

**ASSESSING THE PERFORMANCE OF PUBLIC
SECTOR INSTITUTIONS IN ZIMBABWE: A CASE
STUDY APPROACH**

by

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To my loving mother and late father whose departure from this world in 1997 reduced the very meaning of life in me.

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ACRONYMS

ADC	Association of District Councils
ADF	African Development Fund
APA	African Purchase Area
ARDC	Association of Rural District Councils
AULA	African Union of Local Authorities
BRDC	Beitbridge Rural District Council

BSAC	British South Africa Company
BSAP	British South Africa Police
CBMC	Community Based Management Component
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CHOG	Commonwealth Heads of Government
DA	District Administrator
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DC	District Council
DDC/O	District Development Committee
DDF	District Development Fund
DLG	Democratic Local Government
ELCZ	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe
ESAP	Economic Structural Adjustment Programme
FRD	Forum for Rural Development
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GOZ	Government of Zimbabwe
GPH	Gwanda Provincial Hospital
ICAC	Intensive Conservation Area Committee
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IRWSSP	Integrated Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Programme
IULA	International Union of Local Authorities
LAA	Land Apportionment Act

LHC	Lancaster House Constitution
LSCF	Large Scale Commercial Farm
LWF	Lutheran World Federation
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
MDSD	Most Dissimilar Systems Design
MEWRD	Ministry of Energy, Water and Rural Development
MILGRUD	Ministry of Local Government, Rural and Urban Development
MOHCW	Ministry of Health and Child Welfare
MOEC	Ministry of Education and Culture
MOLGANH	Ministry of Local Government and National Housing
MOPCHN	Ministry of Public Construction and National Housing
MORTS	Ministry of Roads and Transport Services
MSSD	Most Similar Systems Design
NC	Native Council
NGO	Non – Governmental Organisation
NHF	National Housing Fund
NPC	National Planning Commission
NPM	New Public Management
NPS	New Public Service
OGIL	Open General Import License
PA	Provincial Administrator
PDC/O	Provincial Development Committee

PF – ZAPU	Patriotic Front - Zimbabwe African People's Union
PSIP	Public Sector Investment Programme
RA	Resettlement Area
RC	Rural Council
RDC	Rural District Council
RDCCBCC	Rural District Council Capacity Building Coordinating Committee
RHC	Rural Health Centre
RLG	Rural Local Government
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SCCF	Small Scale Commercial Farm
SCN	State Certified Nurse
SDF	Social Development Fund
SEO	Senior Executive Officer
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
SRN	State Registered Nurse
SSI – UK	Social Services Inspectorate – United Kingdom
TTL	Tribal Trust Land
UDI	Unilateral Declaration of Independence
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VIDCO	Village Development Committee
WADCO	Ward Development Committee
WB	World Bank

WPHM	Working Party of Heads of Ministries
ZANU – PF	Zimbabwe African National Union - Patriotic Front
ZANU	Zimbabwe African National Union
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union
ZIMCORD	Zimbabwe Coordinating Conference for Development
ZIPAM	Zimbabwe Institute for Public Administration and Management
ZIPRA	Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army
ZRP	Zimbabwe Republic Police

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Amalgamation: It entails bringing together two systems to make them one. In Zimbabwe, it is used to describe the process of integrating Rural Councils (RCs) and District Councils (DCs) into one rural local government system (Roe, 1992:12). The process has led to the formation of 57 Rural District Councils, which now stand as rural local government units in the country. Prior to this, rural local government was separated on racial lines. DCs were established for blacks and RCs were instituted for white communities. The amalgamation policy marked a positive step, particularly towards undoing the effects of colonialism and developing and strengthening the rural local government (RLG) system in Zimbabwe. Thus, amalgamation should not be viewed as a basic decentralisation initiative, but as a concept for transforming the RLG system. Among other socio-economic imperatives, it sought to unite rural blacks and their white counterparts in commercial areas, thereby bridging the racial gap and ushering in a new era of racial harmony and social coherence in rural Zimbabwe.

Commercial Areas: These are areas set aside for commercial farmers. Before independence they belonged to white commercial farmers and were known as Large Scale Commercial Farming Areas (LSCFAs). The Land Apportionment Act of 1930 led to the demarcation of land in Zimbabwe. It led to the creation of racial apartheid in land distribution and ownership. All fertile land was reserved for white farmers as commercial land areas (Moyo in Mandaza, 1987:188-192). On the other hand, land that was known for its poor ecological conditions was reserved for blacks as Tribal Trust Land or Native/Africa Reserves.

Communal Areas: These are areas inhabited by mostly black peasant farmers. Before independence they were known as Tribal Trust Lands (TTLs) or simply Native or African Reserves. Blacks were pushed into these areas after the promulgation of the Land Apportionment Act in 1930. The areas have become overpopulated and are incapable of sustaining small-scale farmers and their families (Moyo in Mandaza, 1987:187-188). Communal areas are the focus of most rural development efforts from central government, local government and donor communities.

Community participation: It entails the involvement of the public in a wide range of issues of a local government nature. It includes taking part in electing councilors, making decisions on policy matters, programme and project conception and application, determining the modalities of resource sharing and the whole process of local governance. In addition, Paul (1988:2) notes that community participation is an active process by which beneficiaries/client groups influence the direction and execution of a development or local programme with a view to enhancing their well-being in terms of income, personal growth, self-reliance or other values they cherish.

Decentralisation: There are many definitions of this concept. However, the definition by Rondinelli and Cheema (1983:18) seem to be applicable. They see decentralisation as the transfer of responsibility for planning, management and resource raising and allocation from the central government and its agencies to field units of central government ministries and agencies; subordinate units or levels of government; semi-autonomous public authorities or corporations; area-wide, regional or functional authorities; or non-governmental, private or voluntary organizations. Concentration in this study is on decentralisation as transferring these powers to local levels of government, known as local authorities or local government units. It is the manner in which a state adopts this concept that determines the type of local government system in that country.

Local governance: This is a process where a local public authority organizes communities to govern themselves so as to achieve their fundamental purpose: the good life of all. Any local governance system should have a democratically elected council, appointed staff, and communities whose quality of life needs to be improved. The purpose of local governance is to promote the welfare of communities within any local authority area (Fox and Meyer, 1995:55).

Local government: Local government occurs when a nation state is subdivided into smaller geographical units, capable of exercising political and administrative autonomy as provided by the Constitution or enabling legislation. It is a lower level or tier of government, closest to the people (Reddy, 2000:8). The units created through this process should be given the authority to manage their own affairs without the interference of central government. Local government plays an important role in community development. It enhances, if well established, local

participation, responsiveness and administrative efficiency and effectiveness. Thus, a well functioning local government system is that which has the autonomy to determine a combination of services for communities, how these services should be provided and with what resources. In its conduct of duty, local government is expected to maintain a sound tripartite relationship among councilors and staff, central government, and individuals/communities and other interest groups. Such a relationship should be that of equal partners, rather than that of dominance of one group over others.

Performance measurement: This is the process that organizations use to ascertain the level at which they are carrying out their tasks in order to meet set objectives. It is also an attempt to find out if the organisation is able to meet certain set standards (DeJesus, 2001:3). Consequently, performance measurement does not only focus on objective attainment (effectiveness), but on the whole conduct of duty of a given institution, particularly its efficiency, responsiveness, adequacy, appropriateness and equity considerations.

Rationality: The ability to use one's powers of reason in determining courses of action for an organisation and, in involving all stakeholders in decision making, providing services or products to customers, and managing with excellence (Fox and Meyer, 1995:110). According to Bozeman (1979:63), rationality is embedded in the philosophy of rationalism, which is an embodiment of a faith in humans and their capacity to solve problems reasonably, by using scientific analysis, logic and systematic enquiry. Thus, underlining the premise of rationalism is that world phenomena, though complex, can be solved by employing well calculated, reasonable, objective and logical arguments to unravel these complex phenomena and provide answers that can lead to societal change and development.

Resettlement Areas: These are made up of commercial farms that were purchased by the Government of Zimbabwe from commercial farmers through a willing buyer willing seller arrangement. The GOZ acquired these farms in order to resettle landless Zimbabweans, particularly peasant farmers and unemployed blacks (Moyo in Mandaza, 1987:192).

The Rational Actor Model: This is adopted from Graham Allison (1971:28). This is a rigorous model of goal directed action, emanating from well-constructed and well thought out decisions that follow proper human reasoning. This model indicates that rational choice consists of value maximizing actions that follow a systematic procedure of laying down goals and objectives, exploring alternatives for attaining the set goals, weighing the consequences of each action/alternative and making a maximizing choice (Dunn, 1994:274-275). The model is derived from liberal economics with its fundamental notion of humans as maximisers with unlimited wants. However, these human actions are limited by the scarcity of resources, hence the need to make intelligent choices in order to obtain the best satisfaction from these limits.

Transitional Constitution: This is the first Constitution of independent Zimbabwe. It is also known as the Lancaster House Constitution. It was drafted in Lancaster in 1979, just before Zimbabwe's independence in 1980. It was a compromise Constitution intended to facilitate the transfer of political power from the minority whites to the black majority. There were clauses within it that protected whites from arbitrary abuse by blacks, especially where land and property ownership were concerned (Herbst, 1990:47).

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the performance of rural local government institutions in Zimbabwe and the Beitbridge Rural District Council (BRDC) in particular, between 1993 and 2002. Specific focus was on the BRDC's effort to enhance democratic participation and empower local communities; its performance in providing services of a local nature; and the level of performance of its management in its bid to infuse and maintain ethos of institutional excellence in the council.

Interviews, questionnaires and documentary search were used as instruments for collecting data of both a qualitative and quantitative nature. Consequently, the study does not draw polarity between quantitative and qualitative dimensions of research because of the need to derive benefits from both methodologies. The analysis of data followed a similar approach.

The findings of this study are that there is no sufficient community participation in BRDC affairs. Although there is a platform for community participation in the form of VIDCOs and WADCOs, officials of these committees tend to dominate the planning process and consequently, plans reflect the decisions of a minority rather than a majority. Councilors only report back to communities when they feel like and council staff are not responsive to the communities they serve. Thus, the performance of the BRDC in enhancing community participation is below the expectations of communities and this has created a strained relationship

between council and the latter. On service provision, the indications are that services are not adequate to meet the demands of communities particularly in housing, recreational facilities, water and transport. Besides, the provision is not responsive to community needs. Inefficiency and ineffectiveness manifest themselves in the process. Council management is bedeviled with several forms of non-performance due to resource wastage, lack of responsiveness and a general lackadaisical attitude.

One would conclude that the manner in which the council is performing indicates a lack of economic and administrative rationality in both councilors and council staff. Consequently, there is need to build the capacity of both incumbents and infuse ethos of excellence in running council affairs. This can be done through training and staff development programmes.