

PUTTING THE LAST FIRST: USING THE CHAMBERIAN LENSES TO EXPLORE POVERTY AT SIVOMO VILLAGE, NKAYI DISTRICT, ZIMBABWE

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ABSTRACT

Over three decades ago, Robert Chambers published a timely piece of work in the field of rural development. In his tome, he raised a plethora of issues which remain pertinent to academia, practitioners as well as policymakers. His work critiqued the approach to rural development and advocated for a new approach to dealing with development in the periphery. The publication of his work was timely for Zimbabwe given the renewed focus by the new government on development. However, poverty and backwardness remain rife in contemporary Zimbabwe. Using a Chamberian lens, this paper discusses poverty in rural Zimbabwe both from an existential perspective as well as in conceptual terms. It recognizes that some assertions made by Chambers do not play out identically at Sivomo where distance and household income have a strong negative correlation ($r = -.553$ (two-tailed), $p < .05$). Assuming such perspectives, the paper makes a modest contribution to the continued call for broad rural development for the millions in the third world. The paper suggests that a more concerted effort be adopted to realize some of the elusive ideals of rural development as outlined by Chambers.

KEYWORDS: *Rural Development, Elites, Community Development, Zimbabwe*

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