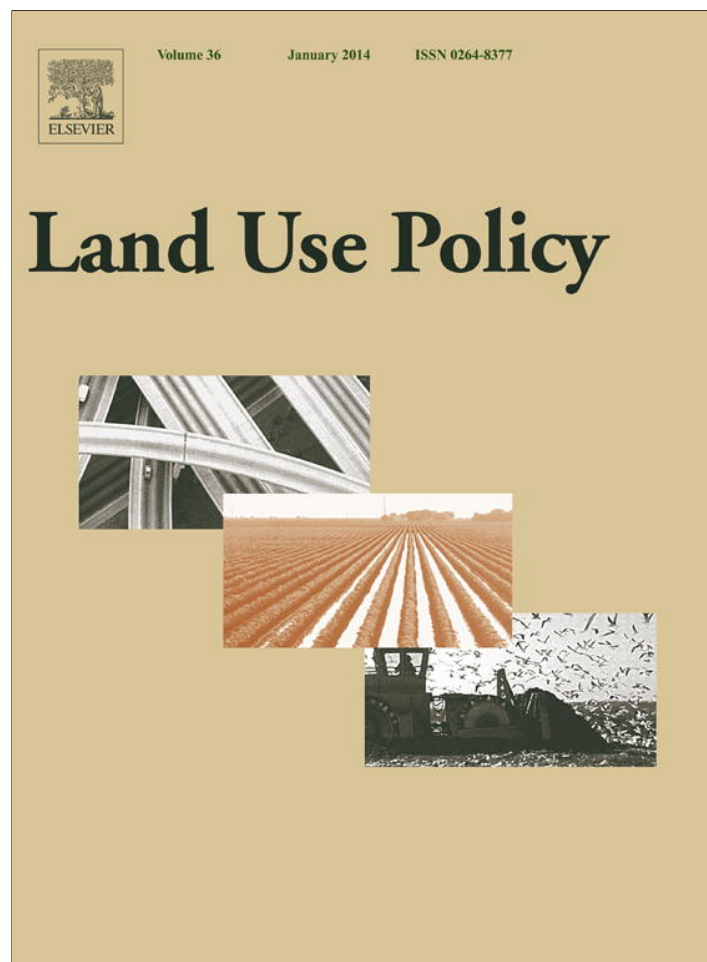


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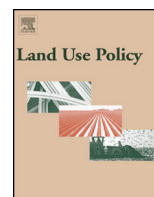
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Floods, resettlement and land access and use in the lower Zambezi, Mozambique

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ABSTRACT

Planned resettlement is increasingly legitimated on account of disasters and vulnerability to climate change. This article looks at resettlement following the 2007 floods in the delta Zambezi in Mozambique. The flooding displaced about 56,000 households, which the government intended to permanently resettle. Four years later the government resettlement program has been object of competing claims of success or failure. In this paper we step away from these entrenched positions. Resettlement, in our view, is an arena of multiple meanings and objectives, with differentiated outcomes for different categories of actors. The resettlement led to a reconfiguring of power relations and land-use. The paper analyses the resettlement policy as a continuation of a history of resettlement to enhance control and modernization of rural folks. It then demonstrates how local chiefs first resented resettlement as this would imply loss of territory-based power, yet moved to occupy elite locations and housing. Local families had differentiated responses depending on their capacities and aspiration to change to a modern lifestyle. Most families opt for a mixed lifestyle, by partly living in and adapting to the resettlement area, and partly retaining their old residence and way of life.

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Introduction

Planned resettlement has a long tradition in Mozambique and Africa more generally. Resettlement was often political in nature or meant to bring about a vision of modernity, in whichever way this was defined by the government of the day. From the point of view of development, resettlement provides opportunities for the reconstruction of systems of production and human settlements that can lead to improvements in the standard of living of those affected, as well as in the regional economy of which they are part (Cernea, 1988:19). The negative impacts resulting from resettlement activities have often been justified as the costs borne by some people for the greater public good (Dwivedi, 1999:44). Today, we increasingly find that resettlement may be induced by climate change, where the overriding legitimization for the process is found in protecting people against recurring and imminent disasters.

One of the pertinent manifestations of climate change is considered to be the increase in natural hazards that culminate into

disasters. Already, it has been perceived that disasters – especially those disasters that are related to windstorms, floods and droughts – have become more severe, both in terms of their frequency and their intensity (IFRC, 2011). As a result, there is an increasing attention to disaster risk reduction (ISDR, 2005). The best way to reduce disaster risks is to eliminate the hazard, and the second best is to avoid exposure to the hazard. These kinds of stringent responses are, in disaster theory, preferred over less structural measures such as mitigating the impact of the hazard or providing relief to cope with its consequences. In the case of recurring floods, this may translate into a policy to resettle people away from flood-prone areas. This strategy raises many questions, however, regarding its feasibility and social acceptability.

This paper is about a resettlement programme initiated by the government of Mozambique following a flood that affected 170,000 people in the lower Zambezi, or delta Zambezi, in 2007. The flood displaced about 110,000 people (56,000 households) (INGC, 2007). In response, the government launched a policy, against the advice of major donors, to resettle permanently the displaced people from the flood-prone areas along the Zambezi river. The international community in Mozambique, however, tended to embark on a different policy – ‘living with the floods’. Four years on, the resettlement programme has become a matter of competing claims. Government officials consider the programme to be very successful: there is

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development and security in the resettlement areas and people use their land more efficiently.¹ For others, however, the programme eroded resettled people's livelihoods as they lost their physical, economic, social and environmental assets and cultural identity.²

These local, competing interpretations of the programme correspond with differing strands of literature regarding resettlement. Whereas proponents of resettlement defend its merits for the development of people and areas concerned, many authors argue that the cost of resettlement usually outweighs the benefits. When resettlement policies are *ad hoc* or absent, displacement often exacerbates rather than mitigates economic, physical and social securities; people are removed from an environment in which they have evolved over centuries of adaptation (Oliver-Smith, 1991, 2005; Asthana, 1996; Hammond, 2008). In many cases this leads to landlessness, joblessness, homelessness, marginalisation, morbidity, food insecurity, loss of access to common property and social disarticulation that altogether produce or aggravate impoverishment and vulnerability (Cernea, 1996).

In this article we aim to explore how the flood-induced resettlement programme in Mozambique gets meaning in practice. We concur with scholars that argue that the relationship between displacement and impoverishment is complex and fluid. Displacement is a historically specific process embedded in particular institutional and political arrangement and interpreted through particular discursive frames (Feldman et al., 2003: 8). In our view, resettlement processes are arenas that different actors invest with different interpretations (Hilhorst and Jansen, 2010). The outcomes of resettlement are socially negotiated and subject to power relations. Our approach to resettlement is founded in an actor-oriented approach (Giddens, 1984; Long, 2001) that views social life as a continuous negotiation of different and sometimes competing 'projects' on the part of individual or collective actors. We want to identify how resettlement is shaped as it is interpreted, appropriated or transformed by local actors.

This article looks into the meaning of resettlement for different domains of actors (Hilhorst, 2003). The first part looks at the state. We will explore how different the flood-induced resettlement policy is from earlier resettlement programmes in Mozambique. We will show how the current programme, is a continuation of its predecessors because of its underlying objective of bringing people under the control of the state and making them live up to the notion of modernity propagated by the state. Rather than being a technocratic response to flood hazards, we propose that the programme is a case of 'securitisation' in which a discourse on danger and people's security is used to depoliticise a process, whereas in reality the policy fits into a long history of a state seeking control and modernisation.

In the second part of the paper we examine responses to the resettlement programme by the people involved. We focus on how people access and make use of the land in the process of resettlement and the meanings they derive from the land. In particular, we demonstrate how processes around resettlement produce differentiated outcomes with an increasing gap emerging between better-off and less affluent households. Power, status, tradition, assets and earning capacities all play a role in these realities, which are partly realised through the organisation of the resettlement. Despite its humanitarian claim of equal treatment for all resettlers,

the resettlement policies and practices reinforced these diverging tendencies.

The article is organised as follows: Section 'Methodology' gives a brief overview of methodology; Section 'Resettlement and land use in Mozambique – a historical overview' gives an overview of the resettlement process in Mozambique. It shows that resettlement has been part of the Mozambican history and has been shaped by different political and economic ideologies. Section 'The 2007 flooding, resettlement and land use patterns' introduces the case of the delta Zambezi and discusses the ways in which local actors interpreted the resettlement, and accessed and used the land. Section 'Conclusion' concludes the article.

Methodology

The empirical data for this article were gathered over a period from 2007 up to 2011. From 2007 up to 2008, Luis Artur spent 18 months of intensive research in the Zambezi delta as part of the fieldwork for his PhD thesis. During this period he interviewed 78 key informants, attended 16 church services, 2 funerals and 3 weddings. He also lived among people resettled in Mopeia district at the 24 de Julho and Zonas Verdes resettlement centres where he did participant observation. In addition he conducted a survey covering 198 households, including 104 households from these two resettlement centres. In January 2011, Artur spent another two weeks of research in Mopeia and in Morrumbala districts, for follow-up interviews and to monitor new development on resettlement and land use.

The fieldwork research on resettlement was part of a larger piece of research on flood responses and climate change adaptation. In this multi-sited ethnographic project, the researcher could follow actors from their home communities to the resettlement centres and observe closely how they developed their livelihood in the new site, returned back home or built a life between the highlands and lowlands (Artur and Hilhorst, 2012).

While this article builds largely on the everyday insights gathered by participant observation, references are included to specific interviews or focus group discussions where a particular issue or concern was most clearly voiced.

Resettlement and land use in Mozambique – a historical overview

The resettlement programme study was triggered by the 2007 flood, when an estimated 56,000 households were temporarily displaced. Debate ensued between the government of Mozambique and several large international donors. The latter, including UN-Habitat and DfID, promoted a 'Living with the Floods' strategy which proposed flood management practices that allow people to live on flood prone areas and take advantage of the fertile soils that result from the floods. The development of early warning systems and creating people's awareness about timely evacuation were elements of the strategy. It was argued that in the Mozambique context, living in a flood-prone area is not a matter of choice but a matter of poverty which makes it hard to suggest alternative options. Those actors have even produced a video 'Living with Floods' which was widely broadcast in the local media. The government of Mozambique, however, favoured a 'Flood-free' approach which stresses the need to resettle people living on the floodplains. They argued that continued habitation in the floodplains would pose higher risks to human life and that the recurrent costs would eventually outweigh the costs of permanent resettlement. In the

¹ Interviews with the National Director of the Resettlement Programme, Maputo, May 5, 2009. Interview in Mopeia with the District Agriculture Director, October 12, 2008. Interview with the delegate of the National Institute of Disaster Management (INGC) in Morrumbala District, January 25, 2011.

² Interviews with Chief Cocorico in Mopeia, April 7, 2008; with the Mozambican Red Cross, Programme Director, Maputo, August 23, 2010; with the National Peasant's Association General Secretary, February 16, 2011.

end, the government decided to embark on the programme without international financial support.³

This issue between the international community and the government of Mozambique over the programme highlights a theme which increasingly is typical of disaster response interaction. International actors – as has been observed by many scholars – have a tendency to encourage a permanent role for the international actors and the continuation of the global rescue industry while local governments may favour an approach that stresses national sovereignty (Harrell-Bond, 1986; de Waal, 1997; Middleton and O'Keefe, 1997; Waters, 2001; Pelling and Dill, 2009).

The dedication of the government to the resettlement programme may be understood against the background of Mozambique's long resettlement history. There have always been large-scale self-organised population movements arising from combinations of drought, government neglect and/or conflict. During the period between 1823 and 1831, millions of people migrated and resettled due to a combination of drought and government neglect (Newitt, 1988). The civil war from 1976 to 1992 displaced millions of Mozambicans: by the end of the war, nearly 4 million Mozambicans were internally displaced and about 2 million were living in Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Swaziland and Tanzania (UNHCR, 1996:15). In addition, there have been many episodes of planned resettlements by successive governments.

Under the *prazo* system of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, large portions of land were expropriated from the natives by the Portuguese colonial government, which led to the resettlement of thousands of Mozambicans in the Zambezi delta (Newitt, 1969). In the early 1970s, attempts by the colonial authorities to block the advance of Frelimo during the liberation war led to the creation of six hundred resettlement villages *aldeamentos* where nearly one million Mozambicans were concentrated (da Silva, 1994:18). During the construction of the Cahora Bassa dam, thousands of people were resettled in poor areas in the central province of Tete (Filipe, 2003:4).

Following independence in 1975, the Frelimo government initiated an ambitious resettlement programme – the *aldeias comunais* programme which was derived from the villagisation policy. The programme displaced nearly two million Mozambicans who went to live in 1360 resettlement villages supported by the government (Coelho, 1993:345). This process occurred either through government leadership and coercive measures or in a 'voluntary' way. In addition, it is likely that thousands or even millions of others who were opposed to the process may have migrated to areas and countries out of reach from the national authorities – and statistics.

In addition, other resettlement processes besides the villagisation policy were implemented. To compensate liberation fighters, the government allocated them large agrarian farms abandoned by Portuguese farmers and turned these into what was known as the production centres, *centros de produção*. The government provided agricultural inputs to about 7000 ex-combatants and their families to settle in apparently isolated areas and operate 23 liberation fighters' production centres, *centros de produção dos antigos combatentes* (Taju, 1992:5). Another resettlement project, *operação produção*, was directed to 'marginal' people – 'os marginais'. In 1983, the government launched a policy of resettling unemployed, 'petty' criminals and those considered against the revolution – *os marginais*. Nearly 50,000 people were relocated to state farms in the under-populated northern provinces of Niassa and Cabo-Delgado (Vines, 1996: 59).

Floods have already been important in the legitimisation of the villagisation programme of the 1970s. In 1977, when cyclone Emily

produced the worst flood in 60 years in the southern Gaza province, the government created a commission of highly ranked FRELIMO leaders for the reconstruction of Gaza Province. It was given the mandate to '*criar um Homem novo e uma nova ordem social*' – '*to create a new Man and a new social order*'. This resulted in a villagisation programme coupled to state farms and cooperatives in the Limpopo valley.⁴ Twenty-six communal villages were created, comprising about 200,000 people (Coelho, 1993:384). When the Zambezi flooded in 1978, affecting 450,000 people (Palmer and Tritton, 1979), the government created the Inter-Provincial Commission for Natural Hazards and Communal Villages. The commission was chaired by the National Director for Communal Villages and had the mandate to resettle people in communal villages.

Following the 2000 Limpopo river floods in the south of Mozambique, massive resettlement processes were undertaken in Chokwe, Guija and Xai-Xai districts and, in 2001, similar interventions were carried out in the districts along the Zambezi delta. The protection of people against floods became thus an impulse as well as an important legitimisation of the government's aspiration to villagise its population to create a new social order. The resettlement after 2007 followed this pattern. Flood protection was a major argument, yet there was a similar subtext on modernisation as in past episodes of resettlement. The government intended to provide development infra-structure such as urbanised plots or houses, hospitals, schools, potable water, employment opportunities and better agricultural services. In doing so, the government hoped that local people could be encouraged or integrated into a modern lifestyle away from their traditional way of living. At a press conference in April 5, 2007, the Prime Minister said:

'...the resettlement process must take into account the expansion of economic activities that can be explored by the resettled, a careful selection of the resettlement sites out of the disaster-prone areas and the establishment of infra-structures. ...the intention is to transform the resettlement areas into small towns with attractive conditions'. (Noticias Newspaper, April 6 and April 11, 2007).

Therefore the 2007 flooding and resettlement process follows a long history of flood-related resettlement policy which is motivated by the use of a combination of security and development narratives. Hence (permanent) resettlement appears to be a solution that is routinely proposed for the flooding 'problem' and the 2007 resettlement programme can thus be viewed as a continuation of the history in which floods have repeatedly informed resettlement policies in Mozambique.

At this point, it is appropriate to recall the debate on resettlement in academic literature. Most scholars tend to agree that spontaneous or voluntary resettlement is more likely to be successful than the forced or involuntary ones (Cernea, 1988; Oliver-Smith, 1991; Kinsey and Binswanger, 1993). The levels of anxiety and insecurity are much higher among involuntary resettlers as the relationship of the involuntarily resettled with their old environment tends to be severely disrupted and the relationship with the new environment is, mostly, 'an obscure and stinking encounter' (Asthana, 1996:1468). From this point of view, some scholars claim that involuntary resettlement should be minimised or avoided if possible (Palmer, 1974:241; Cernea, 1990:26).

However, this typology provides an incomplete view of the dynamics involved in resettlement processes. The lines dividing resettlement induced by development or by disaster, and voluntary from involuntary resettlements are usually very thin and the relationships between them very complex and fluid. Disasters and development are closely linked: disasters affect development while poor quality development leads to disasters. On the other hand,

³ Interview with Dr. Higinio Rodrigues, National director of the Resettlement Programme, Maputo, May 26, 2009.

⁴ Noticias Newspaper, February 28, 1977.

voluntary and involuntary resettlement feed each other in a number of ways. For a policy of largely involuntary resettlement to be successful, a minimum number of settlers must volunteer to participate (Hammond, 2008:520). In other situations some people, although not approving of the resettlement process, may temporarily enrol voluntarily in order to access resources. Others may be coercively resettled by the authorities for political reasons of visibility and international assistance but allowed to voluntarily resettle elsewhere once the objectives have been accomplished – or not.

From all of the above, it appears that resettlement needs to be approached as a process with multiple outcomes. The dichotomy of disaster/development or voluntary/forced resettlements masks the complexities involved and hides different forms of settlement emerging from different policies or from the same policies but leading to multiple outcomes. In reality, resettlement may evolve in hybrid forms which emerge from the (re)combination of the different forms.

The 2007 flooding, resettlement and land use patterns

The resettlement programme of the government envisaged 54 new sites to resettle 56,000 displaced households. Each household would get a plot of 30 m × 40 m and about one hectare of land for agriculture. To encourage people to settle in the new sites, the government applied a mix of push and pull factors. Living in the flood plains was discouraged, amongst others, by breaking down basic services in these areas and discouraging private and public investments. For example, the availability of primary education diminished when the government did not allow teachers to live in the area any longer. To attract people to the centres, it was stipulated that humanitarian relief should be restricted to those people willing to be resettled. Material (cement, roofing material, doors, windows) was provided for building modern and urbanised houses (INGC, 2008:3). The government encouraged resettlement by providing social infrastructure such as brick-built schools, potable water and health care to the resettlement centres. It also designed and implemented, in partnership with (I)NGOs, donors and the private sector, agricultural seed vouchers and fairs (*feiras de insumos agrícolas*), and the affected were advised to form associations which would link up with markets and with different governmental and NGO interventions.

Spatial relocation brings along different economic, socio-cultural and psychological challenges (Cernea, 1996; Downing, 1996, 2002; Feldman et al., 2003; Oliver-Smith, 2005). In addition, with the measure of the government, people had to reinvent themselves into a supposedly 'modern lifestyle' of urbanised cement houses, new high-yielding variety seeds, associations, market integration, and of course taxation. As the following section will show, this created resentment among local people, and it triggered responses by which people negotiated the terms of resettlement to gain property and other assets in this process.

L'art de la localité: fighting for the lower lands

The start of the resettlement programme was marked by clashes between the local population and the government authorities. In a number of encounters, people refused to be removed from the lowlands.⁵ To explain these responses, government officials tended to use pejorative terms such as stupidity, irrationality, reluctance, 'cultural trap' and backwardness.⁶ But for the local people, lowlands

⁵ See for example Noticias Newspaper February 7; BBC February 8; Washington Post February 14; Reuters February 15.

⁶ Interventions at the CENOE meeting in Caia on February 15, 2007; Interviews on STV television March 8, 2007.

mean more than just a physical and geographical space. Living on the lowlands involved '*l'art de la localité*' (van der Ploeg, 1989). '*L'art de la localité*' entails a particular arrangement of space, knowledge and practices. People develop particular repertoires of knowledge and practices which is valid and relevant for a particular context.

In the Zambezi delta, most men develop and reproduce knowledge and networks on fishing and marketing of fish. Different fishing tools, rituals and regulations for fishing are developed. For example, during the research we were told that sexual intercourse before a long fishing journey is prohibited as this is perceived as making the body hot, '*manungo aku pissa*', which supposedly chases away fish. Dreams are also carefully interpreted before long fishing journeys, and may lead to postponement of the fishing journey. Fishing sites vary according to the time of day, month of the year and fishing purposes. Early morning, late afternoon and nights are the best times for fishing. Similarly the beginning and the end of the rainy season are the best months for fishing and produce good catches.⁷

Women are socialised to take care of the agricultural production and domestic duties. They develop extensive knowledge by which soils, seeds, and tools acquire different meanings and purposes both for agriculture and for domestic use. From deep clay to loose sand soils, women identify different agricultural and domestic soil uses (see Barbosa et al., 1998). Loose '*thetcha*' sand may not be good for agricultural purposes but is perfect for the backyard during the rainy season because it does not become slippery. A mixture of sand, loam and clay in different proportions is good for the production of different crops and domestic use. More sand than loam and clay is good for cassava; more loam and clay is good for maize. Deep clay '*d'hongo*' is good for making pots and Plates – a typical female task.⁸ Moreover, time and social networks are crafted by women around agricultural production and the reproduction of the domestic duties.

In this *art de la localité*, a symbolic meaning is attached to the place: for people living on the lowlands, the land is not just land. It is land inherited from the great-great-grandfathers who still bless it for good harvests. The land has been passed down through generations and is as much part of the household as children are. It has meaning far beyond its agricultural use. It represents generations, vivid images of the past, current challenges and hopes, and harbours future aspirations. Food production requires, for many people, the blessing of ancestors and comes from seeds carefully selected from the previous harvests. The Zambezi also has meanings far beyond being just a river. Fish from the Zambezi River is not just a fish: it is a fish caught in the biggest river, requiring one to be brave. Furthermore, compared to other fish, the fish from the Zambezi does not require cooking oil and spices and tastes better – '*Ndzipa maningue*'.⁹

Finally, the Sena speaking people living in the lowlands of the Zambezi River consider themselves as different from and superior to other Sena speakers; they are '*Sena-Gombe*' which means Sena-river/water course which relates to the Zambezi River. They regard themselves as original, while others are descended from them¹⁰ (see also Martins, 1960; Freitas, 1971; Simbe, 2004 quoted by Chambote, 2008). Place, in this way, attains a much broader meaning and shapes, to some extent, people's behaviour and practice.

⁷ Group discussion with fishermen Cocorico, July 23, 2007.

⁸ Group discussion with women in Canhungue (Mutarara district), May 23, 2007; in Cocorico (Mopeia District) September 24, 2007.

⁹ Group discussions Canhungue (Mutarara District), May 23, 2007; Inhangoma (Mutarara District) September 10, 2008; Xitsomba (Chinde district), June 15, 2007; Luabo (Chinde District), October 23, 2007; Cocorico (Mopeia District), September 24, 2007 and Chupanga (Marromeu District), March 11, 2007.

¹⁰ There are 5 groups of Sena speakers: the *Sena Gombe*; the *Sena Phodzo*; the *Sena Rambhala*; the *Sena Bangwe* and the *Sena Tonga*.

Place plays an important role in the formation and reproduction of individual and collective identity, and orders, to a great extent, morals and behaviour. Displacement tends to constitute a loss of control over one's physical space bringing with it an acute expression of powerlessness and this can mean removal from life itself (Downing, 1996:33; Oliver-Smith, 1996:78; Oliver-Smith, 1996:48). The initial resistance to resettlement may be better understood as a refusal to give up this lifestyle, rather than an irrational response on the part of people too ignorant to understand the flood risks they face. Land was going to have a different meaning in the resettlement areas, where it merely represented a place to build a house or to plant crops. People could not evoke the protection of their ancestors any more.¹¹

Resettlement, land ownership and power

Resettlement means, amongst other things, acquiring new land for habitation, for (agrarian) production or other uses. Land ownership is a complicated issue in Mozambique. According to the land law (law 19 of 1997), all land belongs to the state. It cannot be sold or in any way mortgaged, rented or privately transferred. People are entitled to use the land in three ways. Firstly, individuals and communities are entitled to land they have traditionally occupied. Secondly, non-natives are entitled to land if they have been using it 'in good faith' for more than 10 years. Thirdly, people can request governmental authorities for new land. The government can authorise individuals and companies to use land for a period of 50 years renewable for another 50 years.

The land law is hotly debated. Some actors, including the national private companies associations (CTA) favour privatisation of the land to allow people to use it as collateral and to make investments. They claim that land privatisation would provide people with the incentives to use land efficiently and to invest in land conservation and improvements (Feder and Feeny, 1991:139; Feder and Noronha, 1987:144). On the other hand, there are claims that land privatisation would lead to landlessness, increased social inequalities and marginalisation of the poor. Brazil has often been cited as an example of neo-liberal failures of land reform. Migot-Adhola et al. (1991) point out that there is no evidence supporting the lack of privatisation as a constraint on productivity. Defendants for non-privatisation include the National Peasants Associations (UNAC), Land Forum (Forum Terra) and the Rural Association for Mutual Support (ORAM). International donors are divided on the issue, with the World Bank and USAID promoting, and DfID opposing, privatisation (Hanlon, 2004).

More important for this paper, however, are the complex ways in which entitlements to land are secured in practice. In the Zambezi delta, land appears to have multiple and overlapping owners or rights' claimants. Historically, Mozambique was made up of chiefdoms which nowadays represent what is called communities. The chiefs (*mambos*, *regulos*) are historically the guardians of the land and other natural resources. They shape local norms and values of land access and use. Hence, access to land, at local level, was historically regulated by customary structures. The modernisation of land regulation entails in practice a competing normative framework that evokes claims by new actors, often people that have been dislocated by colonial powers or during civil war, changing power relations and lack of clear land ownership. Local chiefs and their customary structures still maintain a large responsibility for land acquisition and use, especially because they are more accessible to

local people (Toulmin, 2008). At the same time, it must be acknowledged that the effectiveness of customary practice may have been eroded by social, cultural, political and economic changes, and some local chiefs use their positions for personal gains (Platteau, 1995; Toulmin, 2008).

For the resettlement programme, the government negotiated with local chiefs to appropriate idle land in their domain to allocate to the newcomers. People in the resettlement sites refer to their area as belonging to chief X or Y, not to the government. This is not just a semantic issue. It encodes power relations and practical land allocation at the local level.

Evolving land practices in the resettlement sites were differentiated in their effect. Relocated chiefs found themselves deprived of their status to govern the land. They had a lower position than the 'chiefs owners of the land' and had little to say in land access and disputes. Resettled chiefs would usually prefer to go back to their original land.¹² The demand for good plots further created a small land market. In order to obtain 'good plots' (well located for housing and suitable for agriculture),¹³ resourceful people could enter transactions with local chiefs, family members and friends in the vicinity of the resettlement areas. In Mopeia, Marrromeu and Mutarara, access to good plots became possible mainly through payment, either monetary or in the form of favours.¹⁴

Hence, although the land law does not allow land rental or selling, in practice this happened, at least for the 'good plots'. Less resourceful people who could not purchase land, ended up on marginal plots. They usually preferred going back to the lowlands or maintaining a double residence: in the lowlands and in the resettlement areas.

House construction, elite capture and differentiations

In the resettlement programme, the government started to provide building material for 'modern' houses. Following the Sphere guidelines for humanitarian action, it was intended to provide plots of 30 m × 40 m per household. This was contested at local level. Most households considered these plots too small for a house, a latrine, livestock, playground and garden. Polygamous or larger households found it nonsensical to attribute a one-person household a similar plot size as a 10-member household. Moreover, chiefs considered they were entitled to larger plots. These claims led to different plot sizes within the same resettlement centre. The Sphere guidelines were put aside and other criteria such as household size, marital status and social status were taken into account by the officials responsible for the allocations.¹⁵

Emerging differentiations were reinforced by the policy of having two types of houses: a two-room and a three-room design. The three-room design became known as the *chief's house design* and the two-room design came to be called the *public design*. It is not clear whether the government intended the two designs like this or whether, in the process, it simply happened. By September 2008, all three-room houses in the areas of study were occupied by the chiefs. At the 24 de Julho, one 'ordinary' household attempted to

¹¹ Interview with chief Chamanga, Mopeia, April 9, 2008; group discussion at Inhangoma resettlement centre (Mutarara District), September 10, 2008; at Chupanga resettlement centre (Marrromeu District), March 11, 2007; at the 24 de Julho resettlement centre in Mopeia (Mopeia district), April 8, 2008.

¹² Interview with resettled chief in Caia, February 19, 2007.

¹³ Well located included being close to main roads, to the water pumps, to the schools, hospitals and other infra-structures.

¹⁴ Group discussions at Inhangoma resettlement centre (Mutarara District), September 10, 2008; at Chupanga resettlement centre (Marrromeu District), March 11, 2007; at the 24 de Julho resettlement centre in Mopeia (Mopeia district), April 8, 2008. Processes of payment varied based, among others, on the relationship between people engaged, the actual land use, plot size, location of the plot, urgency the 'land owner' has with the payment.

¹⁵ Interview with Carlos Froi, chief of the Zonas Verdes Resettlement Centre; 25 July 2007 and 23 September 2008. At 24 de Julho, for example the *Regulo* Cocorico was given 2 plots.

build a three-room house but it was partially demolished by the authorities. They claimed that this would open space for others to do the same and the government did not have funds for so many three-room houses.

A further differentiation process unfolded when the building of the houses started. Households were expected to produce their own bricks. Those households with a plot near the road, who were not ready to start construction, were told by local authorities to move to the interior and hand over their plots to those who had their bricks ready, often with the help of paid labour. The government wanted the resettlement centres to look like *small towns*, and did not want the modern houses to be intermingled with tents and huts (*palhotas*). The new houses had to be neatly lined up, preferably along the main roads.¹⁶

As a result, along the roads emerged brick house cities – *cidades* – while invisible from the road there were areas called bush – *Kutsanga*. Vulnerable and poor families would be relegated to the *Kutsanga*. The process of differentiation was even seen to override the community structures. In principle, households were expected to settle according to their area of origin to preserve the social fabric of the communities. However, the process by which brick houses lined the road led to the disintegration of the envisaged layout. The chief of the resettled Cocorico, for example, built a house in the 'modern' part of 24 de Julho, while most of his people stayed in the *Kutsanga*. The resettlement became a process which favoured the formation of an elite which, regardless of origin, was placed along the roads, near water pumps and schools, while resource-poor households were pushed to the interior.

Land access and livelihood pathways

The element discussed above – the emerging land market, the elite formation and processes of exclusion produced three different livelihood responses. One group of households could not afford to live in the new resettlement areas and went back to the lower flood prone areas. Local chiefs estimated their numbers at around 1/3 of the resettled. We will not discuss this group any further. They returned to *l'art de la localité* discussed above and will face increasing withdrawal of services. Another group of households managed to settle 'permanently' in the upper resettlement areas, because they managed to get enough land for their needs or because of new emerging opportunities. The third group of households live in between upper lands and the lowlands.

Living in the new upper lands: redefining notions of space

A limited number of households managed to make a living away from the Zambezi River and the flood-prone lowlands. Their major livelihood sources have shifted from farming or fishing to trading or permanent employment. The majority of households living in the resettlement centre continue to occupy sites in the resettlement area as well as retaining their house in their former settlement.¹⁷

Building a living in the resettlement centres requires a reframing of cultural boundaries and notions of space, time and assets. It entails expanding livelihood sources. In the lowlands, households live mainly from agriculture, fishing, small poultry, petty trading, mutual help, hunting or gathering of forestry products, and remittances. In the resettlement areas the livelihood activities become

more diverse and complex. Households there live from agriculture, fishing, processing or marketing of food, beer, liquor, and farm products, from scavenging, livestock rearing, mutual help, contract outwork, casual labour, hunting or gathering of forestry products, craft work, remittances, begging, selling assets and seasonal food-for-work, public works and relief. The expanded set of activities requires the reworking and expansion of networks to enter into new domains of activity.

In this process, the so-called cultural divide between women and men is reconfigured. Women are no longer confined to agriculture and domestic duties but become active in the public sphere. Trading is carried out mainly by women. On the other hand, many men become actively involved in home duties. This was one of the advantages of living in the resettlement centres, according to women during group discussions. Their husbands are busy developing different activities, and have less time for drinking. They understand the need to let their wives and daughters interact with the market and increasingly accept carrying out domestic activities which culturally were assigned to women, such as cooking, cleaning and child-care.

By expanding the networks and entering into new spaces and domains of activity, the time spent on agriculture and fishing becomes limited. Interestingly, NGO interventions did not anticipate this change in lifestyle. They were surprised to find in a Participatory Rural Appraisal activity carried out by the Save the Children Alliance at the 24 de Julho Resettlement Center, that women asked for business training and loans instead of seeds and tools. They also asked for better market information. Men did not ask for fishing tools but for diverse new skills like masonry, carpentry, plumbing or mechanical engineering (SCF, 2008). After organising a seed fair, Save the Children realised that people in villagised resettlement centres such as 24 de Julho, were not interested in seeds and tools (SCF, 2008a: 23). Resettlement and life on high land tended, in these cases, to reconfigure the pre-existing norms and values of those resettled.

Living betwixt and between

The resettlement process also produced a large category of households that settled both on the lower and the upper lands. They combine the advantages (and disadvantages) of living in both conditions. They either move part of the family, or move the entire family for part of the year. Between October and December, locally known as the 'hunger period', when market prices get higher, households with limited purchasing power tend to move to the lowlands where they can rely on natural resources. During the flood season and after harvests, these households may relocate to the upper areas. In the lowlands, they make use of their previous knowledge of living on the floodplains while in the resettlement centres they look for market integration and diversification.

Some households that have resettled from the 2001 flood, have adopted this as their permanent lifestyle. For most people, the 'amphibian' character of this lifestyle is dominant during the initial stages of resettlement. For them, being 'amphibian' marks a 'transitional' stage towards the upper land lifestyle. However, during prolonged periods of drought, people resettled in the upper lands may shift to become 'amphibian' or return to their previous lifestyle. Most of the 'amphibians' possess two houses and develop networks that allow them to divide their time over the two sites. This includes for instance finding who can take care of the children if the adults go to the lower lands for days or weeks.

Who remains (temporarily or in shifts) in each site depends on the skills, knowledge and networks each person within the household has. Thus, there is a special labour arrangement within the household and community which if not aptly managed may lead to negative consequences. For example, school drop outs are higher

¹⁶ Interview with Carlos Froi, chief *Zonas Verdes* resettlement centre Mopeia, September 24, 2008 and Alberto Ismael, chief *24 de Julho* resettlement centre September 23, 2008; interview with Tomé Gole resettled at the *24 de Julho* resettlement centre, September 22, 2008.

¹⁷ Interview with Dr. Higinio Rodrigues, National Director of the Resettlement Programme, Maputo, May 26, 2009, and interviews with Alberto Ismael, chief *24 de Julho* resettlement centre, September 23, 2008 and Carlos Froi, chief of the *Zonas Verdes* resettlement centre, September 24, 2008 both in Mopeia district.

amongst this group compared to those permanently resettled.¹⁸ In some cases, young children may be left on the resettlement centres with their teenage sisters for hours or days while their parents are in the lowlands.

Conclusion

This paper has looked into the resettlement programme following the 2007 floods. The programme was mainly presented as a measure to protect people against recurring flood. Nonetheless it is interesting to consider why the programme was launched at that moment. Floods are a common feature of the Zambezi delta and the 2007 flooding was certainly not the worst in the Zambezi delta history (Artur, 2011). The resettlement was not triggered by a spontaneous movement of people away from the lower Zambezi. On the contrary, although flooding may cause human suffering through temporary displacement and loss of assets, seasonal flooding also deposits alluvial soils rich in nutrients that allow the growth of a variety of crops and the maintenance or improvement of livestock and fishing grounds (Rahman, 1996; Rita-Ferreira, 1999; INGC, 2006). Floods are part of people's way of life and where their cosmologies, histories, and identities are closely intertwined with the land and the river to form an integrated lifestyle or '*art de la localité*'. The usual responses of people to floods are hierarchical in nature. Only in cases of severe flood they opt for temporary resettlement. Large donors in Mozambique were also disinclined to the solution of permanent resettlement. They favoured 'living with the flood' policies that aimed to reduce the impact of floods. The resettlement was therefore mainly decided by the Government of Mozambique.

In Section 'Resettlement and land use in Mozambique – a historical overview' we analysed the motivation for the resettlement. The Government of Mozambique claimed to be inspired by current thinking about the need for climate change adaptation and developed a policy aimed at protecting people from the floods. On closer scrutiny, it appeared that this was also the reification of a long history of resettlement that was – notwithstanding the immediate reasons for resettlement efforts – always related to the impulse to control and modernise Mozambicans. The securitisation of the flooding situations seems therefore less based on the actual threat of current floods than on a political decision legitimated by considerations of climate change adaptation.

Once the resettlement process was set into motion, it affected the (local) political, economic, social, and environmental relations. Land policies, the allocation of plots and the construction of houses were all effective in altering power relations and producing differentiated social groups. Old and new chiefs, men and women, and more and less affluent households had to negotiate the new conditions and make the best of it. In the process, the principles of implementation based on humanitarian standards of equal treatment according to vulnerability needs, were changed and turned into a system that reinforced social differentiation. The resettlement centres began to forge social groups, where in particular, chiefs were pre-disposed to obtain the best plots and the better houses.

In Mozambique, and more generally, discussions on resettlement are strongly entrenched between supporters and opponents. This discussion is far from finished in Mozambique. Current developments concerning the Zambezi River are likely to trigger new rounds of debate. In the near future, the already approved Mepanda Uncua dam will be constructed downstream of the Cahora Bassa dam in Tete province. There are prospects of using the Zambezi River as channel for transporting billions of tones of mineral char-

coal from the Tete mines. Malawi has declared an interest in using the Zambezi as a way to the sea. The impacts of climate change along the Zambezi river basin continue to invite discussion and adaptation policies. Internationally too, climate change adaptation will increasingly lead to interventions that imply large-scale resettlements. Notwithstanding the critical reflections about politically- or economically-induced resettlements of the past, the urgent need for adaptation to climate change has been a spur to projects, including water transfer schemes, hydroelectric dams and other projects, to be financed through Clean Development Mechanisms and other climate-related funds.

Whatever the future brings, the present study suggests that, there is no single resettlement reality. Resettlement means different things to different actors involved in the process. For a farmer depending heavily on the soil, moisture and fertility along the floodplains for agriculturally based livelihoods, displacement from the floodplains and resettlement in higher areas may result in a dismantling of his/her production system and the accumulated knowledge of farming floodplains. For a young person looking forward to new life opportunities, the same process may actually represent a window of opportunity and he/she may welcome the process.

The process of resettlement also brings about the reconfiguration of power, economic life, social relations and the management of resources. People respond to and fare differently in the resettlement process and different pathways emerge. Opponents to resettlement will be equally disturbed by the evidence of families who make their lives in the new area as supporters of resettlement are in the face of evidence of households that refuse to settle and prefer to brave future floods and endure the deprivation of services in the lowlands.

This is not to suggest that no action at all would be the right decision. Simplistic solutions and extreme positions promoting or rejecting resettlement disregard the changing realities of life in the lower Zambezi. The '*Art de la localité*' is an important reality, where the meaning of land represents identity, spiritual belonging, power and wealth (Schlager and Ostrom, 1992; Shipton, 1994; Firmin-Sellers, 1995). On the other hand, the lifestyle of people in the lower Zambezi is under pressure because of the interaction of social, cultural, political, ecological and demographic factors. Climate change is another factor that will have consequences that cannot yet be entirely foreseen. Resettlement needs to be based on a thorough understanding of the social meaning of land, the relationship with other resources including labour and knowledge, and the ways these order communities and social networks. Importantly, we need to take into account the differentiated impact of resettlement. Resettlement provides opportunities for some and constraints for others. Resettlement needs to focus on how to minimise the constraints and enhance the opportunities, especially for the most destitute groups in the society.

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¹⁸ Interviews with the director of the school at 24 de Julho resettlement centre, May 8, 2008 and 2 teachers at Zonas Verdes resettlement centre, May 9, 2008.

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