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**Author: Munyaradzi Hwami, Daniel Madzanire, & Evelyn Hwami**

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# **Chiadzwa Resistance to Development Dispossession: Kleptocracy and Rural Struggles in Zimbabwe**

**Munyaradzi Hwami**

University of Alberta

Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

[hwami@ualberta.ca](mailto:hwami@ualberta.ca)

**Daniel Madzanire**

Great Zimbabwe University

Masvingo, Zimbabwe

[dmadzanire@gzu.ac.zw](mailto:dmadzanire@gzu.ac.zw)

**Evelyn Hwami**

Mutare Teachers Training College

Mutare, Zimbabwe

[hwamievelynh@gmail.com](mailto:hwamievelynh@gmail.com)

## **Abstract**

This article recognizes and analyzes rural resistance to the proliferation of the fateful experience of modernity and its related commercial industrial principles. Resistance by rural communities finds itself submerged by more spectacular urban and media attractive narratives. Utilizing a critical interpretive study of the dispossessed and displaced rural dwellers of Chiadzwa in Zimbabwe, we capture their experiences and expositions to assess resistance to development dispossession that even post-colonial humanitarianism has footnoted. The brutality of instruments of global capitalism in the form of the post/neo-colonial state is exposed, and the futile but brave resistance of the villagers given deserved space. The theoretical knowledge engagements emanating from the dauntless efforts of the people of Chiadzwa are discussed and located within other international struggles against the immiserating and failing global capitalism. The article valorizes resistance against the creation of a commercial society of self-seeking individuals engaged in endless competition as this is the essence of neoliberalism.

**Keywords:** rural resistance, global capitalism, accumulation by dispossession, development displacement, neocolonialism, kleptocracy, Zimbabwe

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## **1.0 Introduction**

A closer look at Marx's description of primitive accumulation reveals a wide range of processes. These include the commodification and privatization of land and the forceful expulsion of peasant populations; the conversion of various forms of property rights—common, collective, state, and so forth—into exclusive private property rights; the suppression of rights to the commons; the commodification of labor power and the suppression of alternative—indigenous—forms of production and consumption; colonial, neo-colonial, and imperial processes of appropriation of assets. "The state with its monopoly of violence and definitions of legality plays a

crucial role in both backing and promoting these processes” (Harvey, 2003, p. 145) Resisting modern capital accumulation processes, especially in the developing countries where resource exploitation in mostly ‘remote underdeveloped’ villages dates back to the last centuries of European colonialism, can take varied forms. At times even the subtle, passive and seemingly disorganized anti-capital resistance is underplayed by not only the state and its local and global capital partners but also the resistors themselves fail to recognize and celebrate their victories beyond their villages, living conditions and the suffocating media propaganda of their new colonizers. These common struggles against state-capital collusions are underreported if not ignored in Africa compared to other regions (Mujere & Dombo, 2011). This article, situated within anti-hegemonic perspectives, critically narrates resistance against state-corporate “accumulation by dispossession” (Harvey, 2003, p. 23) machinations by the government of Zimbabwe and its local and global corporate partners. The paper is a representation of local Chiadzwa actors, place-based struggle as they engage critically with their relations of subjection to transcend the terms of their subjection (McMichael, 2010). In the name of resource development projects purportedly for the good of the nation, the people of Chiadzwa in Eastern Zimbabwe have been forced off their ancestral lands by the state. As Black (2007) observed elsewhere, the planning of such a massive disruptive project did not include democratic consultation, omitted adequate compensation for the displaced and neglected environmental concerns. One displaced villager said, “We were chased away like wild animals, our views or demands were never considered” (Chiadzwa villager, interview notes).

The essence of global capitalism or development, as most people understand the term, is that it should combat poverty. However, the face of development being implemented in Chiadzwa has adversely affected poor people and as has been seen in other regions “inflicted poverty on others who were not poor before” (Black, 2007, p. 11). These forced dislocations must also be viewed as development cleansing where villagers are viewed as obstacles to the process of development (Rajagopal, 2003), and may also constitute ethnic cleansing in disguise as most of the dispossessed are from those considered minority groups in the country. We therefore observe that as delivered by the West and new prospectors (e.g., China) and their local state–nationalist elites accomplices:

...development assaults extant life-forms in the South. It explicitly ‘colonizes their life-world’, it consciously seeks to supersede and supplant the living structures and values of life. It is thus endured as an alien invasion, as a criminal intrusion, intended to kill native ways of life. (Dossier, 2007, p. 888)

Development, in the form exploitation of natural resources such as diamonds, is further exposed as a trick played on the people of the Third World, “especially rural communities, to rob them of their resources and wealth, and leave them dispossessed and in debt... they are instead uprooted and displaced. Their resources are snatched from them, converting them into 'development' refugees” (Shiva & Emmott, 2000, para. 3). These economic development projects such as Chiadzwa diamond mining, “deprive the very people it professes to help of their traditional land and means of sustenance, forcing them to survive in an increasingly eroded natural world” (Shiva,

2005, p. 23). This characterization amply captures post-independent Zimbabwe's flirtations with the idea of development and in particular the Chiadzwa debacle.

Utilizing the rhetoric of nationalism and the post-independence development trope, the ruling party, the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) has used neo-colonial laws, traditional leaders and local governance structures, the media and the military to forcibly dispossess and/or relocate the Chiadzwa people to advance kleptocratic capitalism in the form of state-corporate partnerships. Anjin Investments (a joint venture between China-based Anhui Foreign Economic Construction of China and a shadowy local military outfit called Matt Bronze of Zimbabwe), Diamond Mining Corporation from the United Arab Emirates, Mbada Diamonds and Marange Resources were the major corporations active in Chiadzwa, and they illustrate the operations of kleptocratic capitalism. Organized as the Chiadzwa Community Development Trust (CCDT) and with the assistance of NGOs, the Marange have been engaged in a struggle since November 2006 but with disastrous consequences given the limits of democracy in a kleptocratic state with a monopoly over the use of force and the instruments of propaganda/media. Reading Nonini's (2005, p. 6) conception of 'kleptocratic capitalism', that is, the creation of fictitious wealth without going through production of real wealth and a form of political governance that is controlled by looters and daytime robbers, one understands the motive behind the displacement and dispossession that unfolded in Chiadzwa. A kleptocratic government is one that is led "by a group who enrich themselves on the country's resources. ...[or] rule while engaged in plunder of the public treasury" (Nonini, 2005, p. 177). The neocolonial trajectory secures the interests of ex-colonial powers and 'new imperialists' like China (Hwami & Kapoor, 2012).

In the context of postcolonial/independent idea of development and the growing sensibilities towards accumulation by dispossession (ABD), kleptocratic capitalism (Nonini, 2005), development cleansing (Rajagopal, 2003), the violence of development projects (Vandergeest, Idahosa, & Bose, 2006), and displacement and dispossession (Guha, 1990; Shiva, 2005) this article narrates key developments pertaining to Chiadzwa resistance efforts against accumulation by global and local capitalists and the resultant dispossession of their ancestral lands, resources and cultural symbols. What can be discerned is a multi-pronged strategy of civil or non-violent resistance consisting of peaceful demonstrations, lobbying, alliance making with friendly organizations and political groupings, appealing to the legal system and public campaigns including open protests/marches and their impacts are considered along with insights concerning the current direction of the struggle as a 'forced compromise' within the structures of kleptocratic capital as the Chiadzwa people are compelled to bargain for better prices and conditions for relocation as a final resort. They have even put a price to the graves of their relatives! The perspectives of development displaced Chiadzwa and others from the struggle are considered along with secondary documents pertaining to this struggle. In conclusion, we applaud and identify the achievements of Chiadzwa civil resistance, particularly bringing national and international awareness to the brutality of modern ABD mechanisms. A comparative analysis is also included to examine if there are similar dynamics in other countries in the region.

## **2.0 Context**

State and corporate dispossession of rural people's lands and resources in the name of national development date back to colonial times when black Africans were forced off their traditional ancestral lands and forced to settle in areas that were referred to as 'reserves', characterized by poor soils and unreliable rainfall patterns. The land was taken for game parking, commercial farming, road and rail construction projects, dam construction, mining and other projects that the Rhodesian government defined as national resource development. Similar justification of national growth and economic development are being used in the post-independence period by the ZANU PF government to further force people to move off their traditional lands to accommodate projects defined as in the interest of the nation. While these projects are presented as evidence of national development supported by the people, the views and reactions of the rural peoples are rarely considered and captured. There has been resistance by the rural peoples to state-capital dispossession often masked as development, but such forms of resistance have not been covered except in some inside pages of some newspapers.

This lacuna in literature considering the consciousness and resistance of rural peoples in Zimbabwe is in stark contrast to the coverage and publication of urban workers' resistance to biting neoliberal policies implemented by the government. There is abundant literature on worker consciousness, labor walkouts and strikes up to political awareness and activity (Bond & Saunders, 2005; Raftopoulos, 2006). This happy and contented perspective of the rural peoples can be explained in a number of ways but most important is the fact that in independent Zimbabwe, rural people have been portrayed as satisfied and happy with their government. People in rural areas, unlike any other sector of the populace, bore the brunt of the armed struggle and Rhodesian atrocities, and were consistent in their support of the liberation movements. The land reform program, to a certain extent, benefitted people living in rural areas (Moyo & Yeros, 2007) and the massive developments in the social sector soon after independence, notably in education and health were felt by the people in rural areas more than any other group in the country. Equally important have been the use of intimidation and violence in rural areas as one would imagine in a country with very restricted democratic space.

Academics and journalists have persistently ignored the response of the Chiadzwa people. They are not considered in most publications, and extensive coverage has been extended to state and military activities (Chingano, Mereki, & Mutyanda, 2015; Kutsura, 2010; Nyamunda & Mukwambo, 2012). Another stream of scholarship has expended its efforts on people who came from outside Chiadzwa who are referred to as 'illegal', 'non-formal' or 'non-state' diamond buyers and their struggles with the police and army (Anderson, 2011; McDougal, 2009; Towriss, 2013). Others like Nyota and Sibanda (2012) took a socio-linguistic approach to analyze dialectical creativity that developed out of the culture of diamond digging. One cannot fail to observe the global human rights lobby exploiting the Chiadzwa debacle to advocate the banning of Zimbabwe's diamonds through the Kimberly process (Saunders, 2009; Spiegel, 2014). The passive and/or non-existence conception of the native rural dwellers of Chiadzwa is further advanced by another stream of analysis that has highlighted allegations of ZANU PF and government looting of diamonds (Global Witness, 2009; Human Rights Watch, 2009; Nyamunda, Mukwambo, & Nyandoro, 2012; Towriss, 2013).

Despite this glaring absence of coverage of rural people's resistance and opposition to government-corporate accumulation and dispossession activities in Zimbabwe, there have been instances of rural people demonstrating consciousness and resistance. The mining, dam, and road construction projects have faced different forms of opposition from villagers as demonstrated by Chingwizi villagers whose peaceful resistance has captured national and international attention, sympathy and support (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YIXb6273TYQ&feature=youtu.be>). Similar resistance around compensation struggles, refusing to be relocated or relocating themselves to areas outside government plan and buying time to frustrate capital, and public voicing of opposition to relocation was also recognized when the 500 families from Charumbira were told of relocation plans to pave the way for a Cement Plant (Maponga, 2015). Wendy Willems captured what she described as nascent everyday forms of resistance in Zimbabwe such as popular humor and rumor (Willems, 2010). The absence of physical protests should not be equaled by an absence of resistance. In eastern Zimbabwe clashes between peasants and state administrators erupted over the expansion of the Nyanga National Park in the 1990s. According to Moore:

An ethnographic approach to peasant micro-politics emphasized differences among state functionaries and peasants, whose relationship to the local landscape has been shaped by historical transformations in the regional political economy. Gender in particular, mediates not only productive inequalities and access to resources but also the cultural construction of environmental resources. The analysis shows an event history and peasant historical consciousness—arguing for the integration of political economy and cultural interpretation (Moore, 1993, p. 380).

Moore's analysis does not acknowledge that at the center of the conflict is state dispossession of peasantry land and reduces the conflict to a misunderstanding between state employees and peasants. The incompatibility of the capitalist mode of production represented by an animal park and rural peoples' everyday struggles to protect their heritage and provide for themselves is at the center of the conflict. This should be recognized as resistance by rural peoples to dispossession by capital interests represented by the state, and hence early demonstration of peasant consciousness and opposition to ABD in Zimbabwe.

The struggles of rural peoples have largely been left out from popular and academic narratives of Zimbabwe. As Willems observed, this has suggested that the government of Zimbabwe's development projects are supported by the people, and most people in rural areas are 'patriotic citizens' (Hwami, 2012) and hence the success of the state's much-publicized patriotic citizenry program of the Third Chimurenga (Willems, 2010). The examples cited above illustrate the fallacy of such a conclusion and the emergence of the related landscape of several rural resistances to colonial ABD. A critical analysis of the resistance to diamond mining in Marange shows that the idea of 'passive citizens', 'patriotic citizens' or 'contented and happy rural people' does not capture accurately the experiences and actions of rural peoples in the face of state and corporate incursions to take away their ancestral lands and resources.

### 3.0 Conceptual Frameworks and Critiques

The crises faced by ordinary people like rural villagers in developing countries emanate largely from the adoption of Western neoliberal policies that promote marketization and privatization as the only pathways to development. This article utilizes neo-colonial, internal colonial and anti-hegemonic perspectives and analytics to critically examine resistance to ABD by the Chiadzwa people as resistance to local and global capital and coloniality (Quijano, 2007). The project of development as unfolding in Third World countries, like Zimbabwe, has brought about ‘uncontrolled plundering of resources’, ‘forced relocation’ and forced integration of indigenous peoples into ‘market economies’ (Kapoor, 2012; Eversole, McNeish & Cimadamore, 2005; Fisher, 1999). The post-Economic Structural Adjustment Programs (ESAP) era, designed to develop Zimbabwe has enabled the processes of displacement, dispossession or market assimilation without any complaints from human rights organizations, most of them funded by Western countries. The adoption of SAPs in the 1990s marked the introduction of neoliberal policies to achieve much-needed development in Zimbabwe, and these were at the behest of the Breton Wood institutions. In an environment replete with poverty, the Zimbabwe state as the political entity, the body politic was able to orchestrate internal capitalist and imperialist policies and practices that benefitted mostly the elite. Faced with Western condemnation, punitive sanctions and isolation since the year 2000 after violent elections and land reforms (Bond & Manyanya, 2003; Hwami, 2010; Raftopoulos, 2006), the state invoked political, diplomatic and military strategies to assert its political and economic interests. In an authoritarian and undemocratic system, Nonini’s (2005) kleptocratic capitalism became the prevailing paradigm. Organs of the state, especially the military, the police, and intelligence organizations claimed a stake in the lucrative diamond industry through establishing spurious companies in association with foreign entities, mainly from China (Chingano et al., 2015; Evans-Pritchard, 2010; McDougal, 2009). In all this web of state power abuse and corruption, force was used to silence the restless population who opposed a system of capitalism that was being forced on them. As Harvey (2003) noted, the state with its monopoly of violence and definitions of legality plays a crucial role in both backing and promoting privatization and marketization policies.

The dispossession and relocation of rural peoples in eastern Zimbabwe demonstrates the nature of modern capitalist development. Modern development is driven via neoliberalism. Neoliberalism involves the transfer of productive public assets from the state to private companies. Productive assets include natural resources, for example, land and minerals. This was succinctly summed up by Roy:

To snatch these assets that the state holds in trust for the people it represents...to snatch these away and sell them as stock to private companies is a process of barbaric dispossession on a scale that has no parallel in history. (2001, p. 16)

The impacts of such ‘development’ also entail loss of local livelihoods, social structures and cultures—ways of life—the development dispossession and re-colonization of ‘culture’. Under such circumstances, affected peoples are ‘structurally compelled’ to cease radical resistance teleology which addresses the structures of colonial capital’s penchant for accumulation by dispossession and replace this with less challenging if not modest reformist goals within the structures

of capital and neocolonialism, that is, the struggle for local autonomy and forms of sovereignty over local resources and ways of life morphs into a struggle for better compensation deal-making and/or relocation packages. Such demands, however, can come at considerable cost to capital and the state, and perhaps presents an aspect of the new frontier in the struggles against development dispossession and displacement in the 21st century.

On another critical note, this demands the questioning of the whole idea of ‘development’ as promoted in Zimbabwe–Global South. Development, at least for most tribal peoples, like the people of Chiadzwa, is not really about lifting people out of poverty, it is about masking the takeover of their territories. In the name of improving the lives of the people, development has become displacement, tribal–rural cleansing, and so forth, as western–global epistemologies continue to supplant human supportive ideologies, systems of living that have sustained humanity for time immemorial. Accumulation by dispossession and its associated idea of development contains “characteristic traits of colonialism that it denied diversity, epistemic diversity and created instead inferiority” (Bredlid, 2013, p. 7). The displacement and relocation of the Chiadzwa villagers demonstrated a subjugation of their cultural and environmental knowledges and replacement by a foreign knowledge system that ignored ancestral cultures, destroyed sustainable livelihoods and considered Chiadzwa as an object for resource exploitation. Chiadzwa villagers complained, “we left everything including our ancestral graves” (Displaced Chiadzwa villager, interview notes). The cultural importance of ancestors in village life is not considered when faced with resource privatization and marketization. It is viewed as anti-progress and against development.

This violent version of accumulation by dispossession forced modernity–development on the people, “the process whereby other peoples are dominated, and their destinies are shaped according to an essentially Western way of conceiving and receiving the world” (Tucker, 1999, p. 1). The face of development that showed itself in Chiadzwa is one that Dossier (2010) defined as “the process whereby other people are dominated...whereby other people are appropriated and turned into objects” (p. 888). The self-sufficient villagers have been forced into the lumpen proletarian class where they are forced to provide cheap labor for mining transnational companies (TNCs). It is this Othering and objectification of the Chiadzwa villagers for the satisfaction of local and global capital interests that justify their resistance and provides it with a moral standpoint. It is and must be a rallying call for all concerned with anti-neocolonialism to remonstrate the inadequacies of the development mantra as transported and enforced in rural Zimbabwe.

#### **4.0 Methodology**

This was a critical interpretive research as defined by Fossey, Harvey, Mcdermott & Davidson (2002) that sought accounts that were sensitive to the “dialectical relationship between the social structural constraints on human actors and the relative constraints of human agency” (Anderson, 1989, p. 249). Two field researchers were involved, who drew on various aspects of their identities to create a connection with research participants. Research identity and knowledge of the research area were very important factors. Twenty-one interviews were held with dispossessed villagers. Two group interviews–discussions were also carried out, and these involved extended family gatherings. An observation of a protest demonstration by displaced villagers was also part of the data collection process.



The participants were purposefully sampled (see Neutens & Rubinson, 2002, p. 125) but all of them were displaced from Chiadzwa due to diamond mining activities. Interviews were video-recorded. We also utilized secondary sources and though most of them focused mainly on illegal diamond mining and state violence.

## **5.0 Discussion of Findings–Emerging Ideas**

The discussion of this critical interpretive study is presented under two interlinked sections. We first examine how the state and its corporate partners displaced and disposed Chiadzwa villagers of their ancestral lands. Extreme brutal use of state power is exposed. The second section considers the form of resistance that the villagers offered, and a story of courage and persistence develops from reading the narratives of the displaced people.

### **5.1 Anatomy of ABD in the Case of Chiadzwa Diamond Mining**

The ‘curse of diamonds’ [www.imdb.com/title/tt0450259/](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0450259/); <https://www.brilliantearth.com/Blood-Diamonds-Fact-Sheet-2010/> has been widely observed in Africa. The people of Chiadzwa witnessed the disaster that comes with the discovery of diamonds and not the development that people are promised by those in government. Various strategies of dispossession were employed to drive and relocate the people of Chiadzwa away from their traditional lands where diamonds were discovered. While most accounts refer to police and army operations as targeting ‘illegal’ activities perpetrated by people from outside Chiadzwa, the fact is the native rural dwellers were not spared. Multi-sources agree on the vicious nature of state-sanctioned police and military activity in Chiadzwa. Local and foreign sources approximate that around 200 people were killed during Operation Hakudzokwi (Operation No Return) that started on the 27th of October 2008 and was meant to drive people out of the diamond area (Human Rights Watch, 2009; Nyamunda & Mukwambo, 2012; Spiegel, 2014). “The army officers fired live ammunition and tear gas on civilians found in and around the diamond fields” (Kutsaura, 2010, p. 342). According to one displaced resident of Chiadzwa:

The army targeted illegal diamond diggers, but in the process, we were also victims. We were accused of harboring diamond diggers. Also, remember we were also involved in diamond panning. We were able to make money through selling food items to the illegal diamond diggers, and our children could also go pick up the stones. (Displaced Chiadzwa villager, interview notes).

Another displaced and dispossessed villager told us that:

The diamond panning process involved digging during the night and carrying the alluvial soil away from the digging area. We would then do the thorough pannings during the day. Some hid their bags in the surrounding homes and at the end, there was no difference in treatment between locals and diamond diggers from outside Chiadzwa. (Displaced Chiadzwa villager, interview notes)

Many other sources corroborate the government's use of force against the villagers and hence the use of such terms like bloody diamonds and stones of blood (Evans-Pritchard, 2010; Sachikonye, 2007). The government's militant response was meant to displace and relocate the people of Chiadzwa. The violence involved the victimization of local communities surrounding the diamond fields (Saunders, 2009). Observing the violence against the people, Chingano et al. (2015) used the term militant capitalism, while Kutsaura (2010) called it militarized commercialism. "It was like a war zone," one displaced Chiadzwa villager commented.

Numerous reports corroborate the displaced villagers' narrative of extreme violence from the state. During the army crackdown, more than 200 civilians were estimated dead as a result of shootings by army officers (Evans-Pritchard, 2010; Human Rights Watch, 2009; McDougal, 2009). Anecdotal evidence in Chiadzwa suggests the presence of mass graves in which killed people were buried, and this suggests that the number of people who fatally fell victim to army brutality could even be higher (Anderson, 2011; Human Rights Watch, 2009). The violent nature of the displacement is corroborated by Kutsaura:

Relating to the diamond diggers' experiences with the police dogs, which are popularly known as *Bruno*, one diamond miner said: 'The policeman will simply say Bruno catch! [Commanding the dog to attack]'. However, the *Magweja* (informal diamond miners) would team up against police officers, killing police dogs and fighting against and sometimes killing, police officers using their digging iron bars and knives. These killings would sometimes turn into bloody feuds. If a police officer is killed, the other police officers would begin a hitting and killing rampage against the miners and make it very difficult for them to get into the fields to mine. On the other hand, if a miner is killed, the miners would team up against the police in a revenge mission. Although soldiers are feared by diamond miners because of their possessions of more sophisticated firearms and fighting skills, some are also victims of the vengeance of miners. The diamond fields are, therefore, a localized and minute war zone of Zimbabwe. (Kutsaura, 2010, pp. 346–347)

Though most of these fights were between the state and illegal diamond miners from outside Chiadzwa, some local villagers were caught up in the skirmishes. A picture of a war zone is projected by eyewitness accounts of the dispossession process. According to a medical officer based at Murambinda Hospital in Buhera near Chiadzwa:

On November 11 an army truck with seven uniformed and armed soldiers came from Marange with 17 bodies of people they said were illegal diamond miners. The bodies had bullet wounds and were decomposing. The soldiers ordered us to take the bodies and arrange for burial. All the bodies were

unidentified, and we entered their details as "unknown" and "brought in dead" from Marange. (Human Rights Watch, 2009, p. 32)

One villager supported such observations:

Many people were killed here. Some, we did not know them at all because this area had attracted many people from all over the country. However, many young men and women from this area were also involved in gold panning and some were caught up in the violence. (Displaced Chiadzwa villager, interview notes)

Similarly, Wikileaks cables reported that "over 200 bodies turned up at Mutare mortuaries. Many of those bodies arrived with fatal gunshot or dog bite wounds and were tagged 'BID Marange' or 'brought in dead from Marange'" (Evans-Pritchard, 2010). A 23-year-old man who was shot by the police in the diamond fields in October 2008 told Human Rights Watch:

Three policemen on horseback raided us while we worked in the diamond fields and immediately fired their shotguns at us. I was shot in the left thigh. A friend later took out four pellets from my left thigh where I was shot. Two of my friends were shot and killed during that raid. (Human Rights Watch, 2009, p. 25)

One of the displaced residents we interviewed shared this experience:

I first heard the sound and then saw three helicopters above us in the field. I was not worried. I just assumed it was a team of buyers who had come for business in helicopters as they sometimes did. However, soldiers in the helicopters started firing live ammunition and tear gas at us. We all stopped digging and began to run towards the hills to hide. I noticed that there were many uniformed soldiers on foot pursuing us. I know 10 artisans who were shot and killed that morning. (Displaced Chiadzwa villager, interview notes)

At national level, the government through the media presented the discovery and mining of diamonds as national development, a sign of the beginning of good times for Zimbabweans despite sanctions imposed by Western countries. Given the high stakes involved, there was no space for open resistance and official opposition and local traditional leaders were tasked with the mission to explain to their people the displacement and relocation process. As government paid officers, traditional leaders that included chiefs and headman, were not expected to stand against government development projects. However, where open opposition grew, the state responded swiftly to silence such sentiments. For example, in June 2006 police arrested Farai Maguwu, the head of the Centre for Research and Development in Zimbabwe, after he provided sensitive information on the activities of soldiers in the fields to the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme appointed monitor, Mr. Abbey Chikane. Police also beat, arrested, and detained members of Maguwu's family.

Maguwu was charged with “communicating and publishing falsehoods against the state with the intention to cause prejudice to the security or economic interests of the country under section 31 of the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act” (Shaik-Peremanov, 2014, p. 337). It is therefore abundantly clear that force was used as the main instrument to dispossess the villagers of Chiadzwa off their land and give way to state-corporate interests.

## ***5.2 Chiadzwa Resistance to Displacement and Relocation***

The lacunae in the Chiadzwa diamond development displacement saga is the complete non-coverage of the brave efforts of the rural people as they demonstrated opposition to state–corporate collusions to displace them behind the rhetoric of national development. The few spaces offered to Chiadzwa resistance to the well-oiled machinery of contemporary accumulation by dispossession as represented by the Zimbabwean state and its corporate partners are peripheralized or footnoted (Kutsaura, 2010; McDougal, 2009; Nyamunda & Mukwambo, 2012; Towriss, 2013). On display in Chiadzwa are the open features of kleptocratic capitalism. Nonini defined kleptocracy as a government by a group who “enrich themselves on the country’s resources...[or]... rule while engaged in plunder of the public treasury” (2005, p. 177). To further illustrate this observation, the diamond corporate set-up is described in the following manner:

All the seven diamond mining companies currently on site are joint ventures or aligned to the Zimbabwe Defense Force, including two Chinese investments: Anjin a joint venture between Matt Bronze Limited and Jinan which are also linked to the Chinese military. (Gagare, p. 2015)

The resistance of the people of Chiadzwa has been continuous but peaceful. As was noted by Davenport and Trivedi (2013), non-violent resistance does not attract wide coverage as is given to violent resistance or protests despite overwhelming evidence pointing towards their efficacy as demonstrated recently by the Arab Spring protests. Resistance in Chiadzwa involved non-violent or civil resistance (Sharp, 2005). In an environment of brutal military force, speaking out and shaming national leadership was a brave act on its own. The people came up with derogatory terms and names referring to the police, military, politicians and government officials, all inscribed in negativity (See Nyota & Sibanda, 2012) and demonstrating what Mansbridge (2001) referred to as oppositional consciousness where individuals engage in behavioral challenges as they realize the system of injustice they live under.

The next level of resistance from the everyday derogatory language when talking about national leadership and institutions involved many activities that were not only restricted to the rural peoples of Chiadzwa. It is ironic to observe how the police and the army, both instruments of the state–corporate accumulation by dispossession agenda, ended up corrupted and serving both the state–corporate alliance and the ‘people’ of Chiadzwa. One research found that:

In response, the miners employed various tactics such as evasion of police and army officers, bribing authorities, forming syndicates with the police and army officers stationed to guard the boundaries of the diamond fields.

Their tactics also included partnering with powerful and influential local politicians. (Nyamunda, Mukwambo, & Nyandoro, 2012, p. 114)

This observation was confirmed by our interactions with a displaced resident of Chiadzwa who said:

You needed to promise them something to be allowed into the diamond field. Usually, the agreement was that an artisan would be allowed to pan for diamonds for a certain period. When done, they would share with the army officer whatever one would have got. It was usually 50–50. Besides sharing, you were protected and if some army or government officials were scheduled to visit the area, we were warned off and not allowed into the field. (Displaced Chiadzwa villager, interview notes)

Similar expressions demonstrating corruption within the military and more importantly the resolved resistance of the rural peoples have been captured in other studies.

Even the military is forming syndicates with diggers because they have realized that they benefit nothing from shooting them...If there is an imminent operation, they warn you in advance to vacate the area but if you disregard the warning and they catch you, you can be beaten to death even by your 'partner'. (Nyamunda and Mukwambo, 2012, p. 162)

The people resisted and fought back against the kleptocratic state by at times using the apparatus of the same authoritarian regime. It must be noted that by their participation as artisanal diamond miners and in the 'unofficial non-state' diamond trade, the people of Chiadzwa were resisting ABD. To corroborate this version of resistance, one villager said, "It was profitable to pan diamonds. Many people improved their lives by selling diamonds. We were some of the first people in this country to have United States dollars. Others managed to build houses in Mutare from ngoda (diamonds)" (Displaced Chiadzwa villager, interview notes).

The forceful relocation to places away from Chiadzwa has not seen the end of civil resistance. The people have been using the issue of compensation as a rallying point and to exact as much money from the diamond mining companies as is possible. Beside demanding compensation for their houses and other household property, in line with their cultural beliefs, the villagers would like the dead bodies of their relatives exhumed for reburial.

They have to pay compensation for disturbing the peace my departed grandfather, grandmother, father, and all others have been enjoying. This was where our family resting place was located, just behind our homestead. We had lived there for time immemorial. It is our ancestral land. Each grave has a price, and it must be paid. (Displaced Chiadzwa villager, interview notes)

A Chinese diamond mining company, Anjin, has displaced close to 300 families from the Chirasika area of Chiadzwa to an Arda farm in Odzi and compensation for the displaced families has been a three-roomed brick and mortar house. Muzulu and Zhangazha (2014) reported that the villagers complained that the \$1,000 compensation which was paid by Anjin to each of the 474 relocated households under the company's area of jurisdiction was not enough considering the wealth they lost during the relocation exercise. Furthermore, to illustrate that the issue of compensation is being exploited to express resistance against the whole dispossession and relocation process, another set of villagers had issues dealing with another diamond mining company.

Some of the villagers are embroiled in a fierce struggle with controversial diamond mining company Mbada Holdings over the company's plans to exhume 24 bodies for reburial to expand its mining activities. Two affected families, the Kusenas and Manyeres of Ward 29 Betera Village, have refused to have bodies of their relatives exhumed without first receiving full compensation and an assurance that they would be reburied at a place of their choice. The families are demanding US\$3000 per body and the reburial to be in Arda Transau in Odzi where displaced families are being relocated. According to the villagers, Mbada offered to pay US\$150 per grave as compensation and this has infuriated the families. (Muzulu & Zhangazha, 2014)

It is around these socio-economic issues that we see the NGOization of the resistance in Chiadzwa. Villagers have banded together to form the Chiadzwa Community Development Trust to help them secure benefits from the gems extracted from their community. The trust has mobilized the Chiadzwa community in an attempt to assert its rights and benefit from the diamond mining. It has also become the community's mouthpiece in negotiations with all stakeholders, including donor and government agencies. With the moral/other support from organizations like the Zimbabwe Environment Law Association, Action Aid Zimbabwe and Natural Resource Governance, the emergence of this resistance in Zimbabwe cannot be ignored. Faced by brutal military coercion, traditional leaders had no place in leading their people to resist this violent displacement and dispossession. This left the leadership space to young activists organized under some 'development project' titles, for example, Cephaz Gwayagwaya—chairperson of the Arda Transau Relocation Development Trust—and Farai Maguwu, director of the Centre for Research and Development. These are important directions of the resistance of rural peoples as their peaceful stand informs national and international discourses.

## **6.0 Conclusion**

The meaning and implications of rural dispossession in Zimbabwe illustrates the prevalence of colonial-capitalist practices even in self-proclaimed radical-leftist countries and governments like ZANU PF in Zimbabwe. The practice of ABD wrapped in the banner of indigenization and the nationalist rhetoric of 'development' is at the cost of—rather than 'for'—people like the Chiadzwa

villagers who are faced with the challenging prospects of struggle and resistance in a highly repressive political context. That said, the struggle takes on new tactics and directions as a consequence of or in response to dominance and finds new ways to invigorate a popular politics of and for the affected peoples. The struggle of the people of Chiadzwa deserves extensive documentation and celebration. Theirs has been a fight against local and global militant capital, imperialism and neocolonialism packaged as development induced displacement (Vandergeest, Idahosa, & Bose, 2006). The results of their resistance, besides the ignominy of relocation, have included attended poverty, risks and social vulnerability leaving them exposed to state and NGO politics. The fight championed by the Chiadzwa people has been refocused on reducing poverty and their condition of vulnerability. The resistance on issues of compensation is demanding greater protection from the forces of the neoliberal market, concerns about growing poverty and violence. Again, the cost of development is being felt by the poor villagers. The Chiadzwa people deserve opportunities to assist them in their efforts to improve their former living standards and capacity or at least restore them. This was summed up by one of the villagers:

We have lost everything. We have been forced to start a new life and it has not been easy. We are not familiar with this new area where we have been relocated. We have to learn to survive in this new environment. We are no longer a strong and self-sufficient people...we need a lot of assistance, handouts from the government and other agencies. (Displaced Chiadzwa villager, interview notes)

Similar state capital collaboration in mining projects have resulted in the displacement of rural peoples in other countries in southern Africa. It is well known that diamond mining in Botswana has resulted in the forced displacement of indigenous San people from the Central Kalahari Game Reserve to open the park to large-scale diamond mining but not with the level of violence seen in Chiadzwa (Morinville & Rodina, 2013). In the Congo and Angola wars have been fought and the latter country has since failed to be stable because the government and rebels have been fighting over control of diamond reserves. Human rights groups have argued that some multinational corporations from rich nations have been profiting from the war and have developed 'elite networks' of key political, military, and business elites to plunder Congo's natural resources. According to Canada's Mining Watch (see [http://www.miningwatch.ca/index.php?Newsletter\\_16/AIMES\\_stmt\\_20040](http://www.miningwatch.ca/index.php?Newsletter_16/AIMES_stmt_20040)) despite all this evidence of devastation, mining projects are almost always encouraged and the interests of the mining industries count for more than are protecting local communities or natural resources that exist in a mining area.

It is pertinent and germane to refer to Frantz Fanon's vision of a post-independent African nation with regard to giving dignity to all formerly colonized peoples. Fanon (1952/2008) said, "every time a man has contributed to the victory of the dignity of the spirit, every time a man has said no to an attempt to subjugate his fellows, I have felt solidarity with his act" (p. 176). This must be seen as a call to all of us, including and especially scholars and academics in Zimbabwe and the region, to recognize, account and celebrate the resistance of villagers like the dauntless of Chiadzwa. Many publications have been done on diamond mining in Chiadzwa and it is disheartening to observe the conspicuous absence of the villagers' struggle against

state–corporate violence. We encourage scholarship that celebrates humanity and not the inhuman face of capital. In these specific epistemological challenges, we join many others who have projected negritude:

Because they spring from a need to reverse an intolerable situation, they are moved in the first instance by a negative principle. They are a challenge to the common lot which Western expansion had imposed on non-Western man, especially the Negro, whose experience—dispersal, subjugation, humiliation—illustrates the worst aspects of contact with the white man. (Irele, 2003, p. 47)

That the same processes are being repeated more than three decades since the end of settler hegemony in Zimbabwe is an indictment against the self-proclaimed nationalist government and provides ample evidence of the many aspects of coloniality. Fanon (1961/2004) charged that “the intellectual is overwhelmed by the colonizer’s culture, is rootless and uncertain” (p. 84). It is crucial for Zimbabwean scholars, though western educated, to recognize that the totality of Western epistemology, from either the right or the left, is no longer valid for the entire planet (Mignolo, 2002), and for Zimbabwe the ruthless relocation of the people of Chiadzwa in the name of resource development should be an eye opener, albeit belated. Zimbabwean “intellectuals should be the ones to question patriotic nationalism, development displacement, corporate thinking, and sense of class, racial or gender privilege” (Said, 1994, p. xiii).

In a contemporary world where violence attracts attention and change and a world where many people resort to unbridled violence to achieve their objectives or express their views, one cannot but observe the significant role of civil resistance as was demonstrated by the people of Chiadzwa. We concluded that the events in Chiadzwa showed that “activism activates awareness of injustice” (Davenport & Trivedi, 2013, p. 370). There was no identifiable professional social movement in Eastern Zimbabwe. The leadership that grew out of the struggle against displacement and relocation had no experience or links to any social movement. In a sense experiencing exploitation and participation in activism created individuals with the awareness, at a micro level, of eminent freedom rights advocates. The youthful leadership represented by the likes of Maguwu and Gwayagwaya provides us with some evidence that activism activates consciousness of injustice in a system to the extent of concerned individuals becoming politically conscious and informing national political discourses.

There is no doubt that Chiadzwa resistance occurred in an environment of unprecedented state violence and was not expected to stop the dispossession process. So far, the narrative has been centered on state violence, corruption and the resultant idea of blood diamonds in line with the Kimberly process. The epic resistance of the villagers has been ignored and emphasis placed on what has been referred to as illegal diamond artisans. Despite these blatant efforts not to recognize the narrative of resistance and having been given coverage in the independent media, and hijacked by some elements of the NGO community, the resistance of the villagers of Chiadzwa is informing national socio-economic debates. Government accountability and state–corporate relations and/or shady deals have been unmasked for scrutiny. The impact on international investment and perception of the



government of Zimbabwe, largely negative, has been boomeranging beyond the imaginations of Chiadzwa villagers who are still demanding compensation.

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