This is to certify that the

thesis entitled

Cultivating Power:
Women, Gardens, and Development in the
Zambezi Valley Zimbabwe

presented by

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has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for

Master of Arts degree in Sociology

Rita A. Gallin

Major professor

Date August 22, 1997

CULTIVATING POWER: WOMEN, GARDENS, AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE ZAMBEZI VALLEY, ZIMBABWE

By

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A THESIS

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of Sociology

1997

ABSTRACT

CULTIVATING POWER: WOMEN, GARDENS, AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE ZAMBEZI VALLEY, ZIMBABWE

By

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The longstanding image of women of the South as passive recipients of development interventions who are victimized by its processes remains powerful within the field of "women" and "development," despite recent emphases on empowerment. Overcoming this image remains one of the central challenges to the field of "women" and "development." While uncovering the silent structures that have impacted women's lives has been critical to the development of the field, the emphasis on structural issues has obscured women's agency and the efforts of women to shape and transform their lives and communities. By examining evidence from a study on women, gardens, and the Mid-Zambezi Valley Rural Development Project (MZVRDP), the advantages of rethinking power in the context of development become clear. The women of Magariro did not passively accept the constraints imposed by MZVRDP. Rather, they confronted their circumstances, negotiated with other household members, and made choices to improve their position as best they could. Abandoning the "victimization" approach allows us to recognize the way in which women exercise power, rather than focus on the way in which women of the South need to be "empowered," yet another process in which they are passive recipients.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A publication such as this would not be possible without the support of various colleagues and friends. Most noteworthy, my advisor Professor Rita S. Gallin, who dedicated many hours and untold energy to guiding and critiquing me as I completed the writing for this project, and Professor Bill Derman, who supervised my work in the field and provided the opportunity for this research, deserve particular attention. I am indebted to them both for their continuing support through this and other projects. In addition, Professors Chris Vanderpool and Craig Harris also provided me with key insights and support for which I am thankful.

I would like to thank Darcel Smith and Elizabeth Ransom for their critique and feedback on the earliest drafts of this thesis. Darcel and Elizabeth provided the encouragement I needed during the initial writing stage, and motivated me to continue despite the disappointments and difficulties I encountered. Finally, I would like to acknowledge the tremendous support of Dewey Lawrence, without whom, this endeavor would not have been successful.

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INTRODUCTION

This paper is about the relationships among "women," "development," and "power." While these are concepts with which we are familiar, they nonetheless need to be problematized. The longstanding image of women of the South as passive recipients of development interventions who are victimized by its processes remains powerful within the field of "women" and "development," despite recent emphases on empowerment. Overcoming this image remains one of the central challenges to the field of "women" and "development."[1] While uncovering the silent structures that have impacted women's lives has been critical to the development of the field, the emphasis on structural issues has obscured women's agency and the efforts of women to shape and transform their lives and communities. In this paper, I will demonstrate that one element that is essential to recognizing women's agency is a redefinition of the concept of power. By applying recent critiques of traditional definitions of power using insights from postmodernism, we can begin to account for the diversity of responses to development interventions by women of the South and begin to once again see their agency.

The paper is based on data collected in Magariro, a pseudonym for a resettlement village created by the Mid-Zambezi Valley Rural Development Project (MZVRDP).[2] I

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1. I use "women" and "development" to indicate that I am not referring to any particular approach to studying women in the development process, such as women in development (WID) or gender and development (GAD). The quotations also reveal my commitment to problematizing the concepts of "women" and "development."

2. As with the village name, all personal names have been changed to ensure anonymity.

spent five weeks in Magariro in the Summer of 1996 collecting information about women's gardens and the way in which women use them to improve their position within the household and secure their livelihood despite the risks associated with an unlawful activity. The government-sponsored project sought to alter land use patterns by demarcating land for arable fields, residential plots, and grazing areas. Riverine (stream bank) land, the preferred agricultural land, was demarcated for grazing, despite local insistence on cultivating this land. During interviews, women revealed contradictory responses to the project. While they support and make claims based on some aspects, they reject and defy others. These "inconsistencies" and "contradictions" highlight a critical juncture in contemporary thinking about "women" and "development." Women's dry-season gardens (or lack thereof) in the context of MZVRDP represent a site of contestation as women respond to discourses of power in development processes in Zimbabwe. The lack of planning for women (and women's gardens) in MZVRDP demonstrates not simply male-bias, but a lack of analysis of the power dynamics in the development process.

I begin this paper by briefly tracing the history of scholarship on the relationship between "women" and "development," reviewing contemporary challenges to such approaches, and examining discussions of power in the development process. I then discuss important historical events that shape the experiences of Zimbabweans and describe development in terms of the MZVRDP. After reviewing the methodology used in this study, I explore my findings as they relate to discussions of power in the study of "women" and "development."

LITERATURE REVIEW

Classic approaches to the study of "women" and "development" have consistently portrayed women of the South as victims. Often portrayed as victimized by male-biased Western development planners, local male leaders, and multilateral banks, women of the South lack agency within the "women" and "development" literature. While such a perspective grew out of the concerns of "women" and "development" scholars and practitioners that women of the South were being harmed more than helped by development, it results in a uni-dimensional perspective on women's experiences that both distorts reality as well as delegitimizes the way in which women do act to shape their social worlds. In addition, the need to acknowledge women's agency rather than their victimization coincides with the need to thoroughly explore the assumptions laden in the recent emphasis on "empowerment" in development studies. Therefore, to sort through the study of "women" and "development," I briefly discuss (1) different approaches to women and the development process, noting their strengths and weaknesses; (2) new perspectives on power; and (3) how these new perspectives on power frame "women" and "development."

Women and Development Interventions: Reassessing Approaches

The theory and practice of "women" and "development" has surfaced in three primary incarnations since women first entered the official development discourse in the early 1970s. Nearly 30 years ago, Boserup (1970) first revealed that the costs and benefits of development were unevenly distributed between women and men, and that

women were often disadvantaged by the process in comparison with men. In response to the need to highlight this inequality and to demonstrate how the incorporation of women into development planning would result in both more equality between women and men and in more efficient development interventions, the field of Women In Development (WID) was established (Parpart and Marchand 1995, Rathgeber 1990). As Parpart and Marchand (1995:13) note, according to this perspective, "Women's development was seen as a logistical problem, rather than something requiring a fundamental reassessment of gender relations and ideology." WID seeks to integrate women into existing development projects based on the liberal assumption that if women participate in development interventions equally with men, they will also benefit from them on an equal basis. Gallin, Aronoff, and Ferguson (1989) characterize this approach as "reformist" rather than "redistributive" because it seeks to reshape the existing system rather than fundamentally change it. WID remains the dominant approach among policy makers, because, as Moser (1993) argues, it is the least revolutionary in terms of changing the distribution of wealth, power, and resources in society at large as well as between women and men.

The second incarnation of "women" and "development," Women And Development (WAD), adopts a radical feminist approach and critiques patriarchy as well as development as systems of domination. Proponents of WAD argue that women have always been a part of the development process, but that their contributions have remained invisible (Rathgeber 1990). In the view of proponents of this approach, integration into existing development projects will do little to improve women's lives. Rather, they view

women as special and advocate women-only projects as a development strategy (Parpart and Marchand 1995). While the approach recognizes inequities embedded in conventional development projects, the success of the women-only approach in challenging patriarchy has been doubted due to the resulting marginalization of such projects from mainstream development (Razavi and Miller 1995).

The most recent approach, Gender and Development (GAD) draws on socialist feminism and extends the approach of WAD. First, it locates development within the existing economics imperatives of capitalism. Second, it recognizes the social construction of gender roles and relations, and thus, potentially, their reconstruction (Elson 1995a, Moser 1993, Parpart and Marchand 1995, Rathgeber 1990). This approach, the most recent incarnation of "women" and "development," owes a significant debt to the work of women of the South (i.e., Sen and Grown 1987). In contrast to the WID approach which relies on the supposition that inequity in development is a mishap, "the redistributive perspective ..." according to Gallin, Aronoff and Ferguson (1989: 6), "believes that women are disadvantaged not by 'malfunctions' in the system but by the structural features of the global economic order." Further, GAD scholars do not see gender as fixed. Rather, they argue, gender is historically constructed, locally situated, and always challenged. GAD focuses on the empowerment of women and the transformation of the social order. It is thus the most revolutionary of the approaches, and as Moser (1993) notes, the least used in practice, despite its popularity among academicians (Parpart and Marchand 1995).

GAD extends scholarship on women and processes of development by acknowledging

that women do not constitute a homogenous group and that class, race, ethnicity and other social markers of difference mediate women's relationship to power. But the framework remains limited in its analysis of power relations in the development process itself. Specifically, the notion of "empowerment" relies on a definition of power as a zero-sum game; either a person has power or she does not. The concept of "empowerment" further can be viewed as patronizing, by implying that women of the South need to be empowered through development interventions designed in the North. It rests on the notion that women are victims without power who have to be "taught" how to negotiate their own lives.

Parpart and Marchand (1995) suggest that, although scholarship on "women" and "development" has increased our understanding of theoretical and substantive issues in the field, it continues to represent women as passive victims. Calling for new thinking about "women" and "development," Parpart and Marchand (1995) advise researchers both to address the real problems of lower-class women and to challenge control over knowledge and power in development practice, an issue that has remained relatively unexplored in the development process. The classic approaches to "women" and "development" all share an inability to recognize the fluidity of power and thus fail to acknowledge women's agency, a point I will explore later. Demanding "attention to women's lived realities and understandings," Parpart and Marchand (1995:19) advocate, "An approach to development that accepts and understands difference and the power of discourse, and that fosters open, consultative dialogue [which] can empower women in the South to articulate their own needs and agendas."

In their attempt to call for new thinking about "women" and "development," however, Parpart and Marchand also rely on the concept of empowerment to define potential change. However, if we begin to look more closely at the notion of power, and explore non-traditional ways of thinking about power, we can begin to challenge the assumptions underlying the concept of empowerment, namely the alleged powerlessness of women of the South. Scholars of "women" and "development" who attempt to overcome the characterization of women of the South as passive victims require an understanding of power as relational in nature.

Rethinking Power

It is not coincidental that the issue of power has remained relatively unexplored by scholars of "women" and "development." After all, development studies have historically lacked an adequate analysis of power as a process. "Development" has been viewed either as a historical phenomenon in which countries of the North develop by "underdeveloping" countries of the South, or, operationally, in terms of interventions designed to stimulate economic growth, thereby moving countries of the South to a state similar to countries in the North. The nature of the power involved in these two process—the *how* rather than simply the *why*—is not interrogated.

Scholars such as Escobar (1995), Long and Long (1992), and Parpart and Marchand (1995) have recently begun to fill this gap by interrogating the development process drawing on Foucault's (1993) observations that power and resistance are mutually constitutive elements. According to Foucault, power is everywhere, at all times. It is

exercised "from innumerable points, in the interplay of non-egalitarian and mobile relations" (Foucault 1980:519). Power is present in the creation of official knowledge and the suppression of subjugated knowledges. Indeed, Foucault (1980:520) maintains that power never exists in isolation from resistance:

> Where there is power, there is resistance. ... [The] existence [of power relationships] depends on a multiplicity of points of resistance: these play the role of adversary, target, support, or handle in power relationships. These points of resistance are present everywhere in the power network. Hence, there is no single locus of great Refusal, no soul of revolt, source of all rebellions, or pure law of revolutionary. Instead there is a plurality of remittances.

Power is, therefore, always a negotiation (explicitly or implicitly) between agents seeking to gain an advantage, curry favor, or otherwise shape the social world. In fact, Villarreal (1992: 256), echoing Foucault, points out,

> The scope of power, commonly defined as the capacity of an individual to impose his or her will upon others, must be unpacked to allow for an understanding that includes the probability of achieving only part of one's project, of accepting compromises, but then pressing home one's moderate aims in an attempt to dominate as big a part of a situation as possible so that one can consider one's aspirations consummated.

Domination, thus, need not be total. Rather, it may be partial so long as it is sufficient to establish dominance. Extending Foucault's notions of the fluidity of power and plurality of resistance to the field of development studies and practice, Villarreal (1992:258) further maintains that:

> If the intention is to understand the causes, connections and consequences of power processes, we have to look very closely at the everyday lives of the actors, explore the small, ordinary issues that take place within different contexts and show how compliance, adaptation, but also resistance and open struggle are generated. ... [W]e have to look for small flashes of command that may peek out from behind the screens. ... I claim that power is of a fluid nature that fills up spaces, sometimes for only flickering moments, and takes different forms and consistencies, which make it very difficult to measure, but conspicuous enough to describe.

Villarreal reminds us that power relations are never unilinear or predetermined, a point also made by James Scott (1985) in his discussion of the ways in which peasants resist class power in their everyday lives. When looking for power, she insists (1992:257), "we see struggle, negotiation and compromise. Those labeled as 'powerless' or 'oppressed' within specific circumstances are not utterly passive victims and may be involved in active resistance." Power can, thus, be seen in the everyday lives and interactions of the recipients of development interventions.

In a similar vein, Norman Long (1992) situates the different actors in the development process in relations of power. He argues that development interventions must be understood as "interfaces" between individual people and external agencies or structures that are shaped by power relations (Long 1992). Although the design and implementation of development interventions often originate in actors located beyond local community structures, these interventions are still mediated and thus transformed by social actors (Long and Long 1992). According to Long (1992:21, "Social actors are not simply ... disembodied social categories ... or passive recipients of intervention,...[rather they are] active participants who process information and strategize in their dealings with various local actors and personnel." These social actors respond in unique ways, not

according to predetermined scripts to development interventions (Villarreal 1992, Long 1992).

In summary, traditional sociological definitions of power focus on the ability to impose one's will despite opposition from others. It is an approach to power that is unidirectional and zero-sum. Rethinking our approach to power by drawing on Foucault, however, suggests relations between unequals are more complex. Power is not necessarily possessed. Rather, it surrounds us and is infused in all aspects of our lives. Utilizing such an approach in the field of "women" and "development" has important implications for moving beyond merely painting women as victims of development and presenting women as agents who manipulate and shape their social worlds.

HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT IN ZIMBABWE

Zimbabwe (formerly Rhodesia), is a land-locked, semi-arid country in Southern Africa that attained independence from its colonial settlers in 1980 after a prolonged liberation war in which many Zimbabwean lives were lost or disrupted (see Appendix 1). The Eastern Zambezi Valley, which borders Mozambique, was one of a few strategic locations critical to the struggle and a site for frequent conflict between the Rhodesian army and the liberation forces (see Appendix 1). In the seventeen years since Zimbabwe attained independence, the government has pursued the development of the commercial potential of Communal Area (CA) farmers as cotton, maize, and tobacco producers.[3] The decade following independence witnessed a boom in smallholder communal farm cotton and maize production (Rukuni 1994). Yet, Zimbabwe is still plagued by problems of rural poverty and too little land (Mehertu 1994).

Zambezi Valley residents experienced great disruptions to their lives during the war, particularly those who were forcibly placed into Rhodesian "protected villages" or, as they are more commonly known, "the keeps." In addition to the dislocations caused by

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3. Following the creation of racial inequalities under settler-colonialism, at independence in 1980, Zimbabwe"s government engaged in limited social reform and expanded health care and education services for its people. After a prolonged liberation struggle which focused on land alienation, inequality and a socialist future, Zimbabwe emerged in a global system not amenable to true socialist reform, and thus, Zimbabwe's capitalist structures and inequalities have remained largely unchanged. Commercial farm areas emerged in the colonial era (roughly 1890-1980) as "white" or "European" land which was alienated from "black" Zimbabweans who were relegated to marginal agricultural land in the "black" Tribal Trust Lands, now known as Communal Areas. These historical land disparities have persisted in the post-independence era. Thus, approximately five million people currently reside in the Communal Areas, which account for roughly 40 percent of Zimbabwe's total land, while 1.5 million people (including commercial farm workers and their families) reside in the Large Scale Commercial Farm areas, on approximately 30 percent of the country's total land (von Blanckenburg 1992, Rukuni 1994).

the war, the re-arrangement of the lives and land use patterns of Valley residents has a historical and colonial legacy. This legacy includes the creation of Kariba Dam in the Western Zambezi Valley in the 1950s and a long string of legislation aimed at divesting black Zimbabweans of prime agricultural land in favor of whites that includes the original prohibition of riverine cultivation. As Derman has argued (1997, 1995), this history is part of the lived experiences of Valley residents and therefore is critical to an understanding of contemporary responses to non-democratic land use patterns, such as the Mid-Zambezi Valley Rural Development Project.

What is the Mid-Zambezi Valley Rural Development Project?

The MZVRDP stretches from the Manyame river in the East to the Musengezi in the West, from the escarpment in the South to the Mozambican border in the North (see Appendix 1). Initiated in 1987 by the Government of Zimbabwe, the project began with the following goals:

- to protect the fragile ecology of the Valley through changing land use patterns and agricultural practices;
- to improve the standard of living of Valley residents;
- to meet government goals of resettling Zimbabweans living in the overcrowded Communal Areas; and
- to provide social infrastructure such as health clinics, schools, boreholes (protected wells), and roads.[4]

Toward these ends, the government sought to enforce its prohibition of riverine

4. MZVRDP was funded by the Africa Development Bank, a multilateral lending organization. It was staffed and administered by Zimbabweans.

cultivation which had remained illegal following independence despite its original outlaw during the colonial era under policies of racially-based land use planning. MZVRDP further planned to provide agricultural credit for farmers and to resettle 3,000 new families and 3,600 families currently residing in the project area into consolidated villages.

In this project, as with similar Rhodesian policies, riverine cultivation was to be replaced with upland cultivation. The planned changes in agricultural practice involved the government demarcation of land suitable for arables (fields for cultivation), residences (homesteads), and grazing areas. Households were to receive a 12 acre arable field and a one acre residential stand. Riverine land (the preferred agricultural land) was defined as grazing land. This marks a significant change in cultivation practice, because long-term residents insist that they have a history of riverine cultivation. Derman (personal communication) has noted that no ecological studies have been conducted to indicate whether or not stream bank cultivation as practiced in the Zambezi Valley is or is not ecologically harmful.

MZVRDP operates under conditions which include residents' experiences with top-down land use planning and a continuity of legislation that is perceived to undermine their livelihoods. The development vision of the Government of Zimbabwe for the Zambezi Valley focuses on concentrated settlements, increased agricultural production, and improved access to infrastructure. This "blueprint" model of development planning (Derman 1995) plans *for* its intended beneficiaries, rather than *with* them. MZVRDP weaves together two discursive practices—eligibility and gender.

In MZVRDP, the development discourse is deployed through the regime of eligibility (Sylvester 1995). This discursive practice considers peasants who adhere to the scripts of the project to be "modern." Peasants do not design this technique of power. The discursive practice of eligibility further relies on the regime of gender in Zimbabwe which deploys "traditional" beliefs about women and men as discrete and "natural" categories. The practice of lobola, or bridewealth, symbolizes the view that women (and their labor) transfer from the rule of fathers to the rule of husbands upon marriage (Sylvester 1995). Gender as a discursive practice is further evidenced in patrilineal lineage, patrilocal post-marriage residence, and legal polygyny. In Sylvester's words (1995: 189), the regime of gender "combines precolonial patriarchal practices with the sexual division of labor the Rhodesians introduced, and with many of the gender issues that are encrusted in Zimbabwe's diverse politics of truth today." Thus, "eligibility" and "gender" operate together in project goals to exclude women.

In the case of MZVRDP, as is the case in much of hegemonic agricultural development, modernity is defined as the adoption of technologically intensive production and the abandonment of "traditional" practices. The MZVRDP Preparation Report (FAO 1985:3) describes Zimbabwe's Communal Areas (CAs) dominated by "traditional agricultural practices." The report further declares that CAs would benefit from the adoption of modern agriculture. The report (FAO 1985: I) claims,

> The project would have a major impact on cotton, maize and sorghum production. ... Increased production and assurance of reasonable incomes of the people reflects the priority objectives of the Government. These aim to maintain self-sufficiency, export surpluses and, at the same time, to improve living conditions of the most disadvantaged groups.

The report (FAO 1985) emphasizes cotton's significance to Zimbabwe's economy, noting that it contributes fifteen percent of agricultural exports, or seven percent of total exports. According to the report, the majority of cotton production occurs in the commercial farming areas. This sector, however, faces increasing problems of shortages of casual labor during the harvesting season. "The situation differs," the report continues (FAO 1985:3), "in communal areas where labor is more abundant." The report further indicates that the primary objective of the agricultural plans of the MZVRDP are to increase cotton production and encourage participation in the cash economy.

Ironically however, the project's emphasis on "modern" agricultural practice specifically employs "tradition" to exclude women from equal participation. MZVRDP relies on traditional practices in which women (and their labor) belong to husbands and fathers. In the planning of the MZVRDP, women are conspicuously missing from multiple levels. From the planning tables, to the project documents, to the project staff, women are either marginalized or completely absent. For example, despite the increased responsibility of women for agricultural activity, the project still treats men as household heads (Derman 1995). Women are only able to apply for land if they are widowed, and then, they are only able to receive 2.5 acres of land, as opposed to the 12 acres granted to male household heads, regardless of the family which widows must support. There is no provision of land for unmarried, married, or divorced women (Derman 1995; FAO 1985). Instead, it is assumed that, following "tradition," women may gain access to land via their relationships to men as daughters, wives, or sisters.

The male-bias of the project is crystallized in its lack of understanding and planning

for women's work and responsibilities; specifically women's work in gardens/*dimba* (*matimba* pl.) and their responsibility for the provision of relish. The difference between gardens and *matimba* lies in the types of crops cultivated. Whereas *matimba* refers to riverine fields, gardens are smaller sized plots utilized during the dry season to cultivate vegetables only. These differences will be discussed at more length below. Such household gardens, according to Cleveland and Soleri (1987, 1991), are an under-utilized development tool for improving household nutrition and security. As a development strategy, gardens can increase food production in a socially and environmentally sustainable way, improve nutritional status, and increase savings and income (Cleveland and Soleri 1987). Indeed, Magaglela (1994) maintains that women's garden activities are critical to household security and historically have been under women's control.

Yet, riverine gardens are not defined as "eligible" sites for modern development in MZVRDP. Rather, the project has undermined women's ability to maintain riverine gardens. While the project advocates that women rely on boreholes for gardens, the boreholes constructed by the project are poorly built and when broken are only slowly repaired (Derman 1995).

To summarize then, the project's "blueprint" for development in the Zambezi Valley is one that condemns "traditional" agricultural practices, while depending on the persistence of "traditional" gender practices. This approach ignores the unique historical experiences of Valley residents with the war and government interventions. The discourse on eligibility works in tandem with the discourse on gender to determine the nature of planning in MZVRDP.

Perhaps for these reasons, the agenda of MZVRDP has largely been unmet. The various government agencies charged with its implementation have not been able to fully put in place the project's goals, partially because the project has been mediated by people. While I discuss why this is so below, here it is sufficient to note that women choose to participate in some aspects of the project while rejecting adherence to others, thereby revealing the different ways individuals negotiate a top-down, non-participatory project as they also manage the positions of power within their lives.

While one could easily view this situation as one in which women are again victims of thoughtless development planners, the insights of scholars such as Foucault and Villarreal that power is flexible suggest an alternative interpretation that recognizes both constraining and opportunity-providing factors for women involved with MZVRDP and thus accommodates varied responses to similar situations. I particularly take from Villarreal (1992:263) the notion of the "importance of looking into the efforts of ... women in the creation, appropriation and conservation of space for themselves." Through exploring the varied responses by women to MZVRDP, I seek to contribute to an articulation of "women" and "development" in which women are social actors with agency. In seeking to observe small flashes of power, I therefore required a research method that allowed for close analysis of the lives of a limited number of women.

METHODOLOGY

Problem and Practice

The insights of feminist epistemology informed the methods used in this study (Smith 1992, Bell 1993 a & b). This epistemology acknowledges not only the daily matters of women's lives, but it also recognizes the unequal power relations that exist between "researcher" and "subject." Though some (Stacey 1988) find "feminist ethnography" a contradiction in terms because of this asymmetrical relationship, I follow Bell (1993b) who argues that a feminist epistemology which centers women's experience facilitates feminist ethnography.[5] In her words (Bell 1993b:31), "Feminist ethnography opens a discursive space for the 'subjects' of the ethnography and as such is simultaneously empowering and destabilizing." Therefore, by beginning with the everyday lived experiences of women, by talking, working, and learning with women, and by attempting to establish reciprocal relationships and friendships, feminist fieldworkers practice feminist ethnography.

The feminist ethnographic methods employed in this study include participant observation and in-depth interviews with 32 women in the Zambezi Valley. The study is based on approximately five weeks (mid-June through July 1996) of living and working in Magariro, a village created by the project as part of its attempt to resettle area residents. At the time this study was initiated, the village included 23 households and

5. Feminists are not the only fieldworkers who have challenged the unequal relationship that exists between the "researcher" and the "subject." The unequal power dynamic that inheres in the research relationship, however, is particularly problematic for feminists who seek to alter hierarchal social relations (see Stacey 1988).

approximately 100 people.[6] I interviewed a total of 23 women; living in 21 households in Magariro.[7] My study also included in-depth interviews with eight women from a village located near riverine land, as well as three women who maintained borehole gardens as an alternative to riverine gardens.[8] I also walked with women to their garden sites. Through these visits, I was able to document the content and structure of women's riverain gardens. In my interviews, I learned of the work cycle involved in women's dry- and wet- season cultivation and the impact of the project on women's lives.

Delving into the Everyday World as Problematic

I began this study armed with information from the prior research, writing, and experiences of my project supervisor, Professor Bill Derman (1995 a and b, 1994; and Derman and Murombedzi 1994), three years of chiShona language training, and broadly defined research questions and goals.[9] The dearth of information regarding women's dry-season gardening in Zimbabwe and the project's impact on this cultivation demanded that

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6. Household has been defined in terms of each woman and her dependents. Therefore, the two polygynous marriages that were located in the village were treated as two and six marriages respectively. Because new residents are still moving into the village, the population is only an approximation. Within the short time of my research, three new families began clearing lands for residentials.

7. In Magariro, I interviewed two elderly women who lived in the households of their son and daughter, respectively. Two households from Magariro were not represented in my study because the women declined to be interviewed: one was the youngest of six wives in one of the polygynous marriages in the village; the other was a single woman who headed the only *de facto* female-headed household in the village.

8. The project suggests that locating gardens near boreholes is a viable alternative to riverine gardens.

9. chiShona is the language spoken by approximately 80 percent of Zimbabweans. In the area in which I worked, the dominant dialect is Korekore. My original research questions centered around the significance of riverine gardens to household security and the impact of MZVRDP on women's ability to maintain them.

the research be exploratory.

Settling In and Sorting Out. I spent my first days in Magariro settling in with the family of my research assistant, David, exploring and mapping the village, and, with David's assistance, gathering preliminary information on the 23 households that became the focus of the research. My entry into Magariro was facilitated by (1) my ability to speak and understand chiShona,[10] and (2) the fact that I worked with a research assistant from the village who is known and respected by his fellow community members.

David greatly eased my entry into Magariro. His knowledge of the community and region provided me with valuable information and understanding throughout the research process. His experience with conducting research and interviews, as well as his familiarity with women in the community, helped put our research subjects at ease. The benefits of David's position as an insider, however, must be considered alongside its costs. Due to the sometimes sensitive nature of some of my interview questions (e.g., about disagreements with husbands or community politics), women may have felt uncomfortable responding candidly in the presence of a man and a fellow villager. In addition, David may have changed the women's words during interviews in his capacity as translator. While this insertion of another level of interpretation was problematic, my

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10. Respondents told me that few white Zimbabweans or researchers from other countries try to speak chiShona. Therefore, meeting a "*murungu*" (white person) who speaks chiShona was surprising to many of the people I met. Residents of Magariro appreciated my study of chiShona and attempted to assist in my learning process. For example, one woman participant in my study, who had more education than many women in the village and had studied English in school, made an agreement with me that she would speak only in English to me, and I would speak only chiShona with her. In that way, we helped each other's language study.

Though I was able to carry on casual conversations in chiShona, I did not feel my language skills were sufficient to carry out interviews without using a translator.

knowledge of chiShona enabled me to understand most of the subjects' responses, and I therefore felt assured that David's impact was relatively minor.

In many ways, being a woman helped me to gain access to women's lives and experiences. As Bell (1993a:1-2) writes, "The issue of gender arises because we (ethnographers) do fieldwork by establishing relationships, and by learning to see, think and be in another culture, and we do this as persons of a particular age, sexual orientation, belief, educational background, ethnic identity and class. ... [W]e also do it as women and men." Therefore, my gender gave me some common ground with women. My status as both unmarried and childless at an age at which I *should* have been both by local standards, however, created a division. I chose to address these divisions (and other divisions such as race, class, and nationality) by discussing them with honesty and humor. For example, when women and men asked why I was not yet married, I explained that women in the United States often married at a late age and that I wanted to finish school before I thought about marriage and family. Moreover, when I added, "*Aah, varume vanonetsa*" (men are trouble), I elicited laughter from men as well as women, and was thus able to "break the ice" with individuals and establish a friendly (sometimes teasing) relationship.

The Methodological Nitty Gritty. I conducted interviews in women's homesteads, in their gardens, and while walking with them to their gardens. In some cases, David would help the women husk maize while we talked; I was usually busy taking notes. Though we tried to speak with women alone, often children or other women from a household

were present during interviews. The presence of a woman's husband during an interview proved to be one of the most difficult situations we encountered. Early in my stay, David and I walked throughout the village and he introduced me and my project to members of each household. Emphasizing that I wanted to learn about women's gardens effectively disinterested most of the men so that when I interviewed their wives, the husbands left. In a few cases, however, husbands were present, listening or attempting to participate in the interview.

One particularly uncomfortable case involved a husband who answered my questions for his wife. She would speak only after he said what he thought, always looking at him before talking. After completing the first part of the interview which focused on basic household information, I asked the woman when she would next be going to her garden. Luckily, she was planning on going the following morning. Explaining that I would like to see her garden, I asked if we could accompany her there the following day and postpone the rest of the interview until then. I (correctly) suspected that her husband was not interested enough in my interview to walk two hours to the garden. The following morning, we talked while we walked and the woman, who in the presence of her husband said little, flowed with information and anecdotes.

COMMUNITY

The research site is a "new" village created by the project. Magariro (see Appendix 2) is located in the Eastern Zambezi Valley, approximately ten kilometers from the juncture of two major rivers, a site of extensive riverine cultivation. Although a smaller river runs near the village, it does not accommodate riverine cultivation. The first two households were moved to Magariro in 1991 and settlers continue to be moved or migrate to the area. The nearest year-round, potable water source is a borehole built by the government years ago (not as part of this project), which is a three kilometer (40 minute) walk from Magariro. The borehole provides water for the people (and livestock during the dry-season) of at least three villages.

The village includes 23 households (15 monogamous marriages and 2 polygynous marriages) with a population of approximately 100 people (for a rough map of the village see Appendix 3). The predominant ethnic group in Magariro is Korekore with a significant number of Vachikunda as well. Inter-marriage between these and other ethnic groups is common.

In Magariro, villagers receive fields in one of two ways: through the project in which "eligible" people (usually men) apply and receive an arable; and through the village chair who exercises his "traditional" authority to distribute land not marked for arables by the project, despite the fact that the project claims this right to be defunct. Of the 23

households studied, nine had been given land by the village chair[11] while 14 households were given project land in Magariro; one of these 14 was in the name of the woman householder. The majority of residents in Magariro migrated from within the Valley from villages where the land to which they had access was small sized and marginally productive compared to the promised 12 acre arable; therefore, for many households, the acreage under cotton cultivation has increased after resettlement.

Livelihood and Economy in Magariro

Agriculture in the Zambezi Valley is organized according to the two seasons: the wet or rainy season (approximately November through March) and the dry season (approximately April through October). Traditionally, farmers cultivated staple foods such as maize or millet, considered men's crops, intercropped with what were considered women's crops, such as beans, cowpeas, groundnuts, pumpkin, and sweet potatoes in their riverine fields or *matimba* during the wet season. During the dry season, farmers cultivated small amounts of "green" maize as well as vegetables.[12] This past century has seen changes in agricultural practices including the introduction of both cotton as a wet season cash crop under men's control and garden crops as dry season food crops under women's control. While the introduction of cotton for cash production marks a significant change in agricultural practice, the advent of gardens more accurately reflects

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11. This includes the six households of one polygynous man. Since the land was given to husbands, a total of four men out of seventeen cultivate land outside project land.

12. "Green" maize refers to corn that is harvested fresh on the cob and eaten. During the rainy season, maize is left to dry on the stalk and then harvested and pound into a grain.

an alteration of an existing system of cultivation, as I will discuss below. Cotton cultivation has altered the traditional division of labor through relegating the responsibility for all food production primarily to women as men direct their attention to cotton.

Through various means, women adapted their cultivation style to incorporate gardens and therefore now usually reserve portions of their *dimba* to grow garden crops. The term "garden" refers to a specific style of cultivation and specific crops in the wider context of stream bank cultivation. Garden crops include a variety of dark leafy greens, cabbage, tomatoes, and onions. These crops require more work, (such as hand-irrigation and the application of manure and sometimes pesticides) than what I will define as *dimba* crops.[13]

The residents of Magariro rely primarily on cotton and maize cultivation in upland fields during the rainy-season for their livelihoods, though many also engage in off-farm work for income at various points in the year. The staple food of Zimbabwe, *sadza* (a stiff porridge usually made from maize) is, except in dire circumstances, always accompanied by *muriwo*, or a stew. Villagers rely on vegetable stew (and occasionally meat) for nutrition and to add taste to *sadza*. In rural areas like Magariro, meat is a rare treat for many families. According to most women in Magariro, they and their households eat meat less than once a month. Therefore, they rely on vegetables as an important part of their diet.

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13. I distinguish between *dimba* crops and garden crops because the two sets of crops require different inputs. Dry-season *dimba* crops are the same crops (in smaller quantities) grown in rainy-season *matimba* and upland fields.

During the rainy-season, women cultivate and gather vegetables from their household's fields, usually located within a ten-minute walk from their household. Women have assumed responsibility for much of work associated with maize and millet in recent years, as well as contributing work in cotton production. During the dry-season, women historically cultivated riverine gardens. In its attempt to enforce the prohibition of stream bank cultivation through threats of fines, MZVRDP neither differentiated between rainy- and dry-season cultivation, nor between fields and gardens, which are smaller in size.

The emphasis on cotton cultivation has, however, demanded more labor in cotton fields. With more acreage under cultivation than before resettlement and the encouragement of the government through MZVRDP, the needs of cotton have come to predominate within many households. Further, due to the fact that cotton's harvesting period extends beyond that of traditional staple crops, the demand for additional labor comes during the time of year when women historically have focused on beginning to cultivate riverine gardens (March -May). The project's impotence at imposing it's will is clear; understanding the interaction between the project and women requires recognizing women's agency as well as a reconceptualization of the concept of power as a dialectic.

FINDINGS

MZVRDP & Magariro

This village provides a telling example of several short-comings of the project. Although the pegging of arables began in 1991, by 1996 no residential stands had been pegged; in essence, therefore, the entire village is an illegal settlement. According to my informants, the "illegal" status of the village creates a sense of insecurity among residents and has discouraged some from investing in quality housing and sanitation facilities. Similarly, no borehole has yet been provided, although this was promised in project documents. While residents believe the existing borehole is reliable, the lack of fencing to protect it from livestock damage raises concern that it may break. Although women agree that borehole gardens are not a good substitute for riverine gardens, they would prefer them over their present situation. In 1996, the promised school had also not been completed and the majority of children living in the village are not being formally educated. The nearest operating school is approximately a two-hour walk from Magariro, and the road to it is virtually impassable during the rainy season due to the lack of bridges over nearby rivers.[14] Finally, as is often the case in development planning, women's activities were neither understood nor considered in the planning process; dry-season vegetable production, therefore, was overlooked. Figure 1 demonstrates the discontinuities between the project's goals and the outcomes in this case.

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14. I have learned that since completion of my research, the primary school was finished and is now operational.

The project failed to meet it goals by its original five-year end date (1992), its three-year funded extension (1995), and by its most recent one-year extension (1996) (Derman 1997). Government estimates of the local population fell extremely short of actual residents, and thus its goal of resettling 3,000 new households has been unmet.

The Government of Zimbabwe, through MZVRDP, assumed the position of omniscient benefactor, declaring it knew and would keep Valley residents interests' at heart. Derman (1997, 1995, and 1994) has explored, however, the undemocratic, top-down nature of this project and documented the difficulties various actors have presented for the project implementors, such as refusing to provide bricks for the construction of local schools. Residents have not responded to the project in uniform ways. While some have openly resisted different aspects of this project, other residents have acquiesced, revealing the social tensions and differentiation among residents. For example, Derman notes that long-term Valley residents, who were more likely to possess riverine fields, were also more likely to lose their fields as result of the project's resettlement plans than were recent migrants. In contrast, recent migrants, who had been allocated fields away from rivers by "traditional" authorities, were likely to be allocated fields by the project that they were already cultivating and thus were not required to move. Response by Valley residents has been mixed, with some residents refusing to relocate and continuing riverine cultivation and others accepting their new arables.[15]

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15. Valley residents also recall similar government attempts at relocation due to the Native Land Husbandry Act of 1951 and are not favorably inclined to another disruption in their lives.

Women's Responses To/ Against MZVRDP

An analysis of MZVRDP could easily cite its gender-blind and male-biased planning, and then continue to show how the project has victimized women in the Zambezi Valley. Although such an analysis would present the very real hardships women now face due in large part to the project, it would fail to explain the ways women create hardships for the project, namely by refusing to adhere to one of its primary goals, the cessation of riverine cultivation.

Although discursive practices of gender were thoroughly embedded within the project, women are not passive victims. For instance, in some cases the project has opened up "gender" for negotiation. Although fetching water has traditionally been considered women's work, this datum was not considered by project planners.[16] Because the overwhelming majority of women knew prior to resettling that Magariro had no nearby water source, they did not want to resettle. Though ultimately these women agreed to move with their husbands, their reluctance offered them the opportunity to renegotiate the allocation of household chores in the new village. Indeed, several husbands helped their wives with fetching water; in one household, the wife had never collected water in the year since she and her husband had moved to the village. In this case, women were able to manipulate circumstances to improve their lives by avoiding a strenuous and frequent task. This finding emphasizes the fact that while the project speaks to the "relocation" of "families/households," households are sites of struggle rather than sites of domination. Indeed, as Magaglela (1994) argues, despite the reality that men dominate women in

16. Women's chores are often delegated to children; in Magariro, however, very few households had children assist with this chore due to the young ages of the majority of children in the village.

much of household decision making, we must remember that households are sites of negotiation. In addition, this example demonstrates not only the way in which the discursive practices of "eligibility" and "gender" operate in tandem in MZVRDP, but also the way in which women resist the difficulties created by discursive practices. The belief that men are "providers" and "household heads" emanates from ideas deployed by the discursive practices of gender. It is these practices that then enable the discursive practice of development or eligibility to ignore women and riverine gardens in planning.

The project's emphasis on increased cotton production as a source of income and development also deserves close attention. As stated above, the project assumes that, in the CAs, labor is abundant and can be made more productive, improving the status of individual households as well as the nation's GDP. The costs and benefits of increased cotton cultivation, however, are not shared equally. The cultivation of cotton diverts women's labor from their dry-season riverine cultivation. Women, who account for much of the "abundant" labor in CAs, report that the harvesting season for cotton, particularly in high rainfall years, is longer than that for the staple food crops (maize, sorghum, millet). The longer harvest places an increased demand on women's labor at a time of the year when they usually begin their riverine gardens. Delaying the start date for cultivating dry-season gardens can decrease the harvest size of these crops. Increased cultivation of cotton has also increased women's responsibility for food crops, as men devote their labor to cash crops. Although women work with men in cotton fields, they report that cotton money "belongs" to husbands.[17] One woman noted that life had

17. Although women negotiate the use of funds earned by men, they tended to feel that their husbands exercise more control over financial matters than they do.

changed since people began growing cotton, and that people now have money to buy clothes, food, and utensils. She complained, however, that although sometimes a person can get a lot of money from cotton, usually male farmers think only of buying scotch-carts and clothes while the last thing they remember to buy is maize. Although the increase in cotton cultivation predates MZVRDP, the project's advocacy of its continued expansion in the absence of an analysis of its gender (among other differentiated) impacts, disadvantages *some* women. Women do not, however, fully comply with the labor demands reflected in the project's assumptions regarding the "abundance" of labor in the CAs. While the project relies on assumptions of abundant family labor or "tradition," some women adopt a modern approach and sell their labor to others. Thus, for some women, cotton cultivation offers opportunities to earn money. In a limited number of households in Magariro, some women were freed from other tasks to sell their labor in other villagers' fields for cash. Six women in Magariro (all without gardens) chose this option in lieu of cultivating a garden in 1996. The women reasoned they could earn money sufficient to purchase vegetables and possibly have some cash remaining for other expenses. These opportunities result from the increase in land being farmed by most Magariro households.

Women With and Without Gardens: New Constraints. It is easy to see why women might be represented as victims when one considers the constraints the project has placed on women's lives. On closer analysis, we can see that women are responding to these constraints. Although riverine cultivation had been prohibited prior to the advent of the

project, the project attempted to enforce this ban, curbing women's autonomy — although not all women (or men) complied. Regardless of whether or not they did, the project introduced several new constraints on women's lives. For example, many women in Magariro, both those with and without gardens, reported feeling more dependant on their husbands for money to purchase vegetables since relocation. One woman who cultivated a garden said that she tries to keep her garden because she does not like "to beg other women for vegetables or for money from my husband." Another woman noted that she found it very difficult to ask her husband for money to buy vegetables when they first moved, but that she has now become accustomed to it. A 23 year-old mother of two said,

> It pains me in my heart to get money from my husband. If there is anything I want, I wait for my husband to come home and borrow money. Sometimes, we don't have vegetable stew, because my husband doesn't have money. ... We stay with hunger without food; or I can cook dried vegetables.

In short, the women agreed that it is important for women to be able to provide vegetables on their own by cultivating a garden and to have access to their own income.

In addition, women both with and without gardens in Magariro report that their households consume both fewer vegetables and a lesser variety of vegetables since moving to Magariro. Women without gardens are dependent on purchases of vegetables from other women or the nearest shops (a two-hour walk away). According to the women (and my own observations), limited types of vegetables are available at the nearest market. Again, women's limited income also affects their women's ability to purchase vegetables. Just as women renegotiated the household division of labor at the

time of settlement, so too they have negotiated the responsibility for appeasing the impact of these constraints. Because many women had expressed concern over the distance to gardens prior to settlement, the responsibility to alleviate these concerns does not remain solely with women. Therefore, such new constraints become joint responsibilities as women actively lobby for their husband's assistance.

"Its Too Far:" Women Without Gardens. Women's strategizing can also be seen in their decision to maintain a riverine garden or not. No single factor affects whether or not a woman attempts to cultivate a riverine garden from Magariro; rather the decision reflects a compromise between women's work loads, husbands, and perceived opportunities. Women with gardens lived in households of various sizes, reared children of various ages (or had no children), as did women without gardens. Some women with gardens cultivated garden plots they farmed since before they moved while others cultivated new plots. Two women who did not cultivate gardens at the time of the research, said that they had cultivated gardens while living in Magariro in previous years, but had decided not to this year. When asked why they did not have gardens, women most often replied "its too far" and that they had too much work at home. Although as I show below, not all women accepted these constraints.

The decision to continue to cultivate a riverine garden after resettlement reflects a negotiation by women of costs and benefits. Although women would often at first provide a simple answer to why or why not they attempted to cultivate a riverine garden, further probing revealed a complicated process. On the one hand, women must consider

the possibility of penalties. On the other hand, they are negotiating within the limits imposed by discursive practices of "eligibility" and "gender" to construct their own "patriarchal bargain"—a concept originally coined by Kandiyoti (1988). According to Kandiyoti (1988), women respond to local manifestations of patriarchy as actors who strategize within particular constraints and bargain for the best circumstances they can. Mai Felice Marowa's decision to not have garden this year, for example, though she had in past years at Magariro, demonstrates how patriarchal bargaining can occur at the household level. She explained to her husband that this year, she had too much work picking cotton, tending livestock, and looking after children to allow her to also maintain a garden. She reminded him that in past years, they had hired someone to help with domestic chores such as fetching water and tending livestock, but this year they had not. The outcome of her negotiations, according to Felice, was that getting money from her husband to purchase the vegetables she did not grow was not a problem. She had convinced him that since she did all of the work at home, she could not also keep her garden.

Felice added, however, that such decisions depended on family size and demands for labor in the family fields. Felice's sister-in-law, Mai Rudo Marowa, exemplifies this as her decision to not have a garden resulted from her choice to sell her labor in others' fields this picking season, rather than begin a garden. Rudo's large family size freed her labor from her husband's fields and allowed her to earn money which she used to buy vegetables and other household items and, she hoped, for school fees for her children.

More Work, Less Harvest: Women With Gardens. In contrast to these women's decisions to not maintain a riverine garden, other women in Magariro valued riverine gardens over other options. In glaring defiance of project planning, women from eight (34%) of the 23 households attempt to maintain riverine gardens, walking two to three hours one-way, two or three times a week to their garden locations. Only one woman attempts to cultivate a garden located in Magariro. All of the 23 women interviewed had cultivated gardens before resettling to Magariro. Of the eight women who cultivate riverine gardens, five cultivate the gardens to which they had access prior to resettling. Three women were no longer able to cultivate the land they had prior to resettlement because the plots are located at a great distance from Magariro. They therefore borrow riverine land from other women in the village.

Although many women persist in riverine cultivation, resettlement away from riverine areas has introduced new problems for women maintaining gardens. First, the distance has decreased areas under cultivation, limited women's ability to sell surplus vegetables, increased work in gardens, and decreased harvests. Those eight women in Magariro who cultivate gardens revealed that because of the time required to reach their distant gardens, they cultivate a smaller sized and less diverse garden than they had before. As one woman said, "by the time you arrive to your garden, you are tired, so you work less, and harvest less." Second, since the project has demarcated riverine areas as grazing land for livestock, increasing numbers of livestock damage women's crops requiring women to construct fences to protect their gardens. While on the surface these problems show that apparently some women are "victims," this may not reflect reality, as I demonstrate

below.

For women with gardens, the distance from the village to the garden translates into an increase in the time required to maintain the garden, plus additional work required because of the infrequent visits. Maintaining these "distance" gardens does not secure vegetables for the entire dry-season, however. The women report that as the season progresses and the soil becomes drier, the gardens require more frequent watering. In addition, as the dry-season progresses, domestic animals and wildlife increasingly enter and destroy the gardens. Women who live a two-hour walk away can not meet the demands of daily watering. The combination of cultivating a small plot with knowledge that during the driest part of the year they will not be able to maintain their gardens, leads women to sell fewer vegetables in favor of sun-drying and storing them for later use.

Mai Kamwe's experience provides an example of the impact of distance on women's ability to maintain riverine gardens. A woman in her mid-50s, Mai Kamwe has attempted to cultivate her riverine land (from where she previously lived) since moving to Magariro in 1991. She has given use-rights for large pieces of her land to women, friends and relatives, who still live in the village from where she moved because now the distance to her riverine land has forced her to reduce the size of the garden that she cultivates. In exchange, the women living nearby and cultivating her land watch her garden in her absence. Her riverine garden land has been demarcated as grazing land by the project, so she has built a fence around her garden in hopes that she can protect it from domestic animals. Although she says that overall she is not unhappy with the project, she reports with a sense of loss of her past success in cultivating a large garden

and *dimba* and selling her produce. Mai Kamwe still maintains pride in her ability to garden, however, sharing the feeling revealed by many of my informants, that garden cultivation is critical to a woman's contribution to household security.

Yet, the distance that creates difficulties for some, creates opportunities for others. Mai Makanda, a married woman with two children, is now able to sell vegetables to many women in Magariro, as she is one of the few women still cultivating a garden. Mai Makanda's fellow villagers consider her to be successful in gardening and often come to her, rather than other women with gardens, to buy vegetables. This has given her access to her own money.

Mai Makanda is not the only person who now benefits from the demand for dry-season vegetables in villages like Magariro. Women who remained living near the rivers commission adolescent boys to visit Magariro by bicycle to sell vegetables, primarily rape. Although their visits are unannounced and irregular, the young boys sell to many villages located away from the rivers such as Magariro. While my limited time in the field did not allow me to research this in depth, clearly, some women have access to a new source of income, and accordingly, the power that comes with sharing control over money.

CONCLUSION:

DEVELOPMENT AND POWER IN THE MID-ZAMBEZI VALLEY RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Beginning in the early 1970s with the passage of the Percy Amendment to the US Foreign Assistance Act (1973), the UN International Year of the Woman in 1975, and the UN Decade for Women (1976-85), a series of events has propelled women into the development discourse. Since then, the field of "women" and "development" has burgeoned with increased recognition of the often differential impacts of development interventions on women and men. Many international donor agencies now require WID components and within the field debates continue over the value of "integrative" versus "women-only" approaches. Despite these 25 years of scholarship and practice, we must still question the gender impacts of development projects. We must also begin to ask, "In what ways are women and men shaping and transforming the projects to which they are subjected?"

The intersection of the discursive practices of gender and eligibility within the MZVRDP have led to the exclusion of women as full participants and of gardens as sites for investment. In response, women struggle within the constraints imposed by the project to improve their position within the household and secure their livelihood. Women's persistent cultivation of riverine gardens, in opposition to the projects's stated goals, highlights the way in which they challenge power relations in development processes. The women of Magariro revealed ambivalence to the project, simultaneously

noting it's beneficial and detrimental effects on themselves and their families. Despite the hardships imposed by the project, women are pleased with their new fields. These ambiguities, the complex ways in which women choose to participate in some aspects of the project while rejecting adherence to others, reflect women's individual resistance to a top-down, non-participatory project as they negotiate the discursive practices of gender and eligibility and attempt to shape and transform not only MZVRDP, but also their social worlds.

The experience of one elderly woman from Magariro exemplifies women's simultaneous acceptance and resistance to MZVRDP. Mai Hovi lives with her husband on an arable they received through the project. They moved to Magariro in 1994. This woman in her 70s walks an hour and a half each way to her riverine garden. Her feelings about the project reflect complacence, yet her persistent riverine cultivation suggests resistance: "There is nothing I can do or say. We did not see such settlement before, people used to choose their land, their homes. Now, the government is choosing land and villages for people — it's bad." Although Mai Hovi expresses powerlessness in response to the project's insistence on relocation, her refusal to stop cultivating her riverine garden, along with many other women's refusals, represents the project's failure to meet one of it's primary goals — changing land — use and demonstrates her exercise of power in rejecting this important aspect of the project.

Through a series of decisions made to confront the circumstances presented by MZVRDP, the women of Magariro demonstrated "flashes of command" as they attempted to define their social world. For some, the constraints imposed by MZVRDP

allowed women to renegotiate their household division of labor and opt out of difficult or unpleasant chores. The choice not to garden by some women in the village provided economic opportunity for others who chose to continue to garden. Economic opportunity arose for women without gardens in the form of the demand for labor in the village as they were able to sell their labor for cash. In each of these situations, and numerous others that undoubtedly exist and need further study and exploration, the women of Magariro exhibit brief moments of power, thereby challenging the notion that power is unidirectional and total in nature.

By examining evidence from a study on women, gardens, and MZVRDP, the advantages of rethinking power in the context of development become clear. The women of Magariro did not passively accept the constraints imposed by MZVRDP. Rather, they confronted their circumstances, negotiated with other household members, and made choices to improve their position as best they could. Rather than focus on the way in which women of the South need to be "empowered," yet another process in which they are passive recipients, abandoning the "victimization" approach allows us to recognize the way in which women already possess power.

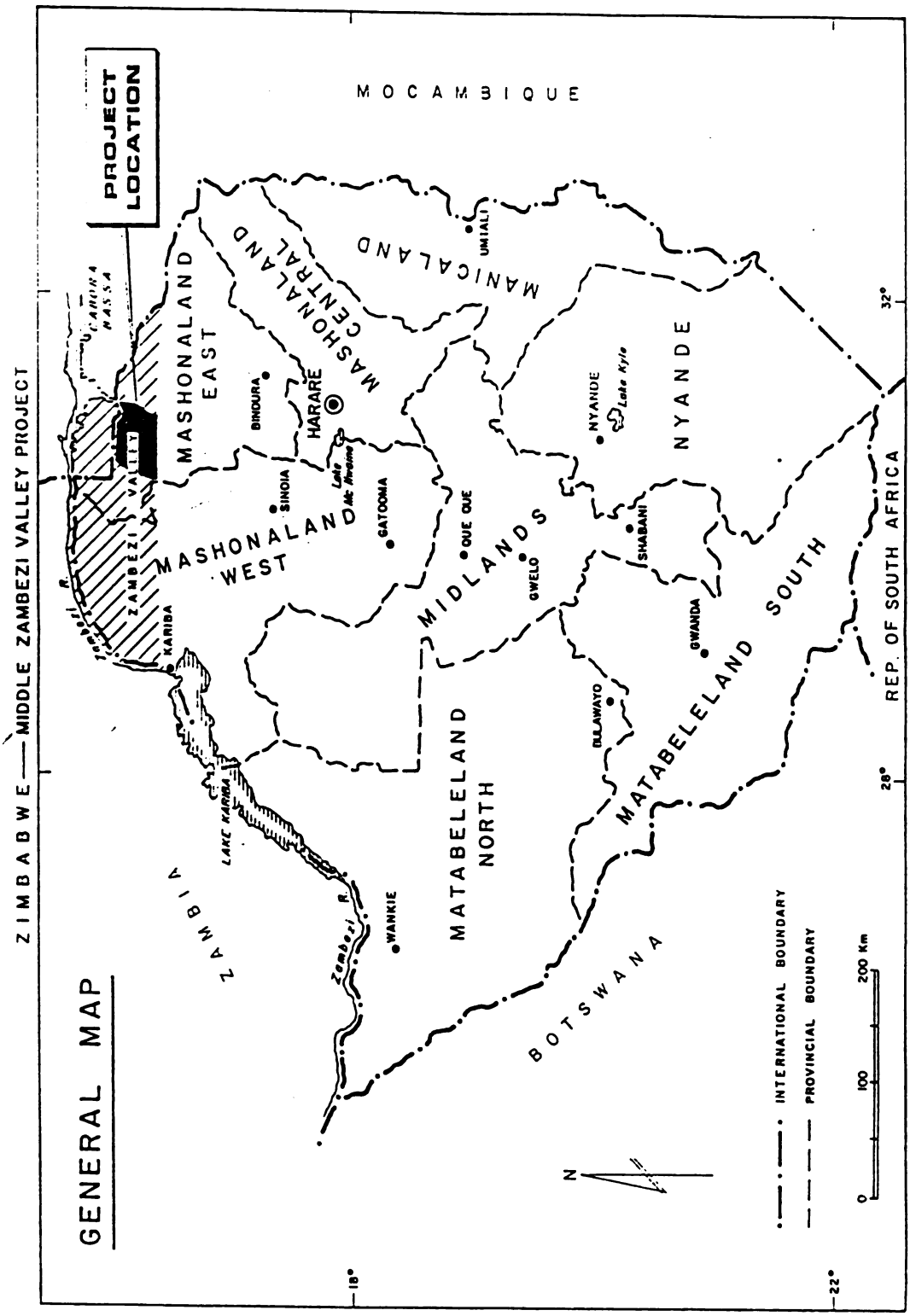
FIGURE 1:

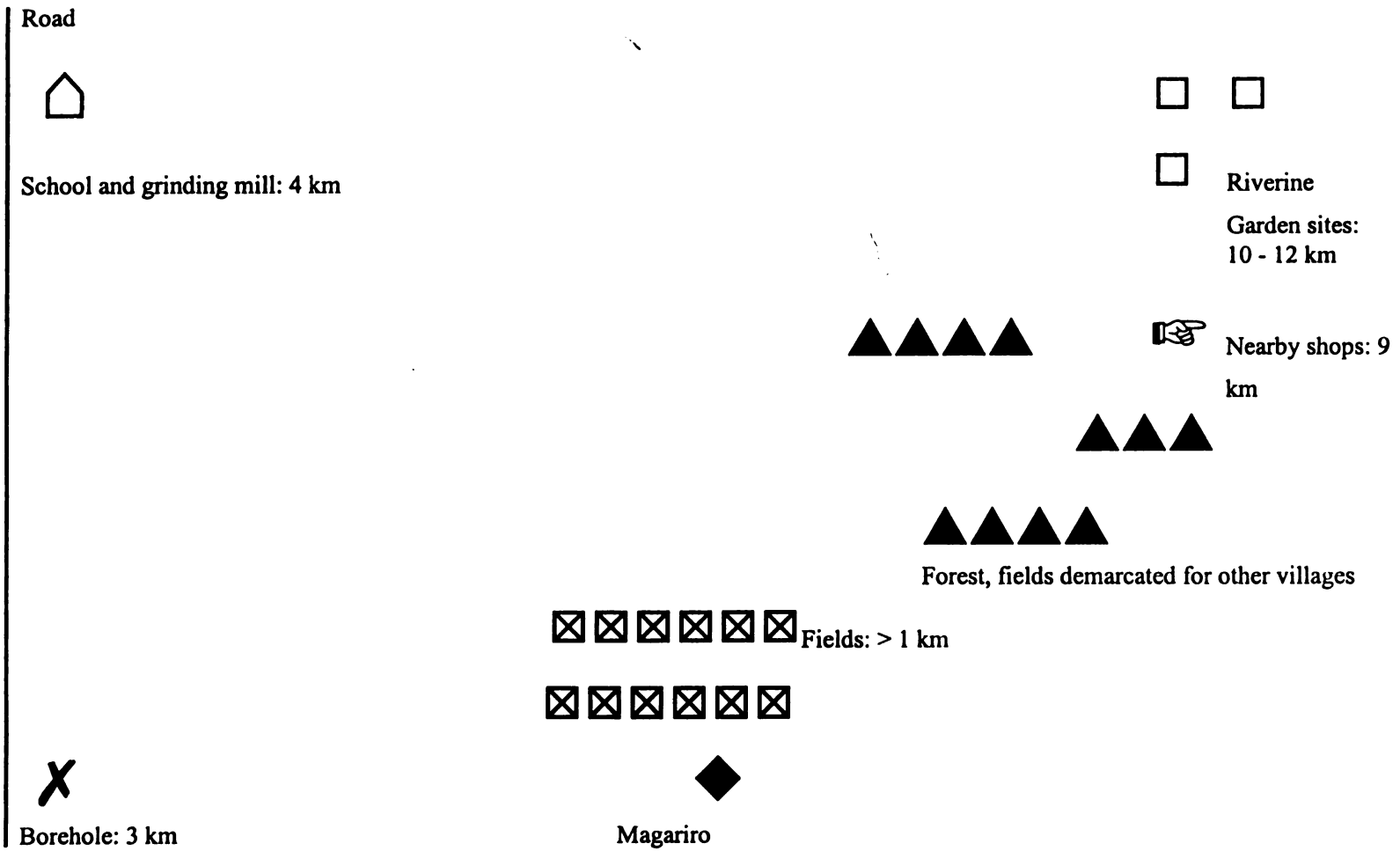
DISCONTINUITIES BETWEEN PROJECT GOALS AND REALITY

Mid-Zambezi Valley Rural Development Project Goals	**Illustrations of Project Short-comings from Case Study in Magariro**
• To protect the fragile ecology of the Valley through changing land use patterns and agricultural practices.	• Arables demarcated in 1991; residentials unpegged in 1996.
• To improve the standard of living of Valley residents.	• Village lacks safe water source within reasonable distance.
• To meet government goals of resettling Zimbabweans living in the overcrowded communal areas.	• Infrastructure such as roads, bridges, schools, not completed at time of research.
• To provide infrastructure such as schools, clinics, boreholes, and roads.	• Lack of understanding or planning for women's activities.

APPENDIX 1

MAP 1





Map is not shown to scale, rather to give a general idea of spatial arrangement of Magariro and surrounding area.

APPENDIX 3

Magariro
= Household
= Households without 12 acre field from MZVRDP
= Polygynous households
Borehole 3 km

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