

Land Reform Migrations and Forest Resources Management in Zimbabwe

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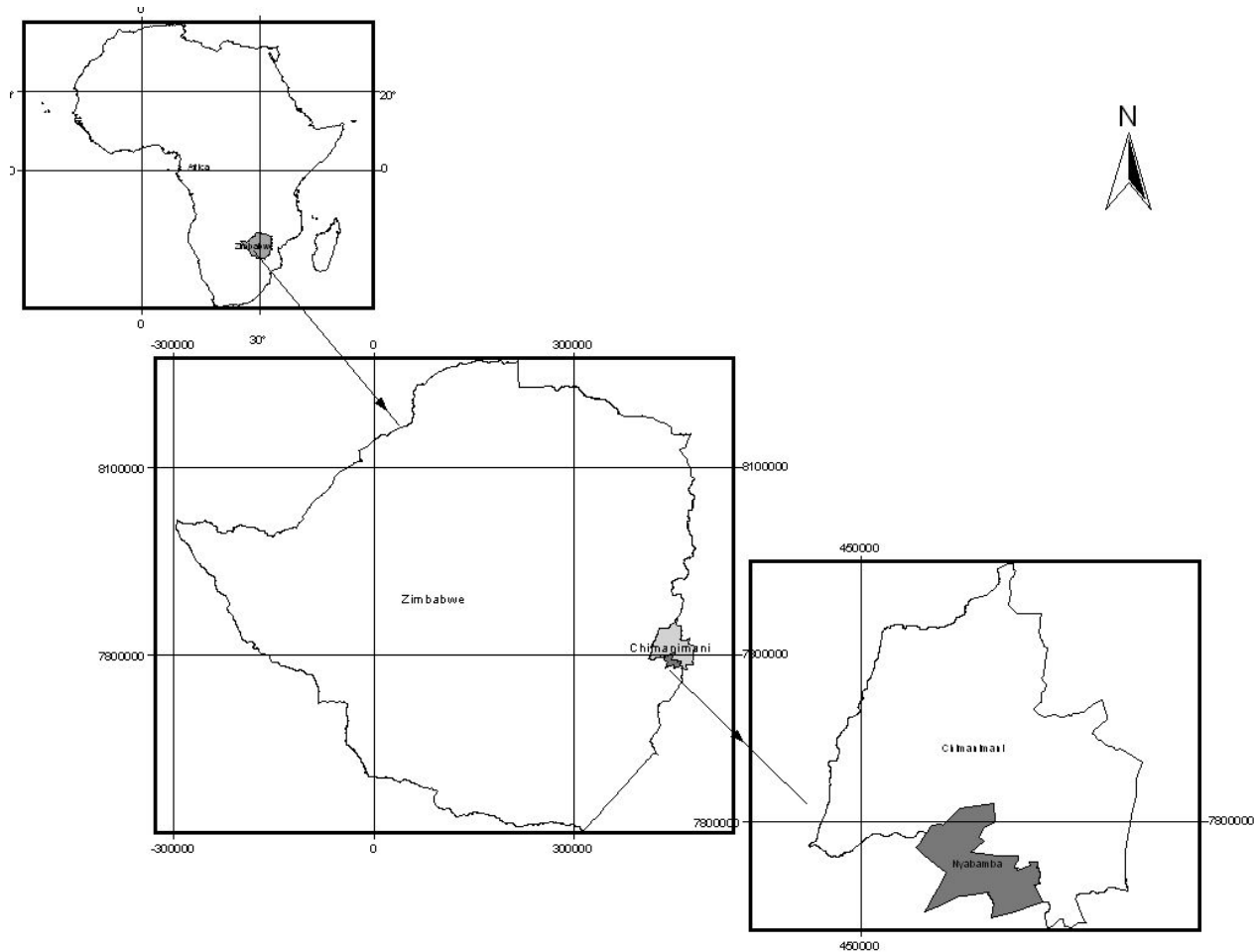
Research Partners

- Chimanimani District farming communities (Nyabamba, Shinja, Chayamiti)
- University of Zimbabwe
 - Institute of Environmental Studies (IES)
 - Department of Sociology
 - Department of Geography and Environmental Sciences
- Southern Alliance for Indigenous Resources (SAFIRE)
- Chimanimani District State Agencies
 - Environment Management Agency
 - Forestry Commission
 - Chimanimani Rural District
- International Development Research Centre (IDRC)

Description of the territory

- Chimanimani district, Manicaland province, eastern Zimbabwe
- Three study sites representing a gradient of agrarian settlement models before and after national independence namely:
 - Nyabamba, a Fast Track Land Reform Programme A1 model area;
 - Shinja, a post-independence old resettlement area
 - Chayamiti, a traditional communal area

Location of study site





Livelihood strategies

- Diversity of livelihood activities
- Crop production: most common,
 - thus 88% of FTLRP migrants to Nyabamba immediately cleared forests in order to commence agricultural activities
- Maize (staple) sunflower, finger millet, sugar beans, wheat, groundnuts, round nuts, cowpeas and sweet potatoes
- Other livelihood activities: livestock production, gardening, piecework, well drilling, needlecrafts, vending, brick moulding, and beekeeping
- Nyabamba migrants claim their welfare generally improved as a result of the land reform migration

Natural resource use

- Harvesting of forest resources
 - 80% households
 - firewood, building poles, timber, herbs, grass, fruits, mushrooms, and meat
 - household use or sale
- Almost all the households relied on firewood for cooking and heating
- 20% of the migrants involved in making secondary products from forest raw materials
- Nyabamba's forest resources endowment
 - migrants' false sense of perpetual abundance?
- Only 2% of the migrants see forest conservation responsibilities as their own

Gendered use of forests

- Women
 - collection of firewood herbs and wild fruits
 - 64% of firewood collectors were women
- Men
 - construction poles and firewood for sale
 - making processed forest products for sale or home use

CONTEXT/DRIVERS

Economic dynamics

- Nyabamba rural to rural migrations derives from colonial land occupation of Zimbabwe of late 1800s -1980 wherein:
- Indigenous people
 - forcibly relocated to segregated native reserves
 - coercively forced into labour on colonial settler farms
 - forced rural to rural, rural to urban migration
- Native reserve lands: very restricted access to natural resources
- 75% of native reserves land was in the most arid and unfertile areas
- Severe overcrowding and land degradation
- Poverty in the native reserves was exacerbated by
 - poor access to natural resources, legal, social and economic barriers created by the colonial government
- Communities used natural resources such as forests as safety nets against poverty

Environmental dynamics

- Nyabamba: > 1000 mm rainfall per annum, 18-26 °C in summer and 12-15°C in winter
- Average : 750m above sea level
- > 80% of land is on steep terrain, susceptible to erosion and land degradation
- Ecoregion: montane forest-grassland mosaic (WWF, 2001)
- Patches of indigenous Miombo vegetation against a landscape of exotic pine and wattle plantations
- Choice of forests as the study natural resource domain: because of the abundance of natural and planted forests in Chimanimani, and the importance of forest resources
- Before FTLRP, most of the forests in the district had remained fairly intact due to inaccessible location and legal protection
- Threats to the forest resources due to resettlement: national implications due to wide range of timber and non-timber products
- Zimbabwe, forests contribute 3% of GDP and employ 8% of the total labour force in the manufacturing sector (Mabugu and Chitiga, 2002)

Institutional framework

- Formal institutions regulating use and management of forest resources
 - State agencies: Chimanimani Rural District Council, Environmental Management Agency, Forestry Commission
- Minimal effectiveness due to constrained implementation capacity
- Traditional leadership: most important forest governance structure
- Thus, any efforts to improve the forest management practices in this area have to be centered around traditional leadership
- Local and traditional rules and regulations for forest resources use were in place in Nyabamba
- But, problematic enforcement
 - High demand for the resources, e.g., wet wood for construction and brick curing, stream bank cultivation for gardening
 - Implications for forest management interventions?

Agrarian reform regimes

- Zimbabwe initiated Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) in 2000
 - after unsuccessful post-independence (1980) land resettlement programmes
 - in response to socio-political pressures for faster land reforms
- ‘fast track’: spontaneously, very short period of time
- A1 and A2 resettlement models
- A1: villagized , individual residential and arable plots, communal grazing, woodlots, forests
 - similar to traditional communal lands but larger plots
 - aim: decongest communal lands, relieve land pressure in over-populated areas, extend and improve agriculture base in the peasant farming sector,
 - official target: landless peasants
 - predominantly rural to rural migration
 - stipulated A1 land sizes inclusive of the communal grazing area: 12-70 hectares depending on rainfall
- FTLRP was implemented concurrently in all the provinces for socio-political equity

FTLRP process

- Farm invasions or '*jambanja*': spontaneous initial occupation of white owned commercial farms by black masses
- Official resettlement: using Government constitutional and legislative provisions
- Invaded farm demarcation and designation to individual settlers
- Offer letters: official recognition of settlers prior to official tenure
- Issuance of permits and leases

Local and traditional knowledge systems

- Local rules governed the preservation of sacred places in forests such as springs, mountains and rivers
- Not allowed to cut down trees, start fires, draw water from natural sources using metallic and modern objects, and bathe at sacred sites
- Sacred places importance:
 - believed to be ancestral spirits residence
 - sites for traditional spiritual ceremonies such as rainmaking ceremonies and rituals for appeasing the spirits.
- Violating rules and regulations regarding the preservation of sacred places:
 - punishment by the headman
 - there was belief that the ancestral spirits would also punish violaters
- Consequently, these areas were relatively intact

ANALYTICAL BACKGROUND

Conceptual framework

- Adapted Hugo's model (1996): environmentally induced migration shaped by
 - *predisposing conditions; precipitating events; constraining and facilitating factors; migration process, natural resource management and the policy response*
- Predisposing conditions, e.g., forest degradation, soil fertility depletion
 - e.g., In Zimbabwe communal areas resultant pressure on natural resources predisposes people to migration
- A1 migrations mainly precipitated by prevailing national political and legislative environment
- A1: "impelled" not "forced" migration, migrants retain some power to decide to migrate
- But different from voluntary migration where migration is entirely migrant's decision
- A1 resettlement process: combination of complex multiple pressures
- Policy and legislative arrangements by government precipitated mass migrations
- Further policy provisions and refinements were made to aid the FTLRP after the migrations

Research hypotheses

- Forest resources are important pull factors for migration into Chimanimani A1 resettlement areas.
- Access to forest resources is gender and poverty related among Chimanimani A1 migrants.
- Management of forest resources in Chimanimani A1 resettlement areas can be enhanced through improved local institutions and improved local capacity for forest management.

Natural resource management

- Major concern : possible environmental degradation due to the influx of settlers to the resettlement areas
- A1 settlers were drawn mostly from various communal areas, urban areas, growth points and mining areas, creating a cosmopolitan mixture of settlers,
- ‘mixed bag’ of A1 settler migrants had different experiences in institutionalised forest resource management
- This scenario is expected to result in disintegrated natural resource management strategies and institutions whose effects on natural resource integrity could be detrimental
- Most A1 migrants engage in non-agricultural livelihood strategies such as sale of fuel wood (Presidential Land Review Committee, 2003) which may result in overharvesting of trees in the forests
- Requisite sharing of forests resources by immigrants in A1 resettlement areas could re-create some of the problems experienced in communal areas where the commonly shared land resources are often over-utilized and degraded

Key issues / Lessons Learned

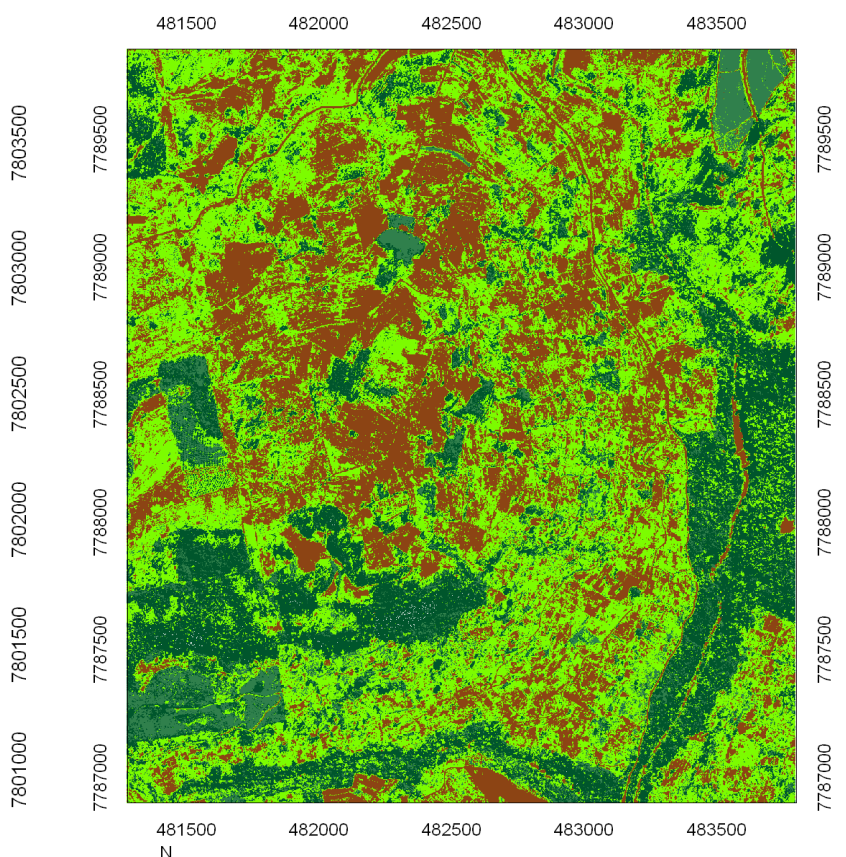
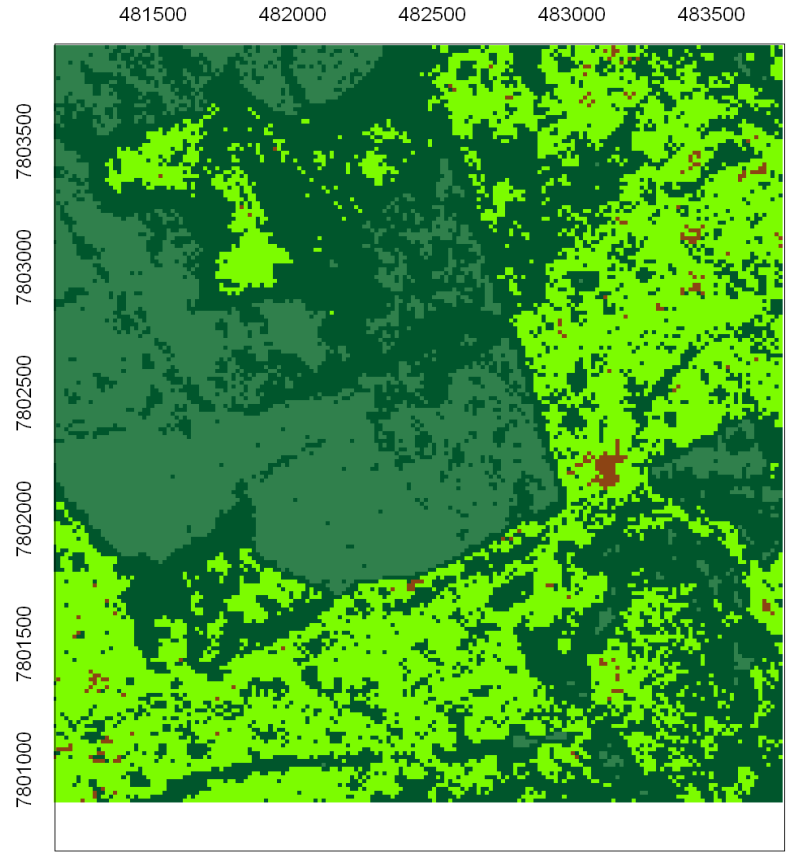
Lessons: migration

- Most important pull factor: agricultural land
- Rejects research hypothesis that forest resources were the important pull factors
- 90% of the pull factors were directly related to the land
 - better farm land,
 - opportunity to own land
 - less populated area

Lessons: forest management

- Forests were invaded and cleared for agricultural activities but there remained forest patches that provide a number of forest products and services
- 86% of the Nyabamba migrants had to clear the forest in order for them to commence farming
- 1-3 months to clear land for farming and residential
- Over 70% reduction in forest cover of the area
- Outside intervention should not be merely to stop deforestation but to facilitate change of attitudes about forests

Land cover change 2000-2009



- cultivation
- plantation
- wooded grassland
- woodland

- cultivation
- plantation
- wooded grassland
- woodland





Lessons: gender

- Women: majority land invasion participants
- Offer letters:
 - 69.2% only men's
 - 7.7% both the husband and wife's names
 - 14.4% only the wife's name
- Did FTLRP advance women's empowerment causes?

Lessons: capacity building

- Nyabamba migrants not oblivious to the degradation of their forests
- Formulated community action plans
- Benefited from NRM capacity building
 - legislation awareness workshop,
 - formed Environmental Management Committees,
 - afforestation,
 - sustainable bee keeping

Forest resources management

This...



....Instead of this



Future scenarios

- Disparity in the access to resettlement land between men and women
- This could accentuate poverty among the vulnerable gender groupings where agriculture is key livelihood
- Gender disparities defeat FTLRP objectives of improving the livelihoods of migrants
- Policy implication for the governance of forest resources is that there should be efforts to strengthen the traditional institutions which seem to be the more recognized.
- A strong partnership of farmer communities, traditional institutions, government, non-governmental organizations, commercial timber producers and the Rural District Council should be supported by institutional and technical capacity building of communities.
- Importance of provision of institutional capacity building for NRM in resettlement programmes. e.g., Environment Management Committees , local by-laws
- Role of collaborative research



Thank you
Muchas Gracias