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(CASS Occasional Paper - NRM ; 1993)

**RECREATING COMMON PROPERTY MANAGEMENT:
GOVERNMENT PROJECTS AND LAND USE
POLICY IN THE MID-ZAMBEZI VALLEY
ZIMBABWE**

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Reprinted July 1993

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**Abstract: RECREATING COMMON PROPERTY MANAGEMENT:
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In this paper, I explore two models of collective action in Zimbabwe; The Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE) and the Mid-Zambezi Rural Development Project (MZR). These two models are being followed in adjacent areas in the eastern Zambezi Valley and have very different implications for efforts to manage "the commons". The CAMPFIRE Programme represents the application of a theory of collective action based upon the development of self-organizing and self-governing groups at the producer community level. The MZR is based upon an external and inflexible plan which ignores local knowledge, practices and institutions. The project by design is resettling large numbers of both long-term and migrant valley residents. By designating where people may live and cultivate large numbers of valley residents are being rendered landless by the project. In contrast, CAMPFIRE seeks to utilize and build upon local knowledge, organization and management skills. The MZR greatly restricts local collective action as it relies upon the "purposive rationality" of land planners who do not take the knowledge and hopes of rural populations into account in their programmes, policies and plans. Thus, the MZR has much greater continuities with the past while CAMPFIRE becomes a test case of the government's resolve to devolve power to local communities

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INTRODUCTION

In her book Governing the Commons Elinor Ostrom observed that what is missing from the common property analyst's tool kit is an adequately specified theory of collective action which allows people to directly organize themselves voluntarily to keep the benefits derived from their own efforts (1990 24-25). In Zimbabwe, as in many nation-states, multiple models exist for governments, communities and individuals to select from, to attain specific goals. It is the stock and trade of social scientists to specify how already existent structures and power relationships will partly or wholly influence what model will be adopted.²

In this paper, I explore two models of collective action in Zimbabwe, The Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE)³ and the Mid-Zambezi Rural Development Project (MZP). These two models are being followed in adjacent areas in the Zambezi Valley and have very different implications for efforts to manage "the commons". CAMPFIRE has been described as:

a philosophy of sustainable rural development that enables rural communities to manage, and benefit directly from indigenous wildlife. It is essentially an entrepreneurial approach to development, based on wildlife management, that uses market forces to achieve economic, ecological and social sustainability" (Zimbabwe Trust et al... 1990: 3).

The Mid-Zambezi Rural Development project is an African Development Bank funded project which got underway in 1987.⁴ It began under the slogan "Putting the Last First".⁵ The MZP is a major effort to bring significant development activity to the eastern end of the Zambezi Valley, an area regarded as both remote and underdeveloped. The project contrasts significantly with the organizational structure of CAMPFIRE. CAMPFIRE is viewed by its proponents as having a bottom-up structure whereas almost everyone agrees that the MZP is a top-down project.

As a model for collective action, the MZP presents interesting internal paradoxes of its own. It shows strong continuities with colonial land-use policies. These policies were based upon the diagnosis that the major problem in Zimbabwe's (then Rhodesia's) rural areas was soil erosion caused by African rural producers. The response was to implement a land use plan which divided communal area land into agricultural, grazing and residential areas. As Drinkwater has stated.

Conflict over interpretation of how land is used and how it should be used has formed a major barrier to understanding between the peasantry and the state since the origin of the colonial state in Zimbabwe (1991: 113).

CAMPFIRE and the MZP illustrate the tensions within contemporary Zimbabwe between relying on older established planning models or devising new ones based upon local communities' knowledge and organization. To date the MZP suggests that Drinkwater's argument (1989, 1991), that the most important legacy of the colonial period is that the state remains the dominant source of power. If this is correct, it places severe constraints upon local collective action as it draws attention to "purposive rationality" of land planners who do not take the knowledge and hopes of rural populations into account in their programmes, policies and plans. CAMPFIRE thus becomes a test case of the government's resolve to devolve power to local communities.

In order to examine and compare CAMPFIRE and the MZP the paper is organized into four sections: In part I, I briefly describe Zimbabwe with an emphasis upon the land question. Parts II and III contain descriptions of CAMPFIRE and the Mid-Zambezi Rural Development Project. In Part IV I conclude by examining difficulties in recreating the commons in both models of collective action.

PART I. THE NATIONAL CONTEXT

Zimbabwe is a nation of ten million people with a population growth rate of approximately 3.4% per year. The World Bank classifies it as a middle-income country, although one of the lowest with a per capita income of \$640.00. During the colonial period large amounts of the best agricultural land were seized from their owners. This land was then divided between the Tribal Trust Lands now known as Communal Areas and the European areas now referred to as Large Scale Commercial Farms ⁶

The communal sector contained about 750,000 households in 1980 comprising more than half of the national population. They generally live on smallholdings of two to four hectares of arable land plus common grazing lands. This area of 16.3 million hectares made up 42% of the total land area of Zimbabwe. Most of the remaining rural land was held by approximately 6,000 farmers on large holdings which covered 15.3 million hectares, or 39% of the land. National parks, safari areas, urban areas, and freehold areas make up the remainder.

Recovery of lost lands was, according to most observers, central in understanding why there was a successful guerrilla war in Zimbabwe (Martin and Johnson 1981, Lan 1985, Ranger 1985, Drinkwater 1991). However, for the first 13 years of independence, the basic dual structure of land tenure was left unchanged. The independent government intervened primarily to increase the flow of government resources and services to the communal areas. It also launched a major resettlement programme which had acquired 2.3 million hectares of land by 1987. The politics of land have been altered again with the passing by parliament of the Lands Acquisition Act of 1992 which gives the national government the right to acquire up to one-half of the large-scale commercial farm land for redistribution or resettlement.

Zimbabwe currently pursues a national policy of decentralization, making efforts to increase local power and authority and to decentralize structures of government. In recent years, this has meant increasing the powers and responsibilities of provinces, districts, wards and village development committees while ostensibly diminishing those of central government. There are also parallel structures of the dominant party, ZANU (PF) which provide another mechanism for local voices to be heard at the provincial and national levels. Even when projects are top-down and technically determined in orientation, the expectation nonetheless exists that local authorities will both be involved and supportive of their activities, and that citizens will participate to ensure their success. It would appear that the role of the party, the United Zimbabwe African National Union, Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF), is diminishing. Herbst, for example, demonstrates that most allocation issues, particularly at the national level, are decided by the bureaucracy. He concludes from several case studies that "the party has not developed a middle-level cadre of technical experts who could intervene when issues are being considered by the bureaucracy" (1990: 240). Lack of such a cadre is important in

understanding the political forces supporting both CAMPFIRE programmes and the MZP and why I will place much greater emphasis upon governmental structures than upon the dominant party ⁷

In order to understand the legal and political basis for decentralizing authority, we need briefly to consider the organization of local government. District Councils are the most important units of local government. Each district is made up of several wards which are represented on District Council by elected Councilors. The extent of District Councils real autonomy varies in different regions of Zimbabwe. This is because the District Administrator (DA) as the chief executive officer of the Council, is appointed by the Ministry of Local Government, Rural and Urban Development and reports to this ministry. DAs are meant to be advisory to council but they also have to implement government policy. Thus the arena of council flexibility may be severely constrained if councils attempt to go against government or party policy.

To implement a CAMPFIRE programme, a District Council must receive appropriate authority from MLGRUD, representing the national government, to develop and administer natural resource management programmes ⁸. Currently at least 22 of Zimbabwe's 50 districts have been granted appropriate authority. The state retains ownership of the wildlife and the DNPLWM determines its sustainability for consumptive uses although there is increasing effort to have communities determine their own annual off-takes. The management of off-take continues to be subject to oversight by DNPWLM

PART II. CAMPFIRE

The CAMPFIRE Programme represents the application of a theory of collective action based upon the development of self-organizing and self-governing groups at the producer community level. Peterson states that:

CAMPFIRE is a common resources management programme for sustained development by communal lands people who are empowered to decide how to manage their resources and benefit from the utilization of these resources (1991: 5)

While the principles underlying CAMPFIRE are general so far they have been applied only to wildlife management. These principles have been primarily articulated by members of Non-Governmental Organizations or governmental ones. They are based upon the assumption that many Africans had altered their originally more positive views of the value of wildlife after the colonial government established national parks and safari areas which maintained declared wildlife as government property. Africans were thereby excluded from use of these resources. Moreover, those living in the communal lands adjacent to these areas often experienced raids on their crops and livestock by wild animals⁹

CAMPFIRE was started at the initiative of the Department of National Parks and Wild Life Management (DNPWLM) in 1985. The original CAMPFIRE document stated that "the programme would involve forestry, grazing, water and wildlife" (Martin 1986). To date, wildlife has been the main focus due to the bureaucratic reason that the programme originated in DNPWLM. Other reasons have to do with the importance of wildlife for tourism and the need (both practical and moral) to provide greater benefits to those who have to live with wildlife. Only recently have representatives of the Forestry Commission and the Ministry of Local Government, Rural and Urban Development (MLGRUD) begun to attend meetings of the CAMPFIRE Collaborative Group (see below).

After some experimentation The CAMPFIRE Collaborative Group was formed. The collaborative group is the collective name for governmental agencies and non-governmental organizations which formally coordinate their efforts to assist District Councils and local communities in the planning and implementation of CAMPFIRE activities. The group currently consists of the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Management (located in the Ministry of Environment and Tourism), the Ministry of Local Government, Rural and Urban Development (MLGRUD), Zimbabwe Trust (a local NGO), the Centre for Applied Social Sciences (CASS a research unit in the University of Zimbabwe), World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF, an international NGO), and the CAMPFIRE Association (a national non-governmental organization representing communities with CAMPFIRE programmes).

The NGOs and CASS support the idea that the benefits from wildlife should go to local communities. They contend that District Councils were not the real

managers of wildlife, nor were whole districts necessarily homes for wildlife. There was an implicit sense that District Councils might not turn the revenues back to "producer communities". Thus, when the DNPLWM revised its CAMPFIRE guidelines it stated that District Councils "...are required to return at least fifty percent of the gross revenue from wildlife to the community... which produced it (e.g. where the animal was shot)" (DNPLWM 1991). A second principle suggested that the ideal size for a producer community is 100-200 households. This according to Thomas (n.d.) and Bromley and Cernea (1989) is a viable size for a user group in moving from an open-access to a common property regime. Lastly, the DNPLWM recommended that producer communities be allowed to determine how their revenues should be spent.

A significant part of the CAMPFIRE programme focuses on recreating wildlife as common property rather than as state property. The CAMPFIRE Collaborative Group works with different wards to help them determine reasonable off-take limits and to encourage them to regard wildlife as community and not state property. This view does not meet with universal support in District Councils and central government. District Councils with increased responsibilities and shortfalls in revenue, will be reluctant to give up an important source of funds. Central government may also be averse to permit local autonomy because if established for wildlife it will set precedents in other domains, and because wildlife tourism is critical to the nation's weakened economy. As environmental concerns are integrated into narrowly developmental ones, there is widespread recognition that for CAMPFIRE to succeed it also needs to incorporate pasture, forests, water, and other natural resources into its programme.

PART III. THE MID-ZAMBEZI RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Many donors assisted Zimbabwe in the early years of its independence. During this period the European Economic Community attempted to complete a long-standing colonial project --the total eradication of the tsetse fly along the entire length of the Zambezi Valley -- from Victoria Falls to where the eastern escarpment meets Mozambique near Mount Darwin. Systematic spraying began in the early 1980's. Proponents of the project thought that eliminating human and bovine trypanosomiasis represented a positive contribution to development. Skeptics and ecologists wondered what the outcome would be for the valley's ecology if a major constraint to livestock were removed from the ecosystem.

The EEC responded to its critics by commissioning the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to conduct a planning exercise for valley development after the tsetse were eradicated and cattle numbers greatly increased.¹⁰ The FAO and the Zimbabwean government thus generated a set of plans and projects for the Zambezi valley. These were intended to control population settlement in order to maintain the valley's beauty and wildlife populations and to protect what is commonly viewed as an ecologically fragile zone. In addition, the FAO and the GOZ developed (livestock) plans, especially cattle management, in this fragile ecosystem

The MZP was one of the FAO proposed projects. The African Development Bank agreed to provide the foreign exchange component for the project on concessionary terms. The MZP is located to the northeast of Harare in Mashonaland Central Province at an approximate altitude of 700 feet. The project zone lies between the escarpment in the south, the Musengezi River to the east, the Manyame River to the west and Mozambique to the north. The total area is approximately 2,600 km². The MZP was initially designed to resettle 3,000 families from over-crowded communal lands into the project area. It was assumed that there were 4600 households already living in this area, of these 1,000 were north of the old colonial game fence originally built to separate wild game from livestock, but now in total disrepair. The resettled families were to be placed in 130 newly created villages of between twenty and twenty-five households located near boreholes to be dug by the project. Other families were to stay in reorganized villages. Each family was to be allocated 12 acres (5 hectares) for an arable (field) and 1 acre (.5 hectare) for a residential plot (home and compound). Of the 4600 households already in the area, 3,600 were to be assisted in the same manner as the resettled households. The 1,000 families north of the game fence were not to be resettled. The original project design called for the northern half of the project zone to be less developed to help assure that its wildlife and vegetation remained relatively unaltered. Thus a total of 6,600 households were to be resettled, include those already living in the valley

In fact, the distinction between the northern and southern zones of the project has broken down and planning for both zones is virtually identical. This is

primarily due to the shortage of arables in the southern zone and the Project's need, if it is to keep to its original goal, of finding 12 acre fields for each of the now 7,600 households. Secondly, the MZP believed that it was inappropriate to bring "development" to only one-half of the valley. At the current time, therefore, approximately 7,600 twelve acre arables have been either allocated or designated ¹¹

The project was designed to accommodate two sets of interests: 1) the planners' and consultants' views of the best way to develop what they considered as the most underdeveloped and isolated region of Zimbabwe, and 2) the government's resettlement and land-use policies. This meant that the MZP included both a resettlement and an equity component. Under the resettlement component, meant that all people in the project were subject to the government's Accelerated Model A Resettlement Programme. Following this plan, land is redistributed to families in twelve acre plots, with grazing rights allocated in designated grazing zones and one acre plots set aside for homes. The equity component is expressed in the policy that all households, large or small, rich and poor, male- or female-headed, are entitled to the same amount of land. Typically thought, the resettlement programme takes place on former commercial farm land.

What the planners and project implementers did not know as they sought and obtained African Development Bank funding for the MZP, was that there were already more households living in the project area than the 7,600 for whom they had planned ¹². This did not become apparent to the project until after it had begun attempting to resettle residents in 1989-90. Despite the impossibility of bringing in new settlers to farm unused land, the project continued on its course becoming, in essence, a village consolidation or villagization programme. ¹³ As part of the planning exercise, the Agricultural Technical and Extension Authority (Agritex) of the Government of Zimbabwe had determined through the analysis of aerial photos where the most suitable areas for agriculture, grazing and residence were to be allocated. For reasons to be discussed shortly, much of the land identified for agriculture by the MZP did not coincide with the land currently being farmed by valley residents.

The Mid-Zambezi Project and Common Property Management

The MZP represents a radical, top-down transformation of land use patterns and life in the area. It requires families already resident in the valley to, in many cases, move their homes and farms to other areas in the valley. The top-down planning approach, however, is combined with a decentralized and locally based implementation strategy. In order to understand the consequences of Government's decision to reorganize valley life let us examine past land-use patterns and ecological adaptations.

Throughout a long and complex history, residents in the area of the MZP have resided adjacent to the several rivers which flow from the escarpment into the Zambezi River itself. This riverain settlement pattern is due to highly irregular

rainfall, consisting of alternations between too much and too little rain. Riverain lands provide areas for dry season cultivation, which are critical when the rain fails, and ironically, these lands also provide good wet land in years floods wash away rainy season fields along the river. Population distribution maps of the valley floor reveal that human settlement is located almost exclusively along the watercourses. Typically, people lived in dispersed homesteads with some of their fields located around their homes and others situated along the streams and rivers. In sum, because of periodic droughts and floods, valley residents have chosen to live close to rivers and naturally watered land

In contemporary Zimbabwe, communal area agriculture on the plateau relies upon draught power and occasionally tractors. In the lowland communal lands of the Zambezi Valley where tsetse fly and bovine trypanosomiasis persist, there are very few cattle. Thus agriculture is primarily carried out by hand, secondarily by tractors, and, only for the wealthiest households by the use of ox- or cattle-drawn plows. In response to the drought prone nature of the valley and the continued presence of tsetse, the MZP and other government agencies have attempted to restrict the movement of cattle in and out of the valley. At the time of writing these efforts have now been relaxed although residents are supposed to limit the numbers of livestock. There tend to be more cattle in the south, close to the escarpment where there are dipping tanks and better watered areas.

Past settlement patterns were partially disrupted by the war for Independence. One reason why the project designers miscalculated the number of valley residents was due to the war itself. From the Kariba Dam east, the Zambezi Valley was a center for the anti-colonial struggle, and there was frequent military activity throughout the valley.¹⁴ When the war ended, land, which had been one of the major causes of opposition to the white Rhodesian state, while neither free or available in most of Zimbabwe was both free and available in the valley. Any Zimbabwean born or raised elsewhere in the country along with commercial farm workers from Malawi and Mozambique could approach the headmen (sabukhu) and spirit mediums to ask for access to land. Headmen and spirit mediums did not pay attention to nationality in those years. These requests were almost always granted and large numbers of migrants received land in this way. These migrants now constitute more than half of the population in the MZP. It is important to bear in mind, however, that they followed the local social conventions for obtaining land rights.

All the migrants who were surveyed in my studies of the MZP followed the locally correct procedures for obtaining land through the headmen, spirit mediums and chiefs (when they had retained their legitimacy).

In 1985 however, the proper way to obtain land changed. The notification and approval of the Ward Councillor and Village Development Committee Chairperson rather than the headman and spirit medium became central.¹⁵ These new procedures still permitted migrants - whether from commercial farms or from other communal areas - to take up unused land in the valley and to claim it as their own. In the eyes of long-term residents and migrants alike the land was theirs, because they obtained it through legitimate procedures and through the war against the

Rhodesians. Once migrants cleared virgin land and placed it in cultivation, they acquired recognized local rights to it.

According to MZP plans the most fertile agricultural areas, along the rivers and streams, are to become the commons for grazing livestock. In the past, the livestock held in the valley were grazed in open access commons or on the previous rainy season's fields. In short, the best agricultural lands are to be taken away from valley residents and given to cattle, sheep, goats and donkeys. The legal basis for taking agricultural land away from farmers has not been tested although the basis for such action is justified by recourse to the Water Act which prohibits stream bank cultivation (see below). Land tenure in the valley was based upon usufruct and management by headmen, chiefs and spirit mediums. The valley's land tenure system is being changed to a leasing arrangement with the national government recognized as the ultimate land-owner. Thus the government is changing both where agriculture takes place and the tenurial system underlying its practice.¹⁶

Wildlife, its conservation and use, is but one small part of the MZP whereas it is central to CAMPFIRE. Bureaucratically, the project works with the structures of local government. The original project envisioned a strong wildlife component in the northern part of the zone. Even though this has not been possible efforts have been made to create ward wildlife committees. According to my surveys, most residents claim not to know what these wildlife committees do or who the members are. The members of these committees are the ward's most influential citizens. They have been charged to promote wildlife but this has been difficult to do for two major reasons: first, many migrants are interested in agriculture, not wildlife. They have little knowledge of wildlife benefits and focus upon other income possibilities. Second, the project by creating such a large landless population have made it difficult to argue that land and water should be given to animals when so many residents appear to be losing their land. In general, it is difficult for the MZP to appear to be participatory and responsive to residents in wildlife matters while not doing so in the fundamentals of project planning and implementation. This contradiction has been pointed out to both local government and project officials.

In addition to community based wildlife management programmes there have been numerous community managed grazing schemes in Zimbabwe which have attempted to develop clear communally defined guidelines for resource use.¹⁷ Unlike wildlife, which was state property, cattle are private property grazing on the commons. Multiple "experts" have claimed that the system of range management of Zimbabweans has been incorrect and thus there have been multiple grazing scheme efforts which have

... attempted to install the more developed version of common property by defining exclusive grazing territories with well demarcated boundaries, agreeing on by-laws which define rules for resource use, and electing committees which are supposed to keep detailed records, raise cash for fence maintenance, organize work parties, decide on grazing rotations and enforce scheme by-laws (Cousins 1992: 18)

According to Cousins these schemes have generally failed for multiple reasons but particularly because they do not build on a community's current rangeland management. These schemes are of particular interest because plans are to introduce them along the rivers and streams of the Mid-Zambezi Valley Project.

The management plans for these grazing commons is not described in the project documents. However, it is fair to suppose they will follow the same formulas utilized in the rest of Zimbabwe.¹⁸ Virtually all grazing schemes attempt to limit the numbers of livestock to what Agritex planners determine is the carrying capacity of a particular area. Typically, paddocks are delineated, most often by fencing, and a rotational system of grazing is set up to be managed by an elected grazing scheme committee. While the initiative to have grazing schemes comes from Agritex much of the funding comes from external donors. One of the most expensive components of grazing schemes has been fencing. Fencing will become a major issue near the escarpment where there are increasing conflicts between cattle owners and agriculturalists over damage to fields. One suspects that it will not be much longer before Grazing Committees are formed in the MZP which will be obliged to generate by-laws for their operation and grazing scheme programmes, including the control of livestock numbers.

Current project livestock policy is complex. People who had livestock prior to the inception of the project in 1987 can keep all their livestock. Those who came after the project's commencement date were allowed only two oxen - a rule no longer respected. People north of the game fence are currently allowed no cattle although this is also not followed. These violations are not regarded as important by the Project staff because they think that ownership and use of cattle is a clear mark of progress for valley residents. They also understand how difficult it is to cultivate solely by hand. Project residents may own as many donkeys, goats, and sheep as they like but only goats seem to tolerate the valley's heat and diseases. After the complete eradication of tsetse it is government's intention to restrict livestock to five to twelve head per household depending upon the carrying capacity of the land. Little or no attention has been paid to the past history of conflict between livestock and human uses of riverain and wetlands (dambo) land nor has an assessment of which leads to more environmental degradation been carried out.¹⁹ Indeed, the issue has been explicitly raised by many residents who think that the project is advancing the interests of those wealthy migrants who brought cattle with them and who now need more land for grazing.

The Mid-Zambezi Project is currently reorganizing settlement, land allocation and use patterns and thus is directly challenging residents' adaptations to valley ecology and to the recent historical processes which have permitted rapid increase in the migrant population.²⁰ Land, which until recently had been plentiful, has become scarce due to a combination of increased population, migration and the MZP itself, as will be described shortly.

It is significant that the valley residents' historical strategies for dealing with the local ecology is also at odds with current government policy. This policy is based upon conservation and environmental protection measures codified during the

colonial period in the Water Act of 1927 (amended 1976) which states that.

No person shall conduct any operations which interfere with the bed, banks or course of a public stream or any swamps or marshes forming the source of a public stream or found along its course without permission. (quoted in Cormack 1972)

This concern with water use and erosion was reinforced by the Stream Bank Protection Regulation which formed part of the 1942 Natural Resources Act (amended in 1975). This law prohibits cultivation within 100 feet (now thirty meters, but often interpreted as 100 meters) of a stream bank or wetland. While the regulation has been enforced in other portions of Zimbabwe's communal lands, it was not enforced, until recently, in the more remote Zambezi Valley. Now, however, land use plans for newly created villages in the MZP call for enforcement of the regulation in the area. The intent is to move agricultural lands away from the banks of streams and rivers and to encourage the cultivation of cotton which is adapted to low and irregular rainfall patterns and high heat. To make it feasible for people to live and cultivate away from the rivers and for them to have water during the dry season, the project is sinking boreholes. This redefining of agricultural lands has resulted in the moving of residents away from the water courses and the cutting of much of the indigenous forests to make room for the new fields and homes. The environmental and social impacts of large-scale deforestation were not considered in project documents nor are they regarded as important by current project personnel.²¹

In sum, the MZP represents a radical transformation of the residents' relationship to, knowledge of, and use of the land. The longstanding practice of riverain cultivation is to be halted. It is to be replaced by maize and cotton fields distant from water sources, and vegetable gardens situated near boreholes. Stream and riverain areas, once used for the cultivation of dry and some rainy season crops are to be transferred into areas for livestock grazing. Non-riverain land, once sparsely planted in maize, sorghum, and millet is to be increasingly turned over to annual cotton production.

Demarcation in the MZP is carried out by a technical team from Agritex. Neither land use planning nor demarcation takes into account prior ownership or use patterns but rather is based on the projects' own assessment of the location of the best arable land. A description of the process by which the MZP demarcates land and then uses local authorities (the Ward Councillor, the VIDCO Chair and the project resettlement officers) to allocate it is beyond the scope of this paper.²² Suffice it to say that most valley residents are being relocated. Some are moving voluntarily because they chose or were given better or more land than they currently possess. Others are moving involuntarily because they did not receive land where they are currently living. If they refuse to take up their new plots they risk becoming landless. One consequence of this land reallocation policy is the creation of a new category of people in the valley -- the landless -- composed of those who are potentially displaced by the project but who did not receive any land from it.²³ According to my best estimates, these people constitute one-third of the current

population of the project area.²⁴ Further, the MZP provides no compensation for homes and property given up by residents nor financial assistance in moving - whether the moving be voluntary or involuntary. The project also provides no help in the construction of a new homestead although it is responsible for stumping and plowing one acre of cropland and for the provision of inputs for one acre of cotton cultivation for a year. It is significant that assistance is provided only for production of a cash crop and not for any food crops nor for moving residences. Moreover, as is the case with deforestation, no attention has been given to the long-term ecological consequences of growing cotton.

Many valley residents are disturbed by the new land-use philosophy underlying the project. Especially upsetting to them is the designation of riverain areas as grazing lands. They fail to understand why this fundamental resource, essential to family survival in difficult years and key to a proper diet even in good years, has been allocated to livestock whose current numbers are very small and which are virtually non-existent north of the old game fence.

The Government of Zimbabwe, through the MZP in this instance, seeks to conduct land-use planning according to what it regards as modern, scientifically based, technical planning. This means that Agritex and project personnel are uniquely empowered to determine where the best agricultural land is, what the size of people's fields should be, the proper rotation of crops, the centralization of residential areas, and the designation of grazing lands. These efforts run counter to historical and local knowledge within the valley and counter to the government's own policy of decentralization. They also contrast with other programmes, primarily CAMPFIRE which stress local ownership and management.

"The Hand of Valley Culture"

Project reorganization of agricultural and residential patterns significantly undermines local expertise and knowledge of the fragile ecology in the area. At the same time, however, the project employs its own version of a decentralized approach in its implementation. It relies on District Council, Ward Councilors, VIDCO Chairmen and ZANU-PF to enlist popular support for its programmes, and thus espouses a collective action, self-help philosophy.²⁵ Regardless of MZP attempts to enlist popular support through state sponsored decentralized means of participation, valley residents are not likely to accept current project goals.

One key difference between how local residents view the valley and how it is seen by the MZP is the importance accorded to royal deceased spirits (mhondoro). In Lan's 1985 analysis of Dande, (which is the term for the this part of the valley), he claims that all of the land "belongs to" or "is owned" by ancestral spirits, most of whom are represented by spirit mediums.²⁶ The boundaries which divide spirits' territories are well known and these territories include the large uninhabited areas as well as densely populated zones. Residents know precisely which spirit mediums to approach for authorization to live in given areas. Even after 1985, most migrants informed the mhondoro of their intent to settle on their land.

The MZP initially paid no attention to, nor did they know of these territorial divisions. Different local populations tried to inform project personnel about spirit medium territories and sacred places. For example, a resident observed that the project had designated a sacred place of an important spirit as a residential area to someone. The villagers stated that at night drum-beats could be heard because the MZP did not ask the spirits permission to allocate the land. In response, the Land Inspector from the Natural Resources Board, who had recently been sent to live in the area to "educate" the people to stop riverain cultivation, stated at a public meeting where these issues were being discussed that these people were simply trying to resist the project and development. During three months of 1990-91, two lions roamed one part of the project area killing cattle, goats, and dogs. Many residents asserted that they were spirits²⁷ who were angry at the desecration of sacred places and the lack of respect being paid to spirits by the MZP. The VIDCO Chair, trying to rephrase the argument, stated at a meeting in April 1991: "The hand of our culture still holds very strong in our villages. We don't want to ignore these major threats from the Mhondoro (ancestral spirits). Please migrants²⁸ don't bring confusion into our villages." Following a discussion of many of these issues, the Resettlement Officer left it up to the villagers to negotiate with the spirit medium to seek the spirit's consent for the relocation. In sum, that it was the residents task to placate the mhondoro not the project's

However, this process of negotiation between the MZP and residents is one-sided as the MZP will not accept deviation from the projects' goals and objectives. Past tenurial practices and common property management find no place with the project unless they happen to correspond to official policy. On numerous occasions, valley residents have tried to raise these concerns with the MZP and other government officials. Despite many open discussions no modifications of project policy and implementation have been made.

The rhetoric at these meetings can be quite strong. For example, at the meeting described above, one long-term resident made reference to the war of liberation by stating that:

This [The MZP] is going to provoke war. During the war we cooked for the freedom fighters and were promised lots of land and everyone to choose the soil which he found suitable to him. I can sense that there can be war among ourselves - the Korekore and the Chikunda²⁹ - and the migrants. The resettlement officer is telling us to stop cultivating the land that we think is good for us. Where our new arables are allocated, many other households are currently settled there, some of them are landless, more people are coming from commercial farms, about 500 the Councilor said. What next is coming? Where shall all the landless go?"

It is significant, that at this meeting which was called by the Ward Councilor and the VIDCO Chair, both officials expressed their powerlessness in the face of the MZP. In response to the Land Inspector's speech in which he announced that no

one could grow sweet potatoes any longer in the dried river beds the VIDCO Chair stated:

*You have heard with your ears what the Lord Inspector has said.
Even if you cry or shout until your voice gets hoarse you will never
stop the government from doing what it thinks is good for the people.
So don't come at night to bewitch me.*

The VIDCO Chairman tried to convince government officials that he was not challenging what they were doing, and to convince his fellow villagers that he was not supporting the project but only acquiescing to government commands. Nonetheless, local populations are attempting to use District Councils, Ward Councilors, VIDCO Chairmen, as well as ZANU-PF, to alter or change those parts of the project they oppose.

PART IV. CONCLUSIONS

The MZP and CAMPFIRE present two different approaches within Zimbabwe's over-all strategy of governmental decentralization. The MZP has strong continuities with earlier approaches which emphasize government superiority in planning, knowledge and organizational capacity. CAMPFIRE represents a clearer break with past policies and practices by emphasizing local knowledge, organization and decision-making.

CAMPFIRE emphasizes ways to make local communities feel proprietorship over their natural resources, particularly wildlife. To achieve that goal to date, however, CAMPFIRE has required both national and international NGO support, and government support. The recreation of systems of common property has necessitated active engagement by non-local actors. The MZP professes the same goal of recreating the commons but project personnel rely upon adherence to project established goals and methods as the mechanism for beneficiaries to feel proprietorship. Management rests almost entirely in the hands of government personnel who have resisted the project being monitored by non-project personnel.

The CAMPFIRE process is a loose one with room for local initiatives. The process entails numerous meetings, involving discussions, goal setting and implementation. The MZP process, in contrast, furnishes the instructions, the arables and residentials to beneficiaries, and responds only to specific complaints about project components, not to any efforts to alter policies.

The success of both CAMPFIRE and the MZP depends upon the capacity and willingness of District Councils to respond to local level concerns. District Councils in the case of CAMPFIRE are being asked to devolve authority and decision-making, no easy matter in an era of scarce resources. In the case of the MZP, District Councils have been ordered to carry out project plans as the implementing arm of MLGRUD. Some Ward Councilors even though personally opposed to the project, have not been free to express their opposition. Ironically, the MZP cannot function without the District Council and District Administrator enforcing project allocations and decisions. Even though the MZP rests upon top-down planning and administration, it must have the engagement of local authorities to carry out their plans. And, ultimately, local authorities cannot carry out the plans without project beneficiaries taking up their residentials and arables.

The collective action model embedded in the two programmes are dramatically different. CAMPFIRE seeks to utilize and build upon local knowledge, organization and management skills. The MZP denies the legitimacy of local knowledge and seeks to create a new system of resource utilization.

CAMPFIRE has had successful beginnings in the western wards of Guruve based upon revenues from wildlife and land-use planning exercises. Basing CAMPFIRE on wildlife is not feasible in the MZP area because of population density and low wildlife populations. If CAMPFIRE was indeed for all "natural

resources" and not just wildlife, then it could be adapted for the project area. If the MZP is successful in overturning the practice of stream bank cultivation it will prohibit residents in the western valley wards where wildlife is abundant from determining their own land-use plans. They, like other valley residents, rely on riverain cultivation. This would mark the triumph of the MZP model over that promoted by CAMPFIRE

Although common pool resource use is emphasized by both CAMPFIRE and the MZP, the strategy is unlikely to succeed in the current context of the MZP. In fact, the collective action model embedded in the MZP dramatically points to the contradictions contained in Zimbabwe's emphasis upon decentralization -- the expectation of full-participation without full-discussion and empowerment. CAMPFIRE has much greater potential as a common pool resource strategy, particularly if the strategy can be extended to other resources. Ignoring local knowledge, practices and institutions while imposing an external, and inflexible plan contains the seeds of failure. As one resident put it bluntly "The project will bring us only poverty." In addition, valley residents rendered landless by the project are likely to oppose forcible removal.

The adoption of a natural resource management strategy similar to that used by CAMPFIRE, however, will now be difficult within the MZP context. This is because the project not only has ignored residents' experiences and knowledge of the complex ecology of the area, it has systematically undermined it. This is most evident with respect to the management of riverain lands.

It is an inescapable conclusion that the effort to create common property grazing regimes on riverain land will, at best, lead to decades of conflict and bitterness, if it is implemented. To imagine the implementation of effective common pool resource organizations under these circumstances is difficult. The MZP's desire to have community participation and support reveals the need for different mechanisms to support local collective action. The more likely alternative is that local collective actions will increasingly oppose the project, and place the MZP and the residents in conflict. If this occurs, then everyone - government, the MZP, and the local residents will all be the losers. A significant opportunity to strengthen CAMPFIRE and expand development alternatives will be lost.

NOTES

1. The research has been supported by a Senior Research Fulbright Fellowship at the Centre for Applied Social Sciences, University of Zimbabwe; A Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research research grant; a Social Science Research Council Project on African Agriculture grant with additional support from Michigan State University and the Centre for Applied Social Sciences, University of Zimbabwe. The work would not be possible without Mike Makina and Lazarus Zhuwao my Zimbabwean colleagues. The research that I have conducted has been independent. I wish to acknowledge the cooperation that I have received from the CAMPFIRE Collaborative Group and the Mid-Zambezi Project in my work. I gratefully acknowledge the assistance of Anne Ferguson for her careful and thoughtful discussion of the issues and careful editing of the paper. Needless to say I am solely responsible for the interpretation and conclusions of the paper.
2. Ostrom's emphasis and focus is upon small-scale common pool resource units (CPRs), with maximum populations of approximately 15,000 people who rely upon common pool resources for their sustenance (1990.26). The populations described in this paper roughly fit her characterization.
3. There are CAMPFIRE programs throughout Zimbabwe's communal areas. In this paper I will restrict my emphasis to Guruve District. Peterson (1991) has presented an analysis and comparison of projects in Nyaminyami, Gokwe, Beitbridge, Bulalima Mangwe/Tsholotsho and Guruve. Murombedzi (1992a, 1992b) has written detailed analyses of CAMPFIRE in Nyaminyami. Murphree (1992) has examined the weaknesses of CAMPFIRE in Nyaminyami and proposed a wildlife management plan for the neighboring wards of Kanyati and Gatshe. Thomas (1991, n.d.) has discussed the legal and ethical dilemmas posed by CAMPFIRE.
4. A recent comprehensive effort to examine Campfire experiences is that of Peterson 1991 (1991.5).
5. This slogan was taken from Robert Chamber's book Rural Development: Putting the Last First in which he puts forth an eloquent case for reversing the priorities of development and suggests how to bridge the multiple gaps between academicians and practitioners of development.
6. This story has been well told in numerous publications. Among scholars who have detailed Rhodesia's/Zimbabwe's land history are Palmer (1977), Phimister (1988), Ranger (1985) and Kriger (1992). Land remains a central focus of ongoing conflict in contemporary Zimbabwe.
7. The 1990 Zimbabwe national election was initially presented as a referendum to legitimate the formation of a one-party state under the leadership of ZANU-PF. Despite ZANU-PF's victory the decision to move to a one-party state was ended under pressure from the major donors, opposition parties and from within the party itself.
8. The legal technicalities are elaborated in Thomas 1991.

9. It was the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Management that recognized that the continued presence of wild animals in National Parks and Safari areas had little or no benefit to people in the communal areas. An initial attempt was introduced in 1978 under a programme called Wildlife Industries New Development for All (WINDFALL) to spread the benefits of wildlife, particularly to adjacent African populations.

10 Tsetse fly populations have been reduced but not eliminated. Partly this is due to the lack of corresponding spraying activities in Zambia and Mozambique. Some argue that tsetse fly populations are being reduced more by increased populations and agriculture than by the spraying. Whatever the case, there are increasing numbers of livestock - cattle, sheep and goats in the eastern portion of the valley.

11. The MZP is also increasing the total number of arables it provides by allocating 2 5 acres of land for widows, and for the second, third and fourth wives of polygynous men. Divorced women do not have rights to obtain land since the project assumes that their natal families will provide for them -- an unreasonable assumption given increasing land scarcity and existing bias against divorced women. In addition, it does not follow current Zimbabwean law which provides for equality between men and women with respect to land rights.

12. The census upon which the project relied was an underestimate due to two reasons; first, many valley residents were dislocated by the war and had not yet returned home and second, the large number of migrants entering the valley were just after the 1982 census. The migrants who came after 1982 tended to be workers fired or laid off from the commercial farms on the escarpment just above the valley.

13. The national government of Zimbabwe made a shift from the emphasis in 1980-85 upon resettlement, to the 1986-90 concern for better land management in order to increase production. It is in the first five year national development plan that one can find the basis for land reorganization within communal areas, not just resettlement ones. The relevant quote from the First Five Year National Development Plan: 1986-1990 indicating the shift in policy is:

In addition to the translocation resettlement which utilises purchases of former large-scale commercial farms, the re-organization of settlement patterns in the Communal Areas will become part and parcel of the resettlement programme. This entails replanning of land-use patterns in order to attain optimum exploitation of the agricultural resource potential on a sustainable basis and to ensure adequate provision of economic, social and institutional infrastructure (1985: 28).

Each of Zimbabwe's fifty districts was to attempt one re-organization program. To my knowledge, no other communal area has been reorganized to the extent of lower Guruve.

14. In David Lan's account, the guerrillas replaced the compromised chiefs as the legitimate holders of the land on behalf of the true owners, the ancestral spirits. Because of the guerrillas success, Rhodesian forces herded all valley residents into "keeps". Many valley residents fled during this time only to return after the war. Nonetheless this led to the perception that the valley was relatively unoccupied in the early 1980s.

15. This change in procedure was based upon the Provincial Councils and Administration Act of 1985. This legislation also serves as the building block for efforts at decentralization

16. In my last visit to the project in November of 1993 I visited a series of fields along the former river beds of the Manyame River prior to its shifting to its current course. In any definition these are not riverain fields since they are located well-beyond 100 meters of the current river. They are made up of rich alluvial soils and have been continuously cultivated for at least thirty years. The people currently cultivating there are to be relocated and the lands set aside for grazing only.

17. These have been studied by Ben Cousins (1989, 1992), M. Drinkwater (1991), and I Scoones and K. Wilson (1988).

18. Cousins (1992) provides a description and analysis of five grazing schemes. Drinkwater (1991) provides another case from southern Chirumhanzu District. All their cases are drawn from the high or low veld, none from an ecology comparable to that in the Zambezi Valley

19. Scoones and Cousins (1991) have an excellent discussion of the struggle over dambo resources between grazing and agriculture. Dambos are defined as low lying, gently sloping grassy areas which are seasonally waterlogged because they are natural drainage channels. There are very few dambos in this portion of the Zambezi Valley.

20. As of January 1993 only one-third of the residents in the Mid-Zambezi Valley Rural Development Project had been actually resettled even though the project was to have been completed in July of 1992.

21. For a more detailed consideration of the ecological consequences of the project see Derman 1992b.

22. I have provided a description of this process in an earlier paper (Derman 1990)..

23. The MZP has no pre- and post-project population figures. In Bazooka VIDCO, for example, the largest in its ward in Guruve District there were 250 households prior to the project and 82 afterwards. Many households received new land in two areas one more than 10 kilometers away, others more than 20 kilometers away. An unknown number left the project area

24. Data analysis is not yet complete. However, in the schools where the resettlement/villagization has been accomplishment enrollment has dropped by one-third. In the area from the escarpment to the Mozambique border along the Manyame (Hunyani) River where people have been allocated arables but not moved to them, about one-third or more of the population had not been allocated land as of July 1991. Many of these are non-citizens of Guruve.

25. I had numerous discussions with project resettlement officers who continuously expressed surprise that valley residents did not volunteer for "development activities". Valley residents are expected to mould bricks for new school buildings and to provide

other labor for project activities. Project personnel expressed to me their belief that many valley people simply did not want to better themselves. As proof they cited their continuing to cultivate along riverain areas and not contribute labour to brick molding

26. I have found this part of Lan's analysis to be accurate. However not all recognized ancestral spirits (mhondoro) have living spirit mediums, and in other instances there may be two or more mediums who claim to represent the same spirit. Not all valley residents believe in the existence of mhondoro nor do all valley residents respect mhondoro commands. Members of some churches are explicitly forbidden to engage in any activity that acknowledges their power. MZP staff because they were not from the valley did not know the full dimensions of mhondoro. Their policies toward them are, on the whole, to ignore them whenever possible and certainly to deny that they can or should hold up the project.

27. Valley residents claim that it is not possible to know if lions are actually lions or if they are inhabited by an mhondoro spirit.

28. Here he refers to the project staff and other bureaucrats who do not originate from the valley and therefore do not respect the mhondoro or implicitly the way of life of valley residents.

29. The Korekore are Shona speakers. Although many Korekore live on the high plateau they were the majority population in this part of the valley. The Chikunda are a relatively new ethnic group in part descended from other valley people who came from what is now Mozambique to participate in the ivory and slave trade in the nineteenth century. However, they are now regarded as long-term valley residents in contrast to the new migrants.

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