

Displacement in the name of Development :Insights from Zimbabwe.

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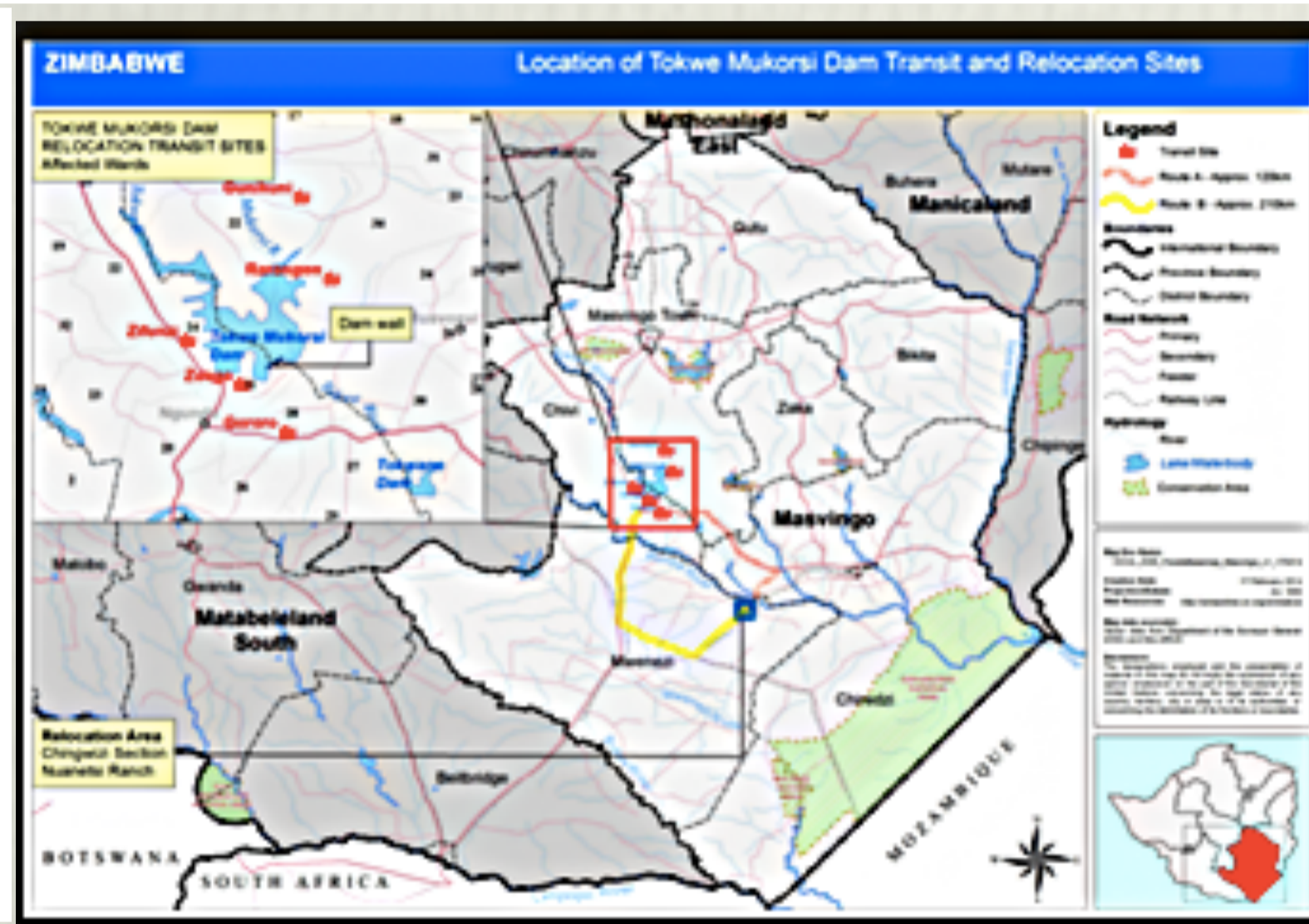
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INTRODUCTION

The general assumption is that infrastructural projects improve people's livelihoods. Nevertheless empirical evidence on the consequences of these projects on the displaced is limited. To address this gap in knowledge the study focuses on the dynamics of development-induced displacements. It uses a case study of the Tokwe Mukosi dam, Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe. An Italian company Salini Impregilo was contracted for the construction of the dam. The construction of the dam begun in 1998 and was completed in 2017 and it was funded by the government of Zimbabwe. The state justified the relocation of an approximated 5000 households to Chingwizi and Naunetsi ranch on the basis that the dam construction was necessary for the creation of modernized irrigation schemes, creation of rural employment and income generation via rural tourism. The study addresses these questions:

- How do displacement in the name of development unfold? (Reasons, processes, actors, methods etc.)
- What are the socio economic, political and ecological dynamics that result from displacements in the name of development?
- What are the emerging livelihoods pathways and forms of rural politics of displaced people?



Map showing relocation sites



Tokwe Mukosi Dam

METHODS

The study applied ethnographic research methods using in-depth interviews, observation and life histories. Secondary data through netnography complimented the primary data. A total of fifty (50) in-depth interviews were done to date with the displaced and data collection is still on going. Fifteen (15) Interviews were also conducted with the key government actors in charge of the project and non-governmental organizations lobbying for the displaced.

DISCUSSIONS

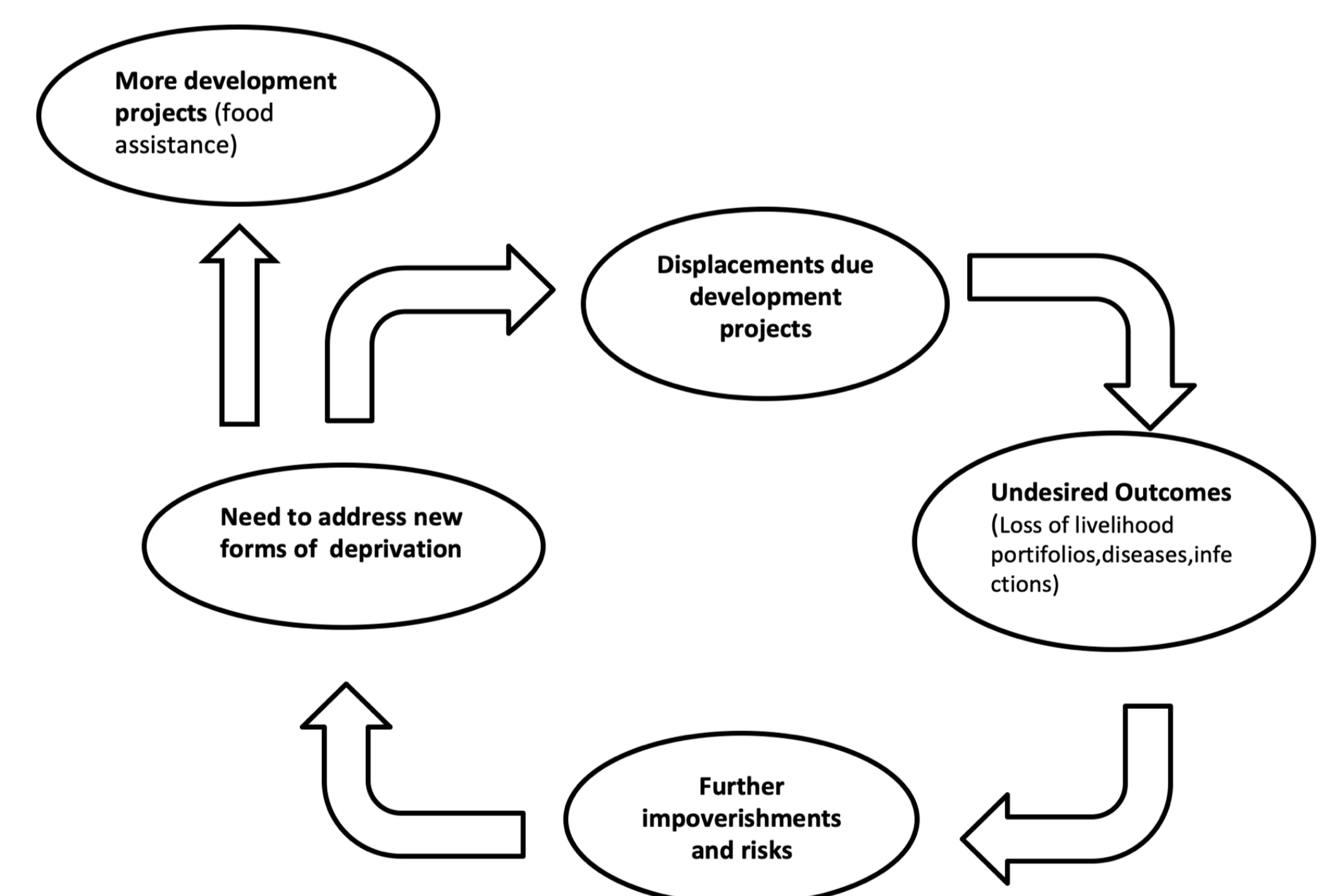
- The study established that relocation was unplanned and spontaneous. A top down approach was employed during the project execution and this led to marginalization of local people. There was emergency upstream evacuations after flooding leading to more forced relocation.
- Livelihoods were destroyed and families left worse off than before. To this date no employment has been created and displaced peasants' livelihoods are in hanging mode. The displaced lost basic amenities, which they had, access to prior to displacement.
- There is elite capture and politicization of the project proceeds where the displaced are excluded from the development projects (income generation, irrigation plots, tourism, fishing).
- Local people in Tokwe Mukosi understood the infrastructural project as a move to create large-scale capitalistic agriculture and state accumulation that does not feed into the livelihoods of the people.
- The displaced suffer a new web of deprivation which needs to be addressed (each household receives food aid monthly to buffer the deprivation).
- Fragile livelihoods for communities left behind because of fear of displacement.
- Government intends to establish a national park, Hotels and museum, projects which



School after displacement



Water source in the new area



Dynamics of development induced displacements

- The displaced apply overt forms of resistance to redress their grievances. They refused to move 1-hectare farms allocated by government citing they were promised 5 hectares.
- Moving back to the dam catchment area and their original homes without permission from the state.
- Engaging community leaders and NGOs to lobby for proper compensation.



Demolished housing before displacements made of brick wall and cement



Houses after displacement made of mud

CONCLUSIONS

- Displacement has produced negative socio-economic consequences on the displaced rather than bringing the envisaged development.
- The displaced are experiencing deprivation and exclusion from the project proceeds.
- Project benefits flow to the elite such as top government bureaucrats and large business conglomerates.
- The study concludes that the resurgence of the modernisation agenda through infrastructural projects is beneficial to those pushing the modernism agenda sidelining and neglecting the displaced.