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THE FAST TRACK LAND REFORM AND THE WELFARE OF FORMER COMMERCIAL FARM WORKERS IN MATEBELELAND SOUTH: A CASE OF SELECTED FARMS BULILIMA DISTRICT

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A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES AT LUPANE STATE UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF MASTERS OF SOCIAL SCIENCE HONOURS DEGREE IN DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

NOVEMBER 2014
ABSTRACT

The study seeks to explore the experiences of former farm workers on the Fast Track Land Reform in Zimbabwe, with particular reference the effect of FTLRP on their welfare in Matabeleland South. Special focus is given to two selected farms in Bulilima District, namely Fairview and Klipspring. This is a qualitative case study that adopts the interpretive philosophy informed by the Entitlement Approach. In the study, 13 former farm workers are snowballed in Fairview and 7 focus group participants are sampled at Klipspring. Face-to-face in-depth interviews are conducted in Fairview while Focus Group Discussions conducted in Klipspring. Non-participant observation, photography and audio-recording are also used to gather data for the research. The study reveals that the Fast Track Land Reform Programme was violent in nature, politically motivated and disorganized. In some instances, people lost property in the process. Vulnerable skills were lost, educational and health standards declined, and land tenure remained insecure for the former farm workers accumulated property as a result of the programme; though some of this property can be attributed to remittances from children working elsewhere. If land reform has to be done, the government should be in control and protect its citizens. Distribution of land should be planned and put in place before people are moved in. Resettled farmers should be trained to produce food, and should be assisted with inputs as a precursor for crop production. The resettled farmers’ land tenure needs to be revised, and such farmers should be granted freehold tenure. This would assist them use land as collateral when applying for agricultural loans. A property organized land reform is likely to yield desirable results.

Key words Fast track land reform; Welfare; Former Commercial Farm Workers