacement and dispossession. They also have some cultural values attached to the land. Displacement and dispossession implied delinking the locals from their ancestral ties.

The informants were also concerned by the destruction and enclosure of the indigenous natural forests. Forests were cleared to pave the way for the sugarcane fields. The forests used to provide traditional fruits, herbs and firewood for cooking for the Chisumbanje community.

From the empirical evidence the Chisumbanje community define their lives based on access to land. This was supported by an elderly woman who said: *"Land is life for us. We rely on land for all our needs such as food, education and health"*. The informant pointed out that land is very important based on the powers it bestows on them and as a source of livelihood.

5.6 Local Community response to the Land grab

"The struggle against land grabbing is a struggle against capitalism....." (Via Campesina 2012:21)

The Chisumbanje community showed some form of resistance to the dispossession and displacement. Scott's (1985) theory on daily forms of peasant resistance highlighted on the ability of ordinary, powerless peasants to devise various weapons of the weak to influence policies and resist dominance. Scott ascertained that peasants are aware of the way in which they are treated resulting in them engaging in a variety of forms of resistance which are not only in the form of open explicit resistance. Peasants can resist quietly through stealing farming equipment or willingly refuse to co-operate. It is important to note that the land deal affected the Chisumbanje community differently resulting in various reactions like cautious acceptance to outright resistance.

In an interview with the locals who were directly affected, it was revealed that the small scale farmers whose crops were ploughed down in 2009 are still showing acts of resistance up to now. The small scale farmers were not happy with the way the transaction was done. Therefore, they continued to fight back hoping that one day, they would retain their former glory. Some farmers kept on ploughing the fields despite the warning from Green Fuel Company. Some were cultivating in the fields where the supposed rightful owners of the land had already planted sugar cane. This supports Scott's criticism of Marxian perspective, which saw the relationship existing between the capitalists and the peasants as that of dominance and uninterrupted exploitation. Scott (1985), postulated that the forms of resistance takes different shapes and are often uncoordinated, these include, invasion, non-compliance, foot-dragging, sabotage, among other forms that can be employed by the peasants. This intensified conflict between the company and the locals since the community still feel they have the right to the land. The land deal introduced conflict between the investor and the community over land, labour among others. The company is overpowering some forms of resistance

resulting in some farmers being arrested for continuing cultivating “private property”.

*“In Chisumbanje, nearly 100 angry villagers fought with Zimbabwe Republic Police officers over disputed land involved in the Green Fuel ethanol project in Chisumbanje. The police reportedly resorted to throwing tear-gas to disperse the villagers. The land dispute allegedly began in 2009 when Green Fuel failed to uphold its promise to provide suitable alternative land for the farmers displaced by the project. A recent Cabinet taskforce ordered Green Fuel to finalize the land issue before the government introduces mandatory ethanol blending but little progress has been made.”*³

From the FGDs it was revealed that some locals portrayed resistance through letting their cattle stray in the sugar plantations. Scott’s (1985) theory on the daily forms of peasant resistance entailed how most of forms of everyday resistance are deployed precisely to thwart some appropriation by superior classes and the state. The resistance from the small scale farmers shows that they have agency and the ability to create their own social meanings through resistance in form of uncoordinated weapons of the weak. Green Fuel Company created a fenced and security guided place where cattle left stray in the plantations would be kept. The owner of the cattle was then forced to pay USD10 as fine to compensate the damages on the sugarcane fields.

Evidence from the community suggests that the bargaining power is on the side of the investors mainly because their aspirations are backed by the government. An informant said *“The government supported peasants during the hondoyeminda period (Fast Track Land Reform), but now it shifted its support from us to the large scale commercial farming⁴. The government is supporting these investors and ignoring the local people, now we don’t know what to do as the land belongs to the government. They have more power over the community”*. Braun and Meinzen-Dick (2009) pointed out that the displaced do not have bargaining power to negotiate terms favourable to them when dealing with such powerful actors and also they cannot enforce agreements if the investor fails to deliver promises like employment and provision of alternative land.

The informants revealed that one village head Mutape and his people refused to take the 0.5 hectares under irrigation that was offered by Green Fuel Company. The allocation was only enough for twenty households yet the village had fifty six households. Due to the close-knit social relations among the people in the village they saw it as improper to have some people allocated the land and some left out. In an interview with the Green Fuel representative, she pointed out that the refusal to take the 0.5 hectares under irrigation was politically motivated as some people assumed the project was a Zanu Pf one and did not want to be associated with it.⁵ Contrary an informant from the village pointed out that the refusal was a way of showing Green Fuel company that

³<http://www.biofuelsdigest.com/bdigest/2012/12/31/fighting-between-villagers-and-green-fuel-continues-in-zimbabwe/> Accessed 29 september 2013.

⁴ *Hondoyeminda* is a term that was used during the year 2000 Fast Track Land Reform programme to mean fighting for the land.

⁵ ZANU PF is currently the ruling party in Zimbabwe. During the interviews Zimbabwe had an inclusive government and ZANU PF was one of the political parties in the inclusive government.

they were not happy and that the 0.5 hectare was an insult considering huge tracts of land the people used to have prior to the land deal.

From the FGDs it was raised that given the nature of politics surrounding land in Zimbabwe, some community members sought ways of resistance in a rather invisible manner. There is a perception among most Zimbabweans not to openly oppose government backed programmes linked to the political parties because of fear of political intimidation. On the surface it seemed as though they were complying with Green Fuel Company, but on the ground there were deep seated controversies regarding farmer displacements. The resistance from the small scale farmers shows that they have agency and the ability to create their own social meanings through resistance in form of uncoordinated weapons of the weak. This is supported by Scott (1985), who in his conceptualization of the daily forms of resistance, posited that, beneath the surface of ritual compliance, there is an undercurrent of ideological resistance.

In 2011 a group of directly affected small scale farmers petitioned the House of Assembly Committee on Agriculture, Water, Lands and resettlement appealing that the deal does not comply with the country's indigenization laws which make it compulsory for all companies to have 51% of ownership by locals (Mutopo and Chiweshe 2012). This form of resistance was coordinated and explicit. An informant during the field interviews pointed out that some small scale farmers wrote a letter to the government raising their concerns about the land deal and demanding the government to address and remedy the situation. A 54 year old small scale farmer said *"we thought writing a letter openly airing out our concerns will make the government and Green Fuel address our problem, but instead nothing has been done even up to today besides the empty promises"*. This was an open, organised protest and evidence from the community suggests majority supported the petition. Evidence from the interviews shows that the community believes their efforts to fight for their lands will influence positive changes from the Green Fuel Company and the State. This highlighted the ability of farmers to demystify the prevailing ideology that peasants are always the downtrodden, oppressed masses who have no ability to resist in any way. In essence, although the farmers tried to fight back in order to regain their social status, the introduction of land grabs greatly affected them in ways unimaginable and it redefined and altered their way of life.

In a FGD with the directly affected people they likened the deal to colonization since they were not consulted and involved. One angry man from the FGD pointed that:

"The government and Green Fuel Company should know that land led Zimbabweans to start a liberation war against the settlers, the defense option is still available"

Bailey and Bryant (1997) argued that power by politically influential and wealthier could lead to suppress resistance from the weak. The investors had more power than the community as they had the backing of the government hence they managed to suppress resistance from the community. Also because of the backing from the government on the project, the investors managed to continue with the project in spite of resistance.

From the FGDs it was also pointed out that over 500 hectares of sugarcane ready for harvest was destroyed by mysterious fire. It was suspected that the fire was deliberately set by angry local people as a way of retaliating the dispossession and displacement. An informant employed by Green Fuel from

the community revealed that 10 local Green Fuel company workers were taken by police for questioning. The informant highlighted that the investors suspected that it was those who were dispossessed and displaced who were sabotaging and this was a way of destroying the lifeline of the company. They suspected locals employed by the company as they were the ones with access to the fields. The 10 were later released as there was no evidence.

However, it would be misleading to paint a picture of total resistance to the land deal as some traditional authorities and political elites are in support of the project. Discussions in FGDs also revealed that Green Fuel company gave Chief Garahwa a vehicle & monthly fuel allocation, electrified his homestead so as to gain support from him as he is the most influential and powerful traditional leader in the community. Chief Garahwa is openly and solidly in favour of the project (Makombe 2013).

However, it should be noted that, although the farmers transparently resisted the basis of domination, there are typical cases in the way farmers resisted, which do not ogre well with Scott's (1985) conceptualization of the notion of resistance. In his understanding of resistance, Scott (I bid) posited that resistance must have revolutionary consequences; and it must negate rather than accept the basis of domination. The idea of negating the basis of domination was fully employed to the maximum by the farmers, and this was seen through the silent symbolic ritual of resistance underground, although on the surface it spoke volumes. Contrary to Scott results of the Chisumbanje smallholder farmer's resistance did not have revolutionary consequences, since the basic understanding of revolution itself entail a complete change. However, the consequences of resistance were not revolutionary, but rather ended up co-opting some farmers and leaving the others to fend for themselves. Thus, if the consequences were revolutionary, the majority of the farmers must have managed to get their land back.

Chapter Six: Conclusions

The research sought to highlight how large scale land acquisition has impacted the livelihood of the Chisumbanje community, through analyzing the impact of land acquisition deals on the livelihood strategies of the community, their perception and response to the introduction of the land grabs. In doing this, the study adopted two of Bernstein's key questions in agrarian political economy "who owns what" and "who gets what". Analytical tools provided through Sustainable Rural Livelihoods framework and Scott's weapons of the weak theory were also applied. The Chisumbanje land deal reflects many features of "land grabs" highlighted in literature. The trajectory of the Chisumbanje case revealed that the investors are more interested in profits than a fair compensation to the local people for their land. The Chisumbanje case reflects that the immense potential opportunities anticipated in diverting a natural resource such as land from the small scale farmer to the large scale commercial farming project has so far proved to be difficult to materialize. Empirical study of the Chisumbanje case shows that there are no convincing positive impacts for the local's livelihoods, but only a long list of downsides. The locals were thus left disempowered, more marginalized and they even lost the ability to make their own decisions.

The Chisumbanje land deal worsened the existing inequalities mainly because those dispossessed and displaced bear an unequal share of the cost of the project development. Furthermore as a result of different positions in the socio-economic and political power relations the Chisumbanje community did not equally benefit or lose out. Some of the people who are socially and politically connected benefitted from the land deal though the majority of them revealed that the wages and 0.5 hectares under irrigation are not sustainable as compared to the proceeds from farming cotton and maize. A growing body of evidence suggests that for the Chisumbanje community use and access to land are questions riddled in power and authority. The Chisumbanje land deal suggests that political capital also plays an enormous role just like other capital assets in shaping livelihoods. The study found out that land as a natural capital is very crucial to the building of rural livelihoods.

The findings reflect that the dispossession and displacement resulted in new livelihood strategies which include outmigration, trade based and wage based. Land based livelihood strategies were highlighted as a major and important contributor of income and food to the well-being of the Chisumbanje community, as more than 80% of the informants pointed out that they would rather have their land back. The small scale farmers had no other vocational training of their own, land and farming were the only source of livelihood they had ever known, thus their forceful evictions from the land, led to a loss of a source of livelihood. In this light, the locals who were displaced to pave way for the bio-fuel project saw this move as a government's way of backtracking on its land reform distribution policy, whose logic went against the repossession of large tracts of land by individuals and private companies.

Though the government's rhetoric of a people centered redistributive land reform appealed to many landless farmers in the rural areas as a way to expand their livelihood portfolios, the dispossession and displacement in Chi-

sumbanje has negatively affected smallholder farmers. The investors have shown less interest in compensating the local people.

The trajectory of the Chisumbanje land deal also showed how the power of traditional leaders has been undermined and disenfranchised. There was no communication pertaining to land dispossession and displacements which was done through them as custodians of land in the traditional Zimbabwean society. Control of natural resources was stripped from the locals. More so, the exclusion of locals from the planning and implementation of the ethanol plant, justified that the contribution of local communities as people who knew what kind of development initiative they wanted was undermined. The conception of the programme was done by the government without the involvement of the locals. The project adopted a conventional top-down approach which fails to meet the needs of the locals but merely imposes more often unwelcome change to the native's livelihood. Therefore it is safe and justified to say that the deal was not transparent and inclusive enough. There was lack of sensitization and education to the locals on the possible benefits that the project could bring in to their livelihoods and the changes they should expect.

In as much as the introduction of land grabs in Chisumbanje affected the locals, a few politically connected people managed to benefit from this project by acquiring the 0,5ha under irrigation whilst not having had lost any of their initial land to the project. There were also those few people who were co-opted into the wage labour thus gaining much needed employment in a country such as Zimbabwe with a current 92% unemployment rate. However this was not sustainable as compared to the proceeds they used to get from farming cotton and maize on their vast lands before the land deal.

The trajectory of the case proved that people in Chisumbanje are not passive recipients of any external development scheme that is seemingly imposed on them. Rather they have agency and have the ability to create their own social meanings, hence resistance in form of uncoordinated weapons of the weak, highlighted the ability of the small scale farmers to demystify the erroneous beliefs that peasants are always the downtrodden, oppressed masses who cannot resist in any way whatsoever. The local's resistance initiatives can be characterized as hidden forms of protests precisely because of the community's powerlessness in the face of inherent and underlying class and political divisions where those who benefited in the land deal tend to favour the investors. The researcher noted that the community did not challenge the development paradigm, but the methodologies that were applied. In essence, although the community tried to fight back in order to regain their social status, the land deal negatively affected them.

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Appendix 1

Summary of the research process

Methods	Research Area	Accessibility	Number of Respondents	Type of Data	Sampling design
Semi-structured interviews	1.Villagers 2.District Administrator 3.Green Fuel public relations manager and production manager 4. traditional chief 5.village head	Headman, Village Heads, local authorities, Green Fuel Company	18 participants	Qualitative	Snowballing sampling
Focus Group Discussions	1.Farmers under Green Fuel Company irrigation scheme- 0.5 ha 2.Locals not in the irrigation scheme	Headman, Village Heads, Green Fuel company staff	1.12 participants 2.12 participants	Qualitative	snowballing Sampling