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## Research Methodology

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### **Introduction**

This chapter describes the research site and discusses the research design that was used to collect data to answer the research questions that informed the study. The following aspects of the empirical investigation phase are covered: the research design adopted a description of the study area description of the population sample and sampling procedure instrumentation pilot testing of the instrument details of the field work data analysis and presentation.

### **Research Design**

The investigation triangulated the research methodologies (made use of both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques). Such a design was deemed appropriate for the following reasons: First, quantitative data collection techniques made it possible to obtain responses from an appreciable number of land reform beneficiaries. Second, qualitative techniques complemented the quantitative data, by seeking responses to *How* and *Why* questions? In other words, the qualitative approach assisted in telling the story behind the quantitative figures.

At the methodological level, triangulation was achieved through the use of questionnaires and interviews to collect data from farmers. Data sources were also triangulated in that data were collected from four different sources: beneficiaries of the resettlement phases under investigation, Ministry of Lands and Resettlement Officers and Ministry of Agriculture Officers. Ministry of

Lands and Resettlement Officers provided important data on the number and gender of beneficiaries under the two phases. They also provided data on services that were put in place prior to resettlement, especially in the Pre-Fast Track phase. On the other hand, Ministry of Agriculture Officers provided production-related data, e.g. average levels of production in the wards, farmers' challenges/problems and support services being provided by the Ministry of Agriculture to beneficiaries through the Department of Arex. Nurses at the ward clinics and district hospital provided data on the prevalence of HIV/AIDS in the district's farming sector and programmes (if any) being rolled out to ameliorate the impact of the epidemic. The officials from the three ministries referred to above constituted the key informants.

### **The Study Area**

The Republic of Zimbabwe is a landlocked country in Southern Africa, covering an area of 390,757 square kilometres, of which land occupies 386,670 square kilometres, and water occupies 3,910 square kilometres. Zimbabwe is bounded on the north and north-east by Zambia (797 kilometres), southwest by Botswana (813 kilometres), Mozambique 91,231 kilometres) on the east, South Africa (225 kilometres) on the south, and Namibia's Caprivi Strip touches its western border at the intersection with Zambia.

Zimbabwe sits astride the high plateaus between the Zambezi and Limpopo rivers, its main drainage systems. Much of the country is elevated, 21 per cent being more than 1,200 metres above sea level. The topography consists of three relief regions. The high veld (an open, grassy expanse) rises above 1,200 metres above sea level, and extends across the country from the north-east narrowing towards the south-east. The middle veld, lying between 900 and 1,200 metres above sea level, flanks the high veld, mostly extending towards the north-west. The low veld stands below 900 metres and occupies the Zambezi basins in the north and more extensive Limpopo and Sabi-Lundi basins in the south and south-east. The eastern highlands have a distinctive mountainous character rising above 1,800 metres, and include Mount Inyangani standing at 2,592 metres above sea level.

The field research was carried out in 33 wards in Kwekwe District in the Midlands Province between August and October 2010. Figure 2.1 is a map of Kwekwe District which shows the wards where the research participants were sampled.

**Figure 2.1:** Map of Kwekwe District



The wards sampled covered the whole district to capture the diversity of farming systems, socio-economic and political context which characterise the district. The overriding objective was representativeness of the sample and also the ease of access into the areas. The research team also targeted areas that had the most activity in terms of resettling people in each district by design. Kwekwe District shares boundaries with Chivhu and Mvuma districts to the east, Gweru district to the south, Bembesi District of Matabeleland North Province to the west, Gokwe East, Gokwe West and Kadoma District to the north. Kwekwe District is one of the eight districts centrally located in the Midlands Province. It is 815,338 hectares in size. Most of the district falls within natural farming region three (78.8 %) and a small margin (21.2 %) is in natural farming region four. Figure 2.2 is a map of Zimbabwe indicating the position of Kwekwe District.

**Figure 2.2:** Map of Zimbabwe Indicating the Position of Kwekwe District

**Source:** *Department of Surveyor General (1998), cited in Moyo et al (2009)*

## Geology and Vegetation

### *Soils Within the District*

Four different types of soils are found in the district. Rego soil – which is made up of fine grained Kalahari sands. Siallitic – these are shallow to moderately shallow reddish-brown clay soils, formed on meta volcanic. Fersiallitic soils – moderately deep reddish-brown clays formed on meta volcanic as well as those formed on trassic and Permian formations. Para-ferrallitic – moderately deep to deep greyish-brown coarse-grained sands over loamy sands or yellowish sandy clay loams and soils with sodic properties interspaced.

Most of the natural vegetation has been destroyed over the years. The current situation depicts scattered bush trees and sparse grass cover. In the Large Scale Commercial farming areas, forests with little grass cover are

noticeable. The common tree species are the *brastegia*, *colophospermum*, *acacia*, and *parinari* species. The common grass species are *aristida*, *heteropogon* and *hyperrhenia* species.

### ***Drainage***

The major rivers of agricultural importance which form the drainage system of Kwekwe District are Munyati, Sebakwe, Kwekwe, Gweru, Ngondoma and Sessombi. They all generally flow northwards and are fed by several streams.

### ***Emerging Farming Systems***

Kwekwe District farmers used to do intensive mixed farming of beef and crop production but due to changes brought about by the agrarian reforms; there is a slight shift as land sizes become reduced in an effort to accommodate as many families as possible. Beef and crop production are still being done although the beef herd has been reduced significantly. Other production sectors such as dairy and small stock are still operational, although some dairy farms were also downsized, resulting in reduction of herd sizes. There is no major shift on small stock production.

### ***Cropping***

Maize, groundnuts, millet, rapoko, sorghum, tobacco, sunflower, soya beans, bambaranuts, sugar beans, wheat, barley, paprika, sweet potatoes and Irish potatoes are grown in the district. There has been a downward trend in the production of paprika, soya beans, wheat and barley. The few remaining large-scale commercial farmers have also downsized their area per crop.

### ***Game Farming***

About 13 farms fall under the conservancies. These have been protected by the delay in the announcement of the policy on conservancies. Settlement has been done on a few of the conservancies. Most of the conservancies are still intact and no human activity has disrupted them.

### ***Irrigation Schemes***

There are six communal area irrigation schemes in the district and several individual schemes which came into existences with the agrarian land reform exercise. However, most of these irrigation schemes are proving very difficult to run due to very high maintenance costs of such enterprises.

### *Phases Covered by the Survey*

The survey covered the two resettlement phases: the Pre-Fast Tract and the Fast Track. Both phases were intended to expand the smallholder farming sector, commonly called the Communal Area sector, to cater for the landless, unemployed and disadvantaged people from communal, urban and other areas.

### *The Population*

The population consisted of land reform beneficiaries (both male and female) in the two phases (Pre-Fast Track and Fast Track A1).

### *Sample and Sampling Procedure*

The sample consisted of 78 male and 24 female beneficiaries under the Fast Track phase and 59 male and 34 female beneficiaries under Pre-Fast Track phase. Registers of beneficiaries of the land reform programme in the district were obtained from the District Lands Office. From the list of names, random sampling was employed to pick the sample, taking into cognisance the percentage of women to male beneficiaries. While this was not problematic in the sampling of Fast Track beneficiaries, it proved difficult under Pre-Fast Track because there was no deliberate attempt to observe the quota system (resettling a certain percentage of female beneficiaries) which was not the case under Fast Track. To circumvent the problem, researchers, with the assistance of Arex officers, established the number of women-headed households under the Pre-Fast Track Phase in Kwekwe District, and proceeded to use random sampling to come up with the sample of women beneficiaries under the Pre-Fast Track Phase. It would appear as if there was no clear cut criteria for identifying women beneficiaries during both phases of land reform. However, literature and what is happening in practice amply demonstrate that the quota system for women was not implemented in both phases of the land reform programme. According to Chingarande (2008:289):

The statistics indicate that the number of females allocated land under Fast Track was very low countrywide. Women-headed households who benefited under Model A1 constituted only 18% of the total, while women beneficiaries under Model A2 constituted only 12%. Women's rights are clearly marginalised in both models. A host of structural and market forces (for example lack of access to finance or credit for the purchase or leasing of land) which relate back to historical and contemporary disadvantages facing women account for women's marginalisation,

especially for Model A2. As well, cultural, legislative and traditional explanations account for the low number of women who have been allocated land under the FTLRP.

### ***Instrumentation***

A questionnaire having both open and close-ended items was designed (refer to Appendix 1). While more work is involved in creating a new research instrument, (Rossier 1990) justifies the labour by pointing out that the researcher may have greater confidence in the instrument which has been carefully built to measure study variables. Unstructured interview guides for beneficiaries and for Arex officers were also constructed. The data collecting instruments were scrutinised for content validity. The basis of the validity was the statement of the problem, research questions and the reviewed literature.

The questionnaire was pilot-tested by being administered to a group of randomly selected land reform beneficiaries in Kwekwe District. Pilot testing is important in that it can reveal any flaws in the instrument. Such flaws are then corrected before the main data collection exercise. This may reduce question ambiguity. Other benefits of pilot-testing as argued by (Walter and Burnhill 1990) are that it:

- ascertains the range of possible responses, especially to items which are open-ended and will require coding or will be changed to closed items in the final survey;
- ensures that the items are yielding the desired information;
- gives the opportunity to learn what the results of the main survey are likely to be; and
- may result in the refinement of procedures for data collection, data preparation, and analysis prior to the commitment of resources to the main data collection programme.

In this investigation, the researchers used the results from pilot-testing to fine-tune the instrument and data collection procedures.

### **Fieldwork**

The team stuck to the original methodology: *triangulating the methodology*. The sample size was 100 Fast track and 100 Pre-Fast Track land beneficiaries. Women comprised 15 per cent of the sample. The sample was drawn from almost the whole of Kwekwe District which comprises 33 wards. The team started with a pilot study to test the reliability and relevance of questions.

Three wards were covered in the pilot study. Data from the pilot study was analysed, leading to the fine-tuning of the research instrument.

Data was collected using questionnaires, interviews and observations (transact walks). As a means of verifying certain data collected through questionnaires, sampled farmers were interviewed. However, because of the sensitive nature of the phenomenon under investigation (the land issue), the researchers did not use Dictaphones and taking notes openly while interviewing farmers. The team members attempted to relive the interviews while moving from one homestead to another, and write notes. In order to authenticate the data from questionnaires and interviews, heads of extension workers were also interviewed. The research team employed Agriculture Extension Officers as research assistants. The team was divided into five teams, comprising three members per team, and collected data from different wards. Each team was headed by a CRN member working with two research assistants who were Arex officers. The reason why we picked Arex officers was that they are known and trusted by the community. As a result resettled farmers were free to answer the questionnaires, participate in interviews and allowed team members to take transact walks on their farms and villages. The transact walks were meant to observe area under cultivation, livestock units, farm implements used and to confirm some of the data from questionnaires.

The researchers collected data at a time when the Constitution Outreach Programme was being rolled out. Hence the chances of being viewed as working against the constitution-making process were very high and the consequences too ghastly to contemplate. Another methodological change was the negation of focus group discussions. This was necessitated by the need to have permission granted for a gathering of more than six people according to the Public Order and Security Act (POSA). While there were a number of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) employees working in Kwekwe District at the time of the study who could have been used as research assistants, the prevailing relationship between the Government of Zimbabwe and NGOs then deterred the researchers from engaging these employees.

Research assistants were responsible for asking beneficiaries and completing the questionnaires. The questionnaires were translated into the major local languages (Shona and Ndebele). Quantitative responses were coded and fed into the computer then analysed, using Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS). Qualitative data was analysed qualitatively, which entailed segmenting, coding and categorising responses. The findings are presented and discussed in Chapter Six.



### **Ethical Considerations**

The researchers explained to the participants that: (a) they were free to pull out of the study if they so wished (fortunately none of the sampled participants pulled out); (b) participants were also informed that their contributions were to be treated anonymously; hence participants' identity particulars were not captured in the questionnaires; (c) participants whose photographs were included in the monograph gave the researchers permission to do so and finally, (d) the researchers treated participants with respect at all times during data collection.

### **Conclusion**

The chapter has discussed research method and design – paying attention to methods and design employed; description of the research site; population sample; sampling procedure; and, instrumentation. The chapter has also detailed how the fieldwork was conducted. The next chapter explores the political economy of Zimbabwe from a historical perspective, underlining the centrality of the Land Question.

