

Presence and Functionality of Rangeland Management Institutions: The Case of Insindi Smallholder Resettlement in Gwanda, Zimbabwe

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Abstract

9 The Fast Track Land Reform in Zimbabwe adversely affected environmental management.
10 The study sought to establish the presence and functionality of institutions for rangeland
11 management in Zimbabwe in Fast Track Resettlement areas. Data was collected using
12 questionnaires and interviews. A total of 30 questionnaires were administered on each
13 household, randomly selected to get their perspective on rangeland management issues. Key
14 informants were also interviewed to understand the trajectories of rangelands management.
15 Data from questionnaires was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences
16 (SPSS). Results revealed that there was a dearth of relevant institutions for the management
17 of rangelands as a common property resource. It was concluded that lack of robust
18 institutions, particularly in Fast Track Resettlement areas was at the core of rangeland
19 deterioration. In order to enjoy the full benefits of the fast track land reform, robust technical
20 support has to be availed to reduce environmental degradation taking place in the area.

Index terms— natural resources, land reform, institutional development, rangelands, common property resource.

1 I. Introduction

25 he history of land reform in Zimbabwe dates back to the coming in of white settlers in 1890s (Marongwe, 2002).
26 However, this study would focus on post independence land reforms particularly the Fast Track Land Reform
27 (FTLR) as critical in explaining the unprecedented rangeland deterioration. From 1980 until 1999 government
28 acquired 3.8 million ha of commercial farmland and resettled 71000 families (Feltoe, 2004). This programme was
29 supported by a robust development package. It is also alleged that during this time government owned 300,000
30 ha of former commercial farmland which had not been allocated for resettlement. Many of the early resettlement
31 programs were not successful because of inadequate planning, failure to provide appropriate infrastructure and
32 agrarian support systems. In March 2000, it was revealed that 272 state owned farms had been leased to high
33 ranking civil servants and a coterie of ruling party cadres (Feltoe, 2004). Up to 1990, government had failed to
34 come up the requisite pieces of legislation to engender a sustainable land reform. As such commercial farmers
35 used this failure by government to follow the procedure laid out in the acquisition legislation in order to obstruct
36 and delay the acquisition for resettlement.

The year 2000 marked a turning point in Zimbabwe's history of land and agrarian reform. Hitherto, there was talk of the land question, but now talk was on the land as an answer to economic problems. The government acquired about 5 million hectares and resettled about 46111 families on 2.5 million hectares under the fast track land reform programme (FTLRP) (Feltoe, 2004). Land audits indicate, that by February 2006, about 156,000 households were resettled on 6,800,000 hectares. The FTLRP was associated with the modification of existing settlement models in the form of a communal subsistence farming model A1 (either as a villagised or self contained

4 III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY A) STUDY AREA

43 model variant) and commercial farming model A2 (with variants of small, medium, large and peri-urban farm
44 models). The programme occurred under adverse macroeconomic and unstable political conditions (Chigumira,
45 2010).

46 Unlike previous resettlement programmes, the FTLR was not properly planned. Consequently, people were
47 resettled without first laying out development infrastructure and were not psychologically prepared to live in
48 relatively pristine environments. Environmental issues were relegated to the background during the land reform
49 in Zimbabwe. There is, generally, a dearth of skills and techniques for sustainable rangeland utilization. The
50 result has been intense disturbance leading to environmental degradation through soil erosion, deforestation and
51 overgrazing. Deforestation has been on the increase particularly in the resettlement areas due to clearing of
52 land for expansion of agriculture, collection of firewood for subsistence as well as for commercial purposes as
53 a response to the demand created by the rise in electricity charges and the shortage of paraffin. Soil erosion
54 is essentially driven by poor farming methods bedeviling smallholder resettlement schemes. The backlash of
55 environmental degradation is more evident T Volume XIV Issue VIII Version I in rangelands of marginal areas.
56 Given that prime beef in the country come from arid and semi arid regions like Matabeleland, rapid environmental
57 deterioration has serious ramifications on beef production in the country. As such, the problem may not only be
58 felt by farmers, but the entire Zimbabwean population as beef is also a critical foreign currency earner. Therefore,
59 the study sought to establish the presence and functionality of institutions for rangelands management in Insindi
60 smallholder resettlement area.

61 2 II. Literature Review a) Causes of rangelands degradation

62 Rangeland degradation is influenced by a number of factors. Haji-Rahimi and Ghaderzadeh (2008) identified
63 inappropriate animal husbandry system as one of the major issues promoting rangeland degradation. The
64 transhumance system was noted as a key driving force in rangeland degradation. However, the Africa Centre for
65 Holistic Management in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe has demonstrated that overgrazing is not in anyway related
66 to an increase in stock numbers. Neely and Butterfields, (2004) argue that overgrazing is a function of time
67 and not stock numbers and occurs when an animal returns to a grass plant before it has had time to fully
68 regenerate. When animals are allowed to roam freely, they will indeed revisit plants before the particular plants
69 recover. However, when animals are herded to ensure that they do not re-graze the plants before they are
70 fully recovered, then overgrazing is no longer an issue. Adverse climate change may reduce the productivity
71 of rangelands so that their grazing capacity may be reduced to the extent of causing desertification (Sharma
72 et al., ??2007). Therefore, in Zimbabwe where over 70% of the rural population entirely uses fuel wood as a
73 source of power (Marongwe, 2002) and in the era of acute electricity load shedding in the urban subsystem, bush
74 cutting is critical in rangelands degradation. Investigations by Chigumira, (2010) in three farms in Kadoma
75 district revealed that because of the shrinkages in the economy, hyperinflation and reduced incomes from crop
76 production, most households particularly those that are resource poor, communities resorted to off farm sources
77 of income particularly through intensive utilisation of their natural environment. These included intensive
78 sale of firewood which have consequently contributed to decreases in woodland and bushland and conversions
79 to cultivation/grassland at the three sampled farms. Ambiguity in property also undermines rangelands. Haji -
80 Rahimi and Ghaderzadeh, (2008) notes that after the passage of nationalization laws in 1963, all natural resources
81 including rangelands were vested to government and the zeal for judicious management waned and the backlash
82 was severely felt in the rangelands. For Zimbabwe, Chigumira (2010) and Chigwenya (2010) attribute rangeland
83 degradation to poor environmental governance and institutional decay respectively.

84 3 b) Institutional framework for current rangeland management 85 in Zimbabwe

86 A number of legal and policies pertinent to the environment exist in Zimbabwe. These include Environmental
87 Management Act cap 20: 27, Communal Forest Produce Act cap 19:04, Forest Act cap 19:05, Rural District
88 Councils Act cap 29:13 and the Parks and Wildlife Act cap 20:14. However, it should be observed that there is
89 no legislation or policy that specifically deals with rangelands as a distinct resource. This probably explains the
90 degradation obtaining at rangelands as a neglected resource. At the same time pertinent policies include Wildlife
91 based land reform policy, the Integrated Conservation Plan for the Fast Track land reform program, Millennium
92 Development Goals (MDGs), National Environmental policy, National Action programme on the United Nations
93 Convention to Combat desertification and drought, Water management strategy and the National Action plan to
94 the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. However, often the letter and spirit of these policies are not followed.

95 4 III. Research Methodology a) Study area

96 The study area lies about 18 km from Gwanda town along the Gwanda-Bulawayo road. The A1 resettlement area
97 covers about 6000 hectares. The study area is located between 20° 53'S and 20°45'S and between 28° 57'E and
98 29° 03' E. Vegetation physiognomic structure is essentially tree bush/ savanna (TBS) with Colophospermum
99 mopane comprising the canopy cover. Dominant tree species include Colophospermum mopane, Dichrostachys
100 cinerea and Terminalia sirecea.

101 **5 b) Methods**

102 Based on the sample size calculator, a total of 30 households were selected and questionnaires were administered
103 on each household, randomly selected to get their perspective on rangeland degradation. Interviews were also
104 conducted with key informants such as traditional leaders and government extension workers from Agricultural
105 technical and extension (Agritex) services, the Environmental Management Agency and Forestry Commission.
106 The interviews sought to extract information related to the role of each institution in rangeland management and
107 also to identify The respondents comprised people from different age-groups. Sixty percent of people interviewed
108 were at least 41 years of age and 30% were between 30 and 40 years of age while only 10% accounted for the 30
109 and below age group (Figure ??). Hence, all important age categories were represented. In terms of gender, the
110 majority interviewed were males (63%) and the rest were females (37%).

111 Figure ?? : Age of respondents in the survey About 67% of people interviewed have been residing in Insindi
112 resettlement for over three years suggesting that land uptake was very high at the time of the land reform. At
113 the same time 30% have been resident in the area for the past 2 years while only 3% had been resident in the
114 area for less than a year. According to respondents, the sampled households owns 29 goats and 30 donkeys
115 and cattle as (Table 1), making a total livestock population of about 89. On average each household owned two
116 goats, one donkey and one cattle. A cross tabulation of the importance of rangelands and the number of livestock
117 owned revealed that regardless of livestock ownership, grazing use was considered an important option as can
118 be seen from figure 3 below. It shows that people appreciate the role of grazing to the local economy. However,
119 it is also clear that those with a few livestock also give more weight to mining of natural resources as a critical
120 use. For example, for those with less than 10 goats, four people indicated that the rangeland was important
121 for mining of natural resources and so was five people with four and less donkeys. Finally, five people with
122 five and less cattle also recognized natural resource mining as an important rangeland use option. The results
123 suggest that the different social groups of the community appreciated the importance of rangelands in as far as
124 grazing is concerned irregard of livestock ownership. People who had fewer or no livestock also appreciated other
125 roles that rangelands play such as aesthetics and mining of natural resources. The recognition of the invaluable
126 role of rangelands is reflective of the significance of the pastoral economy to the locals. This confirms the long
127 held convention that semi arid areas are the prime beef producing areas in Zimbabwe. The majority of people
128 (43%) interviewed generally felt that their rangelands were in good condition while 33% felt that it was average
129 and 23% felt that it was poor (Table ??). The results imply that rangelands are under threat. In terms of
130 healthy rangeland indicator, an overwhelming 83% indicated that high vegetation cover and absence of gullies
131 were indicators of a health rangeland. At the same time 17% indicated that availability of water and more wildlife
132 were indicators of a healthy rangeland.

133 **6 d) Causes of rangeland degradation**

134 In terms of causes of rangeland degradation, 73% indicated that drought, tree cutting and overstocking were
135 the key driving forces behind rangeland degradation while 27 % attributed rangeland degradation to lack of
136 institutions Table ??.

137 **7 Table 3 : Causes of rangeland degradation**

138 **8 Causes of Rangeland degradation**

139 **9 Percentage of respondents**

140 Drought, tree cutting, overstocking 73% Lack of institutions for management 27% Total 100% About 90% of
141 respondents indicated that soil erosion and lack of palatable grasses were key forms of the manifestation of
142 the process of rangeland degradation while 10% also felt that the presence of alien invader plants contributed
143 to rangeland degradation. The results may be indicative of the fact that invader species are not a significant
144 problem in Insindi.

145 **10 e) Need for rangeland regulation**

146 There was a general consensus that rangelands have to be regulated mainly because the community was not
147 well organized and had no common goals. At the same time about 9 respondents indicated that there was need
148 for rangeland regulation given that degradation was already high and about seven people felt that government
149 has to regulate rangelands owing to its paternalistic role. i. Ways of controlling rangeland degradation About
150 43% of respondents indicated that rangeland degradation can be reduced by controlled grazing while 40% argued
151 that the development or strengthening of local institutions could be critical in reducing rangeland degradation.
152 About 17% indicated that degradation can be reduced by destocking, revegetation and reseeding (Figure 4).
153 ii. Institutions for rangeland management About 77 % of respondents indicated that institutions of rangeland
154 management existed while 23% said such institutions were nonexistent in the area.

155 Existing institutions are predominantly community based (Figure 5). 50% of respondents indicated that
156 community based institutions in the form of the neighbourhood watch committee and the committee of seven
157 were instrumental in rangeland management issues. 30% of respondent were of the opinion that there were no

11 V. CONCLUSIONS

158 institutions for rangeland management at all and 20% indicated that government agencies were a key institutes in
159 natural resources management. This means that government and Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) are
160 playing a peripheral role in rangeland management. iii. Effectiveness of institutions About 20% of respondents
161 indicated that community based institutions are more effective while 40% indicated that they were not effective.
162 About 10% of respondents felt that although government agencies were existed, they were not effective. About
163 30% indicated that institutions were neither there nor effective (figure 6). It is therefore clear that community
164 based institutions play a critical role in rangeland management, albeit ineffective.

165 The results also suggest that people understand the dynamics of rangeland deterioration and also insights
166 to sustainable utilization. ??o management that were said to be in existence are either the neighbourhood
167 watch committee or the committee of seven established under the auspices of the Integrated land reform policy.
168 Both institutions lack capacity to deal with rangeland issues. Apparently the core business of the former is to
169 provide security services for the resettlement area and issues of rangelands are just but incidental to their core
170 business. Hence degradation will remain a thorny issue in this area. The latter was established to enhance
171 sustainable management of natural resources in the fast track resettlement areas. However, they were never
172 trained in natural resource management. In addition, they do not wield as much power as they should with
173 respect to environmental governance since there were no intensive environmental awareness campaigns carried
174 out as a prelude to the land reform and also not everyone recognize the environment as a common rallying point.
175 Over and above the results suggest that there are no effective institutions either community based or otherwise
176 for sustainable development of rangelands in fast track areas. This confirms studies by Chigumira, (2010) and
177 Chigwenya, (2010) that environmental governance institutions have broken down in the country due to a decade
178 of political and economic crises with a consequent backlash on the receiving environment. Attached to this, the
179 results suggest that no environmental management programmes are currently going on in the resettlement area
180 since the majority did not meaningfully participate in rangeland management and those who participated were
181 only providing security in the resettlement area. This is undoubtedly a serious gap which needs to be addressed.
182 About 60% indicated that they participated in rangeland rehabilitation while 40% indicated that they are not
183 involved in any rangeland management initiatives. Apparently the 60% that claimed participation in rangeland
184 management were essentially involved in security services for the entire resettlement area, rather than actual
185 rangeland management.

186 11 V. Conclusions

187 Admittedly, the fast track land reform, particularly smallholder schemes has led to community disturbance
188 but rangeland condition is still relatively good to support the farming communities. Therefore, the fast track
189 land reform has not entirely destroyed the agricultural as Campbell, (2008) would want us to believe. It can
190 also be concluded that there is a dearth of requisite institutions and legislation for sustainable management
191 of common property resources such as rangelands in Zimbabwe. There are relevant legislation such as the
192 Environment Management Act, Communal Forest Produce Act and the Forest Act but enforcement is weak
193 resulting in unregulated rangeland use. For example law enforcement agents find it difficult to enforce the
194 Communal Lands Forest Produce Act in resettlement areas because it was not gazetted for such areas. To a
195 greater extent, issues of rangeland management are just but incidental to these pieces of legislation. Hence, the
196 need to develop institutions for sustainable management of rangelands in smallholder resettlement areas cannot
197 be overemphasized. Therefore, disturbances caused by smallholder resettlements in semi arid regions of Zimbabwe
198 if not properly managed could have serious and irreversible environmental effects in the near future. This could
199 also undermine the local beef and wildlife economy which form the backbone of livelihoods in such areas. It
200 is recommended that institutional development for management of rangelands as a common property resource
201 would be critical in enhancing sustainable utilization rangelands. This should be accompanied by ^{1 2}

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Figure 1:

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	Goats	Donkeys	Cattle
Number	29	30	30
Mean	1.55	1.37	1.47

Figure 2: Table 1 :

Figure 3:

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202 revamped extension packages to promote environmental awareness and the importance of rangelands in
203 the community. Also, strategic environmental impact assessments must be carried out by government in
204 resettlement areas to militate against factors that are likely to cause more adverse rangeland degradation.
205 Strategic environment assessments help inform policy, programmes and projects and could be a useful tool
206 for the sustainable utilization of rangelands of rangelands in the smallholder resettlement areas. There is also
207 a need to resuscitate paddock fences in the resettlement areas. The results of this present study showed that
208 open grazing inadvertently led to overgrazing. Therefore, the resuscitation of the paddock system will go a long
209 way in reducing overgrazing since livestock movement will be controlled with a consequent of reducing rangeland
210 degradation. In order to achieve full benefits of the fast track land reform programme, technical support would
211 be required to reduce rangeland degradation in the smallholder resettlement areas.

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