

BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES
DEPARTMENT OF PEACE AND GOVERNANCE



**EXPLORING CONFLICTS ARISING FROM 2023 WARDS AND
CONSTITUENCIES DELIMITATION IN MBIRE DISTRICT.**

BY

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**DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF PEACE AND
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ABSTRACT

The study aimed to investigate conflicts arising from the delimitation of Mbire District's 2023 Wards and Constituencies. Conflict theory was a theoretical framework used in this study. The research design used was a case study. Only 45 of the 55 people in the sample actually took part. Purposive, snowball and stratified sampling techniques were used to find the participants. A mixed research approach was used. Both in-person and telephone data were gathered for the study, along with an interview guide. Statistical and thematic examination of the data conducted. Uncertain boundaries, insufficient representation, competition for resources and allegations of gerrymandering are the primary forms of conflicts arising from the delimitation of Wards and Constituencies, according to the study. The study also discovered that conflicts resulting from the delimitation of Wards and Constituencies have the following effects: poaching, exclusive participation, economic losses and delayed developments, disruption of social services and voter indifference. Changes in voting patterns, election disputes, political polarization, and deterioration of mutual trust and the possibility of electoral reforms are some of the consequences of these disputes on political dynamics, according to the study. The research also suggested potential election reforms in Zimbabwe, such as independent commissions, reducing political violence, collaborating with local stakeholders and improving the constitution. The ZEC was advised to give voter and civic education top priority throughout the delimitation procedure in light of the findings. The Zimbabwean Parliament ought to revise the Constitution to incorporate clauses pertaining to public involvement and discussion during the delimitation procedure. To ensure a seamless delimitation procedure, the Zimbabwean government and its international partners should promptly supply the ZEC with sufficient resources. Additionally, since the results of the delimitation procedure cannot be undone for ten years, ordinary individuals should accept them.

Key terms: boundary disputes, conflict, constituency, delimitation, electoral reform, gerrymandering and ward

DECLARATION FORM

I thus certify that this dissertation is entirely original with proper citations to all sources. The research report has never before been turned in for a test or degree.

Binister Mafiro: 

Date: 02 April 2025

The undersigned hereby confirm that they have supervised and recommend to the University for the acceptance of the research project titled: **Exploring conflicts arising from 2023 Wards and Constituencies delimitation in Mbire District** submitted by B210832B in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Bachelor of Science Honors Degree in Peace and Governance.

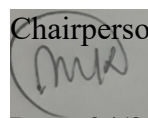
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DEDICATION

I dedicate this research project to my family for their unwavering support, encouragement and love throughout my academic journey. To my parents, who instilled in me the value of education and to my mentors and colleagues, whose insights and guidance shaped this work. I also dedicate this research to the people of Mbire District, whose experiences and resilience in the face of challenges have inspired the very foundation of this study.

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And to my friends Bramwell Chigogo, Portia Marekera and Blessing Matope, I value our connection and am grateful for their encouragement, support, humor and compassion. They added enjoyment and memorability to this trip.

ABBREVIATIONS

ANC: African National Alliance

BUSE: Bindura University of Science Education

CAMPFIRE: Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources

CCC: Citizens Coalition for Change

CDF: Constituency Development Fund

IEBC: Independent Electoral Boundaries Commission

IEC: Independent Electoral Commission

IIDEA: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance

MDC-A: Movement for Democratic Change Alliance

RDC: Rural District Council

RTGS: Real Time Gross Settlement

ZANU-PF: Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front

ZEC: Zimbabwe Electoral Commission

ZESN: Zimbabwe Electoral Support Network

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CHAPTER 1

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Electoral delimitation is the process of determining and creating electoral district borders in order to guarantee equitable representation and efficient governance. Redistricting lowers voter turnout and electoral competition for example, in US Congress and state legislatures, which can lessen the likelihood that citizen votes will influence election outcomes (Hunt, 2018). Redistricting also reduces the advantages of voting to represent the interests of the community (Pattie et al., 2012). In the United States, the average voter participation was 66.0% between 1947 and 1989 and 54% between 1992 and 2019 (Heller et al., 2019). Because some people may not want to be represented by the candidates running in the ward or district they moved into, redistricting lowers voter turnout. Racial and ethnic inequities during delimitation processes, including gerrymandering, also occur in the United States.

The delimitation commission in New Zealand takes into account factors like population, physical features, community interest, and the preservation of identifiable communities within electorates (Hudson, 2017). Article 88(4)(c) of the Kenyan Constitution served as the guidelines for the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC), which was tasked with redrawing electoral wards and constituencies. In Kenya, the delimitation procedure completed a year before the elections and after eight to twelve years (Makuthu, 2017). The Kenyan IEBC also took into account everyone's participation and stakeholder engagement.

In South Africa, after apartheid came to an end, the delimitation procedure was put into place. The Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) was able to establish constituencies that represented the nation's varied demographics through the use of technology and data-driven analysis. In order to establish a more inclusive and representative democracy, Zimbabwe's ZEC

should embrace such creative technological alternatives that take into account a variety of elements when defining boundaries rather than just an equal number of votes. ZEC officials are required to search for physical characteristics and consultants are required to participate.

In Zimbabwe delimitation process started in 1923 and to date there are eight delimitation processes held between 1923 and 2022. From 1923 to 2007, delimitation process held in every five years by Delimitation Commission. But after the adoption of the eighteenth Constitutional Amendment in 2008, delimitation conducted in every ten years and after census conducted in terms of section 160 and 161 of the New Constitution. Based on the 2023 delimitation, there are 210 constituencies and 1970 wards in Zimbabwe (Zimbabwe Electoral Commission, 2023). The ZEC officials gave opportunities to the technocrats whereby using and applying their knowledge but not knowing that the community does not have that knowledge. On the ground there is a gap to be addressed. The delimitation procedure in Zimbabwe began in 1923 and thereafter took place eight times between 1923 and 2022. The Delimitation Commission conducted a delimitation exercise every five years from 1923 to 2007.

However, in accordance with sections 160 and 161 of the New Constitution, delimitations were carried out every ten years and following censuses with the ratification of the 18th Constitutional Amendment in 2008. In accordance with the 2023 delimitation, Zimbabwe has 210 Constituencies and 1970 Wards (Zimbabwe Electoral Commission, 2023). The technocrats were given opportunities by ZEC officials to use and apply their knowledge, despite the fact that the community lacked that information. There is a gap that needs to be filled on the ground. Conflicts over grazing lands arise because, from 2008 to 2022, they lived in different wards, but their livestock did not respect any ward boundaries. As a result of delimitation, ward councillors claimed that other wards were benefiting so much from the Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE), for example, that their livestock should not graze on other wards. Other issues include resource distribution, family

separation and conflicts over fisheries, all of which have an impact on the peace and security of Mbire District's minority groups. They were non-inclusive during the delimitation process because councillors were unaware of their ward boundaries from 2023 until early March. In Mbire District, delimitation had an impact on people's safety and tranquillity. ZEC personnel took an unfair stance during the delimitation procedure. Consequently, the study need to investigate conflicts resulting from the redrawing of the 2023 Wards and Constituencies in Mbire District.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The 2023 delimitation of Wards and Constituencies in Mbire District was marred by lack of transparency and inadequate stakeholder consultation, leading to widespread conflict and dissatisfaction. Many residents were unaware of boundary changes, which disrupted existing community projects, grazing areas and access to resources. The new boundaries also intensified competition and tensions among groups, particularly those who felt excluded or marginalised. As a result, the process created perceptions of injustice and political imbalance, undermining trust in local governance structures.

1.3 Purpose of the study

To investigate the conflicts that arising from the 2023 delimitation of Wards and Constituencies in Mbire District, focusing on their causes, impacts and implications for local governance as well as possible electoral reforms in Zimbabwe.

1.4 Research objectives

Using Mbire District as a reference point, the research objectives are spelt as to:

- 1.4.1 explore the forms of Wards and Constituencies delimitation disputes.
- 1.4.2 assess the effects of the disputes resulting from Wards and Constituencies delimitations.

1.4.3 examine the effects of the disputes resulting from Wards and Constituencies delimitations on political dynamics.

1.4.4 suggest possible electoral reforms in Zimbabwe.

1.5 Central research question

1.5.1 What are the conflicts arising from Ward and Constituencies delimitations in Mbire District?

1.6 Research questions

The research seeks to answer the following questions:

1.6.1 What forms of disputes arise from wards and Constituencies delimitation disputes?

1.6.2 What are the effects of Wards and Constituencies delimitation disputes?

1.6.3 How do wards and constituencies delimitations influence political dynamics?

1.6.4 What electoral reforms can effectively address Wards and Constituencies delimitation disputes in Zimbabwe?

1.7 Assumptions of the study

The study assumes that:

1.7.1 Non-inclusiveness of stakeholders

Stakeholder disputes arise when the delimitation process is not inclusive. Many stakeholders were left out of the delimitation procedures, the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission decided for the people instead of involving them. In Mbire District, the lack of inclusivity led to a decline in public confidence as well as an increase in conflicts and disputes.

1.7.2 Unequal resource allocation

Conflicts over the borders of Wards and Constituencies are exacerbated by unequal resource distribution. In certain Wards, this hinders economic growth.

1.7.3 Gerrymandering

Conflicts arise when votes are manipulated. Through partisan gerrymandering, a political party can bribe the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission to create borders in favour of their party, which leads to unequal voting patterns.

1.7.4 Rigging of votes

Power-hungry politicians can influence minority voting power by manipulating election borders through vote-rigging. Conflicts and disputes between the impacted communities may arise from this.

1.8 Significance to the study

The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission, ordinary citizens and non-governmental organisations benefit from the study's investigation of disputes resulting from the delimitation of Wards and Constituencies. They collaborate peacefully by using an inclusive participative approach and an awareness of the requirements of the community.

1.8.1 Zimbabwe Electoral Commission

The study can create plans for avoiding and settling similar disputes in the future by determining the types of conflicts and their outcomes. Better delimitation procedures might reduce conflict and increase public trust.

1.8.2 Ordinary people and non-governmental organisations

Their knowledge of processes can help them resolve conflicts more effectively. Through monitoring and advocacy, non-governmental organisations can use non-violent means to encourage respectful relationships among communities.

1.8.3 Mbire District and political organisations

The study enhances resource allocation and local community empowerment. The study also makes it possible to more fairly distribute resources to areas that are most in need, such as minority groups, women and girls.

1.9 Limitations of the study

Geographical restrictions, unavailable key participants, and cross-sectional limits are some of the challenges that encountered during the study on conflicts resulting from the delineation of 2023 Wards and Constituencies in Mbire District. Limitations are unexpected events and outside variables that emerged during the research process and were out of the researcher's control and could have affected the results. (Simon & Goes, 2013).

1.9.1 Geographic limitations

Because the study was restricted to Mbire District, it might not be entirely representative of other Zimbabwean districts or regions. Triangulation techniques, such as using documented information to validate conclusions, were used to get around issue.

1.9.2 Inaccessible key participants

The breadth and depth of data gathering and analysis may also be impacted by participants' refusal to share information and by the inability to reach important individuals. Since the interviews were performed during the rainy season, some important participants were unavailable for in-person interviews due to unpredictable weather and dangerous wild animals. To get around this, participants who were difficult to reach were reached via phone.

1.9.3 Cross-sectional constraints

The study focused on the delimitation processes of 2023 and used a cross-sectional approach, which hindered the analysis of conflicts over time because the researcher had the beginning and ending dates. Comparative research from other impacted districts used to get over this restriction.

1.10 Delimitations of the study

Three major factors including the study's purpose, time constraint and area constraint limit this investigation. To find out if they experience the same difficulties with the delimitation procedure, references are also sent to other districts. According to Theofanidis & Fountouki (2018), delimitations are the precise lines that specify the parameters of the research investigation, defining what is and is not included.

1.10.1 Time bound

The research ignores previous conflicts and focused on those that arise between 2023 and 2025.

1.10.2 Area bound

The study was conducted primarily in Mbire District, Mashonaland Central. It is located in rural areas. As a result, it ignores people impacted in town areas and other districts.

1.10.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is to investigate how much Mbire District disputes were influenced by geopolitical boundaries.

1.11 Definition of key terms

1.11.1 Boundary disputes- are disagreements on the physical delimitation of boundaries, like those that define voting districts (Osthagen, 2020).

1.11.2 Conflict- is when two or more parties disagree and each party tries to convince the other that its point of view is superior (Mckiney & Pierce, 2017).

1.11.3 Constituency- is a legally defined area inside a country that has one elected representative representing it in a national or subnational legislative body (James, 2015).

1.11.4 Delimitation- is the act of drawing borders for electoral districts (Fietta & Cleverly, 2016).

1.11.5 Electoral reforms- are changes made to laws, procedures or the electoral system with the goal of improving democracy (Leyenaar & Hazan, 2014).

1.11.6 Gerrymandering- is the practice of manipulating constituencies to benefit the incumbent (Stewart et al. 2019). Following the administration of James Madison, the emergence of party politics, immigration and the expansion of voting rights were some of the interconnected problems that shaped the evolution of gerrymandering. As a result, it spread widely.

1.11.7 Wards- are the territorial divisions of local government areas used in elections to select representatives to the legislature or council (Szakmany, 2020).

1.12 Dissertation outline

1.11.1 Chapter 1: Introduction

The chapter provide summary of the causes, consequences and impact of conflicts resulting from the delimitation of the 2023 Wards and Constituencies in Mbire District. The chapter opens with a summary of the study's background, emphasizing the causes and consequences of conflicts resulting from the delimitation of Wards and Constituencies in order to set the stage for discussion. Following this, the section explored the study's purpose, problem statement,

research objectives, central research question, research questions, assumptions, significance, limitations, delimitations and definitions of key words.

1.11.2 Chapter 2: Literature review and theoretical framework

In order to support the scope of the current study, the chapter presents what previous scholars have written based on earlier research, publications, texts, and reports that are in line with the study's goals. The study's theoretical foundation is described in the first section. The study then focuses at empirical research conducted both domestically and abroad on the disputes resulting from Zimbabwe's Wards and Constituencies delimitation. To identify any knowledge gaps that might be filled, a summary of the literature review was provided.

1.11.3 Chapter 3: Research methodology and design

The chapter discussed the study's methodology. Research methodology, research resignation, population and sample, data collection techniques, data presentation and analysis, validity and reliability, and ethical issues are the sections under which it is structured.

1.11.4 Chapter 4: Data presentation, analysis and discussion of findings

Using the major objectives as a guide, the chapter presents and discusses the study's findings about conflicts arising from the Mbire District's ward and constituency delimitations.

1.11.5 Chapter 5: Conclusions, summary, recommendations and areas for further research

The chapter aims to give an overview of the argument and findings. It presents the findings, makes suggestions, and identifies areas that require more investigation. Appendices and references are also included.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 Introduction

The research problem and its setting about the tensions resulting from the delimitation of the 2023 Wards and Constituencies in Mbire District were introduced in the previous chapter. The theoretical framework and relevant literature are reviewed in this chapter. The theoretical framework of conflict theory was applied in the study. Themes drawn from the research objectives were used to review the literature. The themes are:

Theme 1: forms of conflicts in Mbire District.

Theme 2: effects of conflicts arising from the Wards and Constituencies delimitation in Mbire District.

Theme 3: effects of Ward and Constituencies delimitation on political dynamics in Mbire District.

Theme 4: possible electoral reforms in Zimbabwe.

2.1 Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework of conflict theory serves as the foundation for this investigation. According to Esteban et al., (2012), this theory uses the dynamics of conflict and power struggles between different groups or interests to analyse social occurrences. Conflict theory is acknowledged to have been founded by the German philosopher Karl Marx in the 19th century. Conflicts over resources, disagreements over community boundaries and decision-making, power struggles, social inequity, gerrymandering and poor communication are some of the primary elements of conflict theory. The disagreements resulting from the delimitation of the 2023 Wards and Constituencies in Mbire District are crucial to these areas of conflict. Conflict

theory is criticized for its tendency to overlook consensus and collaboration in favour of an overemphasis on economic considerations.

2.1.1 Relevance of conflict theory to the study

Power dynamics can be effectively analysed through the lens of conflict theory. This theoretical framework examines how power is distributed in society and how it influences various social systems, including political representation (Esteban et al., 2012). Conflict theory highlights tensions between groups, particularly where resources and authority are unequally distributed. It also addresses the social injustices that emerge from these imbalances. Understanding how social, economic and political inequalities are produced and sustained such as through electoral delimitation requires insight from conflict theory. It helps explain why certain groups are underrepresented or marginalised in political processes. Moreover, conflict theory is essential in understanding political mobilization, offering insight into how disadvantaged populations organize in response to perceived injustices, including unfair delimitation practices.

2.1.2 Weaknesses of conflict theory to the study

Conflict theory is criticized for being unnecessarily simplistic and for ignoring important elements like cooperation and consensus among various groups in favour of concentrating only on power clashes. Additionally, the theory might not adequately represent the complex nature of social dynamics in settings where conflict is less obvious factors (Bartos & Wehr, 2002). Economic considerations are given more weight by conflict theory. Conflict theory places a lot of emphasis on economic issues, but this attention may obscure other important elements that also play a role in social disputes, like cultural, ideological and psychological.

2.2 Forms of conflicts using Galtung's Triangle of Violence

Objective one is to use Galtung's Triangle of Violence to investigate the types of delimitation disputes involving wards and constituencies. Direct violence, structural violence, and cultural

violence are the three types of violence that Galtung proposed. Direct violence are the acts that cause or threaten bodily injury. According to Farmer (2004), structural violence is the term used to describe the systematic injury or disadvantage experienced by particular populations. Cultural violence are aspects of culture that support or legitimise structural or direct violence (Galtung, 2010). The following elements affect the delimitation process's results under these forms. Conflicts in society are caused by a number of variables that affect the delimitation process, including partisan tensions, accusations of gerrymandering, representation concerns, identity difficulties, unequal resource distribution, inadequate consultations and the impact of development funds.

2.2.1 Accusations of gerrymandering

Conflicts resulting from the delimitation of Wards and Constituencies might be attributed to accusations of gerrymandering. Claims that the boundaries have been purposefully altered to favour a certain political group may give rise to disputes. Election-related disputes have arisen as a result of the manipulation of electoral borders, which has increased tensions between various ethnic groups. Gerrymandering has also been a significant contributing element to political unrest in Venezuela, where it has been accused of being used to weaken opposition parties (Stewart et al., 2019). As groups mobilise against perceived inequalities in representation, this has resulted in large protests and conflict. Thus, it is evident that gerrymandering is one of the problems that arises from the demarcation of Wards and Constituencies worldwide.

2.2.2 Representation concerns

Conflicts resulting from the delimitation of Wards and Constituencies are also caused by representational considerations. New boundaries may cause communities to feel marginalised or underrepresented, which could result in conflicts over political power. For instance, the

drawing of voting districts in Sri Lanka has caused strife, especially when ethnic tensions are present (Gunathilake, 2018). Boundary changes have sparked demonstrations and political mobilisation because they are seen as attempts to weaken the political influence of minority groups. Significant disputes resulting from the delimitation of constituencies were brought to light in the 2023 post-election in Mbire.

2.2.3 Competition for economic resources

Competition for economic resources, such as water, grazing and agricultural lands, can increase tensions during delimitation. For example, in Somalia, Oromo and Somali pastoralists have been fighting for water sources at Dakketa. In Mbire District, there were conflicts over grazing lands because pastoralists were in different wards from 2008 to 2022, but their livestock did respect any ward boundary. Due to ward councillors' delimitation, they were claiming that other wards, such as those receiving assistance from the Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE), were benefiting greatly and that their cattle should not graze on other wards. The distribution of resources and natural places (conservancies) are also unclear. According to Oberschall (1978), social conflicts mostly occur when groups of people vie over limited resources, such as land, recognition or positions of authority. Because some people in Mbire relied heavily on CAMPFIRE, border delimitation excluded them from that project, which resulted in overnight poaching to support their livelihoods and causing strife between them.

2.2.4 Development funding impact

Conflicts resulting from the delimitation of Wards and Constituencies can also be caused by the influence of development funds. Boundary changes may have an impact on the distribution of development money, resulting in disagreements over investments and priorities across different sectors. These changes in Mbire led to the loss of previous funding because some

homes would have been moved from ward one to ward two, for example, leaving the ongoing projects for which they provided support. Conflicts may occur since the wards they moved to also require development funding, thus they should contribute once more. For example, delimitation adjustments in 2017 had an impact on Kenya's Constituency Development Fund (CDF), (Nakhumicha & Macharia, 2017).

2.2.5 Resource allocation inequities

Due to electoral delimitation, conflicts in Wards and Constituencies are also a result of unequal resource allocation. Communities may fight for resources and services, particularly if delineation makes distribution seem unjust (Farahi, 2024). For instance, unequal resource distribution is a serious problem that has an impact on many groups and sectors in Zimbabwe's Mbire District and India. For instance, poor access to sanitary facilities and clean water, particularly in rural areas. Children and women are the most affected.

2.2.6 Partisan tensions

Partisan tensions in Mbire District can lead to conflicts between Wards and Constituencies as a result of electoral delimitation. During boundary revisions, political party rivalries may escalate, particularly if one party feels the new lines benefit its rivals. According to Rahman (2019), in Bangladesh boundary redrawing has often resulted in political manipulation, which can spark instability and bloodshed, especially during election seasons.

2.2.7 Resource management disputes

Another form of conflict resulting from the delimitation of Wards and Constituencies is disagreements over resource management. In newly created areas, disputes may arise over the administration of resources and services, especially when it comes to jurisdictional difficulties, notably in Wards and Constituencies that cross over into other districts (Ayling & Kelly, 1997).

Bulawayo City and Umguza Rural District Council are the two local governments in Bulawayo that oversee Mbundane. Three local authorities' borders, Epworth, Chitungwiza and Harare intersect, causing issues and misunderstandings with regard to the distribution of resources and the provision of services. Uncertain boundaries, for example, affected Epworth's Wards 1, 2, and 3 intersect with Chitungwiza's Wards 7, 8 and 9 (Overspill, Nyika, and Zengeza). To prevent future conflicts over resource management, the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission should make sure that boundaries are clearly defined.

2.2.8 Insufficient consultation

Conflicts resulting from the delimitation of Wards and Constituencies are another consequence of inadequate consultation. Conflict within communities and a sense of disenfranchisement can result from a lack of public participation in the delimitation process. There was insufficient consultation and participation in Zimbabwe's delimitation process (Zimbabwe Election Support Network [ZESN], 2019). Additionally, according to ZESN, there was no opportunity for talks or voter education prior to the polls because the 2022 delimitation process report was concluded late.

2.3 Effects of conflicts arising from Wards and Constituencies delimitation

Objective two seeks to outline the consequences of disputes resulting from the demarcation of Wards and Constituencies. Reduced voter turnout, community marginalisation, inadequate representation and a shortage of resources were the outcomes of these conflicts.

2.3.1 Voter apathy

Voter turnout in Mbire District may be affected by conflicts between Wards and Constituencies delimitation, as is the case in the US Congress and state legislatures, where redistricting reduces voter turnout, electoral competition and the likelihood that voters' votes will influence election

outcomes (Hunt, 2018). In the US, the average voter turnout from 1947 to 1989 was 66.0%, while from 1992 to 2019 it was 54% (Heller et al., 2019). Redistricting lowers voter turnout because some voters do not want to be represented by the candidate they moved into.

2.3.2 Marginalisation of communities

Local communities may become marginalised as a result of disputes over Ward and Constituencies delimitations. Certain groups in communities, particularly minority groups, may become marginalised as a result of electoral boundary gerrymandering (Pelc, 2017). Feelings of disenfranchisement have resulted, for instance, from a particular tribal area in India being underrepresented because of boundaries that do not appropriately reflect demographic realities. The Doma group was one of the minority groups in Mbire.

2.3.3 Ineffective representation

Conflicts resulting from the delimitation of Wards and Constituencies also contribute to ineffective representation. Ineffective governance can result from constituencies that are poorly designed (Jankowski & Marcinkiewicz, 2019). Political borders have been designed in Zimbabwe in a way that reduces opposition votes, which frequently leads to elected politicians being unresponsive and unaccountable. Certain wards in Mbire District were divided into two or three sections, with additional wards housing different parts of the ward. For instance, ward 11 Masoka, a portion of Angwa Ward 3, and another area of ward 1 (Kanyemba), which is located in Mpedzapasi and is roughly 30 kilometers away. Since they reside far from the councillors and their concerns are occasionally unmet, those who have moved to a different ward feel underrepresented.

2.3.4 Economic losses and delayed development

Delimitation disputes between Wards and Constituencies may cause financial losses and postpone progress. Thirteen out of seventeen wards or almost 76% of the population, were impacted by the 2023 electoral delimitation procedure in Mbire District. Wards 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 16 and 17 are among those impacted. Numerous ongoing initiatives, including the Community Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE) and infrastructure improvements including schools, roads, bridges, dip tanks and hospitals, have been hampered by this transition (Sachikonye, 2017). Fundraising for the devolution initiatives was also disrupted. Due to inflation, the delimitation procedure also had an impact on Zimbabwe's Real Time Gross Settlement (RTGS) payment system.

2.4 Effects of Wards and Constituencies delimitation on political dynamics

Objective three seeks to examine how the delimitation of Wards and Constituencies affects the political dynamics in Mbire District. The study of power, influence and authority dynamics in political systems, including the interactions between governments, interest groups and citizens, is known as political dynamics (Kernell & Jacobson, 2019). Changes in party representation, shifts in party representation, changes in voting patterns, increased competition, potential for electoral reform and disrupt of community ties and social networks are some of the consequences.

2.4.1 Increased competition

To secure contested seats and achieve overall victory, the two major political parties may intensify their competition. For example, ZANU-PF and Citizens Coalition for Change competed to win elections and take control of the government in Zimbabwe in 2023. Since the boundaries have been changed, there was a chance that the two competed for the position. Other persons may move from one ward to another once the boundaries are altered, becoming new members without knowing the personal histories of the contending members. For example,

four newly elected councillors, two were from the CCC and two from ZANU-PF won the elections for the first time in Mbire District. Smaller parties like the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) were able to contest the African National Congress's (ANC) hegemony in South Africa by creating new wards during the 2016 municipal elections. According to Zyl (2016), more competition encourages parties to be more receptive to the interests of voters, which promotes a more robust democratic process.

2.4.2 Shifts in party representation

Wards and Constituencies delimitations may result in changes to party representation, which could affect the overall political balance (Handley, 2007). For instance, smaller parties emerged and gained seats in the National Assembly during Namibia's 2014 delimitation process, reflecting shifts in voter demographics and preferences. As seen by the emergence of the Popular Democratic Movement, the political landscape was changing, with entrenched party control being challenged. Changes encourage greater political plurality and engagement in governance. The CCC also won some seats in Zimbabwe that had previously belonged to ZANU-PF.

2.4.3 Changes in voting patterns

Changes in voting patterns are another way that the delineation of wards and districts affects political dynamics. Since they split into numerous Wards and Constituencies, voters may be steered to other constituencies where they become new members as a result of boundary redrawing. This could have an impact on the outcome (McMillan, 2000). If they had no negative social histories, new members running for office had a chance of winning. Voters in Botswana are prioritising local needs like healthcare and education over traditional party connections as a result of the delimitations of Wards and Constituencies. As voters attempt to

find representatives who address their particular concerns, this change shows a growing need for responsibility from elected leaders.

2.4.4 Potential for electoral reform

The possibility of electoral change is a benefit of boundary changes. Discussions about improving electoral reforms to increase fairness and transparency might take place following the delineation of the electoral boundaries (Aditi, 2015). For instance, there was a lot of discussion about electoral reform in Malawi following the 2014 delimitation in order to address concerns about election fairness and transparency. To avoid manipulation, the stakeholders demanded independent electoral commissions and more precise rules for constituency boundaries. Boundary delimitations have been a divisive topic in Zimbabwe, prompting calls for electoral reforms to guarantee equitable representation.

2.5 Possible electoral reforms in Zimbabwe

Objective four seeks to describe potential electoral reforms in Zimbabwe, such as constitutional amendments, improved voter registration, strengthened electoral frameworks, increased transparency and oversight, electoral system reform, improved voter education, increased security and integrity, post-election accountability and addressing political violence.

2.5.1 Transparency and public engagement

According to Small (2024), an independent delimitation commission prevents partisan interference that leads to gerrymandering. The Zimbabwean government should make sure that the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission operates independently from political influence with transparent and accountability mechanisms. They should also make sure that ZEC fosters transparency because, as argued by (Grishin, 2020), the delimitation exercises conducted in 2007 and prior to that lack transparency experienced inadequate public consultations and limited access to information, as well as gerrymandering in favour of ZANU-PF. The

government should keep an eye on all of these issues because delimitation should be transparent and accountable to establish credibility and trust.

2.5.2 Voter registration improvements

Automatic voter registration procedures should be put in place by the government to boost turnout and guarantee accurate voter lists. The government will be able to guarantee that voter lists and election results are easily comprehensible and available to the public thanks to this reform (Kiyohara, 2019). To make voter registration more accessible to residents, the government should also set up safe internet platforms. The number of people registering online will increase, particularly among young people and underrepresented groups. This has the potential to modernise the electoral process and greatly increase voter turnout. Real-time updates are particularly helpful because certain registration drives have resulted in late voter roll finalization, leaving voters unaware of their polling places and presenting difficulties on election day. In South Africa, for instance, the Electoral Commission offers a voting station finder tool on its website to help people locate their polling places with ease, thereby avoiding these difficulties (Chikerema et al., 2018). Zimbabwe's voter registration situation needs to improve.

2.5.3 Addressing political violence

There should be laws against violence in Zimbabwe. It contributes to the strengthening of legislation that deter and penalise political violence, guaranteeing a secure atmosphere for all voters. For instance, there were no procedures for managing complaints or referral authority in the event of any unresolved disagreements existed during the delimitation process (ZESN, 2019). The credibility of the delimitation process may be threatened by unresolved disputes that escalate into bigger ones.

2.6 Gaps in reviewed literature

There were no provisions for handling complaints or referral authorities in the event that an unresolved dispute arose and the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission's lack of funding prevented it from conducting adequate inclusive participation and stakeholder consultations. Time restraints and restricted access to pertinent data on voter registration, migration trends and population growth are other difficulties ZEC faces. To reduce disputes resulting from the delimitation of Wards and Constituencies, these issues must be resolved.

2.7 Chapter summary

Following an overview of the theoretical framework supporting the study, the chapter reviewed the existing literature on the conflicts resulting from the delimitation of Wards and Constituencies in Zimbabwe. It then examined the empirical research conducted both domestically and internationally on these conflicts, presenting a synthesis of the literature to identify knowledge gaps that may be filled. The study's research methodology will be covered in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

3.0 Introduction

The literature on the conflicts resulting from the delimitation of Wards and Constituencies was reviewed in the previous chapter. The research approach, research design, population and sampling, data collection tools, data analysis, validity, reliability and ethical issues were all covered in this chapter. In order to provide comprehensive data for comprehending the conflicts arising from Wards and Constituencies electoral boundary delimitations in Mbire District, the study used a mixed research strategy that integrated a survey and a case study research approach.

3.1 Research approach

In order to give an extensive understanding of the disputes resulting from the delimitation of Wards and Constituencies in Mbire District, the study used the mixed approach, integrating qualitative and quantitative approaches.

3.1.1 Qualitative research method

Conflicts resulting from the delimitation of Wards and Constituencies in Mbire District are examined using a qualitative research approach because it offers profound insights into the underlying problems, viewpoints and social dynamics at play. It can be applied to analyse social dynamics, pinpoint conflict origins and comprehend stakeholder viewpoints. In order to understand the complexities of the delimitation process and support more equitable and efficient election procedures, this strategy actively engaged with stakeholders and impacted communities. Because good intentions alone cannot provide reliable study results, qualitative methodologies were used (Simons & Snowden, 2020), underscoring the significance of rigorous methodology.

3.1.2 Quantitative research method

The statistical analysis provided by the quantitative method revealed trends and connections pertaining to disputes resulting from the Mbire District's Wards and Constituencies delimitation exercise. It assessed political activity found demographic relationships and gauged the intensity of conflicts. According to Goosen & Van der Merwe, (2015), quantitative research is defined by its methodical and empirical methodology, which uses statistical techniques and numerical data to create, test and improve theoretical hypotheses and predictions.

3.1.3 Mixed methods research

In order to facilitate a comprehensive understanding of the implementation problem and to help identify suitable solutions, the study used a mixed approach, which would not have been possible without these techniques. According to Johnson et al. (2007), a mixed research method enables a researcher to integrate qualitative and quantitative perspectives, data collecting, analysis and inference procedures toward the general goals of corroboration and breadth and depth of understanding.

3.2 Research design

The study used a case study research design because it allows the researcher to gain a more nuanced understanding of a particular issue by exploring deeper into it using a variety of data collection methods (Kumar, 2007). A case study is a methodological research approach that generates an in-depth understanding of a contemporary issue or phenomenon in a bounded system, it also allows for a deep understanding of conflicts arising from the delimitation of Wards and Constituencies. It also provided a platform to capture the lived experiences and perspectives of affected stakeholders, thereby enriching the quality and depth of the analysis.

3.3 Target population

The total group of individuals or items that a researcher is trying to comprehend or characterize is referred to as the targeted population (Babbie, 2020). The study's target population consisted of residents of Mbire District who were at least eighteen years old, a sample of these individuals was chosen to take part. In this sense, the researcher was able to choose informed individuals by using stratified sampling. A wide range of stakeholders, including elected officials (members of parliament and councillors), politicians, and electoral commission officials, were among the targeted population. Additionally, voters, community leaders (both conventional and representatives of civil society organizations) and regular individuals who were impacted by the delimitation process were sought in order to gain insight into their opinions and experiences. Representatives of the local administration in charge of carrying out the delimitation rulings and overseeing the ensuing Wards and Constituencies were also included. By focusing on these groups, the researcher hoped to acquire a thorough grasp of the disputes that arise in Zimbabwe's Wards and Constituencies.

3.4 Sample size

To delve into disputes resulting from the delimitation of Wards and Constituencies in Mbire District, a survey was carried out. The population was split up into five different strata for the study's stratified sampling technique. Fifty five volunteers made up the entire sample size, chosen to reflect the variety of viewpoints present in the district.

The five strata were categorised as follows:

Stratum 1: Electoral Commission officials - 3 participants

Stratum 2: Politicians and elected representatives - 1 Member of Parliament and 17 councillors

Stratum 3: Community leaders – 8, including village heads, headmen and chiefs

Stratum 4: Voters and ordinary citizens - 21 participants

Stratum 5: Local Government officials - 5 participants

3.4.1 Sampling

Certain groups of people who could offer insightful information about the conflicts resulting from the delimitation of Wards and Constituencies in Mbire District were required to participate in the study. Members of the sample were selected on the basis of their knowledge, connections and experience with the research topic (Berndt, 2020). Stratified sampling, a crucial component of the mixed research approach, was used. This strategy made it possible for the study to choose informed individuals who could offer thoughtful answers.

3.4.2 Sampling techniques

In order to collect data, the study combined purposive, stratified and snowball sampling techniques in a multifaceted sampling strategy. By collecting a variety of viewpoints and experiences, this methodological triangulation made it possible to fully comprehend the disputes resulting from the delimitation of 2023 Wards and Constituencies in Mbire District (Alvi, 2016). These methods were combined to produce a representative and strong sample for the investigation.

3.4.2.1 Stratified sampling

Stratified sampling, a probability sampling method that separates the population into subgroups or strata according to pertinent variables, was employed in the study. After that, a random sample was drawn from every stratum. This method was selected because it can increase representation, decrease sampling error, and improve accuracy (Liberty et al., 2016). Based on the population's overall proportions, the study determined the sample size for each subgroup to guarantee that each stratum was fairly represented. Participants were then chosen at random from each subgroup.

3.4.2.2 Purposive sampling

Purposive sampling is the methodical and systematic technique to choosing participants with specific information, experience or viewpoints on the conflicts resulting from the delimitation of Wards and Constituencies (Patton, 2014). This method works especially well for qualitative research, when the objective is to obtain a deep understanding of participants' viewpoints and experiences. The study can obtain extensive, deep insights into the nuances of the conflicts originating from the delimitation of Wards and Constituencies in Mbire District by focusing on people who are highly knowledgeable about the subject.

3.4.2.3 Snowball sampling

Snowball sampling is the efficient method for comprehending disputes resulting from the delimitation of Wards and Constituencies in Mbire District. The researcher obtained access to people who had direct knowledge of the conflicts by enlisting volunteers via recommendations from original participants (Patton, 2014). This strategy was especially helpful in Mbire District, where disputes over the delimitation of Wards and Constituencies were sensitive. The researcher made sure the sample was representative of the various viewpoints and experiences of community members in Mbire District by carefully choosing the first participants and defining precise referral criteria.

3.5 Data collection methods

A variety of techniques were used to gather the data, including questionnaires, focus groups and semi-structured interviews with the use of an interview guide. The study was able to obtain thorough views from a number of stakeholders, including Mbire District politicians, community leaders, and electoral commission officials, because to the wide range of data collection techniques used. These approaches' adaptability enabled the researcher to investigate a broad range of subjects and promoted free-flowing conversations that allowed participants

and the study to raise questions and seek clarity. Both primary and secondary data were gathered for the investigation.

3.5.1 Primary data collection methods

Through focus groups, semi-structured interviews and questionnaires, the study gathered primary data.

3.5.1.1 Focus group discussions

Diverse groups of five to ten people participated in focus group sessions as well. Focus group discussions are a research method in which small groups of unrelated people participate in facilitated conversations on particular subjects, as stated by Lune & Berg (2017). Compared to other approaches, this one allowed the researcher to examine participant justification and rationalization in greater detail (Lune & Berg, 2017). Although this approach saved time, it was difficult to get truthful feedback on delicate subjects.

3.5.1.2 Questionnaires

According to Creswell (2014), a questionnaire is a methodical instrument for gathering data that uses a series of questions to collect data from participants. It provided administrative flexibility through online, phone, and in-person choices. According to Pandey & Pandey (2015), questionnaires make it easier to collect data from people or groups, offering a practical and effective way to get information. This approach preserved participant anonymity while enabling extensive data collecting. However, it was difficult to make sure that the questions were being understood as desired and that further explanation was needed for the data that was gathered.

3.5.1.3 Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data from key informants, such as politicians, community leaders and election commission officials. These telephone and in-person interviews allowed for a thorough investigation of the disputes resulting from the delimitation of Wards and Constituencies in Mbire District. By sharing their thoughts and experiences, participants contributed insightful information on the research issue. All pertinent subjects were covered via an interview guide. Participants from remote locations including Kanyemba, Chidodo, Chitsungu and Masoka were contacted via phone. However, phone conversations lacked the depth and richness of in-person interviews.

3.5.2 Secondary data collection method

Published sources, such as previously conducted studies or data gathered for different objectives, are the source of secondary data. According to Kabir (2016) books are one type of published source that is particularly authentic and trustworthy for secondary data.

3.6 Data collection instructions and procedures

Three methods were used to collect the data including semi-structured interview guides, voice recorders and notebooks. Interviews were recorded using voice recorders and when people refused to be recorded or crucial information was overlooked, notebooks were used to add to the recordings. This folder includes handwritten notes collected during interviews, which enable researchers to capture perceptions, environmental context, behaviours and nonverbal cues that may not be well captured. Notebooks also functioned as a backup in the event of recorder malfunctions (Sutton & Austin, 2015). The study was able to collect more thorough and accurate replies from participants by using a semi-structured interview guide that made it easier to ask clarifying, probing and cross-checking questions. This method made it possible to gather data in organic environments, which yielded insightful information about the topic under study.

3.7 Pilot study

Conducting a pilot study is a crucial step in researching conflicts arising from Wards and Constituencies delimitation in Mbire District. This preliminary study enabled researcher to evaluate the feasibility of the research design, test data collection instruments and refine methods (Polit and Beck, 2008). A pilot study is essential in ensuring the validity and reliability of research findings, particularly when investigating complex issues like conflicts arising from delimitation processes. A pilot study helped researcher to identify potential issues with data collection instruments, evaluate the effectiveness of the sampling procedure and data collection methods and refine research design. The pilot study can also provide valuable insights into the feasibility of collecting data from stakeholders, including residents, local leaders and electoral officials. In the case of the pilot study conducted in Mbire District, the results showed that the study protocol was feasible and acceptable to stakeholders. However, some issues were identified, such as the need to provide occasional help with the questionnaire and check item completion. The study also highlighted the importance of triangulation of data collection methods to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings.

3.8 Ethical considerations

The study of conflicts resulting from the delimitation of 2023 Wards and Constituencies in Mbire District placed a high priority on maintaining ethical standards in research. Introduction letters, voluntary involvement, informed consent and confidentiality were given top priority in order to safeguard the participants' rights and dignity (Arifin, 2018).

3.8.1 Introduction letter

To encourage involvement of stakeholders in data collection, an introductory letter was sent to the Mbire Rural District Council (Mbire RDC) (Saunders et al., 2009). A letter of authorization

from Mbire RDC and a letter of introduction from Bindura University of Science Education were provided upon request in order to build trust among participants.

3.8.2 Voluntary involvement

The selection of participants based on their free agreement to take part in the research. They were free to leave the study whenever they wanted without suffering any repercussions. In order to shield individuals from possible dangers and information imbalance, this right to withdraw was crucial (Mumford et al., 2021). In order to get long-term results, the study made sure that participants understood their right to stop participating and that they weren't prohibited from doing so.

3.8.3 Informed consent

Respecting ethical norms is crucial when conducting research in order to safeguard participants' rights and dignity. One of the cornerstones of ethical research is informed consent (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Before conducting interviews, participants gave their informed consent (Tam et al., 2015). This entailed giving participants' comprehensive information regarding the interview's format, the study's goal, and the usage of an audio recorder throughout the interview.

3.8.4 Confidentiality

The study used password protection on a laptop and mobile devices to protect participant privacy and personal information, and participants were guaranteed that their names would not be revealed and that the information they provided would be kept private (Oswaldo, 2021). Participants were also told that the data gathered would be used exclusively for academic purposes.

3.9 Validity and reliability

In both quantitative and qualitative studies on conflicts emerging from the delimitation of wards and constituencies in Mbire District, validity and reliability serve as the pillars of research quality, laying the groundwork for reliable findings (Dornyei, 2007).

3.9.1 Validity

Validity is essential for trustworthy research, especially when examining disputes resulting from the delimitation of 2023 Wards and Constituencies in Mbire District. It guarantees that studies measure what they are supposed to, facilitating the development of theories and well-informed conclusions. According to Sireci & Faulkner-Bond (2014), validity is the appropriateness and correctness of conclusions made based on assessment outcomes. Several techniques are used to guarantee validity, such as triangulation to validate results, data quality checks for accuracy and pilot testing to improve instruments (Coleman, 2022). However, bias in sampling, measurement, and research design can all undermine validity. For reliable research on the delimitation conflicts, several issues must be resolved. In the end, validity is essential to the credibility of research. Researcher can overcome obstacles and generate trustworthy results regarding the effects of ward and constituency delimitation in Mbire District by comprehending its sorts and tactics.

3.9.2 Reliability

Coleman (2022) contends that reliability quantifies the extent to which a test or evaluation is free from measurement mistakes, with greater reliability signifying fewer mistakes. The researcher understood the value of reliability when examining conflicts resulting from the delimitation of Wards and Constituencies in Mbire District, using tight procedures to ensure data consistency and accuracy. This dedication to dependability produced useful results that

influenced attempts for dispute resolution and policy choices that tackled the particular difficulties faced by the district.

3.10 Data presentation and analysis

Forthcoming is a discussion of the techniques for data presentation and analysis.

3.10.1 Data presentation

A key element of research is data presentation, which helps researcher present detailed findings clearly and simply. Strong data presentation technologies that convert complex data into formats that are simple to read and comprehend aid in this process (Kirk, 2019). By using these technologies, researchers may present vast volumes of data in an easy-to-understand way, drawing in the audience and promoting well-informed decision-making. By giving audiences or clients a clear knowledge of concepts and future options, effective data presentation persuades them to invest in a specific company or idea. In order to accomplish this, the researcher used carefully chosen data presentation strategies that matched the goals and study question regarding disputes resulting from the delimitation of Wards and Constituencies in Mbire District. Commonly used methods for providing descriptive and two-dimensional representations of data that enable comparisons and insights are bar charts and pie charts.

3.10.1.1 Bar chart

Bar charts provide clarity and precision while managing vast amounts of data (Kirk, 2019). A key tool for data visualisation, bar charts let researcher convey complex information in an understandable way. These graphical representations are essential in many academic fields because they make it easier to compare and analyse categorical data. Bar charts are used in research projects to display demographic information, survey results and experimental outcomes. Notwithstanding their advantages, bar charts have drawbacks. Overwhelming amounts of data might mask insights and problems with precision can occur.

3.10.1.2 Pie chart

Pie charts highlight important trends and patterns while providing a visual depiction of data comparisons (Kilb & Jansen, 2016). Researcher was able to make sense of confusing data, extract significant insights and successfully convey findings by presenting data in a clearly understandable and simple manner.

3.10.2 Data analysis

Data analysis is the methodical process of looking over and analysing data to find significant trends, themes and insights (Creswell, 2014). In order to answer research questions or test hypotheses, this procedure entails using a variety of approaches to arrange, classify and summarise data. A qualitative theme analysis technique used to analyse the data. It functions as a tool for creating and confirming interpretations, forming deductions and coming to insightful conclusions.

3.10.2.1 Thematic analysis

The tensions resulting from the delimitation of Wards and Constituencies in Mbire District were examined using thematic analysis. Key themes of responses from participants might be identified through this method (Clarke et al., 2015). Themes were created and refined through a thorough transcribed analysis and note-taking procedure. The study was able to classify and characterise the data in a methodical and significant manner by extracting key elements from the files and grouping them together.

3.11 Chapter summary

The chapter explained the research methodology on conflicts resulting from the delimitation of the 2023 Ward and Constituencies in Mbire District. These consist of population sampling, study methodology, design, data gathering and analytic techniques, ethical considerations and

validity evaluation. 50 individuals were chosen using a case study design and a mixed-method approach, which included stratified, purposive and snowball selection. Questionnaires, focus groups and in-depth interviews were used to collect data. Additionally, it guaranteed ethical standards through secrecy, voluntary involvement, informed permission and an introduction letter. Pie charts and bars were used to display the results. Additionally, statistical and thematic analysis were used. The research findings were presented and analysed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION ON FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

The study's research technique was provided in the previous chapter. The analysis on tensions resulting from the delineation of 2023 Wards and Constituencies in Mbire District was given and addressed in this chapter. The research themes that emerged from the particular study objectives discovered during data analysis were used to support the presentations of the research findings and conversations. To explore the forms of conflicts in Mbire, effects of conflicts arising from Wards and Constituencies delimitations in Mbire District, effects of Wards and Constituencies delimitation on political dynamics in Mbire District and possible electoral reforms in Zimbabwe were the primary objectives. It was admitted that the literature review in chapter two did not specifically include some of the findings from the fieldwork. However, these results have been appropriately taken into account and incorporated into the next chapters, offering a more thorough and comprehensive examination of the research topic. In order to preserve the validity and correctness of the study findings, this omission was recognised.

4.1 Bio data of the participants

4.1.1 Gender

The gender distribution of the participants in the study on disputes resulting from the delimitation of Wards and Constituencies in Mbire District is shown in table 4.1.

Table 4:1 Gender of the participants

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
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Male	22	49%
Female	23	51%
Total	45	100%

The table shows that out of 45 participants, 22 were male (49%) and 23 were female (51%). This indicates a relatively balanced gender representation, with females slightly outnumbering males. Such gender balance in the sample enhances the inclusiveness and reliability of the research findings, particularly in understanding how delimitation affects both men and women. The research can fully capture the wants and concerns of every person of the community by attaining gender balance, which will result in inclusive community development projects and more successful conflict resolution techniques. The near-equal participation also suggests that gender was not a barrier to engagement in this study, reflecting a commendable level of gender inclusivity in research participation.

4.1.2 Age distribution

The age distribution of participants in the study of disputes resulting from the delimitation of Wards and Constituencies in Mbire District was shown in table 4.2.

Table 4:2 Age distribution

Age group (years)	Frequency	Percentage
18-25	6	13%
25-40	12	27%
41-50	10	22%
51-60	11	24%
65 and above	6	13%

Total	45	100%
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According to the age distribution, the majority of participants (27%) were between the ages of 25 and 40. The age categories with the lowest participation rates, at thirteen percent each, were 18–25 and 65 and older. This representation of a range of ages offers important insights into the disputes that resulted from the Mbire District's delimitation procedure.

4.1.3 Level of education

The participants' educational level is shown in table 4.3.

4.3 Level of education

Level of education	Frequency	Percentage
Grade 1-7	12	27%
Form 1-4	15	33%
Form 5-6	9	20%
Tertiary education	9	20%
Total	45	100%

Participants had varying educational backgrounds, with 33% having completed form 1-4 and twenty-seven percent having completed grade 1-7. This diversity in educational backgrounds offered unique insights and experiences that enrich the data.

4.1.4 Employment status

Participant's employment status is shown on table 4.4.

Table 4.4 Employment status

Employment status	Frequency	Percentage
Formally employed	12	27%
Informally employed	18	40%
Both	10	22%
Unemployed	5	11%
Total	45	100%

27% of participants claimed having a formal job, (40) reported having an informal job. Notably, councillors are not regarded as officially employed in Zimbabwe in the traditional sense. The sample is guaranteed to be representative of the population by gathering information from individuals with varying work statuses.

4.1.5 Marital status

Participant's marital status is shown in table 4.5.

Table 4.5 Marital status of the participants.

Marital status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	10	22%
Widowed	13	29%
Divorced	8	18%
Married	14	31%
Total	45	100%

29% of individuals were widowed, and the remainder (31%) were married. It is crucial to gather data from individuals with varying marital statuses since this can affect how they view the disputes resulting from the Mbire District's Wards and Constituencies delimitation process.

4.2: Forms of Wards and Constituencies conflicts in Mbire District

Identifying forms of conflicts that resulted from the delimitation of the 2023 Wards and Constituencies in Mbire District, Zimbabwe, was the primary objective of the study. According to the findings, there were disputes during the Mbire District's Wards and Constituencies delimitation process due to a number of reasons, such as unclear boundaries, inadequate representation, competition for resources and accusation of gerrymandering. This study's objective was guided by the following research question: Using Galtung's Triangle of Violence, what kinds of conflicts result from Zimbabwe's Ward and Constituency delimitations? The information offered offers important new perspectives on the forms of disputes that arose during the delimitation procedure. The findings were presented as a bar chart, which made it easier to interpret them clearly and concisely.

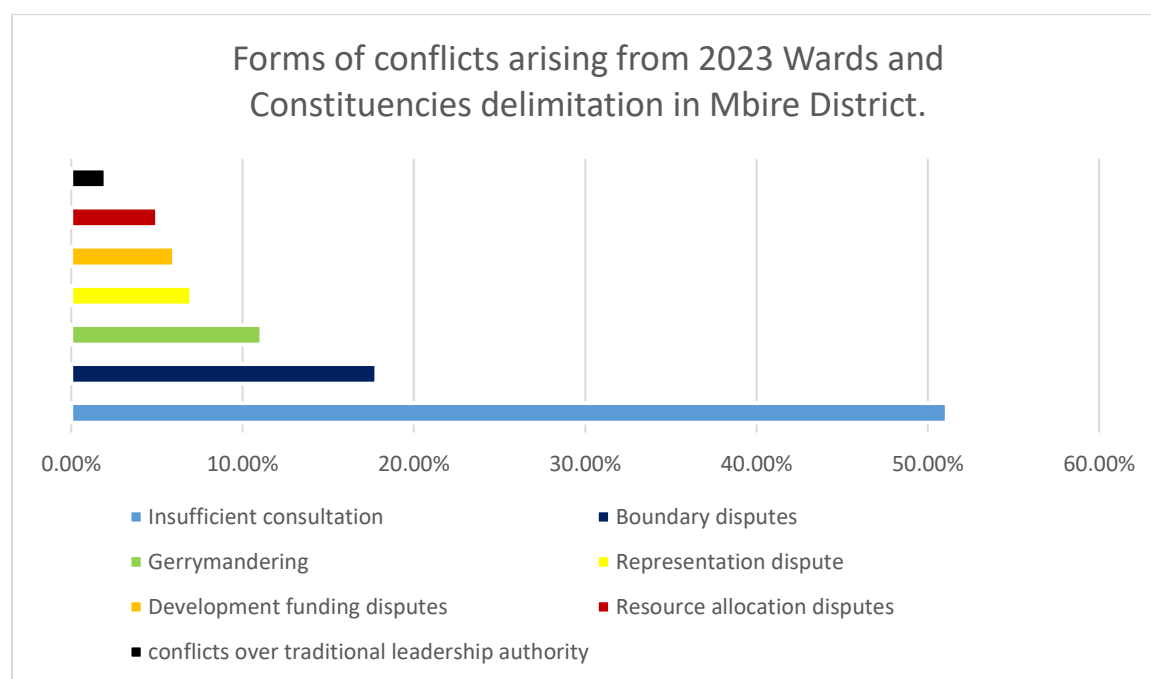


Figure 1: shows forms of conflicts in percentages

Source: Author

The study used thematic analysis to identify important themes from participant responses. Themes were created and developed through a thorough transcribed analysis and note-taking procedure. The study was able to classify and characterise the data in a methodical and significant manner by extracting key elements from the transcripts and grouping them together. Politics and power conflicts, transparency and accountability, as well as community and identity were the main issues. These subjects were divided into categories.

4.2.1 Politics and power conflicts

Boundary conflicts, representation issues and allegations of gerrymandering were the three areas under this theme.

4.2.1.1 Boundary disputes

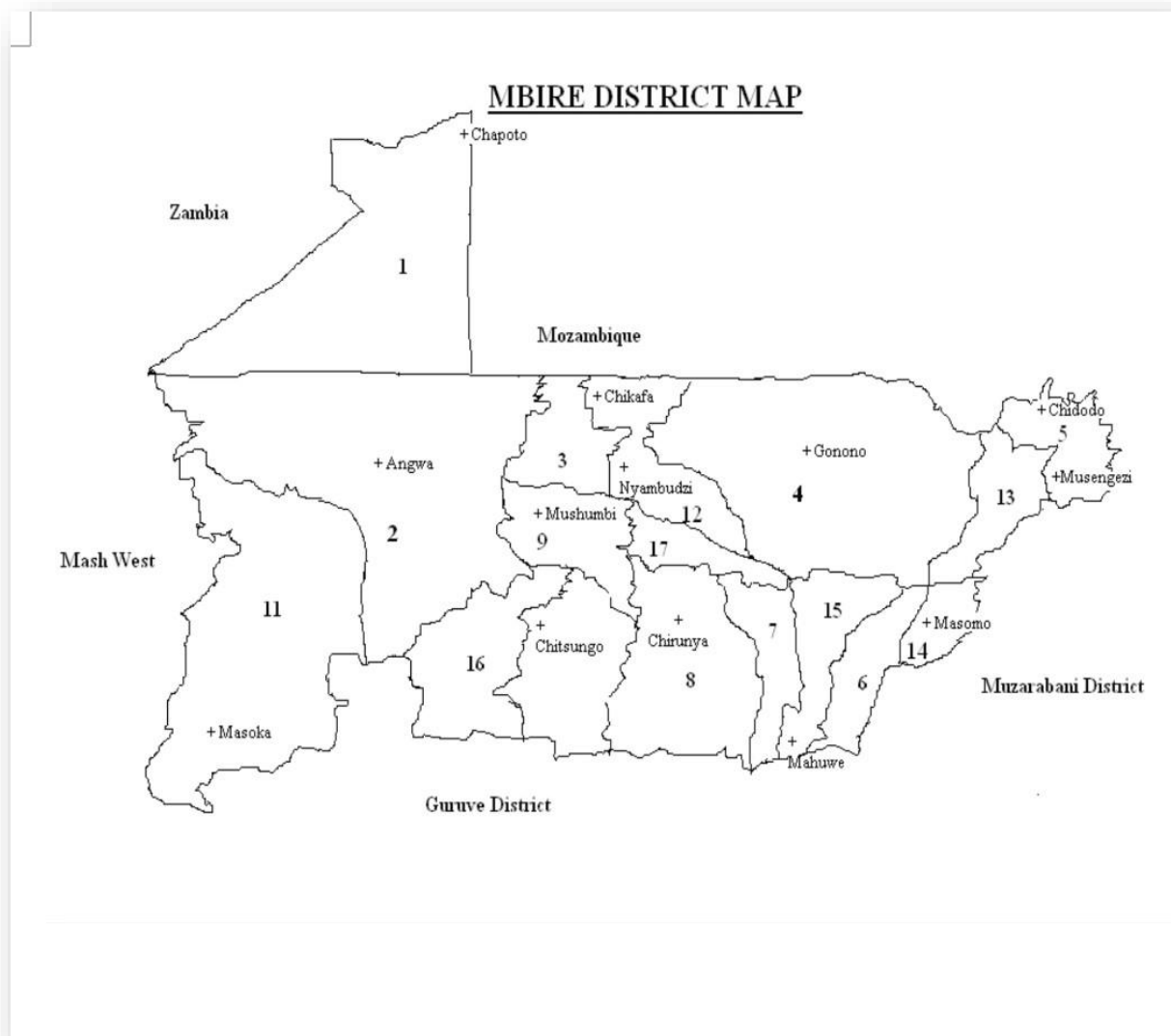


Figure 2: shows Mbire District old map

Source: Mbire RDC files

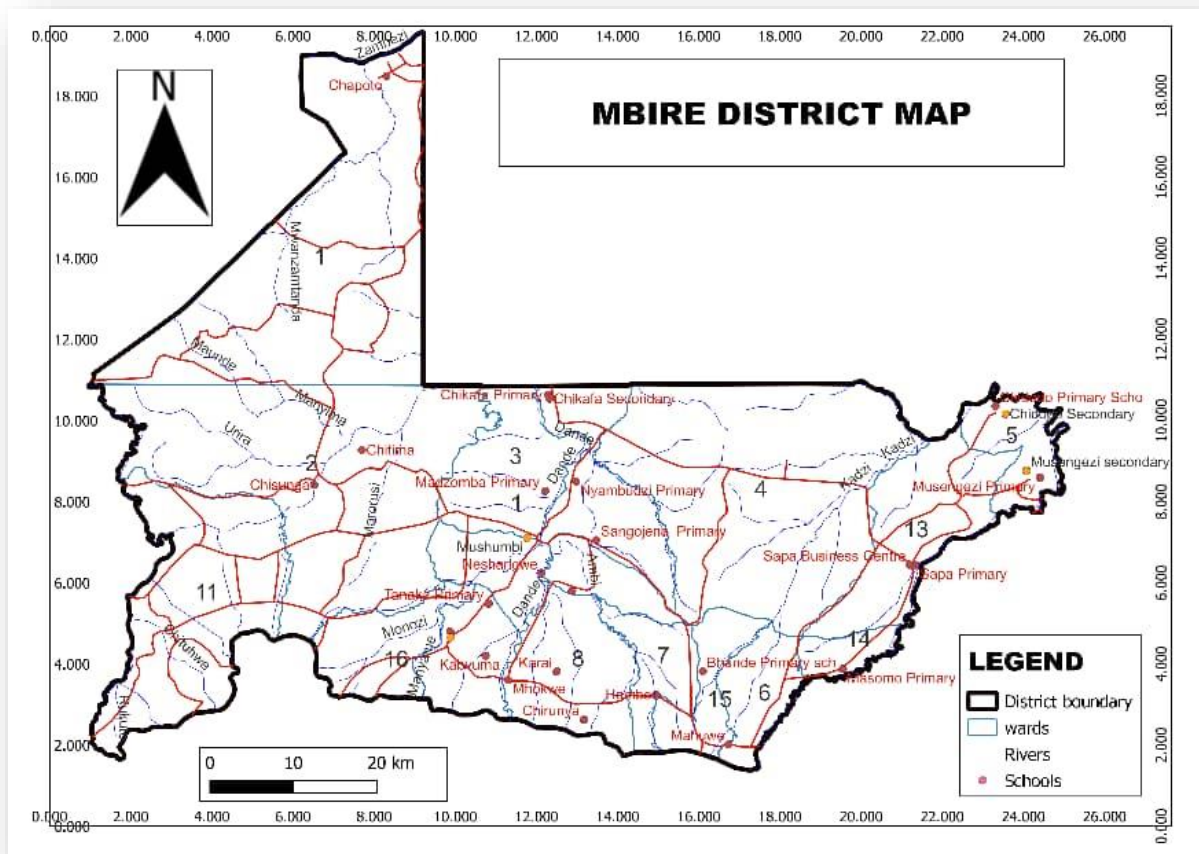


Figure 3: shows Mbire District new map

Source: Mbire RDC files

Boundary conflicts are the main cause of conflict in Mbire District, according to 18% of the persons interviewed. Disagreements on which ward particular communities belong to are caused by unclear boundaries. Some participants made the following comments in order to explain how borders led to conflicts:

“It's unclear where our ward and our neighboring ward meet. Conflicts about whose ward particular communities belong to have resulted from this”. (Participant 1)

"The borders separating Mbire District and Guruve District are not clearly drawn. Due to boundary conflicts, particularly in the region between Bakasa Growth Point and Boomgate in the Mahuwe site, there has been a continuous confrontation between

the Mbire Rural District Council and the Guruve Rural District Council. Uncertain leadership duties within the constituency are the result of this conflict". (Participant 33)

"The Zimbabwean Electoral Commission overlooked traditional borders when deciding on electoral boundaries. Conflicts over leadership limits arose between headmen, village heads, and chiefs as a result". (Participant 25)

"Long-running conflicts with nearby villages have resulted from unclear boundaries. Tensions still exist and access to necessary resources and services has been hampered by the unclear boundaries, regardless of our best attempts to address the problem". (Participant 43)

As a result, unclear territorial boundaries have sparked conflicts over community relationships and caused misunderstandings over administrative duties within constituencies. Tensions among stakeholders have increased as a result of this ambiguity, which has created an environment of uncertainty. The Commission is required by the Constitution's Section 161(5) to make sure that no ward is split up among two or more Local Authority regions (Constitution of Zimbabwe, 2013). Although the literature emphasises the necessity of avoiding encroachment when redrawing electoral boundaries, the analysis discovered that Mbire District did not sufficiently do this.

4.2.1.2 Accusation of gerrymandering

According to the findings, 11% of participants said that accusations of gerrymandering were another form of conflict arising from the delimitation of Mbire District's Wards and Constituencies. Participants made the following claims:

"The electoral process's integrity has been affected". (Participant 14)

“Well-known ZANU-PF candidates appeared to benefit from the delineation of Wards and Constituencies. Only two of the seventeen council members belonged to the Citizens Coalition for Change (CCC). It was unfair to violate voting rights on certain wards in an attempt to increase the number of votes cast by ZANU-PF members. By voting for people who actually represent us instead of simply the party, we hoped to bring about change in our ward”. **(Participant 8)**

Concerns regarding electoral integrity have been raised by participants' claims that geographical boundaries have been changed to benefit particular political interests. These allegations have undermined trust in the voting process by fostering a climate of distrust. The Movement for Democratic Change-Alliance's (MDC-A) Deputy Director for Elections, Shiriyedenga, noted that ZEC's consultations are oppressive as the public isn't given the chance to participate or make decisions (Mushayabasa, 2022). People would enter an election that was unjustly skewed in favour of others because it was already decided upon with regard to Wards and Constituencies. The study's findings that the delimitation procedure was unfair were corroborated by Stewart et al. (2019), who said that there is still a serious worry over the manipulation of political borders to favour particular parties, which in turn causes mobilisation.

4.2.1.3 Representation disputes

According to 7% of the participants, representation issues are still another important problem. Tensions arise because communities feel underrepresented in the wards or constituency. One resident got frustrated that:

“We believe there is insufficient representation of our community in the ward. We have repeatedly requested a separate ward, but our demands have been turned down”.
(Participant 2)

Concerns regarding underrepresentation in governing bodies were being voiced by communities, which resulted in disengagement and disillusionment. Relationships within the community are being strained as a result of the widespread discontent caused by this perceived lack of representation. These support earlier research by Gunathilake (2018), who claimed that attempts to delineate Wards and Constituencies have caused considerable political tensions and local discontent, with many locals believing their interests are not sufficiently represented. Participants suggested that electoral commissions make sure that women, minorities, young people and those with disabilities have a chance to win during the delimitation process.

4.2.2 Transparency and accountability

This theme included disagreements about resource distribution and inadequate consultations.

4.2.2.1 Insufficient consultation

Traditional leaders and other important stakeholders were not consulted throughout the delimitation process. 51% of the participants stated that they were not consulted. Participants were angry about:

“Uncertainty and mistrust have resulted from the changes not being communicated to us in advance. To enable people to accept whatever happens, the community should be aware of the delimitation exercise and its outcomes. To get better outcomes and increase public participation, ZEC should speak with us in person during the delimitation process rather than merely working on a computer”. **(Participant 36)**

“Three to four days prior to election day, ZEC officials arrived and instructed voters to cast their ballots without providing an explanation of the new boundaries. We remained silent when our rights were violated since there were incidents of harassment, assault, and intimidation closer to elections, thus we had no voice. Additionally, they

failed to separate the boundaries using natural features, which resulted in encroachment and disputes in several wards”. (Participant 19)

As a result, the delimitation procedure has come under criticism for not including stakeholders in a meaningful way that has led to a lack of confidence. The validity of the process has been weakened by views of disenfranchisement brought on by the lack of inclusive consultation. The ZEC's delimitation procedure is not sufficiently consultative, according to the opposition party CCC, to guarantee respectable results (*News Day*, 2022). Adding to the conclusions of Zimbabwe Election Support Network (2019), which focused on the 2007 and 2013 exercises, the delimitation process was unclear due to insufficient public discussions and restricted information availability. According to 51% of participants, the study also showed that public consultation in Mbire District was inadequate.

4.2.2.2 Resource allocation disputes

Conflicts are often fuelled by disagreements over resource allocation. Wards struggle for scarce resources, such as funds and facilities. 5% of the participants made the following observation:

“Our ward has less resources since the constituency have given other wards more funding. Conflicts between our ward and neighborhoods have resulted from this”.

(Participant 3)

“Our concerns are being disregarded, and our voices have not been heard. This has increased tensions, reduced access to essential resources and services, and damaged confidence in the political process”. (Participant 10)

“Other wards have been given priority by the constituency, leaving ours with insufficient funding. Tensions have increased as a result and the allocation procedure is now viewed with suspicion. In order to get around this, we suggest that ZEC make it clear that, even though stakeholders are spread throughout multiple wards,

individuals are free to travel around the district in pursuit of resources in order to prevent future disputes”. **(Participant 13)**

Due to conflicting demands from different constituencies, the allocation of scarce resources has become a difficult subject. Stakeholder disputes have been exacerbated by the perceived unfairness of resource distribution, which has damaged confidence. Communities may fight for resources and services, particularly if delimitation results in perceived uneven distribution, as the study's findings support (Keddy, 2012).

4.2.3 Community and identity

Conflicts over traditional management authority and development funds were present in this category.

4.2.3.1 Development funding dispute

One of the most urgent issues was the misallocation of financial resources for development initiatives in Mbire District. Six percent of the participants expressed worries about fund misallocation to local stakeholders.

“Due to changes in boundaries, there were disagreements over who owned certain projects. The Mbire Rural District Council allocated some ward plough-back funding to the new boundary wards. This is an unacceptable scenario that has to be addressed right away”. **(Participant 28)**

“Our location and another area of our ward, where the CAMPFIRE project is located, are separated by a considerable 70 kilometers. We believe that there is a sense of disregard in our area because it has been neglected in development efforts. Additionally, there is a lack of accountability and transparency because the councillor

lives on another side of the ward, leaving us unsure about how the monies are being used". (Participant 17)

Tensions among stakeholders were brought on by disagreements over development funds, underscoring the necessity of open and responsible resource distribution. Conflicts have been exacerbated by the apparent spending of development funding, which has fostered a climate of distrust. Section 161(6) (c) of the Constitution, which required ZEC to take into account the geographic distribution of registered voters, was criticized for this (Constitution of Zimbabwe, 2013).

4.2.3.2 Conflicts over traditional leadership authority

Traditional chiefs are worried that their power has been diminished by the delimitation process. Two percent of participants made the following observation:

"The changes that have caused uncertainty and stress in my territory were not discussed with us. Since we are currently at conflicts with my neighbouring chief about traditional boundaries and leadership responsibilities, we are concerned that if the situation is not resolved, it may worsen. They overlooked traditional limits in favour of political borders during the delimitation process. These confrontations also involved headmen and village chiefs. Campaigns to raise awareness are necessary to resolve the dispute before it gets out of hand". (Participant 11)

As a result, traditional leaders voiced worries about the decline of their power, emphasizing the necessity of giving traditional governance systems more respect. Social cohesiveness has been weakened by the disrespect for conventional authority. These results are consistent with research by ZESN (2022) on the overreach of certain authorities in Victoria Falls, Bulawayo, and Harare. Confusion and disputes resulted from these councils intruding on one another's territory. Residents may become confused about which Local Authority is in charge of

providing particular services as a result of this boundary incursion. The Constitution's Section 161(5)(a), which mandates that the Commission make sure no ward is split between more than two Local Authority regions, was also questioned (Constitution of Zimbabwe, 2013).

4.3: Effects of conflicts arising from 2023 Wards and Constituencies delimitation in Mbire District

The second objective was to determine the consequences of disputes resulting from the delineation of Mbire District's wards and constituencies. Voter apathy, social service disruption, economic losses and postponed developments, community marginalisation, exclusive participation and poaching are some of the consequences of these conflicts, according to the data. This objective was guided by the following question: What are the consequences of conflicts resulting from the delineation of 2023 Wards and Constituencies in Mbire District? Themes from the responses include the effects on the economy and society, environmental and conservation implications and participatory governance. A bar chart was used to show the results.

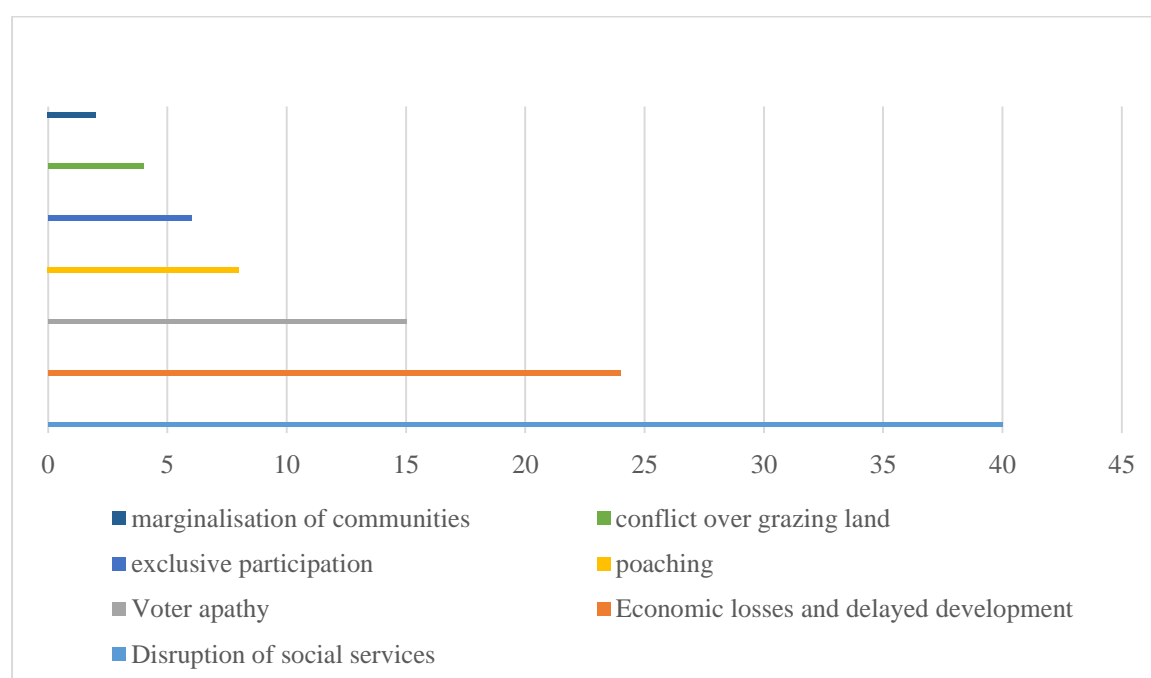


Figure 4: shows effects of wards and constituencies delimitation in Mbire District

Source: author

4.3.1 Participatory governance

Voter apathy with 15% and community marginalisation with 2% fell under this theme.

4.3.1.1 Voter apathy

Voters became indifferent as a result of the Wards and Constituencies delimitation issue. People lost faith in and a sense of disconnection from the electoral process. Concerns over voter apathy were highlighted by fifteen percent of participants.

"I felt confused and uninformed after the ward boundary changes, which prevented me from voting confidently." (Participant 1) "I felt disenfranchised and voiceless because I couldn't vote for my favourite councillor because of the ward changes. Furthermore, I was unfamiliar with the traits of the competitors in my recently designated ward".

(Participant 10)

"Before the delimitation procedure, I had my followers, but the exercise divided the ward in two and assigned another area where voters were unfamiliar with me. Unfortunately, the elections were not won by me". **(Participant 42)**

Constituencies and Wards according to fifteen percent of the participants, delimitation led to a drop in voter turnout. Because the competitor they preferred was assigned to a different ward and they were unsure of the new ones' traits, some members chose not to cast their ballots. Other competitors also lost some of their fans. This sparked questions concerning local government representation and validity. Redistricting lowers voter turnout and electoral competition, which can reduce the likelihood that voter votes will influence election outcomes

(Hunt, 2018). Voter apathy is a widespread issue that has far-reaching effects, impacting not merely elections but additionally the general well-being of democracy, according to studies. For this reason, it is critical to investigate solutions.

4.3.1.2 Marginalisation of communities

Two percent of interviewees expressed anxiety about others, particularly those from distant locations, being looked down upon.

“Ward and constituency disputes have hampered the advancement of our community, resulting in our projects freezing because of insufficient leadership support”.

(Participant 20)

“Being part of a minority ethnic group in the District, I have personally witnessed how disputes over Constituency and Ward boundaries can worsen already-existing disparities. Our demands are overlooked and we are frequently disregarded in decision-making processes. Boundary disputes have further exacerbated the situation, making us feel alienated and marginalised”. **(Participant 24)**

Therefore, according to 2% of participants, the delimitation process continued to marginalise some communities by limiting their access to social services, resources and decision-making procedures. This conclusion is corroborated by (Pelc, 2017), which claimed that gerrymandering electoral boundaries may cause certain communities particularly minority groups to be marginalised. These results emphasise the necessity of carefully weighing the possible impacts on local communities of delimiting Wards and Constituencies. Social services in Mbire District have been impacted by border changes, especially in the wake of recent modifications. The distribution of food has been particularly affected, with the most affected being those living in rural areas. Particularly during the rainy season, some people have been compelled to take long trips through bad roads and flooded rivers in order to reach distribution

centers. Because they are now regarded as new to the wards they moved into, some individuals who previously gained from social welfare programs are no longer eligible. The delimitation procedure has made matters worse for minority groups by intensifying already-existing disputes during food distribution.

4.3.2 Economy and society implications

Three categories that fell under this theme include exclusive participation with 6%, economic losses and delayed developments with 24% and interruption of social services with 41%.

4.3.2.1 Social service disruptions

Another adverse consequence of the Wards and Constituencies delimitation controversy in Mbire District was the disruption of social services. According to the majority of participants (forty-one percent), the survey examined how those conflicts impacted their access to social welfare programs, medical services, education, a sufficient supply of water and sanitation, and other resources. This primarily impacted people who lived in isolated locations, some of whom were far from other parts of their ward, which had an impact on social service programs.

“I feel neglected as a child by our leaders, who are too busy battling over wards and constituency boundaries in the district. We need better healthcare and schools, but our needs are being disregarded”. (Participant 31)

The delimitation process left communities vulnerable since it significantly affected the availability of necessary services. Redrawing electoral boundaries can have a significant impact on the distribution of social services, especially if current service delivery has not been taken into consideration, according to Makumbe (2006), who further supported the study's finding that the disruption of welfare services was an important consequence of conflict resulting from border changes.

4.3.2.2 Economic losses and postponed development

Infrastructure development in Mbire District was delayed by disputes resulting from the delimitation of the 2023 Wards and Constituencies. Uncertainty and confusion resulted from the delimitation exercise's disruption of ongoing initiatives in the disbanded wards. Of the participants, twenty-four percent noted that:

“Due to shifting boundaries, people were fighting for control of some initiatives. The Mbire Rural District Council allocated some ward plough-back funding to the new boundary wards. This is an unacceptable scenario that has to be addressed right away”. **(Participant 28)**

“Our development projects came to a complete standstill due to the district's ward and constituency delimitation conflicts. Our plans for infrastructure development suffered greatly as a result of the development levies' distribution delay”. **(Participant 4)**

“Delimitation disputes caused delays, but I paid development levies anticipating progress in our community. Inflation had depreciated the monies by the time we received them, rendering them useless. It is depressing to observe how these disagreements are impeding the advancement of our community”. **(Participant 15)**

“I am currently making two payments for the development levy. The village chief where I live demands a tax, and because of delimitation, I also have to pay an additional charge for my lands that are under a different authority. My family is afraid of hazardous wild creatures, especially during the rainy season, therefore I decided to move back to my farms”. **(Participant 21)**

As a result, the delimitation process caused major losses and slowdown in local economies, which had an impact on livelihoods and infrastructure development. The study's findings

partially support those of Sachikonye (2017), who pointed out that border changes might cause ambiguity, which can impede development projects and have negative effects on local people.

4.3.2.3 Exclusive participation

The Mbire District's delimitation process has had a negative effect on community development. Certain community members have been excluded from Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources initiatives, which has caused disruptions to livelihoods, impeded economic progress, and damaged confidence. 6% of them noted that:

“Some people of our community who were previously involved in CAMPFIRE initiatives have experienced difficulty as a result of the delimitation process. They no longer have access to necessary money and benefits”. **(Participant 29)**

“After years of involvement, I was abruptly removed from the CAMPFIRE project due to the delimitation process. It is depressing to observe how these changes have halted the advancement of our community”. **(Participant 40)**

Existing resource inequities were made worse by excluding some communities from CAMPFIRE activities. This supports earlier research by Khan et al. (2015) that found boundary delimitation can have significant effects on community project involvement and results.

4.3.3 Conservation and environmental implications

Conflicts over grazing areas and poaching are included in this subject at a rate of four percent and eight percent, respectively.

4.3.3.1 Poaching

Poaching has alarmingly increased in Mbire District as a result of community members being removed from CAMPFIRE initiatives. According to eight percent of participants, certain

residents have turned to poaching as a means of survival since they are unable to receive project benefits, which undermines conservation efforts.

“Many of us have turned to poaching as a means of subsistence after being evicted from the CAMPFIRE project. Although it is a last resort, we believe that there is no other option”. **(Participant 26)**

“The livelihood of our strongest allies in wildlife protection were taken away, and the removal of residents from CAMPFIRE programs has seriously weakened conservation efforts”. **(Participant 33)**

“We need to help communities by offering alternative benefits and re-engaging removed members to help secure their livelihoods and promote conservation in order to combat poaching”. **(Participant 10)**

As a result, poaching operations significantly increased throughout the delimitation exercise, endangering wildlife populations and conservation efforts. This supports earlier research by Von Essen et al. (2014), which found that if the delimitation process is not well managed, it may have unforeseen implications, such as creating an atmosphere that encourages criminal activity.

4.3.3.2 Conflicts over grazing lands

In Mbire District, disputes over grazing areas have been triggered by the delimitation process. The activity has caused overlapping claims and decreased land availability by upsetting conventional grazing patterns through boundary changes. As a result, relationships were strained and livelihoods were impacted, causing conflicts across communities. A more inclusive strategy that takes into account community viewpoints and honors customary grazing patterns is required to overcome this dispute. Four percent of participants made the following observation:

“Removing our grazing land threatens our identity, pride and way of life in addition to causing financial loss”. (Participant 40)

“Our community is deeply divided as a result of the delimitation exercise, which has turned something that is shared into a point of contention”. (Participant 20)

“In the past, boundaries had no effect on our livestock's freedom to graze across wards. Our local councilman says our ward benefits unfairly from the delimitation process; thus, they have banned our animals from grazing across their ward”. (Participant 24)

Area management, community relations and cattle productivity were all impacted by conflicts that arose over the use of grazing area. The results of this study somewhat support those of previous research by Hufschmidt & Ume (2023), who claim that traditional grazing patterns can be upset by the delineation of new boundaries, which can result in intergroup disputes. Mbire District has been greatly impacted by the delimitation process, which has had a variety of effects on governance, the economy, society and the environment. Addressing these issues, building community resilience and advancing sustainable growth in the district all require a more open and participatory approach.

4.4: Effects of conflicts arising from 2023 Wards and Constituencies delimitation on political dynamics in Mbire District

Finding the impact of disputes resulting from the delineation of Mbire District's wards and constituencies on political dynamics was the third objective. According to the results, the impacts on political dynamics included a thirty percent change in voting patterns, fifteen percent electoral disputes, twenty percent political polarization, twelve percent erosion of mutual trust and twenty-three percent potential for electoral reforms. Three themes were political ramifications, institutional implications, and democratic governance rose out of the research findings. This objective was guided by the following question: How do tensions

resulting from the delimitation of 2023 Wards and Constituencies in Mbire District affect political dynamics? The results are shown in a pie chart.

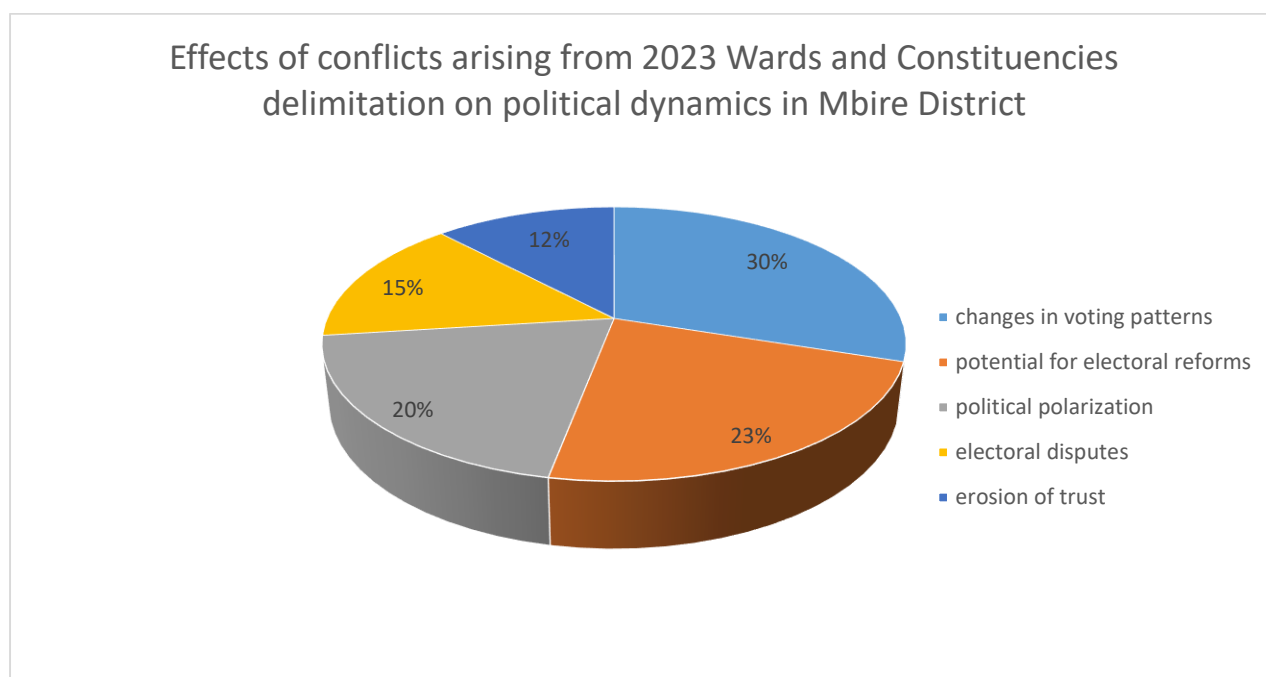


Figure 5: shows effects of conflicts arising from wards and constituencies delimitation in Mbire District.

Source: author

4.4.1 Political ramifications

Under this theme, there were three categories including changes in voting patterns, electoral disputes and political polarization.

4.4.1.1 Changes in voting patterns

By altering the demographic makeup for electoral Wards and Constituencies, the delimitation process has the potential to drastically change voting trends. Election results may then be impacted by this. Thirty percent of those who took part noted:

“Our community is divided as a result of the new boundaries, and people are voting for parties rather than the greatest candidate. We used to vote for the candidate we

believed to be the greatest, regardless of their party, so this is incredibly annoying”.

(Participant 1)

“People's voting behavior has been impacted by the divisions brought up by the boundary disputes. Instead of opting for what they truly wanted, it seemed as though people were being pushed to take sides. It is unfortunate since we ought to cooperate rather than argue over limits”. **(Participant 10)**

“I am concerned that the border disputes will make the election unfair. Unfair boundaries imply that elections cannot be considered fair either. I am really worried about it, and I am hoping that something might be done about it”. **(Participant 20)**

“At this point, I dislike the candidate. I now only have two poor options because of the border adjustments. I would like we could return to the previous borders, so that we had more choices and could cast our votes for those we truly supported”. **(Participant 26)**

Consequently, by changing the demographic composition of electoral wards and seats, the delimitation procedure can have a substantial effect on voting trends. As voters reevaluate the assistance for parties or candidates in light of the revised boundaries, this may have an impact on election results. The delimitation procedure has been ill-timed, frequently occurring right before elections, which lessens its value for candidates and parties, (Zimbabwe Electoral Support Network, 2017). Voters became confused as a result of this rushed approach, learning on election day that their votes were registered in the wrong Ward or Constituency. This emphasizes how crucial it is to complete the delimitation report at least fourteen days prior to election day in order to notify voters of any changes in accordance with section 161 (11) of the Zimbabwean Constitution (2013).

4.4.1.2 Electoral disputes

Political dynamics in Mbire District can be greatly impacted by conflicts over the delimitation of Wards and Constituencies, which may result in election disputes. Concerns regarding electoral conflicts were voiced by fifteen percent of participants. Controversies surrounding delimitation, such as a lack of openness and insufficient consultation, can exacerbate stakeholder mistrust and conflict. Boundary disputes, voter distribution and the representation of particular communities or groups can all give rise to disputes. The delimitation process needs to be open, inclusive and equitable, with sufficient stakeholder participation and publicity, in order to avoid conflicts.

“The people in charge did not do a fair job of drawing the new boundaries. It looks like they were trying to cheat. We would not accept that. We want transparency and fairness”. **(Participant 42)**

“We question the fairness of the delimitation process, especially regarding voter distribution”. **(Participant 40)**

“The new boundaries were not fairly drawn by those in authority. They appear to have been attempting to cheat. That is not acceptable to us. We desire justice and openness”. **(Participant 42)**

“We have concerns about the delimitation process's fairness, particularly with regard to voter distribution”. **(Participant 40)**

Boundary change-related election disputes have the potential to erode public confidence in the democratic process. To avoid conflicts and preserve the integrity of the delimitation process, it is essential to guarantee its openness, inclusivity, and equity. This supports the findings of Gerzso (2023), who claimed that the delimitation procedure is frequently quite politicized and that different factions try to sway the conclusion for their own gain.

4.4.1.3 Political polarization

The adverse effect of Mbire District's Ward and Constituency delimitations on political dynamics is known as political polarization. The term political polarization describes the widening of political differences. People and organisations affiliate themselves with opposing sides as a result of this escalation. Concerns over political polarization were voiced by twenty percent of participants.

“Polarization has hampered social cohesiveness and community cooperation.

Delimitation concerns have caused political parties to fracture”. **(Participant 20)**

Disputes over electoral boundaries have the potential to deepen already existing political rifts and heighten polarization. These studies support the findings of Fiorina & Abrams (2008), who claimed that the growth of authoritarianism and the breakdown of democratic institutions have been facilitated by the polarized political environment. It is possible to lessen polarization and foster social cohesiveness by resolving these conflicts through inclusive and open procedures.

4.4.2 Institutional implications

This theme encompassed the category of mutual trust erosion.

4.4.2.1 Erosion of mutual trust

Twelve percent of participants stated that disagreements over delimitation can undermine confidence in the electoral process by fostering suspicion and mistrust among stakeholders. Perceptions of injustice, bias or fraud in the delimitation procedure may give birth to this mistrust, which could undermine the validity of election results and spark civil unrest. To avoid this, the delimitation procedure has to be open, inclusive, and equitable, engaging all relevant parties and adhering to precise rules to maintain integrity and avoid political meddling.

“Because of the issues with establishing boundaries, many no longer trust the election system, and some people decide not to cast a ballot at all. Many people have lost their trust in the system as a result of the chaotic and unfair procedure”. **(Participant 10)**

“The legitimacy of elections is in danger due to the poisonous atmosphere of mistrust created by delimitation disputes”. **(Participant 28)**

Trust in the election process may be damaged by the dispute around modifications to the electoral boundaries. In the delimitation procedure, transparency, inclusivity and fairness must be prioritised in order to rebuild confidence. Stakeholder issues and grievances must also be addressed. A transparent delimitation procedure that informs stakeholders and lets them influence its outcome has a higher chance of winning the public's trust and acceptance (Handley, 2007). Although this research emphasizes the need of transparency in the delimitation process, the analysis discovered that Mbire District did not sufficiently take these issues into account.

4.4.3 Democratic governance

Under this theme, the possibility of electoral reforms was one category.

4.4.3.1 Potential for electoral reforms

According to twenty three percent of participants, the delimitation experience in Mbire District demonstrates how electoral boundary conflicts can erode the democratic process. Transparency, inclusivity, equitable representation and institutional strength must be given top priority in reforms in order to avoid such confrontations. Mbire can guarantee the validity of its electoral process, avoid conflicts, and foster trust by putting these measures into practice.

“We ought to take advantage of this chance to improve the electoral process so that everyone feels heard and included”. **(Participant 10)**

“Reforms can increase public trust in the electoral process and help avoid future disputes over electoral boundaries”. **(Participant 24)**

On the other side, the disagreements over new electoral boundaries offer a chance for electoral reforms. These changes can support the truthfulness of the democratic process, prevent conflicts and foster confidence. This is consistent with research by Aditi (2015), who claims that in order to ensure fair competition and rebuild public confidence in the electoral process, electoral changes are necessary.

4.5 Possible electoral reforms

Objective four seeks to make recommendations for potential election reforms that are categorized by theme. These themes were election safety and integrity, stakeholder participation and institutional strengthening. According to the results, forty percent of participants supported consultations and the involvement of local stakeholders, twenty-five percent supported an independent commission, fifteen percent supported addressing political violence, ten percent supported constitutional refinement and ten percent supported collaboration as electoral reforms. What potential electoral reforms might be implemented in Zimbabwe was the question that guided this objective.

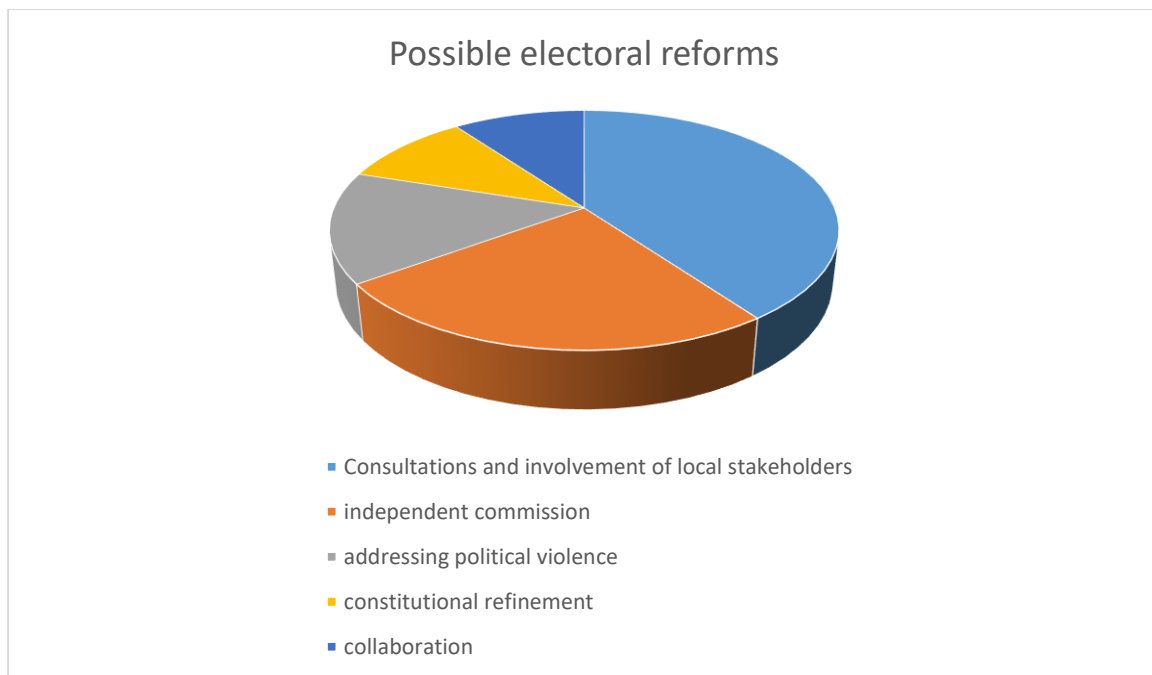


Figure 6: shows possible electoral reforms

Source: author

4.5.1 Institutional strengthening

There were two areas under this theme including the Independent Commission and constitutional change.

4.5.1.1 Independent commission

A government would benefit from creating a distinct Commission that is only involved in the delimitation process. This is due to the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission's extensive workload and constrained schedule, which may generate hasty decisions. Although the ZEC was getting ready for elections, the last delimitation procedure was hurriedly carried out. A stand-alone Commission would facilitate a more comprehensive and ongoing procedure, enabling the settlement of disputes, engagement with stakeholders and the production of reports to guide subsequent delimitation efforts.

“Electoral boundary delimitations would be fair and transparent if a commission operated independently”. **(Participant 8)**

“The concerns of our community would be addressed if a separate commission were established”. **(Participant 33)**

To guarantee the integrity of election procedures, an independent commission is essential. Establishing impartial monitoring organizations helps ensure accountability, transparency, and equity. This supports the assertion made by Small (2024) that Independent Commissions might provide knowledgeable advice on electoral reform, assisting in the modernization and enhancement of the voting system. There are many obstacles in preventing conflicts of interest and protecting institutional autonomy.

4.5.1.2 Constitutional refinement

Delimitation provisions, such as community interests and physical obstacles, are outlined in the Constitution, particularly in Sections 160 and 161. The issue of physical obstacles is distorted by the requirement for equal voter population distribution, as is the case in places like Kanyemba or Chapoto and Mpedzapasi, which are over 70 kilometres apart. Council members are no longer able to manage the entire ward because of the 35-kilometer distance between Angwa and Masoka. Since some places require councillors to travel great distances at their own expense, even though participation is optional, the equal voter strength requirements need to be changed. The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) ignored the significance of unity among citizens in their day-to-day lives in favour of equal voting power over physical obstacles.

“Just to go to a conference, we have to go through dangerous animal regions between these two wards and the bad road system and transportation issues make it much more difficult. Attending meetings become impossible when all of these variables are taken

into account. In these conservancies, for instance, numerous people have been killed and pulled away while attempting to cross flooded rivers. There is animosity between us and the other ward when a councillor from a different area chairs a meeting. The Constitution needs to be reviewed, particularly with regard to equal voting rights, as both electoral motivations and people's everyday circumstances need to be taken into account". (Participant 43).

Constitutional improvement can encourage accountability and transparency in election processes and bring them into line with democratic ideals. Sections 160 and 161 of the Constitution outline the criteria for drawing election boundaries (Constitution of Zimbabwe, 2013). While the legal structure is in place, despite being incorporated in the Constitution along with voting strengths, physical obstacles and community of interests are frequently disregarded during the delimitation process. Development is hampered by the problem, which is noticeable in wards that are roughly 70 kilometres apart. Since council members must travel great distances often willingly through flooded rivers and wildlife conservancies, it is necessary to reevaluate the strength of the electorate. It is necessary to rectify this imbalance. Administratively, development starts at the ward level. Development pauses when physical barriers or distance prevent individuals from coming together. Voters often overlook communal cohesion in favour of elections. The problem is made worse in Mbire by inadequate road networks and a lack of appropriate transportation. Motorbikes are used by locals to get to community halls for gatherings, but because of the risks, not everyone can make it. Twenty individuals have been killed by wild creatures, ten wounded and three drowned in these places while trying to cross flooded rivers between 2023 and 2024. To address those inequities, the Constitution has to be reviewed.

4.5.2 Stakeholder engagement

Categories under this theme were consultation and involvement of local stakeholders and collaboration.

4.5.2.1 Consultation and involvement of local stakeholders

For ZEC to get better results, local stakeholders had to be consulted and included. This is because ward and constituency delimitation conflicts were lessened when stakeholders' opinions were taken into account either before or during the delimitation process because they were informed about the procedure. Unintended repercussions of the delimitation process included, but were not limited to, resource competition, family separation and the loss of customary boundaries.

“People have grievances, and their opinions must be taken into account. Additionally, the participation of all pertinent parties is required”. **(Participant 10)**

“A delimitation process that prioritizes community involvement, transparency, and accountability requires effective public participation and consultation”. **(Participant 3)**

“In order for us to be aware of any developments, we should be consulted and kept updated on the delimitation process. Technocrats participated in the 2023 delimitation process, but the community was left behind because of a lack of comprehension. This emphasizes the necessity of education regarding the delimitation process and inclusive involvement”. **(Participant 36)**

In order to guarantee that electoral reforms represent the interests and values of the community, meaningful involvement with community groups is essential. Managing conflicting demands, balancing diverse interests, and promoting inclusive decision-making processes are all necessary for effective stakeholder participation. According to Zimbabwe Election Support Network (2019), ZEC is in charge of drawing electoral boundaries in accordance with

Zimbabwe's Constitution, particularly Sections 160 and 161. However, it neglected to make sure that all relevant parties were notified and consulted. Participation and public consultation are essential elements of a legitimate election process. The absence of provisions for public engagement in the delimitation procedure is a serious flaw in the Zimbabwean Constitution. Since public participation is crucial to promoting transparency, trust, confidence and credibility in the process, this omission is especially worrisome. The Constitution must be reviewed and amendments that allow for the public's involvement in the delimitation process must be considered. These amendments should include clear guidelines and procedures for public consultations with citizens, traditional leaders, civil society organizations, the government, and political parties.

4.5.2.2 Collaboration

To maintain accountability, openness, and trust during the delimitation process, the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission should collaborate with all pertinent organizations. They should specifically work with the office of the District Development Coordinator, the Mbire Rural District Council, and other groups that are tasked with preventing violence associated to elections.

“Civil society and election officials must collaborate to foster transparency and trust”.

(Participant 32)

“The District Development Coordinator's office and the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission should work together and cherish this collaboration.” It is crucial to acknowledge the significance of this partnership as we oversee, control, and carry out their activities in the district. Regretfully, stakeholders frequently accuse us of not keeping a close enough eye on ZEC's responsibilities when problems occur. Conflicts

between local leaders resulted from ZEC changing a chief's boundaries during the most recent delimitation exercise, which is important for traditional rites". (Participant 31)

Improving democratic processes also requires collaborative governance. A coordinated approach to election change, information sharing and interagency cooperation are all made easier by collaborative governance. Sasa (2022) also emphasized these findings, saying that an open and fair delimitation procedure in Zimbabwe depends on ZEC and stakeholders working together effectively.

4.5.3 Electoral integrity and safety

Addressing political violence was the focus of one of these categories.

4.5.1.1 Addressing political violence

Since political violence threatens democracy, stability, and human rights, it is imperative that it be addressed during elections. Violence can worsen social divisions, undermine public confidence in institutions, and deny citizens their right to vote. Additionally, it fosters a culture of fear, scaring people and keeping them from voicing their opinions or taking part in the political process. The fundamental right to the freedom of opinion and association, which are vital elements of a robust democracy, is undermined by this self-censorship and silence. A cooperative effort is required to support peaceful campaigns, offer security, assist in resolving conflicts and cultivate a culture of peace and tolerance in order to prevent and respond to election-related violence.

"Three to four days prior to election day, ZEC officials arrived and instructed voters to cast their ballots without providing an explanation of the new boundaries. We remained silent when our rights were violated since there were incidents of harassment, assault, and intimidation closer to elections, thus we had no voice. Additionally, they failed to divide the boundaries using natural features, which resulted in encroachment

and disputes in several wards. In order for us to openly voice our opinions and take part in the democratic process, security for citizens' rights should be offered prior to elections". (Participant 19)

Electoral violence can undermine democratic processes. Proactive measures are essential for preventing conflicts, ensuring electoral security and promoting peaceful elections. A nuanced understanding of the root causes of violence and the development of effective conflict resolution mechanisms are crucial in this regard. As argued ZESN (2019) report, a significant oversight exists in the delimitation process, as there are no established provisions or guidelines in the Constitution for resolving boundary disputes that may arise. The African Union already recognised the importance of addressing election-related disputes.

Violence during elections has the potential to erode democratic processes. Preventing confrontations, guaranteeing electoral security and encouraging peaceful elections all depend on proactive actions. In this context, an advanced understanding of the underlying causes of aggression and the creation of efficient conflict resolution techniques are essential. According to the ZESN (2019) research, there is a major oversight in the delimitation procedure because the Constitution contains no set rules or measures for settling potential boundary disputes. The African Union has already acknowledged how critical it is to resolve issues pertaining to elections. Priorities for electoral reform are complex and interrelated. Stakeholder participation, an independent commission, tackling political violence, constitutional improvement and collaborative governance are all necessary components of a holistic strategy to achieve these issues. Electoral institutions can strengthen democratic processes and guarantee peaceful and credible elections by giving priority to these areas.

4.6 Chapter summary

The results of the research on conflicts resulting from the delimitation of Wards and Constituencies in Mbire District were given and examined in this chapter. Tables, bar graphs and pie charts were used to display the data. Additionally, statistical and thematic analysis were used to examine the data. The study will be wrapped up in the following chapter, which will include a summary of the main conclusions, recommendations and areas that require more research.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND AREAS OF FURTHER STUDIES

5.0 Introduction

The study's findings on conflicts resulting from the delimitation of Wards and Constituencies in Mbire District were given and examined in the previous chapter. The study's main findings, conclusions, suggestions and areas for additional research are compiled in this chapter.

5.1 Summary of the whole project

There are five chapters in the research.

5.1.1 Chapter 1

The chapter gave a summary of the forms, consequences and potential electoral reforms of disputes resulting from the delimitation of Mbire District's Wards and Constituencies. Additionally, the chapter highlights the study's objectives, problem statement, research objectives, research questions, assumptions, importance, limitations and delimitation.

5.1.2 Chapter 2

The chapter examined the relevant literature as well as the study's theoretical underpinnings. Conflict theory served as the theoretical foundation for the investigation. The study objectives informed the four themes of the literature review. The chapter also discussed the forms of conflicts using Galtung's Triangle of Violence, the effects of conflicts resulting from the delimitation of Wards and Constituencies generally, as well as the effects of these conflicts on political dynamics and potential electoral changes in Zimbabwe. Gaps in the evaluated literature were also noted in the chapter.

5.1.3 Chapter 3

The study's research technique is described in this chapter. In order to give comprehensive information for comprehending the tensions resulting from the delimitation of Wards and Constituencies in Mbire District, the study used a design based on case studies in conjunction with mixed research methodologies. Out of the 50 participants in the targeted population, only 45 were questioned, the other five chose not to submit information. To collect data, the study used a multifaceted sampling strategy that combined purposive, stratified and snowball sampling techniques. Questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and focus groups with five to eight participants were used to gather data. A pilot study was carried out prior to the final data collection in order to test data collection tools, assess the viability of the research concept, and improve procedures. The introduction letter, voluntary involvement, informed consent, and confidentiality all served to uphold the highest ethical standards.

5.1.4 Chapter 4

The data analysis and explanations of the research findings were presented in this chapter. Tables, bar graphs and pie charts were used to display the data. Additionally, statistical and thematic analysis were used to examine the data.

5.1.5 Chapter 5

The study's main findings, conclusions, suggestions and areas for additional research are compiled in this chapter.

5.2 Conclusions

5.4.1 Using Galtung's Triangle of Violence, the first objective investigated the forms of disputes that resulted from the redrawing of the election boundaries in Mbire District. A lack of local consultation, boundary disputes, gerrymandering, arguments over representation and disputes over traditional authority were among the major difficulties identified by the study. The absence of local consultation was found to be the most important issue. This further

marginalised previously vulnerable populations and intensified already-existing tensions. These results are in line with earlier studies by the Zimbabwe election Support Network (2019), that emphasized the necessity of a more diverse and participatory method of drawing election boundaries. Given these results, it is imperative that local residents participate in the taking of decisions in order to avoid disputes and guarantee peaceful elections. This can be accomplished by creating unambiguous avenues for participation and consultation, guaranteeing that all parties involved are informed and involved at every stage of the procedure. By doing this, ZEC can support electoral procedures that are more accountable, transparent and inclusive and that represent the interests and goals of all citizens.

5.2.2 The residents of Mbire District were significantly impacted by the redrawing of the district's electoral boundaries. According to the study, it led to a number of issues, such as the disruption of vital services like education and health care, financial losses and postponed development, a lack of interest in voting, the exclusion of particular groups from decision-making, disputes over resources and land and the marginalisation of particular communities. People had to travel far to obtain essential services, which was the main issue. Minority groups and those living in distant locations were particularly harmed and already-existing disputes were exacerbated. In order to obtain food or medical care, they now have to travel for hours or on unreliable roads. For many residents in Mbire District, this is their reality. The results are consistent with earlier studies by Makumbe (2006) that demonstrate the harm that shifting election boundaries can do to particular populations, particularly minorities. For this reason, it is crucial to ensure that all individuals participate in the decision-making process and that their requirements are taken into account. By doing this, ZEC can build a more equitable and just society where everyone can get the services they require.

5.2.3 The third objective evaluated the impact on political dynamics of the Wards and Constituencies delimitation debates in Mbire District. According to the study, it has a number

of consequences, such as altered voting habits, the requirement for election reforms, heightened political tensions, disagreements and a decline in confidence. A shift in voting habits was one of the primary consequences. This occurred as a result of people losing faith in the polling places and some people not being able to locate their names. People were consequently perplexed and uncertain about the voting procedure. This supports a report on changes in voting patterns by the Zimbabwe Election Support Network (2017). The study demonstrates the importance of carefully considering the potential political effects of redrawing election borders. ZEC can endeavor to make the electoral system more representational and inclusive by being aware of this. This entails making certain that the procedure is equitable and open and that every voice is heard.

5.2.4 According to studies, significant reforms are required, such as regional stakeholder discussions, an impartial commission, tackling political violence, cooperation and constitutional improvement. According to the study, resolving conflicts and promoting good change require local stakeholders to be included in the decision-making process. In support of this conclusion, the Zimbabwe ESN (2019) emphasises the value of independent commissioning and public involvement. Zimbabwe may create an electoral process that is more inclusive and representational by putting these ideas into practice. Stakeholder participation, accountability and openness must be given top priority by the ZEC in order to accomplish this goal. Preventing political intimidation and violence, creating an impartial commission to supervise the election process, making sure that all pertinent parties participate in decision-making, and amending the constitution to facilitate an inclusive and equitable electoral process are all part of this. Zimbabwe may fortify its institutions of democracy and guarantee that the election process fairly represents the people's will by putting these reforms into practice.

5.3 Recommendations

In Mbire District, the process of defining wards and constituencies is crucial since it has a direct impact on the district's electoral environment. A number of stakeholders must be involved in order to guarantee that this process is carried out in a fair, open and inclusive manner. The following are suggestions for the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC), Zimbabwe's Parliament, the government and development partners, nonprofit groups and regular individuals.

5.3.1 Zimbabwe Electoral Commission

A significant portion of participants reported a lack of consultation and inadequate civic education during the delimitation process. Many felt excluded from decision-making, which led to distrust in the process and confusion about the changes in wards and constituencies. This indicates a gap in stakeholder engagement and public awareness efforts by ZEC. Therefore, civic and voter education should be given top priority by the ZEC throughout the delimitation procedure. This will encourage accountability and transparency by allowing the electorate to comprehend the alterations in Wards and Constituencies. To make sure that their complaints are taken into consideration, the ZEC should also convene consultative meetings and solicit comments from pertinent parties. In order to increase confidence and trust in the delimitation process, involvement from the public is also essential.

5.3.2 Parliament of Zimbabwe

Participants noted imbalances in voter distribution and a lack of legal provisions guiding citizen participation in the delimitation process. They also raised concerns about how geographic and community interests were ignored, leading to disputes. To address the issue of equal voter strength, the Zimbabwean Parliament must amend the Constitution to include regulations for citizen participation and consultation during the delimitation procedure. The current

Constitution fails to take into account community interests and physical barriers, which causes distortions in the delimitation process. The Parliament should also create a commission to handle complaints regarding the delimitation process and boundary disputes.

5.3.3 Government of Zimbabwe and development partners

Several respondents cited resource constraints affecting ZEC's ability to educate, consult and carry out accurate delimitation on time. To ensure a seamless delimitation procedure, the Zimbabwean government and its international partners should promptly supply the ZEC with sufficient resources. This will make it possible for the ZEC to carry out its duties in an effective and efficient manner, guaranteeing the timely completion of the delimitation process.

5.3.4 Civil Society Organisations

The study revealed that many citizens were unaware of changes due to limited outreach and voter education. Marginalized groups were also underrepresented in consultations. Therefore, to guarantee that the public is involved in the development process and that voter orientation is carried out on schedule, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) must work in tandem with the ZEC and local governments. In order to ensure that no one is left behind, CSOs should also encourage inclusive involvement regardless of gender, race or ethnicity.

5.3.5 Ordinary citizens

Some community members expressed disappointment and resistance toward the final delimitation outcomes, feeling excluded and disempowered. Since the results of the delimitation procedure cannot be undone for ten years, the general public should accept them. Citizens should band together and concentrate on positive development for the next generation rather than opposing the changes. Notwithstanding any restrictions enforced by the delimitation process, citizens might contribute to the district's development and prosperity in this way.

In Zimbabwe, defining Wards and Constituencies necessitates cooperation from a number of stakeholders. By putting these suggestions into practice, Mbire can guarantee an equitable, open and inclusive delimitation procedure that supports the district's growth and electoral integrity.

5.4 Areas for further research

5.4.1 Investigating the impact of electoral boundary changes on social services.

Further research is needed to explore the effects of boundary changes on social services, including healthcare, education and food security.

5.4.2 Examining the role of traditional leaders in electoral boundary delimitation.

According to the study, traditional leaders were crucial to the delimitation procedure, but additional investigation is required to fully understand this.

5.4.3 Assessing the effectiveness of electoral reforms

The success of electoral changes, such as the creation of an Independent Commission and encouragement of stakeholder participation in the delimitation process, should be assessed in future studies.

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Annexures

Interview guide

Informed consent form

Introduction

I am Binister Mafiro, a Peace and Governance student at Bindura University of Science Education. I invite you to participate in a research study on conflicts arising from the 2023 wards and constituencies delimitation in Mbire District.

Purpose

This study examines the relationship between boundary changes and conflicts in Mbire District, aiming to inform improved delimitation processes.

Participation

Your involvement is voluntary. You may withdraw at any time without penalty or impact on your relationship with me or the university.

Procedures

A one hour interview will gather your perspectives and your responses will be anonymous.

Benefits

Your participation contributes to enhancing future delimitation processes and the researcher is prepared to share the findings.

Confidentiality

Research findings will not link your name to responses.

Questions

Please ask me any questions before signing this form.

Consent

By signing below, you acknowledge voluntary participation, understanding of the study's purpose and procedures, as well as awareness of your right to withdraw

Signature (optional)

Date

Thank you for considering participation.

Demographic data

Gender: _____

Ward/Constituency: _____

Age: _____

Level of education: _____

Employment status: _____

Marital status: _____

Topic: Conflicts arising from the 2023 wards and constituencies delimitation in Mbire District.

Questionnaire

1. Were you aware of the 2023 wards and constituencies delimitation exercise?

(Yes ☐ /No ☐). Can you briefly explain your answer.

2. How did you receive information about the delimitation?

(Select all that apply)

❖ Social media

❖ Local news

❖ Community meetings

❖ Word of mouth

❖ Other (please specify) _____

3. Do you understand the criteria used for delimitation?

(Yes ☐ /No ☐). Can you briefly explain your answer.

4. What factors do you think influenced the delimitation process?

(Select all that apply)

❖ Population size

❖ Geographic boundaries

❖ Political considerations

❖ Ethnic considerations

❖ Other (please specify) _____

5. How do you think the delimitation has affected your ward/constituency?

(Positive/Negative/No impact) _____

6. Have you experienced any conflicts or tensions related to the delimitation?

(Yes ☐ /No ☐)

7. If yes, describe the nature of the conflicts/tensions:

8. Do you think the delimitation has affected the representation of your community?

(Yes ☐ /No ☐) Can you briefly explain your answer.

9. Do you think the delimitation process was fair?

(Yes ☐ /No ☐) Can you briefly explain your answer.

10. Do you think the delimitation reflects the will of the people?

(Yes ☐ /No ☐) _____

11. Have your rights as a citizen been respected in the delimitation process?

(Yes ☐ /No ☐) _____

12. Do you think the delimitation will impact the outcome of future elections?

(Yes ☐ /No ☐) Can you briefly explain your answer.

13. What changes would you suggest to improve the delimitation process?

14. How can conflicts arising from delimitation be addressed?

15. Any additional comments or recommendations

Councillors and Members of Parliament

Councillors are local government representatives elected by ward residents to advocate for local interests, while Members of Parliament (MPs) represent national interests, elected by constituency residents.

1. What disputes emerged from the delimitation process in Mbire District?

2. Were there instances of violence related to delimitation disputes?

3. How have delimitation disputes impacted community relationships in Mbire District?

4. What impact have disputes had on political representation and resource allocation?

5. Have there been changes in community dynamics, representation, or resource allocation?

6. What challenges have you faced in representing your ward after delimitation?

7. What reforms can prevent or address delimitation disputes in Zimbabwe?

8. How can the ZEC improve the delimitation process?

9. Any additional insights on Mbire District's delimitation process?

Ordinary citizens and community leaders

Ordinary citizens in Mbire District are essentially residents who are impacted by delimitation, including both voters and non-voters. They're concerned about how delimitation affects their daily lives, voting rights, and community development. On the other hand, community leaders like traditional leaders are influential individuals who shape community opinions and decisions. They're worried about delimitation's effects on community cohesion, development, and their leadership roles

1. What were the main causes of disputes over ward and constituency boundaries?
2. Have you personally experienced or witnessed any delimitation-related conflicts? Describe any conflicts you have experienced or witnessed
3. What were the consequences of disputes during delimitation?
4. What changes occurred in community dynamics, representation, and resource allocation after delimitation disputes?
5. How did citizens and stakeholders respond to these changes?
6. How did these changes impact daily life in Mbire District?
7. How can the delimitation process be improved to reduce conflicts?
8. Do you have any additional insights on Mbire District's delimitation process?

Mbire Rural District Council and Local government

The Mbire Rural District Council is a local government body responsible for managing rural areas, delivering essential services such as infrastructure development, social services, public health, and sanitation. Local government, a more comprehensive entity, comprises Rural District Councils, municipalities, and city councils, overseeing a wider range of services and development initiatives.

1. What role did the council or local government played in Mbire District's delimitation process?
2. How did the council or local government handle disputes arising from delimitation?
3. What strategies did the council or local government use to minimize the negative effects of delimitation disputes?
4. How did the council or local government ensure the revised boundaries met community needs?
5. What reforms does the council or local government think are needed to improve delimitation and prevent disputes?
6. How can the council or local government collaborate with the ZEC to enhance delimitation?
7. What suggestions does the local government have for improving Zimbabwe's delimitation process?
8. Any additional insights on Mbire District's delimitation process?

Zimbabwe Electoral Commission

The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) is a vital institution responsible for managing and supervising elections in Zimbabwe. One of the critical functions of ZEC is the delimitation of electoral constituencies and wards. Delimitation is the process of determining the boundaries of these electoral areas, which is essential for ensuring that elections are conducted fairly and transparently.

1. What were the primary reasons for the redrawing of boundaries?
2. How did your commission engage citizens, stakeholders, and traditional leaders?

3. What criteria guided the determination of new ward and constituency boundaries?
4. What changes resulted from the delimitation exercise in Mbire District?
5. Have there been any notable changes in representation, resource allocation, or services delivery?
6. What were the consequences of the disputes for citizens and stakeholders?
7. Were there any challenges in addressing disputes, and if so, how were they overcome?
8. How can your commission collaborate with stakeholders to implement reforms?
9. Any additional insights on Mbire District's delimitation process?

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DEPARTMENT OF PEACE AND GOVERNANCE

28 November 2024

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: REQUEST TO UNDERTAKE RESEARCH IN YOUR ORGANISATION

This serves to introduce the bearer, Binister Mafino, Student
Registration Number B210832B, who is a HBSC PEACE AND GOVERNANCE
student at Bindura University of Science Education and is carrying out a research project in your
area/institution.

May you please assist the student to access data relevant to the study, and where possible, conduct
interviews as part of a data collection process.

Yours respectfully

J. KUREBWA (DR)
Acting Chairperson



Bindura University of Science Education

P. Bag 1020

Bindura

13 December 2024

The Chief Executive Officer

Mbire Rural District Council

Mbire District.

Dear Sir

Re: Request for permission to conduct field research on Conflicts arising from 2023 Wards and Constituencies delimitation in Mbire District.

I am writing to request permission to conduct field research in Mbire District under the topic "Conflicts arising from 2023 Wards and Constituencies Delimitation in Mbire District". The study aims to investigate the impacts of the 2023 delimitation exercise on the community, particularly focusing on conflicts that have arisen from the process.

The research will involve collecting data through questionnaires, interviews, and focus group discussions with community members, councillors, and local government officials. The study's findings will contribute to a better understanding of the delimitation process's effects on community dynamics and inform strategies to mitigate potential conflicts.

I assure you that the research will be conducted in an ethical and responsible manner, respecting the privacy and confidentiality of all participants. The research findings will be shared with the Council and contribute to the improvement of community relations and development.

Thank you for considering my request. I look forward to your positive response.

Yours faithfully,

Binister Mafiro

BUSE, student

0783028406



Mbire Rural District Council

www.mbirerdc.co.zw mbirerdc@gmail.com 0773294571

P.O. Box 539 guruve

All Correspondence should be addressed to The Chief Executive Officer

17 December 2024

Attention Ms B Mafiro

RE: Request for permission to conduct field research on conflict arising from 2023 Wards and Constituency Delimitation in Mbire District.

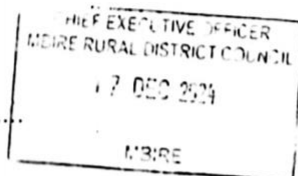
The above subject matter refers.

Mbire RDC acknowledge receipt of your letter regards request for permission to conduct field research on conflict arising from 2023 Wards and Constituency Delimitation in Mbire District. You have been granted permission to undertake your research in Mbire district. Council appreciate your interest in working with our organization. Please furnish us with a copy of your findings for record keeping and future use.

M Madziwa

Ms M Madziwa

Assistant Executive Officer Admin &HR



binister mafiro-4.docx ?

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