BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

The Impact of Women's Quota System in Local Governance Participation in Mudzi District, Zimbabwe

By

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to examine the impact of women's quota system in local governance participation in Mudzi District, Zimbabwe. The study used a broader objective of raising women's representation in decision making structures. The study used qualitative data collection method which was used to collect data from thirty eight (38) participants. This included local government officials, women in the quota system, women ward councilors, man councilors and also civil society organizations. Semi structured interviews, observation and document analysis were used to collect data.. The findings showed that the women's quota have some positive contributions to the study which led to some improvement in societies. However, the women's quota system has just increased the numerical number of women in decision making and it have been affected by male patriarchal society which have continued to dominate in the society. The study recommended that women's quota systems should be strengthened by introducing legal and institutional mechanisms that give assurance to women's inclusion in decision making processes. The study also recommended that the local government should facilitate continuous training and development in leadership policy making.

DECLARATION FORM

I Persuade Chekani (B223189B) hereby declare that this piece of work is my original work and all sources of information that has been used were properly cited in accordance with the academic requirements.

Student …  Date…03/09/26……..

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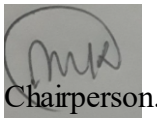
Chairperson…… Date…….

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my father and my entire family for their unwavering support that they have shown me through my academic journey may the almighty God protect them and bless them forever.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the presence of the holy spirit in the name of the heavenly father and son who dwells in me and to whom has brought me this far. I would like to thank my supervisor Dr Madenga for his guidance and support throughout my research.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

MRDC……Mudzi Rural District Council

BUSE……..Bindura University of Science Education

WASH……Water and Sanitation

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CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTTION

1.1 Background to the study

Gender quota mechanisms have been widely diffused and have become a popular method of affirmative action and are now enshrined in international legal frameworks that establish clear targets for women's participation in governance. This worldwide campaign for increased women's participation in high-level decision-making positions was supported by increasing evidence base over the previous decade, showing that such mechanisms can have a meaningful impact on increasing women's representation in legislatures (Bennett, 2014). Today, about half of all countries in the world have some kind of electoral gender quota. The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU, 2015) found that in 2012, elections in 22 countries that adopted electoral quotas resulted in 24% of seats held by women under legislated quotas and 22% under voluntary party quotas. In comparison, without any quota system, women only won 12% of the seats. International IDEA (2014) also revealed an interesting trend: out of the 10 countries with the highest rates of change in the percentage of women in their lower legislative houses, 9 had adopted quota mechanisms to promote gender parity.

The women's advocacy movements have played a key role in the implementation of quota systems throughout Africa. African women have brought unique voices to the legislative process and influenced legislative outcomes in ways that are more responsive to the diverse interests of society. An increased number of women in leadership positions throughout Africa promotes the values of equality, fairness, and justice to a group that has been marginalized in

formal leadership systems. In the last 40 years, no other part of the world has seen as strong an increase in the representation of women in politics as Sub-Saharan Africa (Tripp, 2011). A turning point was when the women's share of seats rose from 8% to 14.3%. Rwanda became the world leader in the number of women in parliament in 2003, when women held 48.8% of seats, a figure that had outdone the Nordic countries, which were traditionally considered benchmarks of gender equality. This trend has been significantly shaped by the growing adoption of different quota models, which are in turn a reflection of changing international norms on representation as expressed in United Nations conventions and resolutions and as enshrined in targets that have been adopted by important African regional organizations such as the African Union, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

Zimbabwe, in 2013, implemented a quota system as a temporary measure for two electoral cycles (2013 and 2018). In particular, Section 124(4) of the Constitution stipulates that 60 additional women members, six from each of the country's provinces, shall be elected by a proportional representation system based on the votes cast for political parties during general constituency elections (Shawarira, 2014). It was a tangible constitutional and legal guarantee to increase women's involvement in local governance. To complement this, a new national gender policy was developed to tackle gender issues in the Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development. Of particular relevance to this discussion is the gender, politics and decision-making section (5.3) of the National Gender Policy 2013-2017, which has as its overall goal, the development and strengthening of the policies, legal instruments and programs towards achieving 50/50 representation of women and men at political and key decision-making platforms.

Mudzi District is located in Mashonaland East Province and is estimated to have a population of 133,252 (Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency, 2013). The district has the same proportions of women's involvement in local governance structures as seen in Zimbabwe as a whole, and falls under Agro-Ecological Region IV.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study aims to examine the impact of the women's quota system in local governance participation in Mudzi District, Zimbabwe.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

The constitution of Zimbabwe amendment (no. 20) act of 2013 section introduced the 60 reserved seats for women's quota system which enhanced women's political participation in local governance structures. Women leaders continued to face challenges of being sidelined from key decision-making spheres despite their increased numbers of the quota system. Evidence showed that women elected under the quota system do not have the necessary resources and expertise in local government participation. This have raised public concerns on whether the woman quota system empowers women or just increased numbers in representation. The ignorance of research in such issues in the Mudzi District area in which this research addressed. This study examined the impact of the women's quota system in local governance participation in Mudzi District, Zimbabwe. The study provided insights into the challenges faced by women elected under the quota system and it also assessed their effectiveness in decision-making and development in local communities.

1.4 Research Objectives

1. To state the perceptions of community members and stakeholders towards the effectiveness of the women's quota system in enhancing local governance participation.

2. To assess challenges faced by women representatives under the quota system in effectively participating in local governance.

3. To examine the extent to which the women's quota system has increased women's representation in local governance in Mudzi District.

4. To analyse the role of women elected under quota system in decision-making processes at the local level.

1.5 Research questions

1. What do community members perceive as benefits and challenges of the women's quota system in local governance participation?

2. To what extent has the women's quota system increased women's representation in local governance in Mudzi District?

3. What role do women elected under the quota system play in local-level decision-making processes?

4. What challenges hinder the effective participation of women representatives under the quota system in local governance?

1.6 Assumptions of the study

1. The study assumed that the women's quota system had an impact in influencing women's participation in local governance in Mudzi District.
2. The study further assumed that women elected under the quota system mechanism are actively involved in decision making as they are in leadership positions so as to voice community concerns effectively.

1.7 Significance of the study

The study was significant in many ways, firstly it was significant by contributing to academic knowledge thereby filling a gap in the actual impact of the women's quota system in local governance participation in Zimbabwe. While other research and studies have focused on international and national representation, this research focused on localized evidence from Mudzi District offering a deeper understanding of how the quota system functions in rural governance. The study provides valuable insights for policymakers and government institutions as it provides critical insights on the success, challenges, and limitations of the women's quota system. The findings can inform future policy makers and policy reforms aimed at strengthening women's participation and leadership positions at all levels of governance. For local authorities and community leaders, the study showed the importance of collaboration and gender balance which promotes development and helps community engagement. The study helped researchers, advocacy groups, and civil society groups who are also working on enhancing a better community representation as it offered practical recommendations for enhancing women empowerment in local governance participation and decision-making.

1.8 Delimitations

This study specifically focuses on examining the impact of women's quota in local governance participation in Mudzi District, Zimbabwe. The key area of concern was on how the quota system had managed to incorporate women in decision-making, political participation, and leadership roles in the district. The research covered the period from 2018 (this was when the quota system began to operate at the local government level to 2025). The study was limited to Mudzi District geography, and it was not going to cover other districts. The study focused on female councilors, local government officials, and community leaders as the target population. The study did not examine the impact of the quota system at the national level, but it focused on the local level.

1.9 Limitations of the study

The research was limited to Mudzi District therefore, the findings don't incorporate experiences of women in other districts or regions of Zimbabwe. The source of research data was qualitative data obtained through interviews or discussions. This can be because of personal experience and politics, and thus responses may be biased and can impact the objective of the research. Privacy and restrictions on access to government records were a problem. This resulted in the research being based on secondary data sources, which may not be fully up to date or complete. Potential long-term effects that could occur during this time may not be accounted for as they are not part of their study. Other factors that contribute to women's empowerment in decision-making are considered peripheries since the women's quota system was the main focus of the study.

1.10 Definition of keywords.

Governance- Fukuyama (2013) called governance as the capacity of the government to make and enforce rules and provide services, whether or not it is a democratic government.

Electoral gender quotas- Krook (2013) identifies "electoral gender quotas" as policies which aim to boost the number of female political candidates in a given setting and are expressed in some form or another.

Empowerment- is a multi-dimensional social process and it enables people to take control of their lives. According to Molyneux & Razavi (2013), Empowerment is defined as "Empowerment' means strengthening of the spiritual, political, social or economic power of individuals and communities".

Development- is the situation of the realization of the human personality. These include reduction in poverty, unemployment and inequality (United Nations, 2013)

Feminism- is about equality and human rights for all women, and has a rich and diverse body of knowledge and activist practices (Ndlovu, 2021).

1.11 Dissertation outline

The dissertation is structured into five chapters

Chapter One introduces the study.

Chapter Two presents literature review and theoretical framework.

Chapter Three details the research methodology.

Chapter Four presents, analyzes the research findings.

Chapter Five provides summary of the study, conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

2.1 LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.2 Introduction

The previous chapter introduced the research problem of the topic: The impact of women's quota system in local governance participation in Mudzi district, Zimbabwe. This chapter presents a review of empirical literature and theoretical framework related to the women's quota system participation in local governance focusing on Mudzi District, Zimbabwe. It discussed about women quota both at global, regional, national and district level, and thus having women decision making role at the local level. The literature review was based on the study objectives and constitutional framework that support women's inclusion in decision making bodies and empirical data on the results of quota system in Zimbabwe. The study examined the gaps that existed among scholars and aspects that needed further investigation with regards to the Mudzi District. This chapter presents the theoretical framework which is based on feminist and empowerment evaluation theory. These theories illustrate the influence of power relations on women's political involvement in governance institutions.

2.3 Theoretical framework

The study took a combination of two theories; the feminist theory by Wollstonecraft 1792 and empowerment evaluation theory by Fetterman 1994. The research has merged both theories giving a holistic picture of the effect of women's quota system in local governance participation in Mudzi District, Zimbabwe.

2.3.1 Feminist Theory

Feminist theory was a way of thinking and interpreting gender roles and it promoted the incorporation of women's interests into the social organization. This theory was put forward by Wollstonecraft 1792 who was a proponent of women education and equality. Theorist such as Karl Marx, Frederick Angels and Audre Lorde also come in the picture with different perspective of feminist but this study focused on the idea of Wollstonecraft 1792 which emphasizes a liberal approach to development. Mills 1869 also supported this idea with his work " The subjection of women " which was also supported by his wife as she talks about supporting women's rights to vote and ending discrimination in all spheres of life. Its relevance to the Zimbabwean context provides a crucial insight into the women's quota system which was provided for in the Zimbabwean constitution Amendment (no.20) 2013 to reserve 30% of local governance seats. This policy reflects a liberal feminist perspective that had been attempting to solve the imbalance of women's participation in governance by involving them in political decision-making (Aizawa, 2019).

Feminist theories were explained and directions for change in social and political factors that created or contributed to dilemmas and problems experienced by women were suggested. They discussed and suggested solutions for women's intra and interpersonal issues. Feminist theories offer a lens through which to analyse social and political experiences of groups and individuals, irrespective of sex or gender. The focus given to each of these three areas, and the centrality of other factors that affect marginalization, oppression and unjustified restrictions. The theory posits that women's full participation in local governance structures was still being undermined by socio, political, economic and male patriarchy (Manase, 2020). The quota system confronted the prevalent male dominant norms in society that has confined women in political participation in local governance structures.

Liberal feminism was a gradualist approach of improving the position of women in society by promoting equal opportunity through legislation while, at the same time, challenging the socialization process that accepts gender inequality. Slow incrementalism that aims for equality and emphasizes cultural beliefs and social interactions; supporters consider legislative, cultural and socialising factors. Liberal feminists are more likely to focus on interpersonal interactions rather than train women to dismantle the structures that uphold power imbalances, and teach women to act more like those men who are successful in their careers. Liberal feminists operate on the basis of seeing women as missing from the structure of society and aim to include them in the structure of society. Liberal feminist celebrates inclusivity of women quota system as a progress mechanism towards reaching equal representation, Radical feminists on the other hand critique them for combining them into male dominant system without a fundamental change in the gendered nature of power. In Mudzi district, women councilors under the quota system face challenges such as limited or no access to resources and tokenism which affects empowerment goals. This illustrated the persistent nature of the male patriarchy which continued to dominate in decision making processes even in areas formally open for women (Ndlovu, 2021).

Cornwall and Goetz (2015) suggested that empowerment is required in order to achieve genuine transformation in inclusion. that this scenario women's quota system in local governance upgrades women's political participation. It is safe to say that the feminist theory not only explains the motivation behind the quota system, but it also provides the tools to analyse and evaluate the effect of the quota system on women's participation in Mudzi district. It shows the importance of dealing out with sociocultural challenges to ensure that women inclusion in meaningful empowerment and equitable governance.

2.3.2 Empowerment Evaluation Theory

Empowerment evaluation theory was developed by David. M. Fetterman (1994). This theory was rooted in the belief that communities should be active in determining and enhancing the areas that impact their life (Fetterman, 1994). Empowerment evaluation was a participatory way that focuses in paving a way for people to help themselves to improve their lives (Fetterman, 2001). Fetterman's empowerment evaluation was rooted in three main principles which are capacity building, community participation and empowerment. These principles make sure that the intended beneficiaries of a program such as women in local governance participation structures are actively involved in improving, implementing and evaluating those policies (Fetterman and Wanders men 2005). The theory was in line with the objective of the women's quota system, which was to improve gender equity in governance. The purpose of the quota system was to correct the imbalance in local government. Community participation was the core idea of empowerment evaluation theory, Fetterman (1996) emphasizes the idea that evaluation should involve all stakeholders in decision making processes. In the context of women's quota system, community participation involves direct participation of women in local governance, not in terms of representation but in terms of participation. Through the women's quota system, women are given a chance of contributing to local developments and ensure that decisions being made there addresses community needs. In Zimbabwe women's involvement in the Councils proved crucial in promoting gender responsive issues. In Mudzi district women have not been involved in decisions making of local government due to historical culture and male patriarchy dominance undermining women in leadership. Empowerment evaluation theory is more than symbolic – it means that women's voices are involved in community development and local decision-making.

The enhancement of skills, knowledge and confidence of people to make their participation effective was capacity building (Fetterman and Wanders men 2005). In empowerment evaluation theory capacity building was both a process and an outcome. In local governance it includes trainings and development of female councilor. In Zimbabwe the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development implemented diverse programs with the idea of equipping women councilors with leadership skills. Matanda (2013) however reported that many women leaders lacked technical expertise and exposure as compared to men. Empowerment evaluation theory has a framework for assessment of these initiatives on whether they are effective or sustainable. It is possible to say that this theory gives women a way to consider how far they have come and areas where they need to develop to become empowered, not just compliant, in the long run.

Another objective of the theory is empowerment, which is the increasing of people's control over their lives and decisions. Socio political outcomes are at the community level. In women quota system empowerment was the enabling of women to be actively involved in decision making processes. The theory offers a framework which has been applied to follow up on the number of women councilors who have gone through training programs and those who have not when it comes to assertiveness in meetings and decision making (Zimbabwe Gender Commission, 2022).

2.4 Empirical Literature Review

The empirical literature was reviewed under the themes that were identified from the research objectives. The themes were the perceptions of community members and stakeholders, challenges faced by women's quota system, the extent to which women's quota has increased representation and the role of women elected under the quota system in decision-making.

2.3.1 Perceptions community members and stakeholders have of the community.

The sense of community members and local actors is a significant factor shaping the impact of women's political involvement under the quota system. Even if the number of representations was raised, society norms always became a big obstacle to it according to global empirical literature. For example, in the Middle East and North Africa, cultural issues remained in women's involvement in decision making processes (Karam,2018). This indicates a policy-society disconnect. This is true in a number of African countries, but the African Union Agenda 2063 highlights the need for gender equality in governance structures (African Union, 2015). A survey by Gottlieb et al. (2018) use that votes are also connected to gender roles which underestimates the ability and legitimacy of women elected under the quota system. In Zimbabwe, women councilors are always considered a secondary to the man who is always considered to have great leadership. Mudzi district and other rural districts do not evaluate women as women, they evaluate them through the male patriarchy. This is an indication of resistance to the integration of women in decision-making positions. Women have received limited support from stakeholders, traditional leaders and community leaders which has led to limited confidence. Empirical findings in Mudzi District indicate that despite the increment of women councilors through women quota, women's participation in local governance has faced challenges as a result of male dominated patriarchal power and community perceptions which limited women's participation. This indicates disconnect between legislation and ground realities.

2.3.2. Challenges faced by women under the quota system

Quota measures have been implemented to boost women's presence in local governance, but empirical literature pointed to women still being confronted with structural, institutional and societal barriers (Dahlerup, 2006). Institutional barriers were also experienced by women

in leadership roles, including inadequate resources and lack of participation in critical meetings. In the study of Mudiwa (2015) & Dube (2018), women councilors were found to be facing challenges which limit their participation in governance including lack of resources, tokenism, etc. Political parties also contributed to these challenges being faced by women (Zvinavashe, 2020). This put women in a structural disadvantage, not men. Chibaya et al (2021) reported that woman in public and other sectors in Zimbabwe was experiencing problems in accessing training because of family responsibilities and discrimination. These challenges are more pronounced in Mudzi District as an indicator of society attitudes towards women leadership. Chikore& Mutasa (2020) study emphasizes on the need to empower women through provision of resources and training capacity for women in Mudzi District in political participation and decision making. If this was done, it would have been easier to know and under and the impact of women quota system at the local governance level.

2.3.3. How far the quota system has gone in terms of representation

Quota systems are one of the most effective methods of increasing women's representation. The quota system, which has been adopted by many countries, has been instrumental in women's representation in politics (Inter Parliamentary Union, 2021). Political representation has been enhanced in many countries in Africa, in particular Rwanda, which has taken a major step forward in implementing such measures, as well as in South Africa and Namibia in their local councils (Tripp, 2015 & Kiyoko 2019). The United Nations and Gender Links (2020) posited that quotas have increased women in local governance but the level of improvement varied according to the level of support in society and political parties. In Zimbabwe the quota system was adopted by the 2013 constitution which mandated that at least 30% of seats should be reserved for women Manase (2019). This showed that constitutional mandate led to an increase in number of women in local governance. The quantitative

representation had improved but qualitative representation had not been high because women in leadership faced a number of challenges including male domination, lack of finance etc. The quota system has boosted female representation in the local council board in Mudzi District but this has not yet been validated by the community. One can say that representation on its own cannot function without incorporating empowerment and reaching community acceptance.

2.3.4 Women's participation in decision making with the help of the quota system

Research has revealed that women's active participation in decision making leads to a reorientation of the policy towards social development. Cross national research finds that men tend to prioritize national defense and military spending more than women (Clayton & Zetterberg 2018, Koch & Fulton 2011). This revealed that women representation contributes to inclusive governance and better governance outcomes with respect to policies. Structural barriers kept the participation of women elected under the quota system low. Women councilors were sometimes disadvantaged in exerting influence over decision making. At other times, they are simply forgotten about because of political factors in the council. In Mudzi District, women work in all ways to champion their communities' interests, but are met with resistance from their fellow men. Women councilors' issues and contribution are often termed as soft issues which do not need attention.

2.4 Chapter summary

In this chapter, the theoretical framework is discussed, which is a synthesis of two theories, one is the feminist theory and the other is the empowerment evaluation theory. Theories were integrated and thus gave a holistic understanding of the effect of women's quota system in the participation in local governance in Mudzi District. The chapter also included an empirical literature review which was reviewed under the themes that the research objectives

gave. Themes were: perceptions of community members/stakeholders, challenges of women's quota system, extent to which women's quota has led to increased representation and role of women elected under quota in decision-making. The research also gives the research gap which is concerned with the lacunas in literature which is the effect of women quota system in the participation of local governance in Mudzi District. This therefore leads the research too chapter four which was the research methodology.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter reviewed the literature from previous studies, which was related to the topic, the impact of women's quota system in local governance participation in Mudzi District, Zimbabwe. The methodology and research design employed in this chapter to gain access to the impact of women's quota system in local governance participation in Mudzi District, Zimbabwe was described. The basic concept was to analyse and evaluate the role of the women's quota in women's representation and active participation in local governance in relation to reach objectives and questions related to the effectiveness of the quota, public perception and obstacles faced by the women in leadership positions. It has also stated the

philosophy that was linked to the study and it has explained the data collection, sampling, data analysis and ethical considerations employed.

3.2 Research Philosophy

The study used the interpretivist paradigm which is a framework that emphasizes the subjective meanings and experiences of individuals in the scope of the study (Pervin and Mokhtar 2022). The focus was on the lived experiences of women in the quota system, power dynamics and cultural norms that women face in the governance system.

3.3 Research approach

This research adopted a qualitative research approach as a guide to the data collection, analysis and interpretation to solve the research problem (Creswell, 2014). Since the research was to understand perceptions, experiences and social processes, a qualitative research approach was appropriate as it does not measure measurable things (Miller et al, 2022). This approach used a qualitative case study that is appropriate for the objective and system of the research. Qualitative case study approach was appropriate as it aimed to respond to perceptions of community members and stakeholders, challenges faced by women under the quota system, to what extent the quota system has increased representation, and the role of women elected under the quota system in decision-making. The qualitative approach was appropriate as it allowed for an understanding of the social system in their natural context, specific areas (Maxwell, 2012).

3.4 Research design

This research used a case study design that combined different aspects of a study into a logical manner that enabled the research problem to be addressed (Creswell, 2018). It enabled the researcher to gather rich, detailed and context specific information that led to the

complexity of women's quota participation at the local level. (Baxter & Jack, 2015) The researcher used the case study design, which enabled him to closely examine one prevailing issue in its natural context (Crowe et al., 2011). The study adopted the case study design with the emphasis being placed on the case of one district (Mudzi District). This enabled the researcher to study the women's quota system in the real life political, social and cultural contexts. By looking at one district the research inquired into the way that national gender quota policies are taken and implemented at the local level and how they influence women's participation in real life governance parameters.

3.5 Target population

Target population is a concept used in research that refers to the entire concerns of the research (Creswell &Creswell, 2017) Target population comprised of a set of people who have prominent knowledge and attributes relevant to the research problem. So, they were deemed appropriate to include in the study. To ensure the research objectives and the population under research match each other, for validation of the research findings and relevance (Kenora, 2012). In this study the targeted population consisted of stakeholders that were directly involved or affected by the women's quota system in local governance participation in Mudzi District. Target population in this research is the women councilors elected under the quota system six councilor's. These are the key beneficiaries of the legislation that is the focus of this study on the basis of their knowledge, skills and activities. Ten male councilors they are included to get diverse ideas, gender interaction and their views on women's activities in the Council. Two women councilors elected ward system, these are included so that they can give deep details or information about the social, political and economic culture in Mudzi District as they are women sometimes, they can have the same challenges as those faced by the quota system. Five local government officials, these include district administrators and others who work hand in

hand with councilors and they can speak to governance processes and institutional impacts. Ten community members and five civil society actors these are included as they have direct involvement with the local Council. By focusing on people with relevant roles in local governance and gender quota the study guaranteed that data collected was meaningful and contextually grounded and coordinated with the study objectives.

3.4 Sample size

The number of samples regarding the effect of women quota system in participation in local governance in Mudzi District was determined by the qualitative essential qualities of the research and basic standard of data. Qualitative research was supported by the fact that detailed unique facts about the participants who had first-hand knowledge of the research problem being investigated were obtained (Creswell &Poth, 2018). According to (Guest et al., 2013) qualitative sample sizes are small due to the fact that the main idea was to achieve depth of understanding and a level point where there were no information or themes imaging from participants. The study involved twelve (12) respondents who were direct stakeholders and/or affected by the women quota in the participation of Local Governance in Mudzi District. The individuals were chosen due to their most relevant knowledge, skills and experience in relation to the research topic. The sample consisted of three (3) women councilors who were elected using the quota system. This study focused on the skills, knowledge and activities of these, who were the main beneficiaries of the legislation. The sample also included (2) male councilors, they were included to get diverse ideas, gender interaction and their views on women's activities in the Council. Two (2) women councilors elected ward system were also sampled as they also provided deep details or information of the social, political and economic culture in Mudzi District since at times they faced the same problems as those faced by the quota system. Also sampled were three (3) local government officials including district administrators and others who work closely with the councilors and talked to governance

processes and institutional impacts. In addition, (3) community members and two (2) civil society were included in the sample as they were directly involved in the local council. According to Patton (2017) goal-oriented participants were crucial in making the researcher get in-depth data for apprehension of social, cultural, political and economic systems. When was collected participants replied to open questions such as "how the women's quota has influenced women's participation and its effectiveness in local governance in Mudzi District. The sample size selected was considered adequate for achieving the objectives of the study of women's quota system in participation in local governance in Mudzi District.

3.6 Sampling techniques

It referred to the ways that were used by the researcher to get information from the targeted population. The study used probability sampling and the researcher used simple random sampling and stratified sampling in probability sampling. The methods helped the researcher to select participants that were required according to the research problem.

3.6.1. Simple random sampling

Simple random sampling was adopted by the researcher where he wanted to randomly select participants from a list of people related to local governance in Mudzi District. The researcher was also provided with a list of councilors and participants were randomly selected. This was useful as the researcher was able to gather data from various councilors in various wards of Mudzi District. Simple random sampling also facilitated in the selection of the community members to be involved in the research.

3.6.2. Stratified sampling

When the researcher divided the participants into groups and took participants from each group using random sampling, stratified sampling was used. Participation was grouped into the following groups namely women councilors elected under the ward system, women

councilors elected who were elected through the quota system, male councilors, local government officials, civil society groups and community members. This method turned out to be useful as it provided the researcher with in-depth information on women quota system participation and its effectiveness.

3.7 Data collection methods

The study learnt qualitative data collection techniques to demonstrate the effect of women quota system in the participation of women in local governance in Mudzi District. Qualitative approach was used due to the nature of the study which sought to provide an account of the participants' first-hand knowledge, perceptions and rendering of the quota system in the socio-cultural and political arena. Semi structured interview, observation and document analysis were the techniques the researcher applied in collecting data from the selected participants. The researcher employed multiple methods to enhance the credibility of the findings.

3.7.1 Semi- structured interviews

One of the key data collection methods in this research was semi structured interviews. Braun and Clarke (2019) qualitative interviews enabled the researchers to explore how the participants make their lived experience visible. Semi structured interviews were conducted with women councilors elected via the quota system, women councilors elected via ward system, men councilors, local government officials, and community and civil society members. To ensure coherence, but also to give the participants the freedom of expression, an interview guide was used. The method enabled the researcher to explore the perception of community members and stakeholders, challenges of women under the quota system, extent that the quota system had increased representation and the role of women elected under the quota system in decision-making. Interviews were added with field work notes which ensure accuracy.

3.7.2 Observation

Another data collection technique that was adopted is observation. Observations provided first-hand information, and it is easier to be knowledgeable about the cultural behaviors in a particular area. In measuring women's participation in meetings, interaction patterns between male and female councilors and women councilors' acting upon decision-making, the researcher observed council meetings and community gatherings. Data validation was done through observation which assisted the researcher.

3.7.3 Document analysis

Document analysis was carried out to analyze relevant policy documents, which include council documents on women's quota system in the district. These documents were helpful in knowing legal frameworks that governed women's participation. Official records of participation were analyzed and this was helpful in cross checking claims made during interviews.

3.8 Ethical considerations

Ethical issues translate to a basic function of maintaining the credibility of research. The study adhered to ethical issues relating to participants. These comprised of the confidentiality, cultural and institutional consent. The research participants were e volunteers and they were free to withdraw anytime they wished. The research also took into account the culture of the people of Mudzi District which demands for respect of local norms values and beliefs.

3.8.1 Informed consent

The subjects were provided with complete information on the aim and nature of the study. Objectives, purpose, nature and role in the research were explained to all the participants. Prior to the start of data collection.

3.8.2 Voluntary participation

Participants in research were volunteers and they were allowed to withdraw at any time they wanted. Bryman (2016) suggested that the voluntary participants ensure the object of the research by their willingness to be involved in the research process.

3.8.3 Confidentiality and privacy

Participants' identity and privacy were well safeguarded. Participants were informed about how their data was going to be used, even when making publications confidentiality and privacy was maintained to make sure that no information presented reveals an individual identity.

3.8.4 Culture

The research also took into consideration the culture of the people in Mudzi District. Ethical research is one that respects local norms, values and beliefs. The researcher did not judge any participant ideas as the research topic is a sensitive topic therefore any contributions to the research was acceptable.

3.8.5 Institutional approval

Before the start of the fieldwork an institutional approval letter was obtained from Bindura University of Science Education. The researcher also requested for permission to conduct the research from Mudzi District local government department and from Mudzi Rural District Council.

3.9 Validity

Validity is the degree of accuracy measurement of research through its findings. Triangulation was carried out in the research that is the use of several data collection techniques, namely semi structured interviews, observation and document analysis. This facilitated the comparison of the data from different sources and thus rendered the findings

correct. The researcher used the questions that were interwoven with the study objectives and questions to ensure content validation. The researcher enhanced validity through engaging with people who are directly involved in local governance systems.

3.10 Reliability

Reliability is the consistency of the study's findings, if it were to be replicated in the same circumstances. The researcher in this research, had ensured the reliability of the research by giving explanations to the research design, sampling technique and data collection technique so that it would be easier for other researchers to replicate the study.

3.11 Chapter summary

The chapter explained the research methodology and design which was to look into the impact of women's quota system in local governance participation in Mudzi District, Zimbabwe. The chapter explained the research approach which was a roadmap to data collection and the research design which was the overall aspect that combined different aspects of the study into one logical manner. It also explained the target population which was the prominent set of people with lived experiences related to the study. Sample sizes and methods of data collection were also discussed. Ethical aspects were discussed to make ethical consents of participants. This then brings about the data presentation, analysis and discussion of findings in chapter four.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented research methodology which focused in research approach, target population, data collection methods and ethical considerations. This chapter presented and analyzed the findings of the study on the impact of women's quota system in local governance participation in Mudzi District, Zimbabwe. The analysis was guided by research objectives and questions outlined in chapter one. The data that was presented in this chapter was collected through semi structured interviews, document analysis and observation. A Thematic approach was used to categorize the data into key themes derived from the research objectives. The themes include perceptions of community members and stakeholders, extent of women's representation under the quota system, role of women in decision-making and challenges faced by women under the quota system. The findings were interpreted in relation to the feminist theory and empowerment evaluation theory which formed the theoretical framework of the study.

4.2 Perceptions of community members and stakeholders towards women's quota system

Many participants indicated that most women have improved women's profile in leadership participation. The findings show that community members and stakeholders had different views in considering the effectiveness of the quota system. On the positive side, many people admitted that the quota system has improved the visibility of women in leadership positions.

A participant said that

" Women are known present in council meetings and they are also participating in council activities ".

This shows that women who were kept out of politics are known actively present in council meetings and in local governance systems. This increased visibility was seen as a progressive step towards gender equality.

Another participant said tha

"The quota system is a platform that has enabled women to speak and represent their communities".

This highlighted that the increased number of women in leadership has helped as they work towards advocacy for women empowerment. This has helped challenge long standing gender stereotypes that portrayed leadership as a male domain.

A participant argued that

"Having an increasing number of women in leadership is helping to change community perceptions that leadership is only for men".

Women's quota system was viewed as a restorative measure mechanism aimed at addressing historical imbalances and structural inequalities that had marginalized women. From a feminist theoretical perspective, this aligned with the idea that institutional interference was essential to remove entrenched patriarchal systems. The quota system, therefore symbolize a form of affirmative action that advanced inclusivity and equal opportunity. On the other hand, despite these positive perceptions the research also disclosed significant disbelief considering the effectiveness of the quota system. Some people who participated argued that the system

had resulted in symbolic participation rather than meaningful involvement as evidenced by a certain participant who said that

" *Women are present in leadership roles but they are not given the power to influence decisions"*.

This means that women are present in governance structures but their influence on decision making remains limited. This perception shows the difference between descriptive representation and substantive. Some people expressed negative attitudes towards the quota system as shown by a certain man who said that

" The quota system select women just to meet numbers".

This indicates that that its sabotaged meritocracy by taking gender over competence. These perspectives were given by male participants who indicated resistance to gender inclusive policies. This attitude can be understood through the feminist theory as the deforestation of patriarchal society as a failure to transform in power dynamics. Perceptions of the quota system in Mudzi District are mixed. It was recognized for empowering women. However, its significant remains questionable.

4.3 Extent of women's representation in local governance

The findings of the research show that the women's quota system had an important impact on advancing women's numerical representation in Mudzi District, since it was reported that they have never exceeded above three. Many people said that the number of women councilors had increased due to the introduction of the quota system.

A local government official reported that

"The quota system is helping women and girls in communities to believe that they

can also participate in leadership".

This demonstrates that quota system was helpful in terms of raising awareness and advocacy for women and girls in their community.

Another local government official said that

" women councilors are working on projects such as water and sanitation which is helping in advancing the living standards of people in their communities".

By virtue of advancing projects in rural communities, one can say that they did not just increase in number but their work was helpful in community development. This therefore shows the importance of the empowerment evaluation theory as this was also aligned with global and regional movement where the quota system was effective in improving women's representation in political institutions.

On the other side, the research shows that increased representation does not expand into effective participation.

A certain official highlighted that

"*Opinions of women's councilors are overlooked when important decisions are being made"*.

This indicates that women took positions in local governance but their power to influence decisions remains constrained. The researcher discovered that although women are in decision making structures sometimes their voice and contributions were not taken seriously in council meetings.

A local government official said that

"Quota *councilors do not have wards and this makes it hard for their decisions to be considered"*.

This shows that these women have limited control to contribute in key discussions because they do not have wards that they represent. Therefore, the quota system becomes less powerful as compared to the other councilors who had ground/ wards that they represent. This idea of tokenism emerged as some participants explained women's inclusion as concerned with fulfillment of policy requirements rather than to actively involved in governance. Tokenism undermined the function of the quota system as it had failed to impower women. From the idea of empowerment evaluation theory, true empowerment required not only participation but also the power to influence outcomes. The findings proposed that even if the quota system had managed to obtain opportunities for women to enter into governance extra support was needed. The research showed a gap between representation and participation. Handling this gap required according change from concentrating in only on numbers but also in ensuring that women have resources and institutional support.

4.4 Role of women in decision making processes

Besides the obstacles mentioned above the research also found out that women elected under the quota system play significant roles in local governance. Women councilors brought impact mainly in areas connected to community welfare and development.

A participant said that

"The *introduction of the quota system more attention has been given to development of project in our wards"*.

This shows the major role that was played by women councilors was advocacy for community needs. They focused on matters that affected vulnerable groups such as women, girls, elderly people and the disabled.

A participant noted that

"women leaders are focusing on inclusive development and they ensure that no group is left behind rather than men".

This highlighted that they worked in areas such as health, education and social services (WASH) and it shows that women brought unique ideas to governance that enabled policies to respond. By virtue of chairing committee, they were leading and participating in planning and implementation of local projects focusing on improving the living conditions of people in their communities. Their engagement demonstrated a commitment to grassroot development and this was a shed of green light to the significance of inclusive governance. The researcher observed that women's influence in decision making was limited by male councilors leaving women with litter or nothing to say in final decisions. This implied that power was concentrated among few individuals. The evidence proposed that while women are contributing to governance and their impact was constrained by institutional and cultural barriers. From a feminist point of view this suggested that achieving gender equality in governance demanded for not only increased representation but also shifting power relations within institutions.

4.4 challenges faced by women under the quota system

The research noted many obstacles that hindered the effective participation of women in local governance. These obstacles emanated from social, cultural, economic and political barriers. One of the most challenging factors was male patriarchal system.

A certain women councilor indicated that

"*The community has not yet understood the quota system and they think that leadership is only for men*".

This shows that women are undermined by their male colleagues and society due to the fact that the community had not yet understood the quota system and the idea that women can also do what men can do, cultural beliefs that associated leadership with men had limited women's authority and influence. Lack of resources was another obstacle that hindered the effectiveness of the women councilors.

A women councilor reported that

" We don't have resources that we can use to meet their demands of our communities".

This shows that they have limited access to financial and logistics support which intern hindered their capability to do their work effectively. These challenges included lack of capacity for community engagement, training and project monitoring. The study also noted lack of skills and training for these councilors so that they can take part in governance structures. The researcher observed that some of these women does not know what they are actually supposed to do due to lack of knowledge in governance processes and leadership skills.

A participant from the local government officials also responded that

"As of late there was Chitepo leadership training which helped these women in terms of decision making but currently there is a struggle to come up with other effective training programs besides gender training program"

This highlighted that there was a program that focused on training people for leadership however the current situation shows that there was nothing to cater for leadership education in the local governance level. Political challenges had also hindered women's participation. Some of these women are affected by party politics, instead of doing the real business that they are supposed to conduct for the women's quota system they turn to mix it with party politics and this had affected one of them to the extent that she cannot understand her work or in the quota system but she understands the political side. On the other hand, party politics had also affected these women because they cannot implement what the politics of the area does not want and the political environment continued dominated by men.

4.5 Discussion of findings

The findings of this research gave significant insights into the impact of women's quota system in local governance participation in Mudzi District. From a feminist theoretical framework, the quota system symbolized an important step towards handling gender inequality in governance structures. On the other hand, the male patriarchal society showed that they are a challenge to women empowerment. Empowerment evaluation theory underlined the significance of building capacity and enabling participation. This underscores the need for intensive measures that are beyond representation to include training, resource allocation and institutional reform. The findings are in line with the already existing literature which showed that the quota system had been effective in increasing numbers but there was still need to work on obtaining effective results. The study highlighted that women are in governance structures however they were not fully empowered to have a final judgment in decision making. This showed the significance of handling both cultural and structural challenges to women empowerment.

4.6 Chapter summary

This chapter laid out the findings on the impact of women's quota system in local governance participation in Mudzi District. The analysis showed that the quota system has exceeded in women's representation and in some parts of its work but had not fully accomplished its goal on women empowerment. Women played significant roles in governance but their participation was often challenged by the patriarchal society. This therefore leads to chapter five which is going to provide recommendations and conclusions based on these findings.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the discussion of data findings and analyzed them through a thematic approach. This chapter presented summary, conclusions and recommendations of the research on the impact of women's quota system in local governance participation in Mudzi District, Zimbabwe. The chapter was guided by findings that were discussed in Chapter four. The stretcher linked them to the research objectives and questions outlined in chapter one. The aim of this chapter was to offer a deduction of key findings, delineate meaningful conclusions and the suggestion of recommendations intended on improving the effectiveness of the women's quota system. The chapter also showed the contribution of the study and proposed areas for future research.

5.2 summary of the study

Chapter one presented the research problem which was the impact of women's quota system in local governance participation in Mudzi District, Zimbabwe. The chapter started with the background of the study and the purpose of the research which was examining the impact of women's quota system in local governance participation in Mudzi District. The chapter also discussed the objectives of the study as well as research questions that was used during data collection. The scope of the study, limitations and delimitations of the study were also discussed.

Chapter two discussed the theoretical framework, which was a combination of two theories, namely the feminist theory and the empowerment evaluation theory. By combining these theories, the research provided a comprehensive understanding of the impact of women's quota system in local governance participation in Mudzi District. The chapter also provided an empirical literature review, which was reviewed under the themes derived from the research objectives. The themes included the perceptions of community members and stakeholders, challenges faced by women's quota system, the extent to which women's quota has increased representation and the role of women elected under the quota system in decision-making. The research also provides the research gap, which focuses on filling the shortfalls of the existing literature by analyzing the impact of women's quota system in local governance participation in Mudzi District

Chapter three explained the research methodology which was to look into the impact of women's quota system in local governance participation in Mudzi District, Zimbabwe. The chapter explained the research approach which was a roadmap to data collection and the research design which was the overall aspect that combined different aspects of the study into one logical manner. It also explained the target population which was the prominent set of people with lived experiences related to the study. Sample sizes and data collection methods

were also discussed. Ethical considerations were discussed to make ethical consents of participants.

Chapter four laid out the findings on the impact of women's quota system in local governance participation in Mudzi District. The analysis showed that the quota system had exceeded in women's representation and in some parts of its work but had not fully accomplished its goal on women empowerment. Women played significant roles in governance but their participation was often challenged by the patriarchal society.

5.3 Conclusions

Conclusions were drawn from the key findings. The women's quota system was infective in increasing the number of women in local governance and this approved that affirmative action policies can play a significant role in promoting gender inclusion. The research also concludes that representation alone was not sufficient in achieving meaningful participation. Women are present in governance structures their power to influence decisions was strained by culture, structures and institutional difficulties. The continued patriarchy attitudes persisted in undermining women's participation. The research concluded that empowerment requires more than access to positions. There was a need for resources training and institutional support. The study concluded that the quota system should be complemented by broader strategies aimed at transforming governance structures and societal attitudes.

1. Effectiveness of the women's quota system

The research established that the women's quota was effective in adding the number of women in local governance structures. This shows that expecting best action policies was a significant tool for dealing with gender imbalances and promoting inclusion. By creating

reserved spaces for women, the quota system helped in improving numerical representation and visibility of women in leadership.

2.Limitations of representation alone

Despite increased representation, the study concluded that having a big number of women does not automatically lead to a purposive participation. Representation that does not have influence limited the impact women could have on decision making processes. This reflects that inclusion must be far beyond numbers so as to make sure that women can actively contributed and sharpen policies.

3. structural and institutional challenges

Women's power to influence decisions was challenged by structural and institutional obstacles. These included limited access to resources, lack of institutional support and a male patriarchal. These challenges limited women's effectiveness even when they are part of decision-making bodies.

The research put emphasis on the idea that the quota system alone was not sufficient. It should be supported by various and more broader strategies aimed at transforming governance structures and charging societal altitudes towards gender equality.

5.4 Recommendations

The women's quota system should be strengthened so that it can move beyond numerical representation. This can be earned by introducing legal and institutional mechanisms that give assurance to women's inclusion in decision making processes. Introducing monitoring and evaluation frameworks that assess their level of influence in governance not just their increased presence. Positioning the quota system within capacity building programs that representation can be matched with competence and confidence.

Local government officials should go and long milestones in promoting gender inclusive governance practices by making sure that women councilors are actively and equally involved in decision-making processes rather than being sidelined. It should also provide and facilitate continuous training and development in leadership policy making. The local government should try to be all means to create an environment that challenges gender bias and promote equality within council operations.

Mudzi Rural District Council should take a proactive role in enhancing women's participation by making gender sensitive policies that are within the Council framework practical. Allocating resources for capacity building programs targeting women in their Council budget and making sure that the area had been addressed. Promoting inclusive participation in the development of community projects. Introducing training programs where experienced leaders support newly elected women.

5.5 Areas for further research

Future research should extend across different rural districts and urban councilors. This research has reflected that participation in Mudzi District was based on rural specific challenges. Researching across other rural districts would help in determining whether the limitations are just affecting Mudzi District or they are broader national patterns. This would allow scholars to assess whether urban women who have better access to resources and training experience greater levels of policy making and decision-making than their rural counterparts.

The findings of this research concentrated on gender. Future research should adopt intersectional lenses and explore how factors such as age disability and education affect women’s participation.

Cultural challenges and patriarchal beliefs were shown as the key barriers that limited women's participation in Mudzi District. Further research should focus on how these norms are changing overtime. This would help in determining whether the quota system has contributed in long term social transformation or whether cultural resistance continues to undermine their impact.

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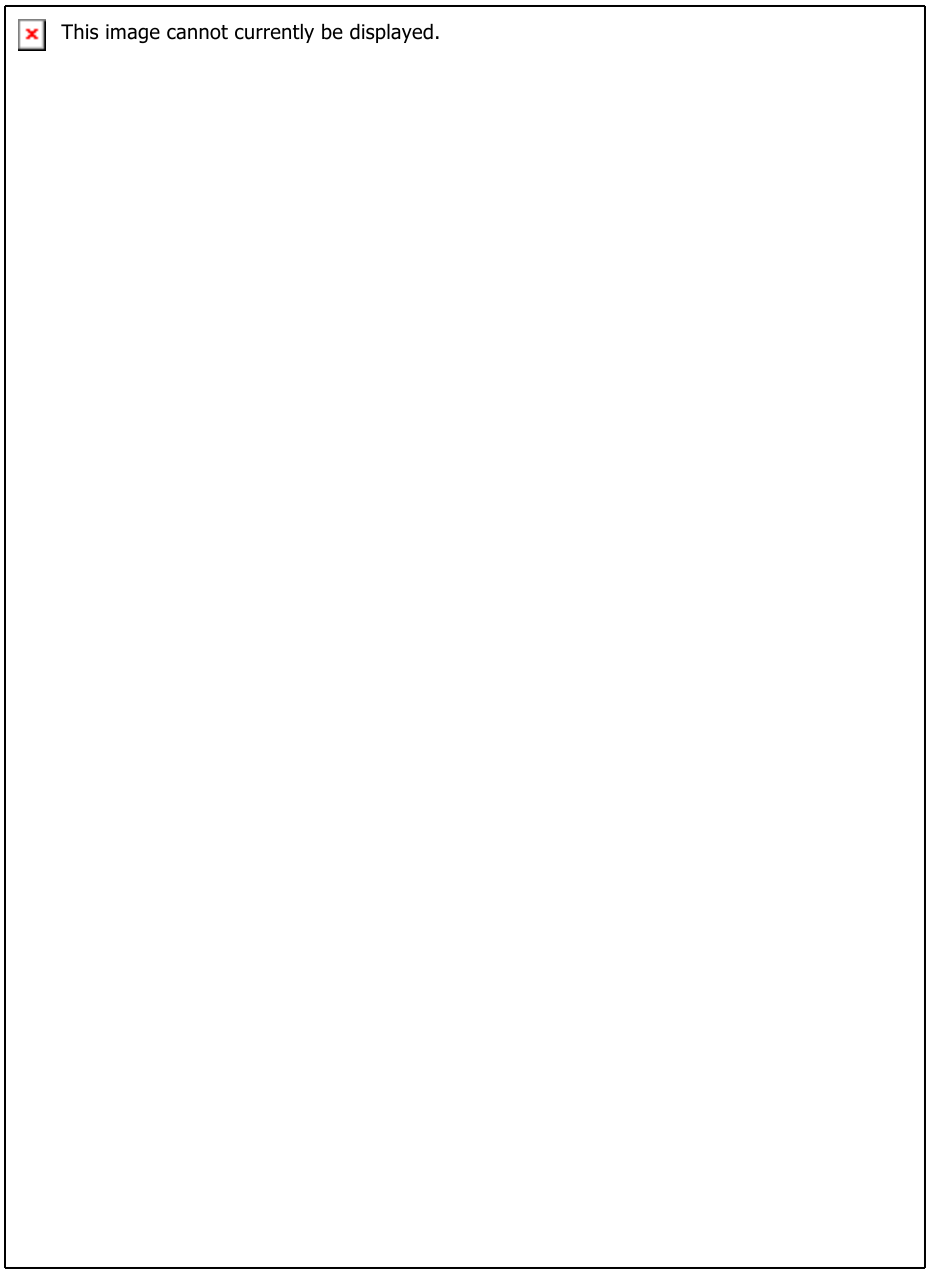
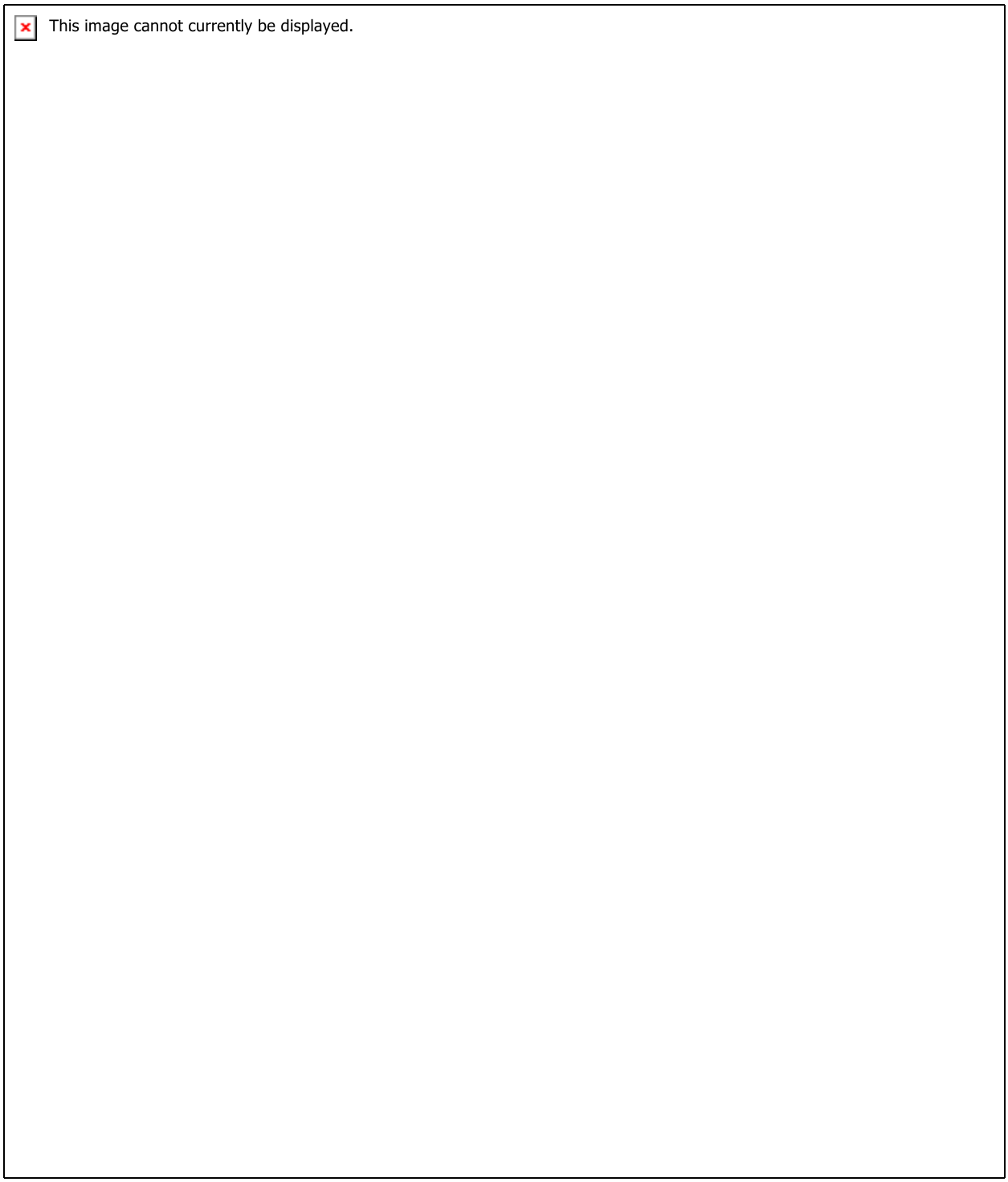
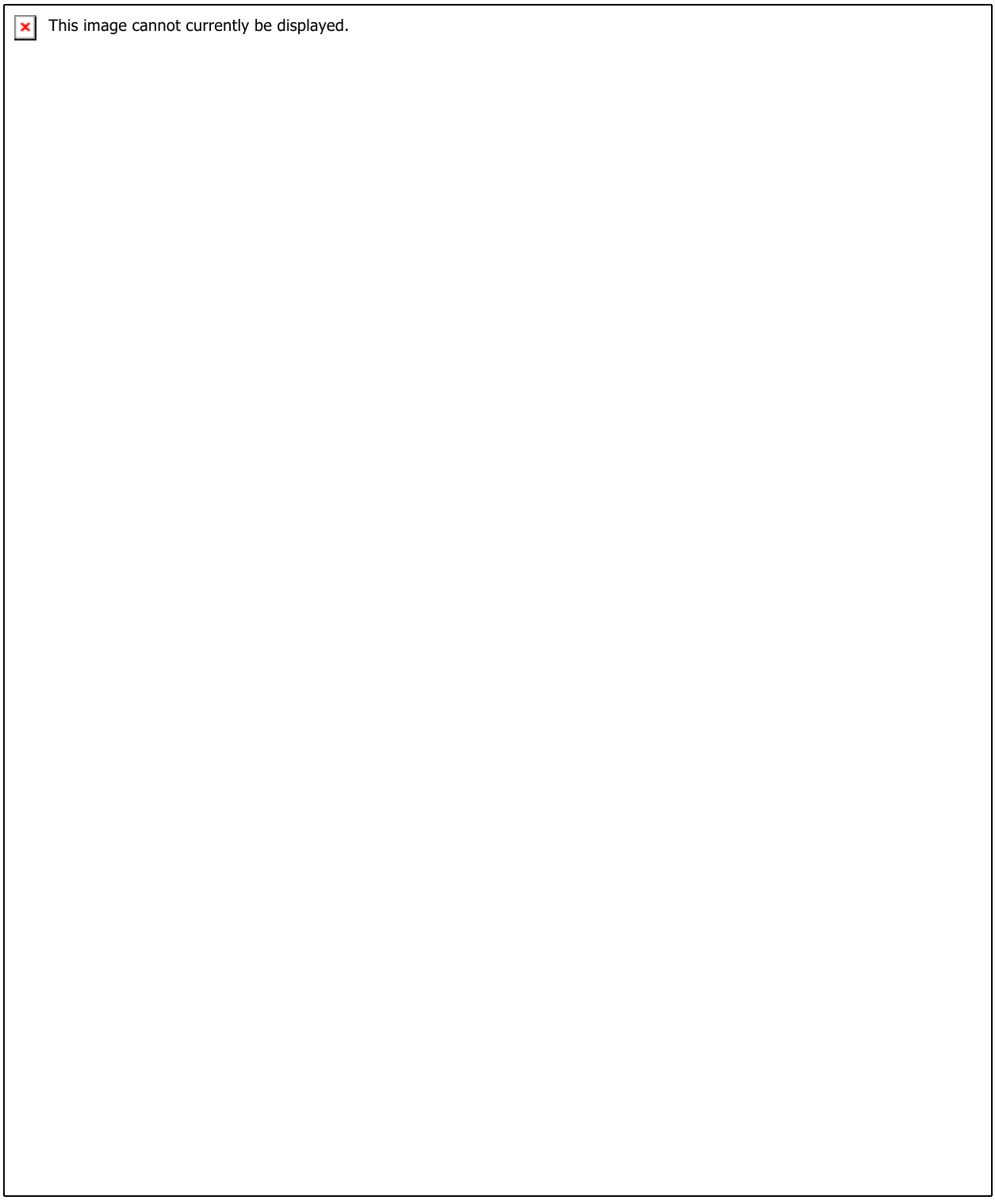
Appendix 1: BUSE fieldwork letter



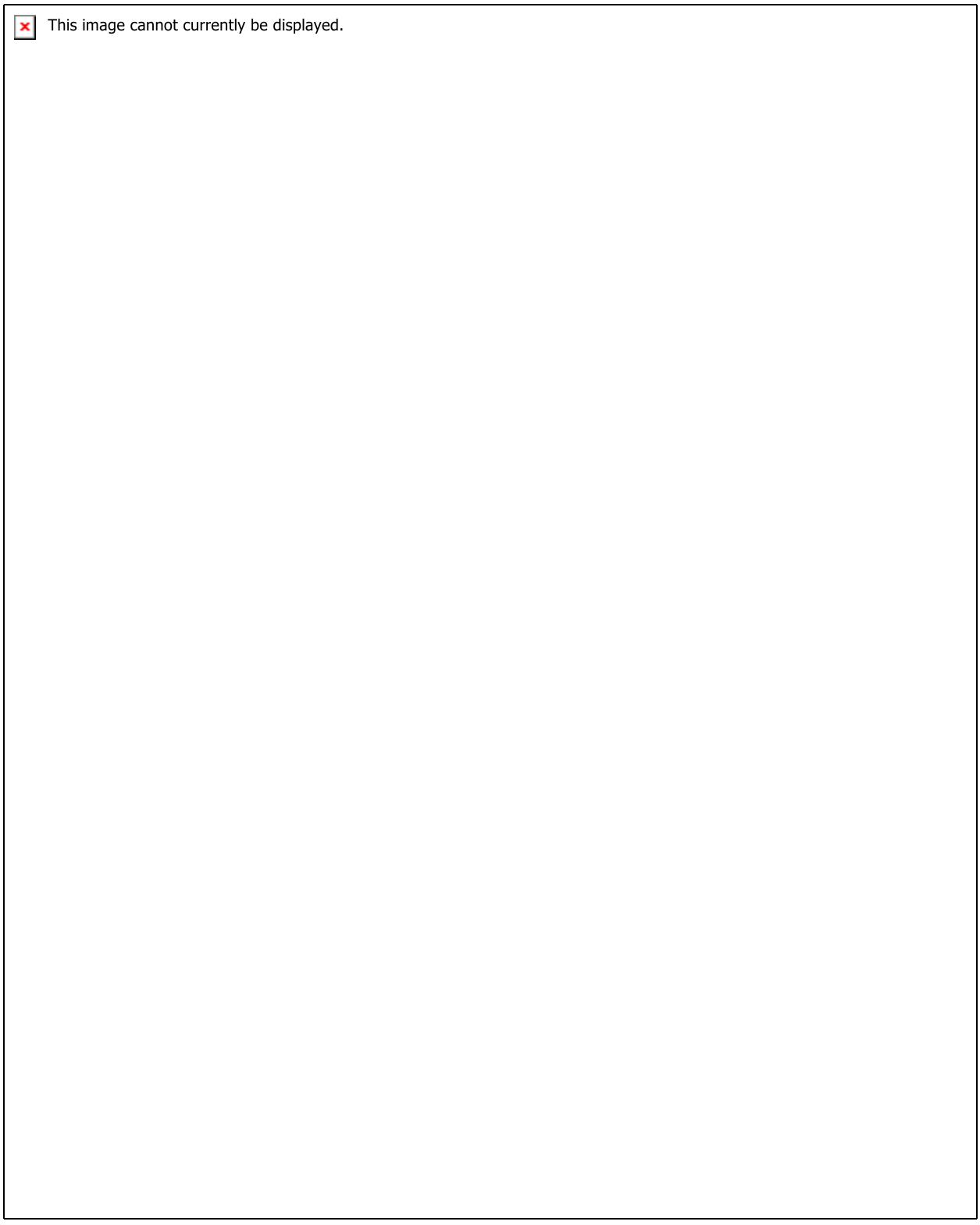
Appendix 2: Mudzi Rural District Council permission letter

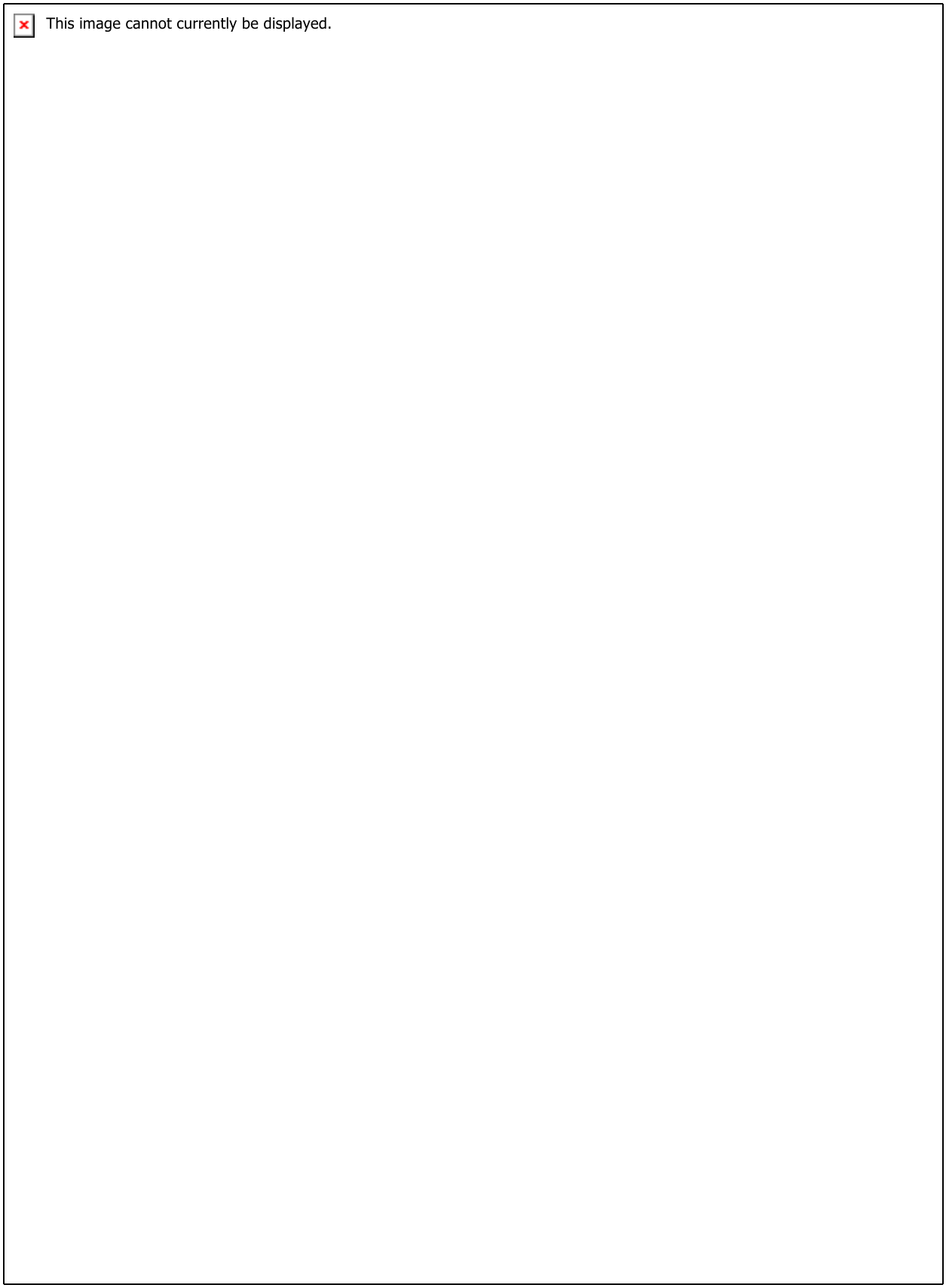


Permission letter from Ministry of Local Government and Public Works



Appendix 3: Fieldwork notes

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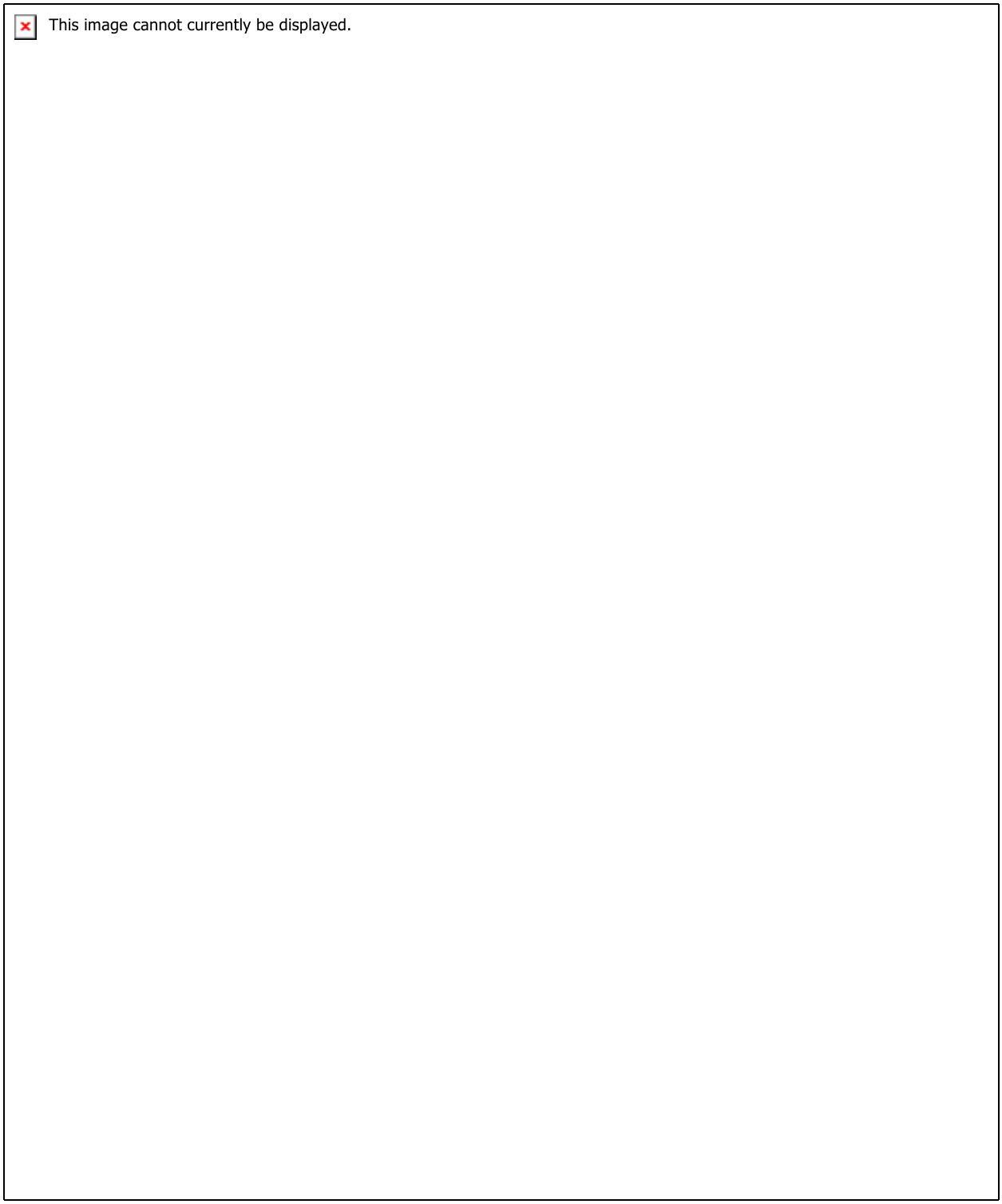
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Appendix3: Picture taken during observation

