

Scales of Vulnerability: Resettlement and Exposure to Multiple Stressors and Shocks in Zimbabwe

Geoffrey Mukwada

Department of Geography, University of the Free State, Private Bag X13, Phuthaditjhaba 9866, South Africa

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ABSTRACT The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which agricultural land resettlement provided its beneficiaries with opportunities for coping better with stresses and shocks. The study was carried out in Mufurudzi resettlement scheme in Zimbabwe, and involved the collection of socio-economic data through a questionnaire survey, interviews and focus group discussions that were conducted on five randomly selected former commercial farms. The existence of three distinct categories of land reform beneficiaries was revealed: the better-off, worse-off and middle income earners, each with its own livelihood trajectories, and differentially equipped with capabilities of coping with stresses and shocks. The worse-off and middle income categories were the most vulnerable due to the resource gaps that featured in their livelihoods. Though land reform may be a necessary condition for reducing poverty and livelihood vulnerability, its importance in playing this role depends on the livelihood trajectories that individual beneficiary households choose to follow.