

‘They are taking everything away from us’: autochthonous claims and the moral contestations over Chiadzwa diamonds, eastern Zimbabwe

Patience Chadambuka, Felix Tombindo and Tawanda Ray Bvirindi

Abstract

This article focuses on the moral contestations of the people of Chiadzwa (eastern Zimbabwe) against their displacement from the area's communal lands and resettlement to Arda Transau by the Government of Zimbabwe to pave the way for large-scale diamond mining. We analyse how the villagers view, and react to allegations of diamonds related corruption, looting and state security brutality in the absence of perceived equitable redistribution of diamond proceeds to the people of Chiadzwa, while the state and investors benefit from the diamond extraction. The article is based on qualitative data drawn from in-depth interviews conducted with former Chiadzwa villagers who were relocated to Arda Transau. Employing the moral economy concept, we argue that the autochthonous claims to land and natural resources play a central role in peoples' contestations against the state and (external) market actors.

Keywords: Moral economy, autochthony, Chiadzwa diamonds, forced removal