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THE UNSETTLING OF THE ZAMBEZI
VALLEY: AN EXAMINATION OF THE
MID-ZAMBEZI RURAL DEVELOPMENT

PROJECT¹

By

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I. INTRODUCTION

My objective today is to explore one vision for, the Zambezi Valley, that emerging from the Mid-Zambezi Project and to present some alternative possibilities for the area. This should lead actors to rethink the alternative and often competing visions for the future. In particular it is important how the Centre for Applied Social Sciences (CASS.), World Wide Fund For Nature (WWF) and Zimbabwe Trust (ZimTrust) will position themselves relative to the most massive undertaking of top-down planning to reshape the valley since the construction of Kariba. The Mid-Zambezi Project also has clear implications for the wider national debate about the land question and how and in what ways small-scale agriculturalists' knowledge can and will be utilized in the restructuring of Zimbabwean agriculture.

In this paper I will outline the major features of the Mid-Zambezi Rural Development Project, summarize some reactions by both migrants and long-term residents to the project, analyze some longer-term issues within the Valley that the Project does not appear to address, and offer some suggestions for an alternative way to proceed. I begin by commenting on what I regard as a desirable approach to rural development: that based not on an opposition to planning but planning with the full-involvement and participation of those who are being planned for - those most often termed beneficiaries.

Despite experiences and lessons learned from the failure of Tanzanian, and Ethiopian villagization programs, the Mid-Zambezi Project is currently attempting to carry out a similar program. The project also represents what used to be called Integrated Rural Development Programs. As such, it requires high levels of coordination and cooperation between numerous Ministries and agencies under the lead direction of the Department of Rural and Urban Development in the Ministry of Local Government, Rural and Urban Development. In total the project involves nine ministries, the Province of Central Mashonaland, & two District Councils. In addition the Mid-Zambezi Project has been defined as an Accelerated Resettlement Program, Type A. It is, to my knowledge, one of the only times the government has applied resettlement to an already settled area. Resettlement has its own literature. Certainly other work from the valley by Thayer Scudder and Elizabeth Colson demonstrates the short and long-term negative consequences of resettlement.

The Mid-Zambezi Project represents a top-down, highly centralized effort at planning. This manner of proceedings provides a challenge to those who seek to construct participatory or bottom-up methods for planning and implementing rural development. Mid-Zambezi project personnel are applying a single, general land use plan, designed by central planners on behalf of designated

beneficiaries rather than developing plans generated in full consultation with communities, or different local organizations as advocated in CAMPFIRE programs.

The slogan used by the Mid-Zambezi Project, "Putting the last first" is taken from Robert Chambers book Rural Development; Putting the last first.¹ I find this of particular interest because Chambers has been in the forefront of trying to reverse rural development priorities by beginning analysis from the poor, the periphery, and the non-professional rather than the wealthy, the center and the professional. He emphasizes participation, democracy, development and learning from the poor and farmers. In two recent publications Chambers has examined the relationship between environment and the poor, and the state and rural development. Since the project has adopted his slogan it is appropriate to examine the project in light of his ideas. Let me quote him briefly and then return to how the project has been applying his thinking:

SLT [Sustainable Livelihood Thinking] centres on enabling poor people to overcome conditions which force them to take the short view and live 'from hand to mouth', or 'from day to day'. It seeks to enable them to get above, not a poverty line defined in terms of consumption, but a sustainable livelihood line which includes the ability to save and accumulate, to adapt to changes, to meet contingencies, and to enhance long-term productivity. SLT reverses thinking which flows from core to periphery or from the top down, and substitutes thinking from periphery to core, or from the bottom up. (1988: 16)²

One of the central concerns of my research to date **is the nature of the planning process in the Mid-Zambezi Project area of the Valley** and how this contrasts to the model **currently emerging through CAMPFIRE**. Certainly, I am not arguing against **the need for**

¹. My first knowledge of this **came about because I saw project staff wearing tee shirts with the Mid-Zambezi Rural Development Project 1987-1992 written in the middle surrounded by Chambers' title.**

². **"Sustainable Livelihoods, Environment and Development: putting poor rural people first" by Robert Chambers. Discussion Paper #240. Institute of Development Studies, December 1987.**

planning or planners.⁵ However, there are a series of theoretical and practical issues that emerge when planning is carried out without consultation and interaction with those being planned for.

Much emphasis has been placed upon what is called "the fragile ecology" of the Zambezi Valley. My focus is not on the area's fragility but on the more general issue of how environmental issues and concerns are incorporated into development. Robert Chambers also has focused upon the relationship between development and the environment. He writes:

It seems inherent in the contemporary human condition for most rural people to seek a secure and independent land-based livelihood where resources are controlled and commanded by the family and where returns are directly linked to efforts. With secure tenure and rights to land, livestock and trees, farm families tend to take the long view and invest in sustainable agriculture. Without it, they take the short view and environmental degradation often follows. Not only are collectivisation of agriculture and forced villagisation undesirable as forms of core-based, top-down ideological and political paternalism, which puts rural people's priorities last: they are also environmentally unsound. (Chambers: 1989)

While there has already been much discussion of the Zambezi Valley as a "fragile environment" without fragile being clearly defined, my perspective will be somewhat different. The valley between the Musengezi and Manyame Rivers is clearly drought prone. The majority of residents are now migrants. We need to ask the question how will people be best able to secure their livelihood in this harsh environment: through centralized state planning, or through more flexible, variable and differentiated local strategies? Current directions are clear and they are the opposite of those supported by Chambers.

It is not my intent to romanticize or idealize valley residents and argue if only left to themselves the Valley would be an ideal place to live. Many migrants have come in order to grow cotton which has been profitable in the short term but may, in the long term have great environmental and social impacts; ones in Chambers terms, that do not lead to sustainable livelihoods.

³. Although it is important to note that planning is a relatively recent human activity, most humans for most of human history lived and died without the direction of planners. In addition, planning needs to be understood as a cultural construction and representation in addition to the specific material interests that planning activities must include'.

My remarks today are preliminary, based upon work in progress. I need to point out that much of the analysis has not been completed. The project is perhaps at its most chaotic phase and I might rightly be criticized for reaching premature conclusions. I indeed hope that I am incorrect in some of my conclusions. Nonetheless I have concluded that it's important to raise some serious questions about the project.

II. MID-ZAMBEZI PROJECT: A DESCRIPTION

A. Project Location

The MZP is located 10 kilometers west of the Manyame River to 10 kilometers east of the Musengezi River⁴ and from the Mozambican border to the base of the escarpment. The entire project area falls within the lowlands north of the escarpment. It is often mistakenly thought this area has a uniform ecology and rainfall pattern. This appears not to be the case with rainfall apparently decreasing as one goes north from the escarpment's base. The project is located within two Districts of Mashonaland Central Province, Muzarabani and Guruve. The larger part of the project is located within Guruve District.

Running through the project zone (as well as beyond) is a game fence. The game fence originally constructed to separate water buffalo from cattle continues to serve as a key marker in delimiting where cattle can and cannot be kept. The area has typically been one of dispersed settlement. Recently the most frequent pattern has been that of fields surrounding the homestead with separate riverain fields. It appears that prior to the spread of cotton cultivation many households just had riverain fields. The valley was home to the Korekore Shona, linked to the Korekore in the uplands but nonetheless having separate traditions consistent with living in a different ecological zone. The other long-term valley residents are the nineteenth century formed ethnic group, the Chikunda. They tend to be concentrated in areas close to the Mozambican border and have close links to their kinsfolk in Kanyemba (Chapoto Ward) and Mozambique.

B. Project Origins

The origins of this project are difficult to piece together. In part they result from the EEC tsetse **eradication program which had been implemented without any land-use planning for the valley after**

⁴. This is a change from the **original project documents which had the rivers themselves as the boundary. This has meant that the project zone has been significantly expanded with implications for the highly settled area east of the Musengezi as well as for the wildlife west of the Manyame.**

the tsetse flies were eliminated. FAO came in as consultants to the Government of Zimbabwe to develop a land use plan. This was then submitted to the African Development Bank as a project. The African Development Bank accepted the conclusions of the FAO land-use exercise and the analysis of the Government of Zimbabwe to fund a major part of the proposed project.

It is not coincidental that this area of the Mid-Zambezi valley was chosen for a project. Dande, as the region is also known, was a strategic area during the war and important for the victory of the liberation forces. Both ZANU and ZAPU were very active here. Underlying the project then were political concerns. On the one hand the valley had been central in the war and on the other, the Zambezi Valley was and is viewed as underdeveloped and backward and in serious need of development. A large project was viewed as a positive step. In addition, the Government decided to use this frontier area as proof of their seriousness about resettlement. Recall that this was in the 1986 time period, prior to the new land policies.

The Zambezi Valley was and is viewed as underdeveloped and backward. Therefore it seems to have been assumed by both Government and Donors that virtually any development activity would be welcome. As it is stated in the Appraisal Document

...the Mid-Zambezi Valley is recognised to have been a neglected area requiring development. The need has also been appreciated to extend the rural development programme to the communal areas. [This is a reference to the resettlement program.] Thus the risks frequently associated with the start up and implementation of this type of project are thought to be minimal. (p.43)

As mentioned earlier, the migrants were ahead of both the EEC tsetse eradication program and the government's project. This has meant the Project Manager, the Agritex Planning Officers and the Rural Settlement Officers found a population in place, active, and quite diverse. The people were more numerous and the unused lands less than they anticipated. Furthermore there was no room to bring in new settlers. The planners therefore had a **difficult terrain to negotiate**, and virtually no flexibility **to change the basic framework of the project**. Neither they nor the **local population** have the authority to alter the project **no matter what their technical** knowledge or objections might be.

C. Project Design and Rationale

The project original proposed⁵ to settle 3,000 new -families in the project area. These households were to come from over-crowded communal areas between the Musengezi and Manyame Rivers south of the game fence. These families were to be settled in some 130 villages of between 20 and 25 households each depending upon the availability of water supplies. In addition, the project was to provide support to the estimated 3600 families already resident south of the game fence. Only to a limited extent would it support the 1,000 families living north of the fence. The project was designed to accommodate not only the planners' and consultants' views of the best way to develop the Zambezi Valley but also Government's resettlement and land-use policies. Thus the MZP project included a resettlement component and an equity component: all households were to receive 12 acres of land for cultivation and one acre for a residential plot.

The project is also designed to provide a range of services to the valley residents. These include: improved agricultural credit, increased agricultural extension services, formation of cooperatives, natural resource management, infrastructure development including roads, and water supplies; educational development including new classrooms and housing for teachers; rural service centres, and clinics.⁶

The original project documents made a clear separation between the northern and southern zones: the northern ones were to be primarily reserved for less development activities, lower human population densities, and a focus on wildlife. The boundary between the two zones was to be the game fence. Precisely how a wildlife management system was to be encouraged was not specified. However, there was to be a limit of 1,000 households north of the game fence and were not to be provided with the same range of development services as those in the southern zone.

The Project Appraisal Paper however clearly indicates the centrality of resettlement at the same time that it demonstrates the top-down nature of the planning process:

⁵. This is based upon the Appraisal Report : Mid Zambezi Valley Rural Development Project. Zimbabwe for the African Development Fund, Agriculture and Rural Development Department. July 1986. The report was written by an agronomist, 2 agricultural economists, and a civil engineer.

⁶. The financing of the project whose total for the five year period 1987-92 is 14.67 million F.U.A (1 FUA=1.72 Zim dollars) is 56% for the ADF, 13% for GOZ and 21% for the AFC. However, the AFC contribution will be met primarily from a line of credit at the Africa Development Bank. The foreign exchange component is \$5.9 F.U.A.million. The project is based upon a loan from the ADB.

To facilitate the resettlement of families, and the reorganization of resident farmers within the project area, extensive farm development will be undertaken. The project will fund the survey and demarcation of farmers' plots, village and RSC [Rural Service Centre] sites; the clearance of settlers' land and the ploughing of an initial 0.5 ha of land for all families; the provision of a 0.5 ha. crop pack, consisting of seed, fertilizer, and pesticide; and all families will be provided with a privy base. (p. 26)

The Project Appraisal then specifies that:

Each family will be allocated a residential plot (0.5 ha) and 4 ha. of arable land. Resident families will also be reorganised in a similar fashion to facilitate the provision of agricultural services but above all to be in line with government policy with regard to land reform and the equitable distribution of land in communal areas. (36)⁷

In other words, the existing residents are to be resettled just like the newcomers. In practice, almost everyone must move. The only exceptions are those few families whose holdings correspond to the newly delineated residential stands and arable plots⁸ marked out by the project.

Another significant feature of the project is that the original project documents do not specify what have become its central thrusts: 1) arable plots (fields) must be located away from rivers and river banks; 2) riverain areas are to be designated as grazing zones, and 3) villages are to be located where boreholes are found.

In the project documents there is no discussion of how much relocation would be required because no census or socioeconomic data collection was carried out prior to the project's implementation.⁹

⁷. This has been changed to 5 hectares or 12 acres.

⁸. In the project's terminology residential stand means homestead or place of residence and arable plot means field.

⁹. There are no accurate population figures. VIDCO Chairmen or Secretaries have the most accurate figures for their constituencies. However, it is difficult to obtain figures in Muzarabani District for VIDCOs prior to project implementation. **No household enumeration was carried out prior to the project's inception and households have continued to arrive in the valley even though in principle no new households are allowed to be**

As noted earlier, what the planners did not know as they prepared the project proposal was that there were already more households living in the area than the 7,600 they planned for. Nonetheless, the objective remains the same - the demarcation of precisely 7,600 arable plots of now five hectares each, based on surveys of the amount of arable land available in the area. What has developed then is not simply a resettlement process but rather a process of resettling the settled, or a villagization project.

In principle, only citizens of Zimbabwe and Guruve and Muzarabani Districts are eligible to receive land in the scheme. Clearly, citizenship has become a heated issue for many recent migrants to the valley. It is also an issue for those who worked for many years in the Commercial Farm areas of Upper Guruve but who never got their citizenship. Additionally there are many recent Mozambican migrants who have settled in the valley many of whom have kinsfolk in Zimbabwe.

III. RESEARCH STRATEGY

My research strategy evolved from what I was observing and hearing. I have, for the most part, opted to follow issues that have been raised by people in the area: migrants, long-term residents and project staff rather than systematically pursue my own defined research agenda. However I have tried to collect systematic data on cropping patterns, livestock ownership, sources of income, migrant histories, women and new villages.

Within the project area, to date I have focused most heavily on the area between the escarpment and the Mozambique border along the Manyame and Dande Rivers. My choice of location was influenced by two factors: First, finding two excellent research assistants who lived in this region and having failed to find one in the Muzarabani area was important. Second, since the project involves shifting people's water supply from river utilization to boreholes more boreholes (59) are being dug in the Manyame/Dande area with only 20 in the Utete and Musengezi area.¹⁰ Thus within the project zone, the most densely settled area is along the Manyame and Dande rivers and along the escarpment which means that this is the area of most resettlement. Along the rivers some resistance to the resettlement process has occurred, with some families insisting on a greater role for themselves in the selection of arable plots or insistence they would not give up their land. In short, resistance

settled.

¹⁰. The total number of productive new boreholes is estimated to be 119 (Annex 6 of Appraisal Report).

to the project has become part of my research.

IV. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

To implement their plans, project personnel have asked the Agritex Planning Officer and other technical personnel to examine the aerial photos taken in 1982-83 to determine the most suitable areas for agriculture, residence and grazing. The Agritex planning officer has then laid out areas which, by technical criteria of soil quality, are to be pegged in 12 acre plots for each household. For every arable plot, a residential stand must also be found. Residential stands of .5 ha are to be arranged in lines near boreholes. Boreholes themselves are not necessarily found near sites where arable plots are located. Boreholes are also used to site both schools, clinics and rural service centers. New schools are to be constructed at designated points reflecting the location of new settlements. The Project provides the frame for the school. Residents must mould the bricks, and then the project will transport them to the new school and complete the structure.

Land allocated can be adjusted for polygamous household -- for each additional wife 2.5 acres will be provided to a limit of four. Thus one household can have a maximum of 19.5 acres. Widows are eligible to become 12 acre plot holders if they have dependents. Elderly widows who are determined not to have dependents living with them are to be allocated 2.5 acres (1 ha) of arable land and a residential stand.

Agritex has also demarcated grazing areas for livestock. These in principle are along the watercourses. Plans for their development and use have much lower priority given the small number of livestock currently held by valley residents. Even though cattle are not now permitted north of the game fence the grazing areas are still being established along the rivers. Given the limits on cattle, the project also proposes to introduce fifty tractors. Efforts are now underway to form tractor cooperatives which require cooperators to raise at least \$10,000 per cooperative.¹¹

¹¹ There isn't space here to probe deeply into the economic arguments put forward in the project proposals. Little differentiation was made between types of households with regard to issues such as gender of household head, wealth differences, variations in age and labour power. While it makes sense to generalize about nonetheless such a model risks hiding who can and who cannot actually utilize the land to be made available through the project, and special kinds of assistance that might be needed to render the project successful to poor households. Once again it appears that planners believed that because the valley is poor everyone is poor and therefore they didn't pay sufficient attention to the already existing differentiation. This includes elderly

The wildlife component is currently being discussed between Parks, District Council and the Project. The project has agreed to leave access points along the Manyame River for game. These are to be 1.5 km wide. Provision of watering points for game is on hold pending the final demarcation of arables. Over-all, the wildlife component does not hold the prominent place it took in the original project documents.¹²

A. The process of resettlement:

The project began in a stormy fashion. Pegging teams - people sent out by the project to survey and mark arable plots and residential stands - appeared near both Muzarabani and Chitsungo. According to reports these first peggings were thwarted by valley residents who pulled up the stakes and placed them at District Council offices.¹³ Meetings were then held with residents to inform them of the Project, its different dimensions and the benefits that valley residents would derive from the project. Many different accounts circulate about what was promised during these early meetings and there appears to be much misunderstanding by valley residents of what they were to receive from the project.

Aqrutex undertook the mapping of arable plots, residential stands and grazing area in a VIDCO. The mapping complete, a team including an extension officer and workers pegs the area. The pegs (what we in American English call stakes) are metal and driven into the ground at the decided places for the arable plots and residential stands. They are numbered to keep track of them. There appears to be more flexibility in determining residential stands. The Resettlement Officers have told me that when they have

former commercial farm workers who cultivate entirely by hand farming one hectare, and larger scale cotton farmers who cultivate up to thirty acres.

¹². Alternatively it could be argued that the wildlife portion of the project was not fully supported by the key Ministry and Provincial planning officers. Its place in the project documents was to pacify Parks and donors but did not fit with the project's priorities.

¹³. There appears to be a link between **Karanga migrants and the earliest opposition to the project. They are reported to have pulled up stakes and placed them at Muzarabani District Council offices. Others pulled up the stakes in the Chitsungo area of Guruve District. Given their opposition to the project, efforts were made, it has been stated by some informants, to encourage Korekore Ward Councillors and VIDCO Chairs. It is now difficult to find anyone who will take responsibility for the pulling up of the stakes so this account is certainly subject to question.**

to plan a "new village" they align the stands trying to preserve the better brick or cement homes. Such a procedure clearly favours the better-off households.

The coming of the pegging team is usually not announced to the residents. Typically the peggers show up one-day and begin demarcating areas, although frequently they are accompanied by the VIDCO Chair. Depending upon the relations of the VIDCO Chair with his constituents he may or may not inform village chairmen. In any event, word spreads quickly and many people come out to watch the peggers. Often villagers try to influence where the pegging is taking place but the peggers are under instructions to say that they are not authorized to make any changes, their job is to peg and they will brook no opposition or discussion. Many residents have reported that when they have tried to express their opposition to the pegging sites they have been told that if they continue to object the police will be called and/or they will not be allocated any land.

As noted earlier, most people live in dispersed homesteads with their homes surrounded by their fields, although some also have fields located elsewhere, for example, along the rivers. The Project is insisting that fields and residential sites be separated. Thus when peggers come they may peg residential stands in the middle of people's fields, or they may peg arables in people's homesteads. From the population's perspective this is an arbitrary process and while they understand the project's thrusts, they do not understand how decisions were arrived at for their particular village or home.¹⁴

Once the pegging has, of either residential or arables, been completed, people have to register for their plots.¹⁵ Initially,

¹⁴. There may be vast differences between the numbers of arables found and the numbers of people living in the VIDCO. In two VIDCOs I've been following the differences are enormous: Batsirai VIDCO has approximately 300 households of whom 27 will be allocated arables and residential in the current VIDCO, everyone else will have to move. In three villages there are approximately 250 households with only 71 arables. Those households that do not obtain fields will have to move. In this instance they may move across the Manyame River to Kanongo where there 300 arables. It is an important and legitimate question to know how decisions are made as to who stays and who goes, and who makes those decisions.

¹⁵. Allocation is done by individual, not by household. To be eligible one has to be married and a citizen of Zimbabwe and Guruve or Muzarabani. Married women are not eligible. It is assumed they will be given land by their husbands, and when they divorce, customary law is expected to be followed. As indicated earlier, female household heads (assumed to be widows) are eligible

the assignment of residential and arables was done by the Rural Resettlement Officers. However, the Project rapidly discovered this was a highly charged arena and it shifted responsibility for this function to the VIDCO Chairs and Councillors. Thus, once an area is pegged, the household heads make their appeals to their VIDCO Chair and Councillor for the arable and/or residential they would like. Under this system, the VIDCO Chairs and Councillors have had first choice for their own fields and homes. The VIDCO Chairs make up the lists of those eligible within their VIDCO and then the Resettlement Officer comes to make up the official registration. However a process, which as described earlier, is not straightforward as Guruve citizenship even for longer term residents may be difficult to establish. Final allocation awaits verification of national and district citizenship. It has not been determined how long an individual has to establish citizenship before their land may be allocated to someone else who has citizenship.

Following the allocation of arables and residential people are then told they have to move.¹⁶ Of course, it is not that simple. In many instances arables are pegged but not residential ones. These arables may be too far away from current homesteads to be farmed. The reverse may also occur. Moreover, someone may be given an arable and a residential of someone who has not yet been assigned their arable plot and/or their residential stand and thus cannot effectively take possession of the assigned area. Assigning land that has been cleared by one person, thereby establishing rights of ownership to someone else, can create very hard feelings and is a violation of long-standing land-tenure systems in the valley. Informal arrangements may be negotiated which involve asking the former owner's permission to begin cultivating and often giving a gift. If this is not done, one risks witchcraft.

What the process looks like can be seen most clearly in new villages where the project has assigned new arables and residential. In new villages the land had been vested in particular families and spirit mediums but is currently not being used. People move, either voluntarily because they choose better land than they currently possess, or involuntarily because they did not receive land where they were currently living and thus risk landlessness if they refuse to move. In any case, they begin to construct new homes and to clear fields. The project provides no compensation for homes and property given up nor financial

for the full 12 acres if they have dependents, but only 2.5 if they do not.

¹⁶. In the case of some new villages, the Rural Resettlement Officer has been determining who has not taken up their new arable and residential. If he finds the person absent and with little or no evidence of activity, he has been reassigning them to others.

assistance in moving - whether the moving is voluntary or involuntary. The project provides no help in the construction of a new homestead. However, the project is responsible for stumping and plowing one acre and the provision of inputs for one year for growing one acre of cotton.

No one is supposed to have to move until there is a functioning and adequate borehole at their new location. This has provided a major stumbling block in the project's meeting its timetable. Sites for boreholes were selected principally on the basis of water availability. Other criteria for settlement and village location may not have been taken into account. In addition few efforts were made to coordinate borehole site selection with the project resettlement.

No arables are allocated close to rivers, and in principle these are designated as grazing areas. Muzarabani District Council has established a \$50.00 fine for those cultivating within 30 meters of a river bank. Guruve District Council has not as yet taken that step although the two Ward Councilors in the Project area have made it clear in meetings that people must stop cultivating along the rivers. The project expects that people will give up their riverain cultivation and construct cooperative vegetable gardens at borehole sites or further away from rivers than is currently practiced.¹⁷ These fields while not-held by all residents are a critical part of the agricultural system. They enable families to live in this environment in both drought and flood years. They provide a second crop of maize (critically important when maize fails due to drought) along with a variety of beans, cowpeas, vegetables (an important source of income for women along with the normal dietary benefits), and tobacco as a cash crop. Riverain cultivation is thought by project officials to cause or intensify erosion.

With regard to livestock, project policy is that households are allowed to keep all animals they had prior to the project's implementation. There are two or three herds of 40 and many more of around ten cattle. These herds tend to be close to the escarpment. Households which did not have cattle are restricted to two oxen in the southern zone and to none in the northern zone.

B. Participation as Defined by the Project:

The Mid-Zambezi Project clearly desires popular support and

¹⁷. Residents notes that the boreholes do break down. Currently most people can go to rivers and dig open wells. But, when they are moved away from rivers residents worry what will happen when the borehole breaks down. In addition, they point out that their vegetables will be ruined if they depend solely upon borehole water when and if it breaks down.

participation. In the introduction I suggested that the form of planning adopted to date prevents participation by the intended beneficiaries. The Project would answer in response that they have consulted the appropriate local authorities, namely Ward Councillors and VIDCO Chairmen. And, to a certain measure they are correct. Certainly District Councils - both Guruve and Muzarabani have been involved, and to varying degrees VIDCO Chairs have been kept abreast of project developments. In my view, there has not been adequate give and take however between project officials and project participants/beneficiaries. What is not a matter of opinion is that the basic socioeconomic research or needs assessment necessary for proper planning was not carried out during the project planning or implementation stages.

The design of the Mid-Zambezi project has not been altered by the involvement of Ward Councillors and VIDCO Chairs. One question that emerges is whether they represent the people to the government or the government to the people? In the case of the Mid-Zambezi Project they have not been free to oppose the project whatever private concerns they have. My views are shared by many project participants. In interviews with both long-term residents and migrants they believe rightly or wrongly that it would be impossible for a VIDCO Chair or a Ward Councillor to publicly disagree with the government concerning the project.¹⁸

V. VALLEY RESIDENTS' RESPONSES TO THE PROJECT:

Valley residents do not have a single view or perspective on the Project. I have found quite diverse opinions regarding the impact of the project, reflecting the fact that some families stand to gain while others will lose as a result of the resettlement process, depending in part on their personal circumstances. However, despite differences, there are unusual dimensions to the Mid-Zambezi Project around which near unanimity of opinion exists. Unlike most resettlement schemes where participation is voluntary, this is not the case in the Valley. Residents, whether migrant or long-term, must accept what can only be called forced resettlement. I say forced because the residents do not have the right to re-fuse. To more fully explore differences in response to the project it is necessary to divide valley residents into three categories; long-term residents, whose families have been in the valley pre-1965 and who are predominantly Korekore with some Chikunda; migrants from other communal lands who came either in the 60s or 80s for land; and migrants from the commercial farms usually in Upper Guruve. Many of these workers were born outside of Zimbabwe in Mozambique, Malawi and Zambia. Some of these commercial farm workers are older and see the valley as their last opportunity to obtain some land

¹⁸. In another paper I will explore more **fully the thorny issue of participation** and its structure and meaning in **the Mid-Zambezi Project**.

and autonomy from work on the farms.¹⁹

Long-term residents had extensive plots of land along the rivers which, until the late 1980s, was more than adequate. The 80s saw a tide of migrants entering the valley, asking and receiving from headman first, and then VIDCO chairs and Councilors rights to land. The population has increased rapidly so that along the Manyame River from the escarpment to Mozambique, on both the east and west banks, there is one homestead after another. Descriptions both from the archives and older residents indicate there used to be long distances between homesteads, and a profound change in population density has occurred since independence.

The most important reason that migrants come to the valley appears straightforward: to gain access to land. For multiple reasons, the valley was one of the few places in Zimbabwe where there was open land and migrants were welcomed by long-term residents. They were welcomed to help guard fields from the depredations of elephants, buffalo, and other game; to share in the difficult life in the valley, and as symbols that more people would bring more commitment by the newly independent state to increase resources and services. The valley had become more accessible because of road construction during the war, and two efforts by the Tribal Trust Development Corporation (TILCOR) to establish large irrigation schemes in the valley - currently the ADA estates at Mushumbi Pools and Muzarabani.

The viability of agriculture in the valley was increased because of favorable conditions for cotton - one of the few crops that does well in the valley. The Lutheran World Federation, some private commercial farmers and a few communal land farmers brought tractors into the valley permitted some farmers to greatly increase their acreage and yields of cotton. The Cotton Marketing Board (CMB) supported extending cotton cultivation in the valley and in 1985-86 established a CMB depot at Mahuwe, which is in the center of the current project area.

In addition, the Zambezi Valley is the site of the current EEC effort to eradicate tsetse flies. I had initially hypothesized that migrants had heard of the program and had begun to enter the valley with their cattle in anticipation of its success. However, in the surveys that have been done by CASS, Spiereburg and myself I have not found a single migrant stating that they came to the valley for such reasons.

It is clear that the plans and design for Type A resettlement schemes, like the MZP, have a series of social, economic and environmental consequences which have generated a series of

¹⁹. It is possible that further refinements may be made to these categories following analysis of the information collected.

concerns among residents. In the Mid-Zambezi Valley these concerns have been articulated to the Rural Resettlement Officers, the Project Manager, the Provincial Governor and District Councils. However, because addressing these concerns would entail redesigning the project, or a different conception of valley agriculture, they have been rejected. Some adjustments have been made but they are minor and concern shifting an arable plot or residential stand because it is waterlogged during the rainy season, or moving an arable plot because it is part of a cemetery and the like.

It is my sense that valley residents do not understand (and probably rightly so.) that they are part of a resettlement scheme. Initially they were told that the Mid-Zambezi Rural Development Project would combine new government resources with community efforts leading to a higher standard of living for all. Valley residents appear initially to have welcomed increased state intervention after the difficulties of the war years, and after the experience of the keeps into which residents were put to prevent the population from supporting ZIPRA and ZANLA forces active in the Valley. In addition, elements of the project appeal strongly to most residents in the valley: clinics, boreholes, more schools and roads. There is widespread agreement that these are needed in the valley.²⁰ On the other hand, there is widespread disagreement with the key elements of resettlement. The areas of disagreement include: project determination of where people are to live, where their fields are to be, the prohibition of riverain cultivation, and the establishment of grazing areas along the rivers.. Let me quote from an interview with one migrant:

In 1956 Gota was communal land but now it belongs to commercial farmers. They came in the same ways as you are doing. [He identified us as representing the MZP.3 These white people are clever. In Gota they sent people from Agritex to do the same as you are doing. We were surprised in 195B to find a convoy of trucks coming to move people from their homes to take them to other places such as Bakasa, Kazunga and Hurungwe. Those who tried to refuse had their huts burned down without being able to take out their goods. This was during Minority rule. When we got independence in 1980 we people who were working on commercial farms we began to lose our jobs.. When we complained to the Ministry of Labour, they just said you better go and seek a place to settle on the communal lands. So we came here and now are in another time of pegging. We are to be forced to cultivate fields which we don't want and

²⁰ There are exceptions of course: Vapostoris refuse to have their children immunized or go to clinics but on the other hand, they tend to support land allocation.

also to move from our residential stands to another pegged area. Is this what independence means? The government actually knows that we don't have butcheries and markets. Where can we get meat

~~carried~~ and green vegetables? That is why we have to ~~happened~~ cultivate on the river banks so that we can get "relish" but the Government is stopping us from cultivating there. Thus cultivation has been carried out for a longer period of time and what has happened to the Manyame river? The Government must leave us living in the way we are used to.
(Interview July 5, 1990)

One must ask how representative is such a statement? To what extent are views like this held, and by what proportion of valley residents? Are such views held only by migrants or by long-term residents as well? It is here that I must plead insufficiency of time to analyze my data. At this point I can only outline the arguments for and against the project that valley residents make, their areas of concern, and my sense of who supports the project and who does not.

Let me take an example that illustrates how the project operates in a set manner without taking into account historical and ecological variability. In the northern center of the project area is Chiriwo Ward, usually referred to as Gonono. There are several villages surrounding the centre "town" of Gonono. Gonono centre relies almost entirely on boreholes, dug in the early sixties. There is an excellent functioning clinic and a well-maintained and supported school. Nonetheless the villagers have been told that their fields are in the wrong places, that they will have to move their homesteads, and give up their riverain cultivation. Unlike other areas in the valley they rely heavily on sorghum but their knowledge of agricultural conditions has been ignored. Most people in this area do not want to move. Even though many have moved before they do not want to destroy their old homes, build new ones, clear new fields, and have new and often unchosen neighbors. Project officials treat these feelings as indications of the population's inertia and resistance to change - people viewed as obstacles to their own development. Their historical experiences, their experience with droughts and flood and the difficult environment of the valley is discounted. No mechanism exists within the project, nor have the field officers the means to incorporate these feelings.²¹

²¹. My sense of Project views toward residents reflects the same set of biases toward what are viewed as non-modern farmers. There appears to be little concern about the constraints **under which people** carry out their agriculture and **about how difficult it is** under such an uncertain rainfall regime to actually succeed

VI. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS :

One set of conclusions has to do with the broad processes of social and economic transformation unleashed in the valley following independence and the reasons why migrants sought this harsh environment. This is to say that there are clearly processes of social change independent of the project. In my opinion, the valley was one of the only places where people could find adequate land. These processes of migrations and settlement were in place prior to the tsetse eradication program or the Mid-Zambezi Project.

Any enquiry must ask the question what will be the longer-term consequences of the project and will the project be able to achieve its stated goals given the social and ecological conditions in which they are being undertaken. Once again I must leave a full discussion of these issues to another paper. However, the constraints and opportunities in the valley will persist without the project and form the context in which the Project will achieve or fail in its objectives.

I have in the body of the paper indicated which parts of the project are viewed as controversial or negative by valley residents and which ones are seen as promoting their well-being. Quantifying these can only come after I have analyzed the data but let me summarize the major issues:

(1) Riverain Cultivation. The greatest amount of opposition to the project comes from the anticipated loss of riverain fields. These fields make-up for the highly variable productivity of upland fields. They are historically what has permitted the successful occupation of the valley.²² The residents are familiar with the arguments presented by Project Staff and local government as to why they should cease riverain cultivation. However, virtually all residents agree that they do not detect increased erosion due to their riverain cultivation. In short, they disagree with the explanations that have been presented to them. It seems to me several different micro-systems are included under the one category

in feeding their families.

²². I find it quite probable that **the Project will increase the vulnerability to drought of a large number of valley residents for reasons I have detailed earlier concerning riverain cultivation.**

of cultivation within 30 meters of a river.²³ In addition, because of designating riverain areas for grazing much more land will be taken out of agriculture than would be the case if it were just the thirty meter rule.

(2) Relocation. Most people do not want to move. They cite a number of reasons including a strong preference to live further away from neighbors than the project plans them to, staying close to fields, staying close to cemeteries where kin are buried, difficulty in building new homes, loss of homes, etc. There are certainly those who do want to relocate and typically are those who have had the opportunity to choose new sites in new villages

If current trends continue, those people who won't benefit or resist the project will be forced to leave. For example, school populations in Huzarabani District where the project was implemented were reduced by one-third reflecting a real decline in population. Since no base-line data exists for these populations we do not know why they left, what has happened to them, how many have left the project area, or how many have been resettled in other parts of the project area.

(3) Relocation has another dimension. Everyone is to live near each other, in lines, and arguably with cement or brick houses. The project lays out the villages, decides on the number of residential stands, and suggests strongly where on each stand families are to build their homes. There is much resentment¹ against this process by residents.

(4) Many people have raised a series of questions about the twelve acre allocation. Some say they don't need the twelve acres and are concerned that they will be forced to cultivate them or else lose the land. A smaller subset oppose the limit because they can use tractors or oxen to cultivate larger areas than the twelve. There is a large number of former migrants who are delighted to receive a full twelve acres with secure tenure. In short, there are very mixed views of this particular project dimension. The government appears intent on instituting this equity provision in the project but residents think that they will alter the system by offering their land to others if they can't fully use it. Larger land holders also think they will be able to obtain more land in a variety of ways and thus not be restricted to the Project's land-

²³ For example, some agriculturalists grow sweet potatoes in the river bed itself as the river **shrinks during the dry season**. Others may have their major maize **fields in what used to be the former river** beds of the Manyame, Dande or (Musengezi rivers. Still others cultivate in those areas flooded **during the rainy season but where** there is significant residual moisture. **The farmers appear to have an excellent knowledge of soil deposition along the river.**

holding limits. It is difficult to adopt self-management or regulation of project rules when many residents do not agree or accept them.

(5) One issue which I expected to find was concern over how the descendants of current residents were going to obtain land. Surprisingly, this issue was not seen as very important. My sense is that this is due to residents not having lived in a land-scarce environment before. In the recent past, sons were able to find land through asking the appropriate village headmen or sabuku, and now they will not be able to obtain land in this fashion and land allocation will be left up to the individual households. I have asked project personnel if and how they have taken population growth and inheritance into account in their plans and they have all said they have not taken the issue into consideration in their plans. One thoughtful AGRITEX officer responded that even if they wanted to, they couldn't because of the large and rapidly growing population. He thought that agricultural intensification combined with labor migration would be what actually happens.

(6) The rest of the project: more schools, more clinics, more or upgraded roads, boreholes are non-controversial. Resistance to these is slight, support great.

(7) It will be the case that some people will benefit from the project. The question becomes which part of the population will benefit and which ones won't. Migrants who had received only an acre or two from Village Headmen or VIDCO chairs now have 12 acres. If they had or have other sources of income then they can successfully grow cotton. Long-term residents who, relied on riverain cultivation will have to give up their agricultural system and very often have to move as well.

The social forces which led to the filling of the valley after independence will affect this point in time a large and overwhelming influence in the Valley's future, but it will be of only five years duration. The question is what will the staying power of the project be? What levels of supervision and enforcement will actually be followed since the Project clearly views local government (Ward Councillors and VIDCO chairs) as the responsible parties?

Let me in conclusion return to Chambers and whether or not the last have been placed first: Does the Mid-Zambezi Project reflect a reorientation of development practice? Specifically, does the project seem to be leading to lesser or greater sustainable livelihood for valley residents, and do they (valley residents) seem vested in the project leading them to take responsibility for the project's success?

Is it then possible to have, as many people have suggested to me, a Mid-Zambezi Project which included roads, schools, clinics,

improved transport, and boreholes without resettlement, villagization, and the banning of riverain cultivation? I think it highly unlikely under current circumstances for there to be a reconsideration. In my view, the dominance of a developmentalist perspective combined with the perception of valley residents as backward prohibit such a course.²⁴

What are the prospect -for the valley? Who will have to take the risks and who bears the costs of mistakes or -failures? No one, despite the project's rhetoric is betting on the valley's poor. Despite the view that the entire valley is poor there is an extensive differentiation among the agriculturalists. The project bets on the more successful in point of fact. The degree of differentiation which can be measured indirectly by cotton production is greater than I anticipated. In addition, while boreholes and clinics will greatly benefit women, less attention was paid to their concerns as farmers and producers.²⁵

The incorporation of wildlife into the project remains highly problematic. Project staff are oriented toward resettlement and agriculture. Boreholes, schools, clinics, roads, arables and residential have all been planned not including wildlife issues. The northern zone, where wildlife was to be given a higher priority has been subject to the same planning exercise. The situation from the perspective of wildlife will be worsened because of the project zone's expansion west of the Manyame.

The protection of wildlife does not figure high in the residents' priorities. Indeed, many are demanding that wildlife be removed from new village areas before they clear arables and residential. Despite the formation of a wildlife committee, increasing cotton production and keeping animals out of the fields are dominant concerns.

What then of the future? There is a Shona proverb which says Chisi chako masimba mashona. This means that "What is not yours you have no responsibilities for." It certainly seems that the project is

²⁴. The two recent cases of communities rejecting an irrigation project on the one hand, and a dam on the other (see articles in The Herald) and both government's and the newspaper's apparent horror as to how it was possible for some people to reject progress indicate a climate in which a reconsideration of the more controversial aspects of the project is highly unlikely.

²⁵. The exclusion of women's concerns from the project will be the subject of another paper. In an environment in which all project personnel are male, all Ward Councillors and VIDCO chairs are male, most of those having jobs outside of agriculture are male, insufficient attention has been paid to the position of women in the valley.

not for the valley residents because the responsibilities of where and how to live are being made by the project, not by the population. This will lead to greater passivity and resistance to government demands and requests, and in the longer-term an undermining of support. This was underlined for me at a meeting at which a VIDCO chair was taken to task for allowing pegging in his VIDCO without informing the village chairmen. One speaker finally said in frustration that "the only thing the Project will bring us is poverty". I spoke to him afterwards to see what if anything he felt he could do to express his concerns beyond the meeting. He said there was nothing since the government had taken responsibility for their lives it would be for government to care for them when the project failed.

Different parts of the valley are in different stages of being resettled. In some places pegging hasn't been started, in others all pegging has been completed and many people have taken up their new fields and homesteads. Most villages are somewhere in between. In short, the region is being unsettled, the people feel unsettled, and project staff, overworked and understaffed, do not have the time or resources to examine what's actually occurring from village to village. Most people say, even when they support the project, that it is not properly theirs. If sustainable livelihoods and democracy are central to valley planning and project operation, they are difficult to detect.